SUNY-TEN Presentation on the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST) Reading & Writing Competencies with Close Reading

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Disclaimer

▸ This webinar will be recorded for future review.

▸ This webinar is informational in preparing you for the Academic Literacy Skills Test certification exam. The ALST is a new exam and therefore scoring, test content and test design is subject to change.

▸ Information is based on the following:

▸ **ALST Test Framework- March 2014**

http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/PDFs/NY202_OBJ_FINAL.pdf

▸ **ALST ample Selected-Response Questions**

http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/STUDYGUIDE/NY_SG_SRI_202.htm

▸ **ALST Sample Constructed-Response Items**

http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/STUDYGUIDE/NY_SG_CRI_202.htm

▸ **NY202 ALST Rubric**

http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/STUDYGUIDE/PDFs/NY202_Rubric.pdf

▸ **How to Read Your Score Report for ALST**

http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/pdfs/NYSTCE_ISR_back_ALST.pdf

Purpose & Agenda

Purpose of this webnar is to provide you with the tools to prepare for the ALST:

▸ Deconstruct the ALST

▸ Close Reading Approach

▸ Reading Competencies

▸ Writing Competencies

▸ Close Reading for the Writing Test

▸ ALST Sample Test Questions

▸ How to prepare for the ALST

▸ Test Taking Strategies

ALST Test Framework

▸ The New York State educator has the academic literacy skills necessary to teach effectively in New York State public schools.

▸ The teacher is capable of proficient, close, and critical reading that reflects wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with a range of high-quality, complex informational and literary texts.

▸ The teacher demonstrates command of evidence found in texts and uses cogent reasoning to analyze and synthesize ideas.

▸ The teacher produces complex and nuanced writing by choosing words, information, and structure deliberately for a given task, purpose, and audience.

ALST Test Design

▸ The selected-response items (40 reading multiple choice questions) are designed with the expectation of response time up to 110 minutes.

▸ There are two focused constructed response items (150-200 words). Each focused constructed-response item is designed with the expectation of a response up to 20 minute each. Total 40 minutes.

▸ The extended writing assignment (400-600 words) is designed with the expectation of a response up to 60 minutes.

▸ The total testing time is 210 minutes

▸ Passing score is 520/600

Test Design Percentage

Competency	Selected -----	Response	Constructed --	Response
	Approximate Number of Items	Approximate Percentage of Test Score	Number of Items	Approximate Percentage of Test Score
Reading- 0001	40	40%	------	
Writing to Source- 0002			2 focused Response 1 extended response	60%
Total	40	40%	3	60%

Performance Index

Performance Index **Definitions**

- ++++ Performance on the skills and knowledge is well above the level represented by the minimum passing score.

- +++ Performance on the skills and knowledge is just at or above the level represented by the minimum passing score.

- ++ Performance on the skills and knowledge is just below the level represented by the minimum passing score.

- + Performance on the skills and knowledge is well below the level represented by the minimum passing score.

- **TEST: 202 Academic Literacy Skills Test TOTAL SCORE: 492**

- **STATUS: Did Not Pass MINIMUM PASSING SCORE: 520**

- **Selected-Response**

- 001: Reading +++

- **Constructed-Response**

- 002: Writing to Sources ++

ALST Rubric 1 Extended Response Item

▸ **Performance Characteristics for Extended-Response Item**

The following characteristics guide the scoring of responses to the extended-response assignment.

▸ **CONTENT AND ANALYSIS**

The extent to which the response conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics and sources

▸ **COMMAND OF EVIDENCE**

The extent to which the response presents evidence from the provided sources to support analysis and synthesis

▸ **COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE**

The extent to which the response logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language

▸ **CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS**

The extent to which the response demonstrates command of the conventions of standard written English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Score Scale for Extended-Response Item

Scores will be assigned to the response to the extended-response item according to the following score scale.

Score Point-Score Point Description

4- The "4" response demonstrates a strong command of argumentative writing skills.

