Sample Multiple-Choice Questions - RICA Written Examination

1. Compared with standardized reading assessments, one important advantage of informal reading assessments is that they allow the teacher to:

   A. characterize a student's reading proficiency in terms of typical grade-level performance.
   
   B. personalize reading assessments to identify the needs of individual students.
   
   C. avoid bias in the administration and interpretation of reading assessments.
   
   D. compare the reading performance of individual students to other students in the class.

2. During class discussions about stories, Rosalinda, an English language learner, often mispronounces key words from the stories. The teacher's best response would be to:

   A. ask Rosalinda to pause and correct her pronunciation before she continues with her remarks.
   
   B. analyze Rosalinda's pronunciation patterns and plan an intervention to address her needs.
   
   C. encourage other students in the class to help Rosalinda work on pronouncing words correctly.
   
   D. write down the words and include them on a list of words for Rosalinda to practice pronouncing.

3. A kindergarten teacher could informally assess a student's phonemic awareness by asking the student to:

   A. identify the sound he/she hears at the beginning, middle, or end of a spoken word (e.g., "What sound do you hear at the end of step?").
B. listen to a tape-recorded story while looking at the book, then answer several simple questions about the story.

C. identify the letters in the alphabet that correspond to the initial consonant sounds of several familiar spoken words.

D. listen to the teacher read aloud a set of words with the same beginning sound (e.g., train, trap, trouble), then repeat the words.

4. Which of the following strategies would best help a kindergarten student with visual discrimination difficulties distinguish between frequently confused letters?

A. creating sandpaper letters that the student can trace with his/her finger while saying the letter name

B. helping the student locate the letters within the text of a favorite book

C. repeating the name of each letter several times as the student points to the letter

D. encouraging the student to observe closely as the teacher writes the letters

5. A first-grade teacher provides students with explicit, systematic phonics instruction to promote their reading development. When designing activities to teach letter-sound correspondences, the teacher should:

A. provide reading opportunities for students to practice sounds in context after studying the sounds in isolation.

B. make certain that students have mastered vowel sounds before focusing on consonants.

C. ensure that students master the spelling of practice words using the target sound before teaching a new sound.

D. include instruction in related consonant blends when introducing individual consonants.
6. Ms. Carlyle, a sixth-grade teacher, observes that several students have misspelled the word *pasteurize*. After writing *pasteurize* and *Louis Pasteur* on the blackboard, the teacher explains how Pasteur invented the process of pasteurization. Students then discuss how the word *Pasteur* relates to the word *pasteurize*. This instructional activity is likely to foster students' reading development primarily by:

A. helping students learn to use etymology to improve spelling and promote word recognition.
B. helping students improve their spelling by comparing and contrasting similar words.
C. motivating students to use orthographic patterns to expand their vocabulary knowledge.
D. motivating students to improve their spelling through the use of systematic study skills.

7. A teacher plans to assess a student's comprehension of a short story through oral retelling. After the student silently reads the story, the teacher will prompt the student's retelling by asking open-ended questions. To prepare for this assessment, the teacher reads the story carefully and composes the questions. Which of the following additional steps would be most helpful for the teacher to take before the retelling activity begins?

A. Prompt the student to recall similar tasks he or she has previously performed.
B. Prepare a checklist of the key elements that an effective retelling of this story should include.
C. Review grades earned by the student on recent tests and quizzes in language arts.
D. Remind the student to concentrate on recalling as many details as possible during the retelling.

8. When selecting texts for first graders to read in the upcoming school year, a teacher should be aware of the importance of:

A. focusing primarily on realistic texts that mirror the children's own experiences.
B. including a wide range of fiction and nonfiction
texts in a variety of genres.

C. focusing largely on simple fictional narratives such as folk and fairy tales.

D. providing students with transcripts of their own oral language as their primary reading materials.

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

Ms. Hollister's fourth-grade class is beginning a unit on deserts. She starts the unit by having the students form small groups and list everything they know about deserts. Then the whole class meets to share their lists, and Ms. Hollister asks the students to help her arrange their ideas into a web. The class's partially completed web is shown below.

