

READING TEST TOPICS for ELEMENTARY WEST-E:

Synthetic v. analytic v. inductive phonics: Synthetic phonics refers to a part-to-whole model of instruction in which blending of separate phonemes is emphasized, followed by articulation of a phoneme in the initial, medial and final position. Analytic is a whole-to-part model in which the focus is more reading by onset and rime, or chunking. The child is taught to read the beginning and end of the word and then the middle. The focus is on segmentation. Inductive phonics emphasizes practice with blending of phonemes until the child is able to recognize the phonic generalization at work and apply it independently. In other words, the child figures out the sounding-out rule.

Diphthongs: A diphthong is a glide in which the first vowel sound is elongated into the second = /ou/, /aw/, /ow/

Digraphs: Occurs when two letters, read together, make a single, unique sound. Examples include: /th/, /sh/, /wh/

Schwa: A vowel sound in an unaccented syllable in a multisyllabic word. The vowel says /uh/.

Schema Theory: We tend to associate schema theory with the work of Jean Piaget, although there are many perspectives on schemata and their nature and function. Regardless, schema theory is a way of understanding how we categorize information or impose a mental framework on information to assist in understanding, retention and retrieval of that data. In a simple sense, the theory says that we have mental frameworks (file cabinets) where we store information as we attain it. The files are organized in some way that is meaningful for each of us and allows us to not only store, but to comprehend and retrieve the data more easily. Each time we are confronted with a new piece of data, we compare it to our existing files and, if it fits somewhere, in it goes (accommodation). If it does not, we have to alter our framework (files) to make it fit and this is learning (adaptation).

Story Grammar: This refers to the internal structure of a story meaning the setting (time and place), the introduction of the characters (main, secondary, protagonist, antagonist, round or flat), narrator (first person, second person, third person, third person omniscient), the conflict (man v. man, man v. self, man v. nature), the plot sequence to the climax, the resolution, the theme and the moral. The more a child has strong story grammar, the better their comprehension of narratives will tend to be because they can use their knowledge to predict what's coming and they can use it restructure the story during a retell.

Caldecott and Newbery: The Caldecott is an award given for outstanding illustration in children's literature and was first awarded in 1938; the Newbery is given for an outstanding contribution to American literature for kids beginning in 1922.

Use of literature circles: This gets covered in children’s literature but, for the test, the purpose is to motivate students through social sharing of literature and to encourage more critical and evaluative reading through discussion. In a literature circle, the students may or may not be assigned specific roles or tasks, but they are grouped by a common book and they read and discuss it together at regular intervals to promote deeper comprehension and appreciation of the text.

Critical/Inferential/Literal/Analytic/Evaluative Reading:

Literal: At the literal level, comprehension is seen as focusing only on information as it is explicitly stated in the text. In other words, a person reading at this level will retrieve only exact details or ideas as they are expressed by the author.

Inferential: At this level, the reader uses personal experience to interpret text by making personal connections or using prior knowledge.

Critical: At this level, the reader is willing to engage in questioning the validity/style/purpose of the author or content through self-generated questioning, using additional research to find out more about the topic, reading rebuttals and so on.

Analytic: An analytic reader is one who takes apart a piece to examine its structure and the relationship between the parts. So, if you’re talking about a story, this person would look at the quality of the piece in terms of story grammar and how well each element of story grammar is explored by the author. If you are talking expository, it would mean knowing the 11 organization patterns and identifying which is being used and examining each element for completeness.

Evaluative: At this level, the reader forms a value judgment about the piece in terms of how well it’s written, if it was enjoyed, and why or why not.

Metacognition and think aloud strategy: Metacognition is the act of thinking about, or becoming aware of, one’s own thinking. The purpose is to develop self-monitoring skills. There are strands of metacognitive awareness or skills that teachers can promote in their students. These include: self-generated questions, prediction, summarizing, visualization, compare-contrast, and evaluation. The think aloud strategy, when a teacher reads to the class and then thinks out loud about what is happening, what might happen next, what the author’s purpose is, whether the writing is clear or could be improved, helps students to understand how to apply metacognitive thinking and helps them see how doing so assists in deeper comprehension of text. This strategy is a form of modeling in which the teacher allows the child “into his/her head” so that it is possible to “see and hear” what a master reader does.

Expressive v. receptive language which are speaking and writing focused and which are listening/reading focused: Expressive language is the word bank you have for communicating your ideas verbally. It is speaking and writing focused. Receptive vocabulary is the word bank you have for understanding others’ messages. It is reading and listening focused

Alphabetic principle: The alphabet is a man-made system for communicating messages in writing. Because it is man-made, the symbols we use are also arbitrary, meaning anything could have been used for the sound of /a/. As a result, the ability to learn the alphabetic code (otherwise known as the ability to associate sounds with their correct symbols) is not natural to children, it must be learned. For some kids that happens through repetitive exposure to print. For others, it must be directly and repeatedly taught. The principle is that for each letter, there is one or more sounds associated that, if we learn the relationship, will help us “read” words. Most kids learn the principle, or “crack the code”, by the end of first grade if not sooner.