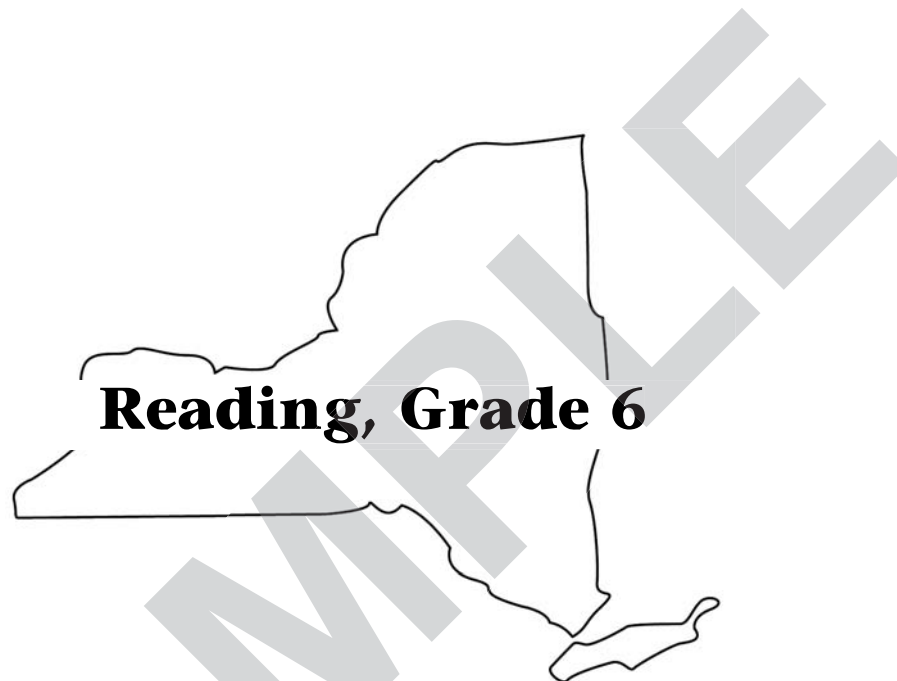


# TestSMART®

# Power Practice

*for the New York English Language Arts Test*

## Student Work Text



**Reading, Grade 6**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

Today, students in all 50 states face some form of mandatory competency tests in reading and mathematics. In some states, these tests are high-stakes events that determine whether a student progresses to the next grade level in school. The emphasis on testing has grown directly from the push for higher standards and greater accountability for the nation's schools. Under increasing pressure from political leaders, business people, and the general public, policy-makers have turned to testing as one way to measure and improve student performance. In particular, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 requires schools to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) in student achievement. Failure to meet the goals set out by NCLB can result in the loss of vital federal education funds.

Although experienced educators know that test results reveal only part of a much broader educational picture, state-mandated competency tests have gained a strong foothold and show no signs of fading. To prepare students for such tests, teachers need both effective instructional methods and meaningful assessment practice for their students. Only through the best instructional methods and the most useful test practice will students demonstrate true knowledge and learning on required tests—and this is where the *TestSMART® Power Practice* series can play an important role.

## What's inside this book?

The books in the *TestSMART® Power Practice* series provide valuable tools for both teachers and students as they prepare for required state tests. To accomplish this, each book in the series includes practice in both the format and content of the test for a specific state. In addition, each teacher guide provides effective teaching strategies and highlights simple ways to incorporate meaningful instruction while using the *Power Practice* exercises.

This teacher guide accompanies the *TestSMART® Power Practice for the New York English Language Arts Test, Reading—Grade 6*. The student work text is designed for review and practice of important reading skills that are part of the New York English Language Arts Test for grade 6. Together, the student work text and teacher guide include:

- a master skills list based on the reading performance standards for New York.
- pertinent information on the test specifications for the New York ELA Test for reading.
- 13 reading selections, which include fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
- tag-lines to identify the standard addressed in each question.
- a complete answer key for all practice items.
- suggestions for effective and meaningful instruction and test preparation.

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## What's on the New York ELA Test for Reading?