3- The "3" response demonstrates a satisfactory command of argumentative writing skills.

2- The "2" response demonstrates limited argumentative writing skills.

1- The "1" response demonstrates a lack of argumentative writing skills.

U- The response is unscorable because it is unrelated to the assigned topic or off-task, unreadable, written in a language other than English, or contains an insufficient amount of original work to score.

B- No response.

ALST Rubric 2 Focused Response Item

Performance Characteristics for Focused-Response Items

The following characteristics guide the scoring of responses to each focused-response assignment.

▸ **CONTENT**

The extent to which the response meets the requirements of the assignment

▸ **ANALYSIS, EVALUATION, AND INTEGRATION**

The extent to which the response demonstrates understanding of and engagement with the provided sources

▸ **COMMAND OF EVIDENCE**

The extent to which the response presents evidence from the provided sources to support analysis and synthesis

▸ **COHERENCE AND CLARITY**

The extent to which the response is focused and clear

Score Scale for Focused-Response Items

Scores will be assigned to each response to the focused-response items according to the following score scale.

Score Point-Score Point Description

4- The "4" response demonstrates a strong command of relevant skills.

3- The "3" response demonstrates a satisfactory command of relevant skills.

2-The "2" response demonstrates limited relevant skills.

1-The "1" response demonstrates a lack of relevant skills.

U-The response is unscorable because it is unrelated to the assigned topic or off-task, unreadable, written in a language other than English, or contains an insufficient amount of original work to score.

B-No response.

Reading Competencies
(ALST Test Framework, 2014, pp 202-2- 2-2-3)

Reading Competencies Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators are the observable and measurable aspects of teaching practice under each standard.

- a. determines what a text says explicitly
- b. makes logical inferences based on textual evidence
- c. draws conclusions based on textual evidence
- d. determines the central ideas or themes of a text
- e. analyzes the development of central ideas or themes of a text
- f. recognizes accurate summaries of key supporting details and ideas in a text
- g. analyzes how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text

Reading Competencies Performance Indicators

- h. interprets words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings

- i. analyzes how specific word choices shape meaning and tone in a text

- j. analyzes how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of a text relate to each other and the whole

- k. determines an author's attitude, opinion, or point of view

- l. assesses how point of view and purpose shape the content and style of a text

Close Reading

Close Reading Approach

What Is Close Reading?

Essentially, close reading means reading to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension.

- What is the author *telling* me here?
- Are there any hard or important *words*?
- What does the author want me to *understand*?
- How does the author play with *language* to add to meaning?

Boyles, N. (Dec 2012-Jan 2013). Closing in on close reading. *ASCD Educational Leadership*, 70(4), 36-41.

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec12/vol70/num04/closing-in-on-close-Reading.aspx

PARCC Close Reading

Close, analytic reading stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly and examining its meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention on the text itself empowers students to understand the central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences; the order in which sentences unfold; and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole.

▸ Close, analytic reading entails the careful gathering of observations about a text and careful consideration about what those observations taken together add up to — from the smallest linguistic matters to larger issues of overall understanding and judgment.(PARCC, 2012, p. 7).

▸ Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. (2012). *PARCC model content frameworks: English language arts/literacy grades 3–11*. Retrieved March 31, 2015 from www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCCMCFELALiteracyAugust2012_FINAL.pdf

Close Reading for the ALST Reading Competencies

- ‣ You will have to read the selected text and determine the central idea for each paragraph.

- ‣ You will need to understand how the central idea from one paragraph overlaps into the next paragraph.

- ‣ You response to each question needs to be directly based on the text.

Test questions and answer are from the
ALST Study Guide (2014, pp. 10-14).

Close Reading Activity

▶ ALST Close Reading for the Reading Competency

▶ Direction: Read the following paragraphs and annotate the central idea of each.

