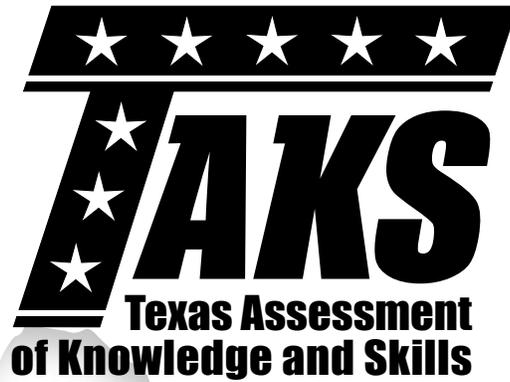


August 2004



Information Booklet

READING Grade 3 Revised

Texas Education Agency • Student Assessment Division

INTRODUCTION

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is a completely reconceived testing program. It assesses more of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) than the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) did and asks questions in more authentic ways. TAKS has been developed to better reflect good instructional practice and more accurately measure student learning. We hope that every teacher will see the connection between what we test on this new state assessment and what our students should know and be able to do to be academically successful. To provide you with a better understanding of TAKS and its connection to the TEKS and to classroom teaching, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed this newly revised edition of the TAKS information booklet. The information booklets were originally published in January 2002, before the first TAKS field test. Now, after several years of field tests and live administrations, we are able to provide an even more comprehensive picture of the testing program. We have clarified some of the existing material and, in some cases, provided new sample items and/or more explanations of certain item types. However, it is important to remember that these clarifications do not signify any change in the TAKS testing program. The objectives and TEKS student expectations assessed on TAKS remain unchanged. We hope this revised version of the TAKS information booklet will serve as a user-friendly resource to help you understand that the best preparation for TAKS is a coherent, TEKS-based instructional program that provides the level of support necessary for all students to reach their academic potential.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The development of the TAKS program included extensive public scrutiny and input from Texas teachers, administrators, parents, members of the business community, professional education organizations, faculty and staff at Texas colleges and universities, and national content-area experts. The agency involved as many stakeholders as possible because we believed that the development of TAKS was a responsibility that had to be shared if this new assessment was to be an equitable and accurate measure of learning for all Texas public school students.

The three-year test-development process, which began in summer 1999, included a series of carefully conceived activities. First, committees of Texas educators identified those TEKS student expectations for each grade and subject area assessed that should be tested on a statewide assessment. Then a committee of TEA Student Assessment and Curriculum staff incorporated these selected TEKS student expectations, along with draft objectives for each subject area, into eleventh grade exit level surveys. These surveys were sent to Texas educators at the middle school and secondary levels for their review. Based on input we received from more than 27,000 survey responses, we developed a second draft of the objectives and TEKS student expectations. In addition, we used this input during the development of draft objectives and student expectations for grades 3 through 10 to ensure that the TAKS program, like the TEKS curriculum, would be vertically aligned. This vertical alignment was a critical step in ensuring that the TAKS tests would become more rigorous as students moved from grade to grade. For example, the fifth grade tests would be more rigorous than the fourth grade tests, which would be more rigorous than the third grade tests. Texas educators felt that this increase in rigor from grade to grade was both appropriate and logical since each subject-area test was closely aligned to the TEKS curriculum at that grade level.

In fall 2000 TEA distributed the second draft of the objectives and TEKS student expectations for eleventh grade exit level and the first draft of the objectives and student expectations for grades 3 through 10 for review at the campus level. These documents were also posted on the Student Assessment Division’s website to encourage input from the public. Each draft document focused on two central issues: first, whether the objectives included in the draft were essential to measure on a statewide assessment; and, second, whether students would have received enough instruction on the TEKS student expectations included under each objective to be adequately prepared to demonstrate mastery of that objective in the spring of the school year. We received more than 57,000 campus-consensus survey responses. We used these responses, along with feedback from national experts, to finalize the TAKS objectives and student expectations. Because the state assessment was necessarily limited to a “snapshot” of student performance, broad-based input was important to ensure that TAKS assessed the parts of the TEKS curriculum most critical to students’ academic learning and progress.

In the thorough test-development process that we use for the TAKS program, we rely on educator input to develop items that are appropriate and valid measures of the objectives and TEKS student expectations the items are designed to assess. This input includes an annual educator review and revision of all proposed test items before field testing and a second annual educator review of data and items after field testing. In addition, each year panels of recognized experts in the fields of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies meet in Austin to critically review the content of each of the high school level TAKS assessments to be administered that year. This critical review is referred to as a content validation review and is one of the final activities in a series of quality-control steps to ensure that each high school test is of the highest quality possible. A content validation review is considered necessary at the high school grades (9, 10, and 11) because of the advanced level of content being assessed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TAKS TESTS