The *TestSMART® Power Practice for the New York English Language Arts Test, Reading—Grade 6* addresses the following curricular standards aligned with the New York grade-specific performance indicators:

### Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

- Read the steps of a procedure in order to accomplish a task such as completing a science experiment or installing software
- Skim material to gain an overview of content or locate specific information
- Use text features, such as headings, captions, and titles, to understand and interpret informational texts
- Recognize organizational formats to assist in comprehension of informational texts
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Identify information that is implied rather than stated
- Compare and contrast information about one topic from multiple sources
- Identify main ideas and supporting details in informational texts to distinguish relevant and irrelevant information
- Condense, combine, and categorize new information from one or more sources, with assistance
- Draw conclusions and make inferences on the basis of explicit and implied information, with assistance
- Make, confirm, or revise predictions, with assistance
- Use word structure knowledge, such as roots (e.g., Greek and Latin), prefixes, and suffixes, to determine word meaning\*
- Use prior knowledge and experience in order to understand ideas and vocabulary found in a variety of texts\*
- Acquire new vocabulary by engaging with a variety of texts written by a range of different authors\*
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context, dictionaries, glossaries, and other print resources, including electronic resources\*

- Use a thesaurus to identify synonyms and antonyms\*

### Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

- Read, view, and interpret texts from a variety of genres
- Define characteristics of different genres
- Identify literary elements (e.g., setting, plot, character, rhythm, and rhyme) of different genres
- Recognize how the author uses literary devices, such as simile, metaphor, and personification, to create meaning
- Recognize how different authors treat similar themes
- Identify the ways in which characters change and develop throughout a story
- Identify the author's point of view, such as first-person narrator and omniscient narrator, with assistance
- Determine how the use and meaning of literary devices, such as symbolism, metaphor and simile, alliteration, personification, flashback, and foreshadowing convey the author's message or intent, with assistance
- Recognize how the author's use of language creates images or feelings, with assistance
- Identify poetic elements, such as repetition, rhythm, and rhyming patterns, in order to interpret poetry, with assistance

### Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

- Evaluate information, ideas, opinions, and themes by identifying a central idea and supporting details; precise and vague language; statements of fact, opinion, and exaggeration; missing or unclear information
- Use established and personal criteria to analyze and evaluate the quality of ideas and information in text
- Identify different perspectives, such as social, cultural, ethnic, and historical, on an issue presented in one or more than one text

- Recognize how one’s own point of view contributes to forming an opinion about information and ideas
- Evaluate, with assistance, the validity and accuracy of information, ideas, themes, opinions, and experiences in text to identify conflicting information; consider the background and qualifications of the writer; evaluate examples, details, or reasons used to support ideas; identify differing points of view in texts and presentations; identify cultural and ethnic values and their impact on content, with assistance; identify multiple levels of meaning

\*Literacy competency for Grade 6 Reading

### Question Formats for New York ELA Test for Reading

At grade 6, the items on the New York ELA Test for Reading are in the multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response formats. A sample scoring rubric for short-response and extended-response items can be found on page 10.

### How to Use TestSMART® Power Practice for Reading

**Effective Test Preparation:** What is the most effective way to prepare students for any reading competency test? Experienced educators know that the best test preparation includes three critical components:

- a strong curriculum that encourages a love of reading and addresses the content and skills to be tested.
- effective and varied instructional methods that allow students to learn content and skills in many different ways.
- targeted practice that familiarizes students with the specific content and format of the test they will take.

Obviously, a strong curriculum and effective, varied instructional methods should be the foundation for all test preparation. Students must acquire knowledge, practice skills, and have specific educational experiences that can never be included on tests limited in time and scope. Most importantly, the reading

curriculum should lead students to love and recognize the importance of reading in their present and future lives. For this reason, books like those in the *TestSMART® Power Practice* series should **never** become the heart of the curriculum or a replacement for strong instructional methods.

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*Most importantly, the reading curriculum should lead students to love and recognize the importance of reading in their present and future lives.*

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**Targeted Practice:** *TestSMART® Power Practice* books do, however, address the third element of effective test preparation (targeted test practice) in the following ways:

- They familiarize students with the content usually addressed in competency tests.
- They familiarize students with the general format of such tests.

When students are familiar with both the content and format of a test, they know what to expect on the actual test. This, in turn, can reduce test anxiety and improve their chances for success.

**Using TestSMART® Power Practice:** Used as part of the regular curriculum, the books in this series allow teachers to:

- pretest skills needed for the actual test students will take.
- determine students’ areas of strength and/or weakness.
- provide meaningful test-taking practice for students.
- ease students’ test anxiety.
- communicate test expectations and content to parents and/or guardians.

**Moving Beyond Test Practice:** Books in the *TestSMART® Power Practice* series can also serve as a springboard for other instructional activities that extend beyond mere test practice. These include any of the following:

**Group Work:** Teacher and students can work through selected practice exercises together, noting the kinds of questions and the range of answer choices. Group work should include a discussion of common errors for each type of question and strategies for avoiding these errors.