1. Central Idea_____

2. Central Idea_____

3. Central Idea_____

4. Central Idea_____

5. Central Idea_____

6. Central Idea_____

Review of Central Ideas from Reading Text

1. Gertrude Stein left behind her American life when she decided to pursue her fascination with the "collision between old and new" models of living in Europe.

2. What most interested Stein was the "collision between old and new" models of living. By juxtaposing the "balls, carriages, and Victorian sensibilities" of old Europe with the cultural innovation of modernist artists and writers.

3. For Stein there was clash between a traditional way of life and the new sensibilities that found expression in the work of modernist writers and artists.

4. Stein recognized Cubism—a cultural expression that epitomized modernism—in the instruments of the war.

5. World War I had forced asunder the social order that had defined the prewar period. In Stein's view, the rupture left Hemingway and other people his age adrift.

Reading Sample Test Q 1

1. In Paragraph 1, the repetition of the phrase "well-rounded, prosperous" emphasizes

A.   the sophistication of Stein's family

B.   the predictability of the life Stein rejected

C.   the flowering of Stein's creative powers

D.   the contempt for convention Stein embodied

Q. 1 Answer

▸ **Correct Response: B.** This item requires examinees to analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. In Paragraph 1, the author's repetition of the phrase "well-rounded, prosperous" focuses attention on the stable, orderly world that Stein left behind when she decided to pursue her fascination with the "collision between old and new" models of living in Europe.

2. In Paragraph 2, the author develops the idea that "Europe was where [Stein] was most likely to see what interested her most" primarily by

A.   contrasting "the classical European way of life" with "the dances of Nijinsky, the sentences of Joyce, the paintings of Braque"

B.   describing Paris in terms of "the speed of its trains" and "the hustle of immigrants"

C.   stating that Stein "began to collect great talent: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso"

D.   identifying Stein as "a woman alive to the great theme of her day"

Q. 2 Answer

▶ **Correct Response: A.** This item requires examinees to determine the central ideas of a text and analyze their development. What most interested Stein was the "collision between old and new" models of living. By juxtaposing the "balls, carriages, and Victorian sensibilities" of old Europe with the cultural innovation of modernist artists and writers such as Nijinsky, Joyce, and Braque, the author develops the idea that Europe was the epicenter of this collision.

Reading Sample Test Q3

3. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 2:

▸ It was that her way of thinking and seeing, her curiosity about the collision of old and new, was perfectly tuned for a moment when Europe was, cataclysmically, struggling with that collision.

▸ Which phrase is closest in meaning to the word "cataclysmically" as it is used in the sentence above?

A.   with furious upheaval

B.   with unrelenting violence

C.   with reckless abandon

D.   with shocking suddenness

Q. 3 Answer

- **Correct Response: A.** This item requires examinees to interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text. As it is used in this sentence, the word cataclysmically refers to the cultural upheaval resulting from the clash between a traditional way of life and the new sensibilities that found expression in the work of modernist writers and artists.

4. The author's assertion in Paragraph 3 that the encounter with a military convoy was the moment Stein "felt a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment most clearly" is best supported by which excerpt from the passage?

A. It *looked* different: the sides of the trucks and the cabs had been splotched unevenly with different colors of paint.

B. The two of them froze. Stein wrote later, "I very well remember being with Picasso on the Boulevard Raspail when the first camouflaged truck passed."

C. "It was at night, we had heard of camouflage but we had not yet seen it and Picasso amazed looked at it and then cried out, yes it is we who made it, that is Cubism!"

D. This is quite a scene—the saturnine Stein, forty years old, and the diminutive thirty-three-year-old Spanish genius, exulting together in a fresh aesthetic surprise of the Great War.

Q 4 Answer

▶ **Correct Response: C.** This item requires examinees to determine the central ideas of a text and analyze their development. World War I was the defining event of Stein's historical moment. When she recognized Cubism—a cultural expression that epitomized modernism—in the instruments of the war, Stein had reason to feel "a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment."