TAKS is divided into test objectives. It is important to remember that the objective statements are not found in the TEKS curriculum. Rather, the objectives are “umbrella statements” that serve as headings under which student expectations from the TEKS can be meaningfully grouped. Objectives are broad statements that “break up” knowledge and skills to be tested into meaningful subsets around which a test can be organized into reporting units. These reporting units help campuses, districts, parents, and the general public understand the performance of our students and schools. Test objectives are not intended to be “translations” or “rewordings” of the TEKS. Instead, the objectives are designed to be identical across grade levels rather than grade specific. Generally, the objectives are the same for third grade through eighth grade (an elementary/middle school system) and for ninth grade through eleventh grade (a high school system). In addition, certain TEKS student expectations may logically be grouped under more than one test objective; however, it is important for you to understand that this is not meaningless repetition—sometimes the organization of the objectives requires such groupings. For example, on the TAKS writing tests for fourth and seventh grades, some of the same student expectations addressing the conventions of standard English usage are listed under both Objective 2 and Objective 6. In this case, the expectations listed under Objective 2 are assessed through the overall strength of a student’s use of language conventions on the written composition portion of the test; these same expectations under Objective 6 are assessed through multiple-choice items attached to a series of revising and editing passages.

ORGANIZATION OF THE INFORMATION BOOKLETS

The purpose of the information booklets is to help Texas educators, students, parents, and other stakeholders understand more about the TAKS tests. These booklets are not intended to replace the teaching of the TEKS curriculum, provide the basis for the isolated teaching of skills in the form of narrow test preparation, or serve as the single information source about every aspect of the TAKS program. However, we believe that the booklets provide helpful explanations as well as show enough sample items, reading and writing selections, and prompts to give educators a good sense of the assessment.

Each grade within a subject area is presented as a separate booklet. However, it is still important that teachers review the information booklets for the grades both above and below the grade they teach. For example, eighth grade reading teachers who review the seventh grade information booklet as well as the ninth grade information booklet are able to develop a broader perspective of the reading assessment than if they study only the eighth grade information booklet.

The information booklets for each subject area contain some information unique to that subject. However, all booklets include the following information, which we consider critical for every subject-area TAKS test:

- an overview of the subject within the context of TAKS
- a blueprint of the test—the number of items under each objective and the number of items on the test as a whole
- information that clarifies how to read the TEKS
- the reasons each objective and its TEKS student expectations are critical to student learning and success
- the objectives and TEKS student expectations that will be included on TAKS
- additional information about each objective that helps educators understand how it is assessed on TAKS
- sample items that show some of the ways objectives are assessed

TAKS READING INFORMATION BOOKLET

The purposes for reading are as varied and diverse as the people who read, but the ability to read effectively is essential for all students in the increasingly complex world in which we live. Reading is one of the most important foundations for learning, not only in English language arts but also in other content areas, such as science, social studies, and mathematics. Students who can understand what they read and who can make connections between what they read and what they already know will more likely be successful—in the classroom, on the test, and in the real world. Strong reading skills are necessary for academic achievement, for the fundamental tasks of daily living, and for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

The TAKS reading assessments evaluate a subset of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state-mandated curriculum. This curriculum is specifically designed to help students make progress in reading by emphasizing the knowledge and skills most critical for student learning. Because the TAKS reading tests are closely aligned with the TEKS, students who effectively learn the TEKS will become proficient readers who are able to perform successfully on the test without unnecessary emphasis on test preparation. A system of support has been designed to ensure that all students master the TEKS. The Student Success Initiative (SSI) requires that students meet the standard on TAKS to be eligible for promotion to the next grade level as specified below:

- the reading test at grade 3, beginning in the 2002–2003 school year;
- the reading and mathematics tests at grade 5, beginning in the 2004–2005 school year; and
- the reading and mathematics tests at grade 8, beginning in the 2007–2008 school year.

To prepare students for the SSI requirements and to promote vertical alignment, it is essential that teachers collaborate and coordinate across grade levels.

The TEKS student expectations eligible for testing on the third through eighth grade TAKS reading assessments are grouped under four TAKS objectives.

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of culturally diverse written texts.

Objective 2: The student will apply knowledge of literary elements to understand culturally diverse written texts.

Objective 3: The student will use a variety of strategies to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

Objective 4: The student will apply critical-thinking skills to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

These objectives are consistent from third grade through eighth grade, and the TEKS student expectations assessed under each TAKS objective are vertically aligned, meaning that they build logically from one grade level to the next. An example of this logical movement follows.

Example from Objective 2

Grade 3 TEKS 3.11 (H) states that *students are expected to analyze characters, including their traits, feelings, relationships, and changes.*

Grade 4 TEKS 4.12 (H) states that *the student is expected to analyze characters, including their traits, motivations, conflicts, points of view, relationships, and changes they undergo.*

Many of the TEKS student expectations from grade to grade are expressed in similar language, but the level of student performance required at each grade increases. Reading selections will be longer and more challenging, and the critical thinking required of students will be more complex and sophisticated. Although elementary and middle school teachers are not directly responsible for student success on TAKS at the high school level, it is important for them to familiarize themselves with the reading (ninth grade) and English language arts (tenth and eleventh grades) assessments. Without strong elementary and middle school reading programs, students will not have had the opportunity to acquire the literacy skills they need to be successful at the high school level.