**Predicting Answers:** Students can provide an answer before reading the given answer choices. This method encourages students to think through a question rather than just focus on finding the right answer. After providing an answer, students should then read the given answer choices and determine which one, if any, matches the answer they have given. Follow-up discussion helps students understand why their answers were correct or incorrect.

**Developing Test Questions:** Once students become familiar with the format of the test questions, they can develop their own questions for assigned reading in any subject area (e.g., science, social studies). Students can use their questions to quiz their classmates.

**Vocabulary Development:** Teacher and students can foster vocabulary development in all subject areas through a myriad of activities—word walls, word webs, word games, synonym/antonym charts, analogies, “word-of-the-day” activities, etc.

**Two-Sentence Recaps:** Students should have a regular opportunity to summarize what they have read in one or two sentences. For fiction, students might use the basic elements (setting, characters, problem, solution) as a framework for their summaries. The journalist’s questions (who, what, where, when, why) provide an excellent framework for nonfiction. In another method, the teacher provides three to five key words from a reading selection and directs students to write a simple summary that includes the given words.

**Generalizations:** For a post-reading activity, the teacher can state a generalization based on the reading. Students provide specific information from the passage to support the generalization. The teacher can also provide specific information from the text and ask students to make a generalization based on the information.

### **Teaching *With* the Test... Not *To* the Test**

Contrary to what many people believe, merely “teaching to the test” provides a great disservice to students. As stated previously, students need richer reading experiences than test preparation can provide if they are to become lifelong, competent readers. Reading and answering questions about practice test passages serve a purpose, but getting the right—or the wrong—answer should not be the final step in the process.

All students benefit from carefully planned follow-up discussions that allow them to learn from both their successes and their failures. Questions like those in the box on page 7 encourage students to analyze and evaluate their responses. Such thought-provoking questions lift a practice passage and its accompanying questions to an entirely different level, where choosing the right answer is not enough, and choosing the wrong answer provides avenues for real learning.

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## Teaching *With* the Test...Not *To* the Test

Use questions like the following to stimulate discussion and promote learning after students have read a passage and answered the corresponding questions.

1. If a student has chosen an incorrect answer, follow-up with questions like the following:
  - Why did you think your answer was correct?
  - Why is the correct answer better than the answer you chose?
  - How could the question be reworded for your answer to be correct?
  - How could the question be reworded so other answers would be correct?
  - Where did you look in the text to confirm the answer you chose?
  - Where should you have looked in the text to find the correct answer?
  - If your answer were correct, how would that change the overall meaning of the passage? How could that change the answers to other questions?
  
2. If a student has chosen a correct answer, follow-up with questions like the following:
  - Why did you think your answer was correct?
  - Why is your answer better than the other three choices?
  - Where did you look in the text to confirm the answer you chose?
  - How did you know where to find the correct answer?
  - What kind of thinking did you use to answer the question correctly?
  
3. To extend student learning beyond specific questions and answers, follow-up with questions like the following:
  - What other questions could have been asked about the information in this passage?
  - What else would you like to know about the topic of this passage?
  - Where could you find other information about the topic of this passage?
  - What have you learned about reading and finding answers that will help you with future reading tasks?

## Correlation Chart for *TestSMART® Power Practice* Reading, Grade 6

This chart lists the reading passages in the student work text and the specific standards addressed in each passage. For quick reference, the question number is included.

	Bunnies Under the Bed	Pan Tzu's Gift	Sojourner and the Sisters	Why the Moon... and How Moon and Sun...	Better Friends Than We Thought	The Great Barrier Reef and Exploring the Reef	The Boy Who Drew Cats	And the Smiles Keep Coming	A Very Long Nap	An Ancient and Wonderful Substance	Snowshoes	Caves of Wonder and Vacation Letter	Before Winter
<b>Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.</b>													
Steps in a Procedure										5,8			
Locating Information	7				9	2,4		4		2,3	5,6,10	1,3,5	
Text Features						10					11		
Organizational Format	9	8			5		13	8		4			
Fact/Opinion						8				6		9	
Implied Information		11	2	3	7	12				10		7	
Compare/Contrast				13,14,15,17		14				12		13,14	
Main Idea/Supporting Details				10	2,3,12		14	6		7	12	4	
Condense/Combine/Categorize	3,12					15		13					
Inference/Conclusion	4,6	6	3,4,7,8,10	7	10	3,5	8,11	2,5,9,10,12	5,8	9	3,4,8,9	10,11	
Prediction									11				
Key Vocabulary	1,2,8	1,5	1,6	1,6	4,11	1,6,9	2,3,7	1	1	1	1,2	2,6	
<b>Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.</b>													
Genre		12		16			15	11	12				
Literary Elements		2,3,4,10	5	2,4,5,8,9,11,12			1,4,5,8,9,10,12		2,3,6,7,9			12,15	2,3,5
Literary Devices	11	7,9					6	3	4,10				1,4,6
<b>Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.</b>													
Precise/Vague Language					1,6								
Missing/Unclear Information						16							
Quality of Information	5		9		8	7		7				8	
Perspective/Point of View	10		11			11				11	7		
Personal Point of View			12,13		13								
Author's Credibility						13							