Reading Sample Test Q5

5. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:

"You are, all of you, a lost generation," Stein told Hemingway when he showed up in Paris after the war.

The quotation in this sentence is most closely connected with which idea in Paragraph 4?

A. the emergence of an aesthetic associated with World War I

B. the convergence of expatriates in postwar Paris

C. the staggering casualties among young men during World War I

D. the complete rupture of the prewar social order

Q. 5 Answer

- **Correct Response: D.** This item requires examinees to analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole. The author uses Stein's famous declaration that Hemingway's was "a lost generation" to underscore the idea, also expressed in Paragraph 4, that World War I had forced asunder the social order that had defined the prewar period. In Stein's view, the rupture left Hemingway and other people his age adrift.

Writing Competencies
(ALST Test Framework, 2014, pp. 202-3-202-4).

Writing Competencies & Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators are the observable and measurable aspects demonstrated in your focused and extended responses.

- a. delineates and evaluates the argument and specific claims in a text

- b. evaluates the validity of reasoning used to support arguments and specific claims in a text

- c. evaluates the relevance and sufficiency of evidence used to support arguments and specific claims in a text

- d. evaluates the credibility, objectivity, and reliability of an author or sources used by an author

- e. analyzes how multiple texts address similar themes or topics to compare the approaches the authors take

- f. integrates and evaluates content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively

- g. introduces a precise, knowledgeable claim

Writing Competencies- Performance Indicators

- h. uses valid reasoning to support the claim

- i. anticipates and addresses a possible counterclaim

- j. chooses relevant and sufficient evidence from multiple texts to support the claim and integrates the information while avoiding plagiarism

- k. establishes and maintains an appropriate style and tone

- l. uses transitional words and phrases and varies syntax to link sections of the text and to clarify relationships between ideas

- m. produces a conclusion that follows from and supports the claim

- n. chooses precise language for clarity and rhetorical effect

- o. uses correct standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Close Reading for ALST Writing Competencies

For the ALST you are required to read, analyze, write and interpret the presented text and graphs.

▸ You are asked to read and summarize the two opposing articles.

▸ You are asked to analyze and interpret the graphs and summarize the graphs with one of the opposing articles.

▸ You then asked to synthesize all three: the graphs and the two opposing articles into an interpreted summary, and you must choose a side.

▸ All supportive claims must come directly from the text and graphs.

Focused Constructed Response & Extended Response Graphic

Passage A

Assignment 1

Passage B

Assignment 1

Passage B

Assignment 2

Graphics

Assignment 2

Passage A, B & Graphics

Assignment 3

Focused Constructed Response 1

▸ **Assignment 1:**

▸ **Use Passages A and B to respond to the following assignment.**

In a response of approximately 100–200 words, identify which author presents a more compelling argument. Your response must:

▸ outline the specific claims made in each passage;

▸ evaluate the validity, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence used to support each claim; and

▸ include examples from both passages to support your evaluation.

Writing Activity

▸ Directions:

▸ Assignment 1

▸ In 20 words or less outline the claim for Passage A

▸ In 20 words or less outline the claim for Passage B

▸ Assignment 2

▸ In 20 words or less outline the claim from Passage B

▸ Use the graphs to support your claim from Passage B

▸ Assignment 3

▸ Take a position and use supporting information from Passages A, B and the graphs.

▸ Bring in a counterclaim

Focused Constructed Response 1 Answer

- The author of Passage A contends that increased ethanol production promotes economic growth and makes the United States more energy independent. He projects the likely effects of increased biofuels production on the economy and oil imports but does not furnish any information to support these estimates (ALST Study Guide, 2014, p.5).

- The main argument in Passage B is that increased diversion of corn to ethanol production will drive up the price of corn. The author contends that the diversion of corn to fuel has already reduced corn supplies for food and fuel with a corresponding increase in corn prices (ALST Study Guide, 2014, p. 5).