TAKS READING SELECTIONS—GRADES 3–8

TAKS reading selections are designed to be interesting, meaningful, and reflective of the Texas population and our culturally diverse world. Cultural diversity includes regional, economic, social, and ethnic differences and may be represented through subject matter and/or characters. In addition, reading selections will be similar to those that students encounter in their classrooms and in their everyday lives.

Four kinds of selections are developed for TAKS:

- Narrative selections, which are fictional stories presented with a clear progression of events. Letters or diary entries as well as stories may represent narrative writing.
- Expository (informative) selections, which provide information about noteworthy people and/or events or explain topics related to content areas, such as science, social studies, art, or music.
- Mixed selections, which combine two types of writing into a single passage. For example, a mixed selection may be a story about Martin Luther King, Jr., that includes both factual information (expository) and invented dialogue (narrative). Or a selection may mix narrative and functional writing. For example, an advertisement, a recipe, instructions, or directions for a game (functional) may be presented within the context of a story (narrative).
- Paired selections, which are two selections designed to be read together. Paired selections provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate an understanding of the connections across texts. Selections may be paired for many different reasons; for example, a paired selection may be based on the same story told from two different points of view or a science article and a science fiction story that address a common theme or idea. It is important to remember that paired selections are linked by more than a superficial connection, such as common subject matter or characters. Paired selections contain a deep link, so that students can recognize the strong connection across the two pieces.

NOTE: Although the third grade TEKS include student expectations requiring students to make connections across texts, no paired selections will be included on the third grade test, since all third graders do not have independent mastery of this skill.

Word counts for each selection will vary according to age and grade-level appropriateness. Some selections may require students to turn pages in order to complete the reading selection and/or to answer test items.

- Selections for third and fourth grades will be approximately 500 to 700 words.
- Selections for fifth grade will be approximately 600 to 900 words.
- Selections for sixth, seventh, and eighth grades will be approximately 700 to 1,000 words.

Two notes regarding word counts:

- (1) Selections written as a pair will be comparable in length to singly developed selections.
- (2) Due to the differences in language, the Spanish reading selections may be somewhat longer than the English passages.

Other important information about TAKS reading selections:

- Paragraphs will be numbered when doing so does not interfere with the layout of the text. For example, a selection that includes an advertisement with bulleted information most likely would not have numbered paragraphs.
- When appropriate, each selection will be preceded by a title.
- Additional information will be provided in an introduction or a postscript when this information will help the reader better understand the selection.
- In sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, narrative selections will be formatted so that students have the option of taking notes, keeping track of important information, or asking themselves questions as they read. This margin is labeled *My notes about what I am reading* and is located on the right-hand side of each page in the selection.

NOTE: The third grade test booklet is a scannable (machine-scorable) booklet designed to allow third graders to mark their answers directly in the booklet.

**TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TAKS)
BLUEPRINT FOR GRADE 3 READING**

TAKS Objectives	Number of Items
Objective 1: Basic understanding	15
Objective 2: Literary elements	7
Objective 3: Analysis using reading strategies	6
Objective 4: Analysis using critical-thinking skills	8
Total number of items	36

A Key to Understanding the TEKS Included on TAKS Grade 3 Reading

Example from Objective 1

- A** → (3.8) **Reading/vocabulary development.** The student develops an extensive vocabulary. The student is expected to
- B** → (C) use [resources and references such as beginners' dictionaries, glossaries, available technology, and] context to build word meanings and to confirm pronunciations of words (2–3).
- D** →

KEY

A. Knowledge and Skills Statement

This broad statement describes what students should know and be able to do for third grade reading. The number preceding the statement identifies the grade level and number of the knowledge and skills statement.

B. Student Expectation

This specific statement describes what students should be able to do to demonstrate proficiency in what is described in the knowledge and skills statement. Students will be tested on skills outlined in the student expectation statement.

C. [bracketed text]

Although the entire student expectation has been provided for reference, text in brackets indicates that this portion of the student expectation will not be tested on TAKS.

D. (2–3)

The student expectation is taught from second grade through third grade.

NOTE: The full TEKS curriculum can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/>.

TEKS STUDENT EXPECTATIONS—IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

For every subject area and grade level, two terms—*such as* and *including*—are used to help make the TEKS student expectations more concrete for teachers. However, these terms function in different ways. To help you understand the effect each of the terms has on specific student expectations, we are providing the following:

- a short definition of each term
- an example from a specific student expectation for this subject area
- a short explanation of how this term affects this student expectation

Such as

The term *such as* is used when the specific examples that follow it function only as representative illustrations that help define the expectation for teachers. These examples are just that—examples. Teachers may choose to use them when teaching the student expectation, but there is no requirement to use them. Other examples can be used in conjunction with those listed or as replacements for those listed.

Example from Objective 1

(3.5) (D) *use root words and other structural cues such as prefixes, suffixes, and derivational endings to recognize words*

In this student expectation, students must use structural cues to figure out the meaning of words they don't know. Three examples—prefixes, suffixes, and derivational endings—follow the *such as*. These examples name word parts that teachers may use when helping students learn how to recognize structural cues. Teachers may use these examples and others when they teach this skill.