![Deserts Web Diagram]

9. Creating such a web is likely to promote students' ability to retain and use information they read about a topic by:

A. encouraging students to attend to new information on the topic rather than to familiar information.

B. providing students with the vocabulary they need to make sense of their reading.

C. prompting students to assess the accuracy of their prior knowledge of the topic.

D. helping students learn to use categories to organize their thinking about the topic.
10. Ms. Hollister gives each student a copy of the web developed by the class. She could best help students make use of the web to learn and retain facts from their reading by asking them to:

A. add continuously to the web as they encounter and organize new information in their reading.
B. try to maintain a mental image of the web while they are reading on the topic.
C. review each category on the web to ensure that it is an appropriate one to have included.
D. memorize the information on the web before they begin their reading.

11. A teacher could most effectively support at-home reading by:

A. sending parents a regular newsletter describing classroom reading activities.
B. sharing with parents important articles from professional reading journals.
C. recommending books that parents would likely enjoy reading aloud to their children.
D. providing parents with periodic reports on their children’s progress in reading.

12. Which of the following activities would best help upper-elementary students who are English language learners use the intonations and rhythms of the English language when reading?

A. The teacher leads a class discussion on an age-appropriate topic, then each student reads a section of text aloud on the same topic.
B. The students record their own oral reading of a passage and then listen to the tape while silently reading the passage.
C. The teacher gives an expressive oral reading of a passage, then the students practice reading it in unison.
D. The students read aloud and then silently from
13. Structural analysis would be an especially appropriate strategy for a student to use to determine the meaning of which of the following words?

A. impassable
B. elephant
C. interim
D. examine

14. A fifth-grade teacher gives students the following sentence:

Neither walking on the beach nor running around the track cheered Danny up.

The teacher asks the students how the phrases that come just after neither and just after nor are similar. This exercise can promote students' reading comprehension by helping them:

A. distinguish between explicit and implied main ideas.
B. identify cause-effect relationships.
C. apply literal comprehension skills.
D. recognize parallel constructions.
Sample Multiple-Choice Questions - RICA Written Examination

1. Compared with standardized reading assessments, one important advantage of informal reading assessments is that they allow the teacher to:

   A. characterize a student’s reading proficiency in terms of typical grade-level performance.
   B. personalize reading assessments to identify the needs of individual students.
   C. avoid bias in the administration and interpretation of reading assessments.
   D. compare the reading performance of individual students to other students in the class.

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #1 assesses competency 1.1 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice B is correct. When teachers use informal reading assessments, they are able to create individualized assessments that focus on targeted reading skills and thus can provide substantial insight into a student’s specific reading strengths and needs. In contrast, standardized reading assessments typically test many skills at once and yield results that are more useful for obtaining a general overview of student achievement. In addition, the content of standardized reading assessments cannot be modified for individual students. Informal assessments are more useful for engaging in day-to-day instructional decision making. Answer choices A, C, and D describe benefits and features of standardized rather than informal reading assessments.

2. During class discussions about stories, Rosalinda, an English language learner, often mispronounces key words from the stories. The teacher’s best response would be to:

   A. ask Rosalinda to pause and correct her pronunciation before she continues with her remarks.
   B. analyze Rosalinda’s pronunciation patterns and plan an intervention to address her needs.
   C. encourage other students in the class to help Rosalinda work on pronouncing words correctly.
   D. write down the words and include them on a list of words for Rosalinda to practice pronouncing.

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #2 assesses competency 2.2 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice B is correct. In an effective classroom reading program, teachers must be prepared to provide students with individualized skills instruction that addresses their specific reading needs. In the situation described in the question, the student’s mispronunciations may interfere with reading development. The teacher should respond by planning and implementing an intervention specially designed to meet this student’s specific needs. Answer choices A, C, and D are not likely to be effective in addressing the student’s needs. In answer choice A,
the teacher appears to expect the student to publicly correct her own pronunciation errors. In answer choice C, the teacher places the responsibility for helping the student on classmates, who are clearly not qualified to plan and implement interventions. In answer choice D, the student is asked to correct her own pronunciation errors without benefit of teacher instruction.