Focused Constructed Response 2

- **Assignment 2:**

- **Use Passage B and the Graphic to respond to the following assignment.**

In a response of approximately 100–200 words, explain how the information presented in the pie charts can be integrated with the author's central argument about the impact of converting corn to ethanol in Passage B. Your response must:

- explain how specific information presented in the pie charts either supports or counters the author's claims, reasoning, and evidence with regard to the conversion of corn to ethanol; and

- include examples from the passage and the pie charts to support your explanation.

United States Department of Agriculture
Ethanol's Role in Gasoline and Corn Markets

2005/2006 Relationships

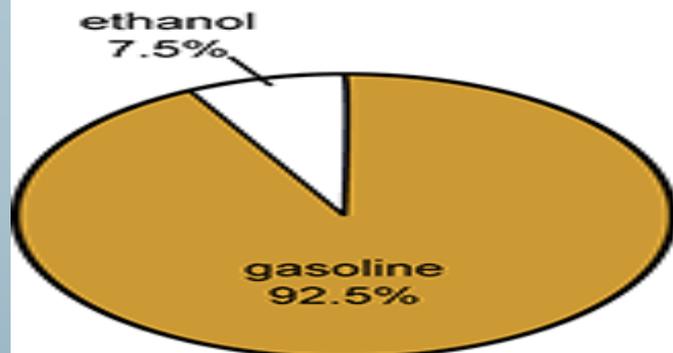Ethanol use is small relative to overall gasoline use.
ethanol 3.5%
gasoline 96.5%
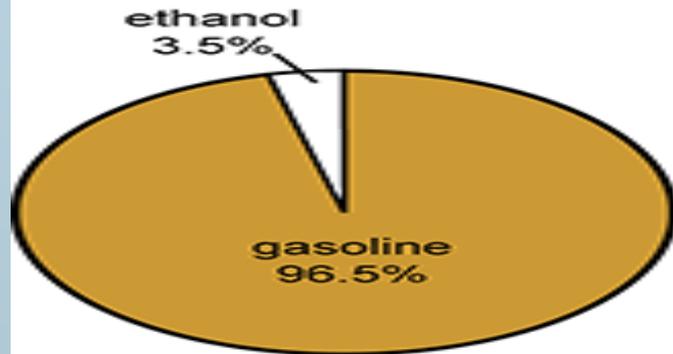
Ethanol accounts for a large and growing share of corn use.
ethanol 14%
FSI less ethanol 12%
feed and residual 55%
exports 19%
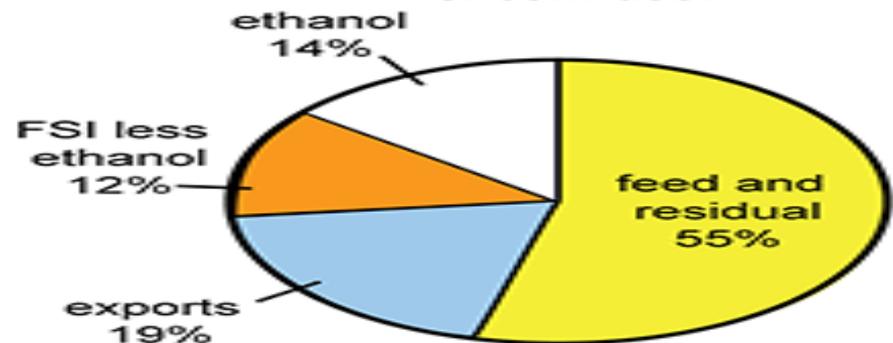
2016/2017 Relationships (projected)

Ethanol use is still small relative to overall gasoline use.
ethanol 7.5%
gasoline 92.5%