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Read the passage “Bunnies Under the Bed” and answer the questions that follow.

## Bunnies Under the Bed

It leaves a gray film on furniture and bunches up to make bunnies under the bed. It also moves around us all the time. You can see it in a sunbeam streaming through a window: tiny particles that dance in the light. This is dust, or “fine, dry particles of matter.” Dust is made up of a variety of things and comes from a variety of places.

Outside, a lot of dust originates locally. Some of it may be air pollution: bits of carbon from the exhaust of cars, trucks, trains, and planes. Some of it may be particles, or specks of matter, from industry smokestacks. Brick and concrete dust from buildings and soot from chimneys can also be part of the local dust. Some dust is comprised of pollen from flowers and trees, or tiny scales from moth and butterfly wings.

Dust can travel great distances on the wind, so not all the dust around you is local. Maybe your air has dust from China, where annual sandstorms in the Gobi Desert sweep dust across the Pacific Ocean and into the United States. Maybe your air has dust from ancient Greece. Every August, mighty winds scour the ruins of the Acropolis, an ancient fortress in Athens, and blow bits of it away. The air around you might have bits of camel hair from northern Africa or llama hair from Peru. It might even have ash from funeral pyres in India or smoke from California wildfires.

Dust is present in rain, too. Water vapor wraps around bits of dust, which then gather into raindrops and fall to the earth. Damp fog can suspend dust in the air to make smog, a mixture of smoke and fog. When the air dries, the dust descends or moves along with the wind.

Some things that we consider to be either “lost” or of the past might revisit us as dust. In 1930s Oklahoma, a terrible drought led people to call the region the Dust Bowl. Tons of the state’s topsoil was blown away in dust storms. Some of this dust has probably blown across Oklahoma many times since. Dust from explosions is also carried on the wind, so your air may have dust from wartime bombs or a demolished building.

“Quick! Run inside!” you might be thinking. “The air outside is terrible!” Well, the air inside is dusty, too. Let’s start with the air in your classroom. It probably contains chalk dust, graphite and wood dust from pencils, and paper dust from notebooks. It may have lint from people’s clothing and outdoor dust from their shoes. Every time someone turns a page or raises a hand, the dust rises up and moves around.

The most interesting indoor dust is probably each person's dust cloud. Dust from our homes mixes with dust from our skin and hair, giving each of us a dust cloud that is as personal as a fingerprint. One person's dust cloud might have eye shadow, wool fibers from a sweater, poster paint, and cat fur. Another person's cloud might have flour or cocoa dust from baking, or clay dust from an art studio. Someone else's cloud might include fireplace soot or sawdust from a workshop.

Indoor dust can be worse than outdoor dust, even in homes. Homes are more likely to have dust from mold, mildew, air fresheners, pesticides, and cleaning products. Some indoor dust is actually powdered stone, from substances like plaster and talcum powder. Homes with wall-to-wall carpeting are often the dustiest, because dust settles deep into carpets. Vacuuming captures some of the dust, but it also pulls more dust to the surface and into the air.

By now, you might be feeling like an *amathophobe*. That's someone with a fear of dust. Amathophobia comes from the Greek words *amathos*, meaning sand, and *phobia*, meaning fear. You can relax: dust from chemicals or fuels is unhealthy, but an active body can still handle a lot of dust. After we breathe in dust, the body moves it out on what author Hannah Holmes calls a "mucous escalator." That is, we expel dust by coughing, blowing our noses, or sneezing. We also expel dust when we take good strong breaths.