3. A kindergarten teacher could informally assess a student's phonemic awareness by asking the student to:

A. identify the sound he/she hears at the beginning, middle, or end of a spoken word (e.g., "What sound do you hear at the end of step?").

B. listen to a tape-recorded story while looking at the book, then answer several simple questions about the story.

C. identify the letters in the alphabet that correspond to the initial consonant sounds of several familiar spoken words.

D. listen to the teacher read aloud a set of words with the same beginning sound (e.g., train, trap, trouble), then repeat the words.

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #3 assesses competency 3.1 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice A is correct. Phonemic awareness is the conscious awareness that words are made up of individual speech sounds (phonemes). Of the answer choices given, only choice A, in which a student identifies a sound heard at the beginning, middle, or end of a spoken word, is an appropriate assessment of phonemic awareness. Answer choice B assesses listening comprehension, answer choice C assesses knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, and answer choice D assesses auditory memory.

4. Which of the following strategies would best help a kindergarten student with visual discrimination difficulties distinguish between frequently confused letters?

A. creating sandpaper letters that the student can trace with his/her finger while saying the letter name

B. helping the student locate the letters within the text of a favorite book

C. repeating the name of each letter several times as the student points to the letter

D. encouraging the student to observe closely as the teacher writes the letters

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #4 assesses competency 4.3 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice A is correct. Multisensory techniques, such as having students trace sandpaper letters with their fingers while saying the corresponding letter names, can help students recognize letter shapes and learn the names of letters. These techniques have been shown to be effective in working with students with visual discrimination problems that
interfere with their ability to distinguish between particular letters. The activities described in answer choices B, C, and D would be less effective because they provide fewer opportunities for the student to practice multisensory techniques.

5. A first-grade teacher provides students with explicit, systematic phonics instruction to promote their reading development. When designing activities to teach letter-sound correspondences, the teacher should:

   A. provide reading opportunities for students to practice sounds in context after studying the sounds in isolation.

   B. make certain that students have mastered vowel sounds before focusing on consonants.

   C. ensure that students master the spelling of practice words using the target sound before teaching a new sound.

   D. include instruction in related consonant blends when introducing individual consonants.

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #5 assesses competency 5.2 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice A is correct. A key principle of reading programs that provide explicit, systematic phonics instruction is to have beginning readers first learn specific letter-sound correspondences in isolation and then practice the sounds they have learned when reading decodable text. Providing students with opportunities to apply knowledge in this way helps reinforce new learning. Answer choices B and D identify inappropriate instructional sequences for first-grade students. Answer choice C is incorrect because it delays introduction of new sounds for reading until spelling of practice words has been mastered.

6. Ms. Carlyle, a sixth-grade teacher, observes that several students have misspelled the word *pasteurize*. After writing *pasteurize* and *Louis Pasteur* on the blackboard, the teacher explains how Pasteur invented the process of pasteurization. Students then discuss how the word *Pasteur* relates to the word *pasteurize*. This instructional activity is likely to foster students' reading development primarily by:

   A. helping students learn to use etymology to improve spelling and promote word recognition.

   B. helping students improve their spelling by comparing and contrasting similar words.

   C. motivating students to use orthographic patterns to expand their vocabulary knowledge.

   D. motivating students to improve their spelling through the use of systematic study skills.

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #6 assesses competency 6.2 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice A is correct. In the instructional situation described in the question, the teacher helps students...
use the origin (etymology) of the word *pasteurize* to enhance their spelling accuracy and word recognition. Answer choices B, C, and D describe other approaches that could be used to promote spelling and word recognition skills; they do not describe the strategy used by the teacher in the question.