Including

The term *including* is used when the specific examples that follow it must be taught. However, other examples may also be used in conjunction with those listed.

Example from Objective 3

(3.11) (A) *distinguish different forms of texts, including lists, newsletters, and signs and the functions they serve*

In this student expectation, students must identify the unique features of the texts listed. Students must also understand how the functions of these specific texts differ. Though teachers must teach lists, newsletters, and signs, they may also use other forms of texts in addition to these.

Remember

- Any example preceded by the term *such as* in a particular student expectation may or may not provide the basis for an item assessing that expectation. Because these examples do not necessarily have to be used to teach the student expectation, it is equally likely that other examples will be used in assessment items. The rule here is that an example will be used only if it is central to the knowledge, concept, or skill the item assesses.
- It is more likely that some of the examples preceded by the term *including* in a particular student expectation will provide the basis for items assessing that expectation, since these examples must be taught. However, it is important to remember that the examples that follow the term *including* do not represent all the examples possible, so other examples may also provide the basis for an assessment item. Again, the rule here is that an example will be used only if it is central to the knowledge, concept, or skill the item assesses.

Grade 3 TAKS Reading—Objective 1

The TEKS and corresponding student expectations listed under Objective 1 will help students as they learn to read for the basic meaning of a text. To develop an initial understanding of what they read, students must be able to do three things: (1) use context and other word-identification strategies to help them understand the meaning of the words they read, (2) recognize important supporting details, and (3) understand the main idea of a selection. These skills are the building blocks that students need to develop a deeper understanding of what they read.

TAKS Objectives and TEKS Student Expectations

Objective 1

The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of culturally diverse written texts.

- (3.5) **Reading/word identification.** The student uses a variety of word identification strategies. The student is expected to
- (D) use root words and other structural cues such as prefixes, suffixes, and derivational endings to recognize words (3); and
 - (E) use knowledge of word order (syntax) and context to support word identification and confirm word meaning (1–3).
- (3.7) **Reading/variety of texts.** The student reads widely for different purposes in varied sources. The student is expected to
- (B) read from a variety of genres [for pleasure and] to acquire information [from both print and electronic sources] (2–3).
- (3.8) **Reading/vocabulary development.** The student develops an extensive vocabulary. The student is expected to
- (C) use [resources and references such as beginners’ dictionaries, glossaries, available technology, and] context to build word meanings and to confirm pronunciations of words (2–3); and
 - (D) demonstrate knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, and multi-meaning words [for example, by sorting, classifying, and identifying related words] (3).
- (3.9) **Reading/comprehension.** The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently. The student is expected to
- (C) retell [or act out the order of] important events in stories (K–3); and
 - (H) produce summaries of text selections (2–3).

Objective 1—For Your Information

Tested vocabulary words will be above grade level. Because a student may use context only or combine strategies (for example, knowing a word’s synonym or antonym or the meaning of a prefix, root, or suffix) to determine a word’s meaning, items will not be constructed to test skills in isolation (e.g., “The prefix in the word disapprove means —”).

Items testing multiple-meaning words might require students to identify the correct answer from a sample dictionary entry. The entry will include the tested word, its pronunciation key, its part of speech, and four definitions of the word. Students will use the information given and context clues to choose the correct meaning of the word as it is used in the reading selection.

Students may be asked to identify the context clues in a selection that help them to understand the meaning of a tested word. Answer choices for these items will contain context clues taken verbatim from the text rather than definitions of the tested word. These answer choices will be italicized.

Students will always be provided with enough context clues to allow them to identify the correct meaning of the word as it is used in the reading selection.

NOTE: The sample vocabulary item provided at each grade level will help teachers understand some of the different ways in which vocabulary will be assessed on the TAKS reading tests.

Items that measure students’ basic comprehension of a reading selection are of three types: items that focus on acquiring information from supporting details, items that focus on identifying the main idea and the important events in a selection, and items that summarize a selection. Detail items will focus on important information that is directly stated or paraphrased from a text. Main idea/gist items will be written so that students clearly understand that they are focusing on broad or central ideas. In narrative selections main idea items will focus on either a single paragraph or a series of paragraphs. However, expository and mixed selections may also include items that focus on the main idea of the entire selection. Summary items will focus on a reading selection as a whole. A summary is a short paragraph that includes the main idea and the most important details of a text. For this type of item, all answer choices will be constructed authentically as short paragraphs. However, the answer choices will be appropriate for third graders in that they will include enough information without being too long or dense.

Grade 3 TAKS Reading—Objective 2

Developing an understanding of literary elements makes stories both more accessible and more meaningful to young readers. Learning to make connections between events, characters, and other elements of a story helps students relate what they have read to their own lives and experiences. At the same time, knowing about a story’s characters, setting, and problem gives students an opportunity to relate to the story in concrete terms while learning about emotions and events that are beyond their own personal experiences.

TAKS Objectives and TEKS Student Expectations

Objective 2

The student will apply knowledge of literary elements to understand culturally diverse written texts.