Ethanol accounts for over 30 percent of corn use.
ethanol 31%
feed and residual 42%
FSI less ethanol 11%
exports 16%
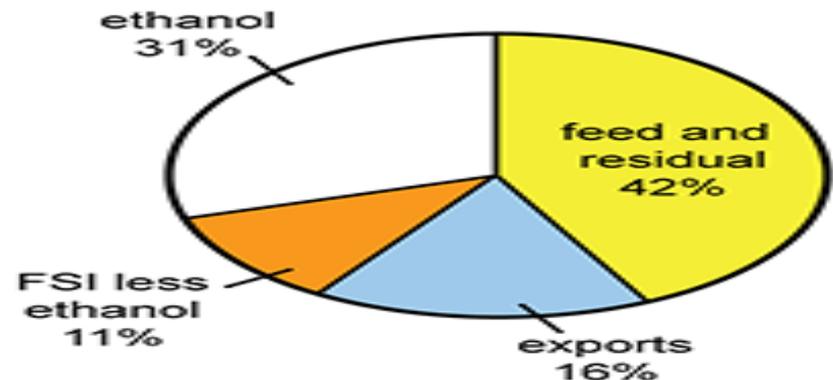
Note: FSI = food, seed, and industrial

Westcott, P. C. (2007). *Ethanol expansion in the United States: How will the agricultural sector adjust?* (USDA Outlook No. FDS-07D01). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Focused Constructed Response 2 Answer

▸ Information presented in the pie charts provides strong support for the argument presented in Passage B. It shows that, in 2005/2006, about one-seventh of the corn grown in the United States was already being devoted to ethanol production; it further estimates that the amount of corn diverted to fuel will more than double by 2016/2017, at which time nearly a third of all U.S. corn will be turned into ethanol (ALST Study Guide, 2014, p. 6).

Focused Constructed Response & Extended Response Graphic

Passage A
Assignment 1

Passage B
Assignment 1

Passage B
Assignment 2

Graphics
Assignment 2

Passage A, B &
Graphics
Assignment 3

Extended Writing Assignment

- **Assignment 3:**

- **Use Passages A and B and the Graphic to respond to the following assignment.**

- Should the production of corn ethanol in the United States be expanded or reduced?

In an essay in your own words of approximately 400–600 words, present a fully developed argument that introduces and supports a claim assessing the benefits and risks of U.S. corn ethanol production. Your argument must:

- include a knowledgeable claim that demonstrates an understanding of the topic;

- use valid reasoning that draws on and extends the arguments in the sources provided;

- support your claim with relevant and sufficient evidence from all three sources; and

- anticipate and address at least one counterclaim.

Extended Writing Assignment Answer

▸ Devoting an ever larger percentage of our nation's corn harvest to the production of ethanol will do very little to address our long-term needs for energy security. The effects of such a decision on food prices, however, could be nothing short of disastrous.

▸ As enthusiastic as many supporters are about the development of ethanol as a gasoline additive, the projected benefits of increased ethanol production are minimal. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that the amount of ethanol use relative to overall gasoline use would increase from its 2006 level of 3.5% to only 7.5% by 2017, despite what the study expected to be a massive diversion of corn from food to fuel production (ASLT Study Guide, 2014, p. 6).

How to prepare for the ALST

Give yourself time to prepare:

▸ Know your learning style for retaining information for a short time.

▸ What is your strength? Is it reading or writing, or is it both?

▸ Use close reading when practicing with reading and writing samples.

▸ Practicing writing from 12th grade reading and writing samples or old ELA/ English Regents exams.

▸ Build your reading speed using 12th grade reading samples old ELA/ English Regents exams.

▸ Practice using the ALST Sample test in pairs or groups with other students to share ideas.

Test Taking Strategies

▸ Do not answer any question until you have fully read the passage and all questions first.

▸ Often for the reading section the answer is in the question.

▸ Pace yourself and start with what you do well, reading or writing.

▸ Limit written responses only to the prescribed requirements 100-200 words or less than 600 words.

▸ Become familiar & comfortable with the directions & computer format of the test.

▸ <u>Only respond to information in the text based on the text. Do not bring in outside information or prior knowledge.</u>

This concludes our webinar
Thank You

Good Luck