7. A teacher plans to assess a student's comprehension of a short story through oral retelling. After the student silently reads the story, the teacher will prompt the student's retelling by asking open-ended questions. To prepare for this assessment, the teacher reads the story carefully and composes the questions. Which of the following *additional* steps would be most helpful for the teacher to take before the retelling activity begins?

A. Prompt the student to recall similar tasks he or she has previously performed.

B. Prepare a checklist of the key elements that an effective retelling of this story should include.

C. Review grades earned by the student on recent tests and quizzes in language arts.

D. Remind the student to concentrate on recalling as many details as possible during the retelling.

**Explanation of Correct Response**
Question #7 assesses competency 7.1 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice B is correct. This teacher's ability to assess the student's comprehension would be aided most by preparing a checklist of the specific story elements that should be included in the student's responses to the open-ended questions prepared by the teacher. By specifying information to be included in each response, the checklist would help the teacher evaluate the accuracy and completeness of the student's actual responses. Answer choices A and C focus on the student's past experiences and performance and have little relevance to the assessment preparations described in the question. Answer choice D is incorrect because the student's retelling, for purposes of assessing comprehension, should focus primarily on main ideas and relationships in the story rather than on the recall of many details.

8. When selecting texts for first graders to read in the upcoming school year, a teacher should be aware of the importance of:

A. focusing primarily on realistic texts that mirror the children's own experiences.

B. including a wide range of fiction and nonfiction texts in a variety of genres.

C. focusing largely on simple fictional narratives such as folk and fairy tales.

D. providing students with transcripts of their own oral language as their primary reading materials.

**Explanation of Correct Response**
Question #8 assesses competency 8.2 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice B is correct. Students in a first-grade classroom are likely to have varied backgrounds, interests, and needs, and all students benefit from opportunities to engage with many types
of text. Therefore, when a teacher selects texts for first graders to read during a school year, a guiding principle should be to ensure inclusion of a wide range of fiction and nonfiction texts in a variety of genres. Answer choices A, C, and D identify specific types of texts that would be useful to include as part of a first-grade curriculum; however, no one type of text should dominate student reading experiences.

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

Ms. Hollister's fourth-grade class is beginning a unit on deserts. She starts the unit by having the students form small groups and list everything they know about deserts. Then the whole class meets to share their lists, and Ms. Hollister asks the students to help her arrange their ideas into a web. The class's partially completed web is shown below.

![Deserts Web Diagram]

9. Creating such a web is likely to promote students' ability to retain and use information they read about a topic by:

A. encouraging students to attend to new information on the topic rather than to familiar information.
B. providing students with the vocabulary they need to make sense of their reading.
C. prompting students to assess the accuracy of their prior knowledge of the topic.
D. helping students learn to use categories to organize their thinking about the topic.

Explanation of Correct Response
Question #9 assesses competency 9.3 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice D is correct. In the instructional situation described, the teacher prompts students to activate their prior knowledge about a topic and to help create a web to consciously organize that knowledge into logical categories. Having students engage in this activity can help them develop a conceptual framework within which to process and organize new knowledge they gain through reading, which in turn should enhance their ability to retain and use the information they read about the topic. The process described in the scenario does not prompt students to disregard familiar information or assess the accuracy of their prior knowledge, as described in answer choices A and C, respectively. The process also does not
necessarily provide students with all the vocabulary they will need to make sense of their reading, as suggested in answer choice B, because in this scenario the words in the web are generated by the students themselves.

10. Ms. Hollister gives each student a copy of the web developed by the class. She could best help students make use of the web to learn and retain facts from their reading by asking them to:

   A. add continuously to the web as they encounter and organize new information in their reading.
   B. try to maintain a mental image of the web while they are reading on the topic.
   C. review each category on the web to ensure that it is an appropriate one to have included.
   D. memorize the information on the web before they begin their reading.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Question #10 assesses competency 9.3 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice A is correct. Learning and retention of new information is aided when the information is organized and placed within a logical schema such as that provided by the web described in the scenario. Therefore, an effective strategy for using the web to help students learn and retain facts from their reading would be to have the students add continuously to the web as they encounter new information. The strategies described in answer choices B, C, and D fail to take advantage of the web's potential for providing students with an effective organizational tool to guide their thinking as they encounter new information in their reading.