- (3.11) **Reading/text structures/literary concepts.** The student analyzes the characteristics of various types of texts. The student is expected to
- (H) analyze characters, including their traits, feelings, relationships, and changes (1–3);
 - (I) identify the importance of the setting to a story’s meaning (1–3); and
 - (J) recognize the story problem(s) or plot (1–3).

Objective 2—For Your Information

Items that test characterization focus on the degree to which students understand the characters in a story: who they are, why they feel and act as they do, how they relate to one another, and how they are changed by the things they experience. Items that require analysis of characters will be grade-level appropriate; that is, students will not be asked characterization questions that are overly sophisticated or too far beyond their developing understanding of other people and themselves.

Items that focus on setting are of two types. The first type simply measures whether a student can identify the time and place of a story. However, most setting items will focus on whether a student understands how time and place contribute to the meaning of a story.

Items that focus on story problem(s) or plot will require students to identify the main conflict in the story or to recognize important events that occur in the story. The depth of analysis required will be appropriate for third graders.

For the most part, Objective 2 items will appear with narrative selections or with mixed or expository selections that include literary elements such as characters and plot.

Grade 3 TAKS Reading—Objective 3

All texts are not equally challenging. For young readers, reading a story may be much easier than reading a text that is based on science or social studies. However, to make academic progress, students must develop the ability to comprehend and process material from a wide range of texts. That is why it is important for students to develop the ability to know the purpose of the written text they are reading, how the author has organized information, how this organization affects the way the reader reads the text, and what distinctive features characterize a particular type of text. These are the skills students must learn if they are to become independent readers who can move beyond the literal meaning of a text and who have the ability to develop the deeper understandings needed to think critically about what they read, to connect what they know to new information, and to become independent learners.

TAKS Objectives and TEKS Student Expectations

Objective 3

The student will use a variety of strategies to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

- (3.9) **Reading/comprehension.** The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently. The student is expected to
- (C) retell [or act out] the order of important events in stories (K–3); and
 - (I) represent text information in different ways, including story maps, graphs, and charts (2–3).
- (3.11) **Reading/text structures/literary concepts.** The student analyzes the characteristics of various types of texts. The student is expected to
- (A) distinguish different forms of texts, including lists, newsletters, and signs and the functions they serve (K–3); and
 - (C) recognize the distinguishing features of familiar genres, including stories, [poems], and informational texts (1–3).

Objective 3—For Your Information

It is important for teachers to note that the knowledge and skills statement (3.9) (C) that appears here also appears under Objective 1 but with different text bracketed. In Objective 1, (3.9) (C) requires a student to be able to retell the events that occur in a story. For items assessing this skill in Objective 3, however, students must understand the proper sequence of events and how the events affect the central meaning of the text. These types of items will require students to use analysis, or higher-level thinking skills, to understand how one event relates to other events in the story.

Items that focus on representing text information in different ways may require students to select the answer choice that best completes a missing portion of a particular graphic organizer, such as a story

map, graph, chart, or picture map. Other items might require students to interpret information from a graphic source and use that information to make an inference or draw a conclusion.

Items that assess a student’s ability to distinguish among different forms of text might require students to recognize that authors organize information in specific ways. It is important for students to know that authors use various organizational patterns to arrange and link ideas depending upon how they want the reader to understand those ideas (“Why does the author use a list to explain how to make a kite?” e.g., “To show the importance of performing the steps in order”).

Items that require a student to distinguish among different genres focus on the unique characteristics of different kinds of texts. Items of this type might require students to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction or a fairy tale and a realistic story. Students might be asked to identify the purpose of a text (to inform, to entertain, etc.). A student might also be asked to identify the unique characteristics of a text, such as the title of a newspaper, or to identify where a particular selection might appear (“Where might the selection about the Grand Canyon be found?” e.g., “In a travel magazine”).

Grade 3 TAKS Reading—Objective 4

To be successful in school, students must have the ability to bring different levels of understanding to the texts they read. Good readers can do more than “read the lines.” They ask themselves questions, make initial predictions, and create meanings as they move through a text. Good readers also know that as they read, they will likely change their mind about some of their early ideas and assumptions. Why? Because as they read and acquire a more complete “picture” of the text, their understanding deepens and grows. They are able to answer their own questions, think critically about what they’ve read, develop their own interpretations, and use relevant parts of the text to support these interpretations. In essence, good readers understand that reading is a complex process that requires them not only to read “between the lines” but also to read “beyond the lines,” relating what they’ve read to what they already know. In this way reading becomes an important tool for thinking and learning, both in school and in real life.

TAKS Objectives and TEKS Student Expectations

Objective 4

The student will apply critical-thinking skills to analyze culturally diverse written texts.

- (3.9) **Reading/comprehension.** The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently. The student is expected to
- (F) make and explain inferences from texts such as determining important ideas, causes and effects, making predictions, and drawing conclusions (1–3); and
 - (J) distinguish fact from opinion in various texts, including news stories and advertisements (3).
- (3.10) **Reading/literary response.** The student responds to various texts. The student is expected to
- (C) support interpretations or conclusions with examples drawn from text (2–3).

Objective 4—For Your Information

Items that assess the ability to read and think inferentially will require students to move beyond their basic understanding of a text to demonstrate a deeper, more complete understanding of what they’ve read. These types of items can take many forms; for example, they may ask students to draw a conclusion, make a reasonable prediction, understand the relationship between two parts of a text, understand how a text relates to their own lives, or understand the deeper meanings implied by a text.

To distinguish a fact from an opinion, students must be able to recognize when an author is using opinions or persuasive techniques to influence the thinking or actions of readers or when an author is merely presenting facts. Fact/opinion items will be assessed only in expository or mixed selections in which it is clear that the author’s intent is to persuade.

Students will be required to support interpretations or conclusions with evidence from the text. Answer choices for items of this type will include either paraphrased ideas or sentences taken

verbatim from the text. However, an individual item will never mix these answer-choice options; that is, paraphrased ideas and verbatim quotes will not be combined in the same item. Answer choices using words, phrases, or sentences taken verbatim from the text will be italicized.

TAKS
GRADE 3 READING
Sample Selections and Items

P e o p l e & P l a c e s

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
SECTION B, PAGE 1

Serving the Citizens of
Forked River, New Jersey

MORE THAN A ZOO

By James Davis
DAILY SUN WRITER

1 Popcorn Park is not like most zoos. It is a very special place. This zoo gives assistance to animals in need. Workers at the zoo care for hurt or sick animals. They return some of these animals to their natural homes. Those animals that cannot live on their own stay at Popcorn Park Zoo.

2 This unusual place was not originally a zoo. At first it was called the Forked River Animal Care Center. The workers there took care of lost or unwanted cats and dogs. Today the center is part of the zoo, but now many other kinds of animals are helped there, too.



This is Sonny in his new home at Popcorn Park Zoo.

3 The changes to the center began in 1977 when a raccoon needed help. One of its front paws had been badly hurt. The workers cared for the animal. Finally it was better, but it could not

care for itself. The raccoon was allowed to live at the center. Then a hurt deer was brought to the center for help. It, too, stayed at the center after it got well.

4 Once people heard about the wonderful work being done at the center, they began taking all kinds of hurt or homeless animals there. Soon the center was no longer just a home for cats and dogs. So many animals were living at the center that it became more like a zoo. It was time for a new name.

5 Popcorn Park Zoo got its funny name because many of the animals there like to eat popcorn made without oil or salt. The popcorn is sold at the zoo to help make money to care for the animals.

People buy the popcorn to feed the animals as a treat.

Continued on next page

More Than a Zoo continued

6 Popcorn Park Zoo now takes care of more than 200 kinds of animals. Tigers, lions, monkeys, and bears live there. The zoo is also home to squirrels, birds, and many other animals. Just like people, each animal at the zoo has its own name and its own story.

7 One of the zoo's most interesting animals is Sonny the elephant. When he was young, Sonny lived in a small zoo. Then he grew to be over 10 feet tall. He became too big for his small home. Popcorn Park Zoo was the perfect place for him to live. Sonny's new, larger home fits him much better. Now he has lots of room to move around.

8 Like Sonny, almost all the animals at Popcorn Park came to the zoo because they needed a new home. Foxy Loxy is a red fox that was rescued when he was just a baby. Tina the tiger was once with a circus, and Lacey the lion used to perform in a magic act. Dudley Morris is a potbellied pig that grew too big for his old home.

9 Many of the animals live freely at the zoo. Some of the gentler ones, such as goats, sheep, geese, and deer, walk among the visitors who come to see them. Others are kept in large closed-in areas. These areas are almost like their natural homes. All the animals at the zoo get lots of care and love.

***Popcorn Park Zoo is in Forked River, New Jersey.
The zoo is open every day and welcomes visitors.***

- 1 Paragraph 7 is mostly about —
- where Sonny lived when he was young
 - how Sonny got his name
 - why Sonny came to Popcorn Park Zoo
 - what Sonny does each day

Objective 1

- 2 In paragraph 2, which words help the reader know what originally means?
- unusual place*
 - at first*
 - took care of*
 - lost or unwanted*

Objective 1

3 Look at these pictures of a hurt raccoon.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



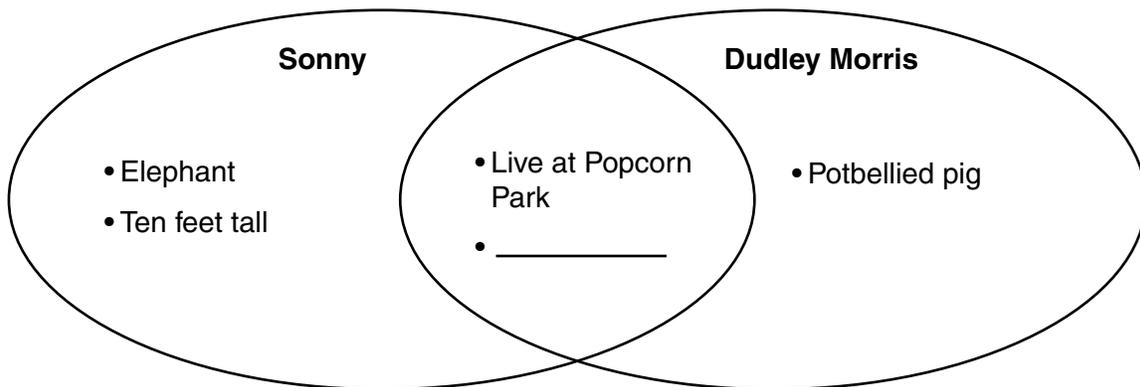
Picture 4

Which picture is most like the raccoon described in paragraph 3?