11. A teacher could most effectively support at-home reading by:

   A. sending parents a regular newsletter describing classroom reading activities.
   B. sharing with parents important articles from professional reading journals.
   C. recommending books that parents would likely enjoy reading aloud to their children.
   D. providing parents with periodic reports on their children's progress in reading.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Question #11 assesses competency 10.2 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice C is correct. One component of an effective school reading program involves encouraging and providing support for parents to read to their children at home. Recommending books that parents would probably enjoy reading aloud to their children would support at-home reading by offering parents useful information to help them select high-quality children's books that are likely to appeal to their children. Although a teacher might wish to implement the activities described in answer choices A and B, these activities would not provide parents with direct guidance or support for at-home reading with their children. Simply providing parents with periodic progress reports, as in answer choice D, is not likely
12. Which of the following activities would best help upper-elementary students who are English Language Learners use the intonations and rhythms of the English language when reading?

A. The teacher leads a class discussion on an age-appropriate topic, then each student reads a section of text aloud on the same topic.

B. The students record their own oral reading of a passage and then listen to the tape while silently reading the passage.

C. The teacher gives an expressive oral reading of a passage, then the students practice reading it in unison.

D. The students read aloud and then silently from a text in which stressed words and punctuation marks are highlighted.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Question #12 assesses competency 11.2 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice C is correct. In English, intonation can affect the meaning of a sentence. For this reason, students need to be encouraged to read using the same intonations and rhythms they would use and hear in speech. Especially when working with English Language Learners, teachers should provide models of good oral reading to help students understand the relationship between spoken and written language and the role intonation plays in comprehension.

Having students imitate an expressive oral reading enhances their understanding of this relationship and helps students learn to use their oral language competence to comprehend written sentences. Answer choices A, B, and D are not likely to be effective with English Language Learners because they do not provide models for the students to use in developing appropriate intonations and rhythms for the particular passage.

13. Structural analysis would be an especially appropriate strategy for a student to use to determine the meaning of which of the following words?

A. impassable

B. elephant

C. interim

D. examine

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Question #13 assesses competency 12.3 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice A is correct. Structural analysis is a strategy used to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words by breaking the words into their component elements (morphemes). These elements may include, for example, roots, affixes, and inflected endings. Of the answer choices given, only choice A, *impassable*, is well suited for using structural analysis to determine its meaning. This is because a reader can readily break the word into its component parts (*im, pass, able*) and then use the meaning of each of the parts to define the word. The words in answer choices B, C, and D do not contain easily recognizable elements that would permit a
14. A fifth-grade teacher gives students the following sentence:

Neither walking on the beach nor running around the track cheered Danny up.

The teacher asks the students how the phrases that come just after neither and just after nor are similar. This exercise can promote students' reading comprehension by helping them:

A. distinguish between explicit and implied main ideas.
B. identify cause-effect relationships.
C. apply literal comprehension skills.
D. recognize parallel constructions.

Explanation of Correct Response

Question #14 assesses competency 13.3 of the RICA Content Specifications. Answer choice D is correct. The sentence in the question shows an example of parallelism in sentence structure. Such parallel constructions are often used to state grammatically equal and closely related ideas. Helping students learn to recognize parallelism, as well as other typical patterns of word order in sentences, can promote their ability to group words into meaningful phrases as they read and thereby facilitate reading fluency and comprehension. The learning activity described in the question—having a class identify the phrases that come just after neither and just after nor—will not help students distinguish between explicit and implied main ideas (answer choice A), identify cause-effect relationships (answer choice B), or apply literal comprehension skills (answer choice C).