- Picture 1
- Picture 2
- Picture 3
- Picture 4

Objective 1

4 Look at the diagram about Sonny and Dudley Morris. Answer the question that follows.



Which of the following goes in the blank?

- Are raccoons
- Grew too big for their homes
- Were in the circus
- Had injured feet

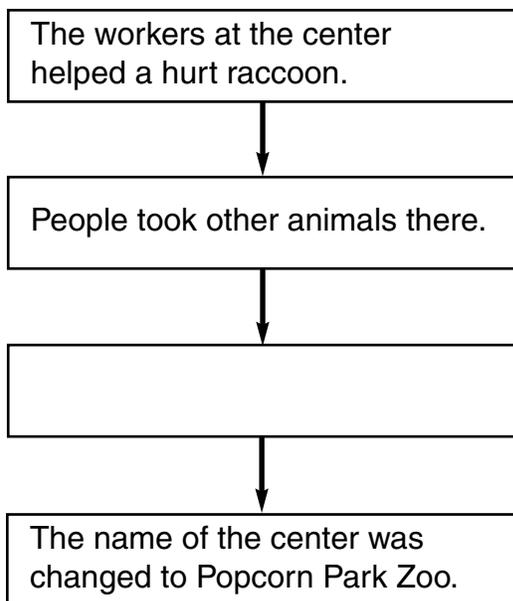
Objective 3

5 What is the title of this article?

- People and Places
- The *Daily Sun*
- Daily Sun* Writer
- More Than a Zoo

Objective 3

6 Read the chart below. It shows the order in which some events happened in the story.



Which of these belongs in the empty box?

- The changes to the center began in 1977.
- The raccoon began living at the center.
- The animal center became more like a zoo.
- The center took care of unwanted cats and dogs.

Objective 3

7 Which statement is true of most of the animals at Popcorn Park Zoo?

- They once had a problem.
- They are gentle.
- They cannot walk very well.
- They came to the zoo as babies.

Objective 4

8 Which sentence from the story shows the reader that Popcorn Park Zoo is taking good care of the animals?

- The changes to the center began in 1977 when a raccoon needed help.*
- Once people heard about the wonderful work being done at the center, they began taking all kinds of hurt or homeless animals there.*
- People buy the popcorn to feed the animals as a treat.*
- Some of the gentler ones, such as goats, sheep, geese, and deer, walk among the visitors who come to see them.*

Objective 4

- 9** Why are some animals allowed to walk among the visitors?
- Visitors like these animals the best.
 - These animals do not eat popcorn.
 - Visitors might want to adopt these animals.
 - These animals will not hurt the visitors.

Objective 4

Daisy the Otter

1 “This is Daisy,” Ricardo began. He held up a picture from the newspaper for the class to see. “Daisy is the new otter at the zoo. The zoo built a special area for her. It has lots of trees and plants. It even has a pond so she can swim. Daisy also has a slide. She can go down it into the water.”

2 The students studied the picture of Daisy.

3 “The newspaper story tells a lot about otters,” he continued. “There are river otters and sea otters. They are playful animals. Their favorite games are sliding and hide-and-seek.”

4 Ricardo stopped. His classmates wanted to know more.

5 “Otters have webbed feet like a duck’s feet,” Ricardo continued. “They can swim very fast. When mother otters teach their babies to swim, the babies sometimes resist. They squeal and don’t want to go into the water. Their mothers lead the way. Soon the babies are swimming and playing with the other otters.”

6 When Ricardo finished, several students raised their hand. “Can we see Daisy?” they asked. Mr. Chen, their teacher, had the same idea. He planned a trip to the zoo so everyone could see Daisy.

7 For the next two weeks, the class studied and learned about zoo animals. They checked out books from the school library and drew pictures of the different animals.

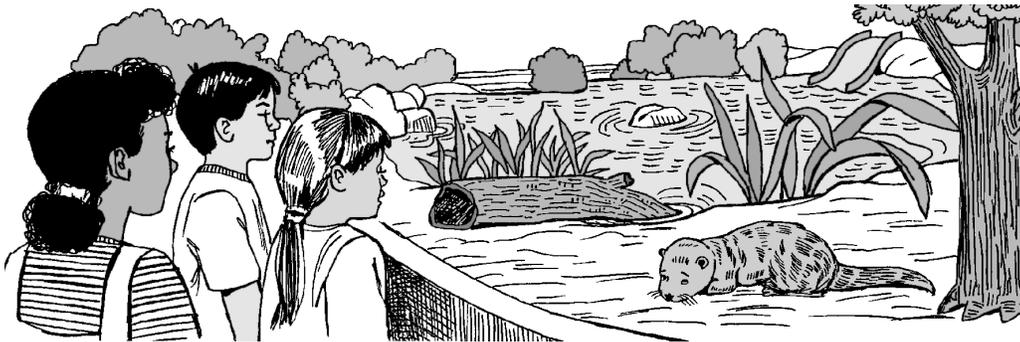
8 Finally the day of the trip came. The class boarded the bus, carrying their lunches. As they rode to the zoo, they chattered noisily. They could hardly wait to see Daisy and the other animals.

9 Ms. Wells, one of the zookeepers, met the class at the gate. She led them around the zoo.

10 “Very few of our animals are in cages,” Ms. Wells stated. “Most of them are in fenced areas. These areas look like the animals’ homes in the wild.”

11 First the students walked by the lion den. Two lions were napping under a shade tree. Next the class saw the polar bears. There were two bears in a large rocky area with a big pool. Both bears were swimming. When they got out of the pool, they shook themselves. Drops of water sprayed everywhere.

12 The students finally reached Daisy’s area. Her home looked like a playground. However, Daisy was not playing. She just lay there, looking sad.



13 “Is Daisy sick?” Shamika asked.

14 “No,” Ms. Wells said. “She doesn’t have a friend to play with. The zoo spent a lot of money to build Daisy’s home. There wasn’t enough money left for two otters. So we’re saving money to buy Daisy an otter friend.”

15 The class thought about what Ms. Wells had said. They thought a life without friends would be very sad.

16 “First we have to find another otter,” Ms. Wells continued. “There is also the expense of bringing the other otter here to the zoo. We don’t have enough money to pay for it right now.”

17 The trip to the zoo had been fun, but the students were quiet on the bus ride back to school. As soon as they returned to their classroom, Ricardo raised his hand.

- 18 “Is there something we can do to help Daisy?” he asked.
- 19 Shamika raised her hand, too. “We could have a bake sale,” she said. “We could bake cookies and brownies and bring them to school. Then we could sell them. We could give the money to the zoo. Maybe then the zoo could buy Daisy a friend.”
- 20 The students all wanted to help. So Mr. Chen got permission to hold a bake sale. On Friday the class brought cookies and brownies to school. Some even brought whole cakes and pies. By the end of the day, the class had raised more than \$300!
- 21 Two weeks later the students received a note of appreciation. The zoo thanked them for their help. The note also said that the zoo had found a friend for Daisy. The new otter would arrive soon. The class was invited to visit the zoo again. They could hardly wait to see Daisy again and meet her new friend.

10 Which of the following is the best summary of the story?

- Mr. Chen takes the students on a trip to the zoo. They meet Daisy and learn more about her. Though her home looks fun, Daisy is sad because she does not have a friend to play with.
- Ricardo's class has a bake sale and earns money to buy an otter for the zoo. The zoo thanks the students for their help and invites them to visit Daisy and the other animals again.
- Students spend two weeks studying about different types of animals. Then they go to the zoo to learn more about the animals. Students see lions, polar bears, and an otter named Daisy.
- Ricardo tells his class about an otter named Daisy. The students go to the zoo to visit Daisy. When they learn she is lonely, the students raise more than \$300 to help the zoo buy another otter.

Objective 1

11 Read the meanings below for the word raise.

raise ('rāz) *verb*

1. to lift; to move higher
2. to help grow
3. to take care of
4. to collect; to earn

Which meaning best fits the way raised is used in paragraph 20?

- Meaning 1
- Meaning 2
- Meaning 3
- Meaning 4

Objective 1

12 In paragraph 16, the word expense means —

- cost
- reason
- idea
- chance

Objective 1

13 Which of these best describes how the students feel on the way to the zoo?

- Amused
- Afraid
- Excited
- Bored

Objective 2

14 Why are the students quiet during the trip back to school?

- They are worried about Daisy.
- They are eating their lunch.
- They are planning the next trip.
- They are thinking about the polar bears.

Objective 2

15 What is the main problem in the story?

- The zoo has to keep many of the animals in cages.
- The students cannot go on a trip to the zoo.
- The zoo does not have the money to buy another otter.
- The students are not allowed to talk on the bus.

Objective 2

16 After listening to Ricardo's report, the class went to the zoo to —

- study the plants and trees
- meet the otter they had heard about
- bring food to the animals
- meet Ms. Wells, the zookeeper

Objective 2

17 What happens after Mr. Chen plans a class trip to the zoo?

- The class learns about different zoo animals.
- The class reads a newspaper story about Daisy.
- Ricardo shows the class a picture of Daisy.
- The zoo gets a new otter named Daisy.

Objective 3

18 This story was written mainly to —

- show how otters play with each other
- tell how a class helped an otter at a zoo
- explain what an otter is and where it lives
- tell about Mr. Chen's favorite animal

Objective 3