Try two easy ways to stay healthy in this dusty world. First, spend time outdoors, where the air is usually better. Shoot some baskets or wrestle with your dog. Increasing and deepening your breathing will help your lungs clean themselves. Second, even when you're indoors, be active. Reading or working at the computer is okay, but watching television for hours is not such a good idea. When people sit in front of the television, their bodies slow down and their breathing becomes shallow. So, they inhale dust but aren't able to exhale all of it. When you watch television, take some breathing breaks. Stretch, dance, or just open a window to check out the moon. Don't let that dust get you down!



Standard 1: Key Vocabulary

- 1 Read these sentences from the passage.

**Dust is made up of a variety of things and comes from a variety of places.**

**Outside, a lot of dust originates locally.**

What does the word “originates” mean?

- A begins
- B breaks
- C creates
- D settles

Standard 1: Key Vocabulary

- 2 Read this sentence from the passage.

**It leaves a gray film on furniture and bunches up to make bunnies under the bed.**

To what does the word “bunnies” refer?

- A dust balls
- B a layer of dust
- C particles of matter
- D small furry animals

Standard 1: Condense/Combine/Categorize

- 3 A personal dust cloud is

- A an amathophobe’s senseless fear of harmful dust in the air
- B a mixture of indoor and outdoor dust that can make a person sick
- C expelled from the lungs by coughing, sneezing, or blowing the nose
- D a one-of-a-kind blend of particles from a person’s skin and surroundings

Standard 1: Inference/Conclusion

- 4 What is the author’s intended purpose in writing this passage?

- A to compare indoor dust to outdoor dust
- B to persuade the reader to be more active
- C to explain the origins of the dust in the air
- D to explain the dangers of indoor and outdoor dust

*Standard 3: Quality of Information*

- 5 Which statement from the passage **best** supports the idea that dust “comes from a variety of places”?
- A “When the air dries, the dust descends or moves along with the wind.”
  - B “The most interesting indoor dust is probably each person’s dust cloud.”
  - C “Dust can travel great distances on the wind, so not all the dust around you is local.”
  - D “Some things that we consider to be either ‘lost’ or of the past might revisit us as dust.”

*Standard 1: Inference/Conclusion*

- 6 From information given in the passage, the reader can conclude that dust in the air
- A never poses a health problem for people
  - B may contain particles harmful to people
  - C always contains particles from faraway places
  - D cannot move from place to place on people’s clothing

*Standard 1: Locating Information*

- 7 What is one way that outdoor dust differs from indoor dust?
- A Outdoor dust is more harmful to people than indoor dust.
  - B Outdoor dust comes from explosions, and indoor dust comes from dust bunnies.
  - C Indoor dust is composed of personal dust clouds, and outdoor dust is composed of mold.
  - D Indoor dust is more likely to include fine grains from air fresheners and cleaning products than outdoor dust.

*Standard 1: Key Vocabulary*

- 8 Read this sentence from the passage.

**Dust from explosions is also carried on the wind, so your air may have dust from wartime bombs or a demolished building.**

What does the word “demolished” mean?

- A centuries old
- B destroyed
- C poorly constructed
- D restored

*Standard 1: Organizational Format*

- 9** The author organizes the first three paragraphs of the passage by
- A explaining the sources of local dust
  - B comparing outdoor dust to indoor dust
  - C listing different sources of outdoor dust
  - D showing how dust from long ago can still be in the air

*Standard 3: Perspective/Point of View*

- 10** The author of this passage would **most likely** agree that
- A dust poses a serious danger to people
  - B most people are afraid of the dust in the air
  - C learning about the origin of dust is interesting
  - D people living today create more dust than people who lived long ago

*Standard 2: Literary Devices*

- 11** When the author states that tiny particles “dance in the light,” she means that
- A the air around you is always moving
  - B dust particles can only move in the light
  - C dust particles move in the air all the time
  - D wind is the main force that moves dust around

*Standard 1: Condense/Combine/Categorize*

- 12** Which of the following is the **best** summary of the passage?
- A Dust contains fine, dry particles of matter from a variety of things and places. Some dust comes from air pollution. Most dust, however, is not harmful.
  - B Dust contains fine, dry particles of matter from many things and many places. Some dust is local dust, but other dust is from faraway. Everyone has a personal dust cloud.
  - C Dust can travel great distances on the wind. Some things we consider to be either “lost” or of the past might revisit us as dust. To stay healthy, active people must expel dust from their bodies.
  - D Dust contains fine, dry particles of matter from a variety of things and places. In addition to the outdoor and indoor dust in the air, everyone has a personal dust cloud that is unique to that person. Although dust may contain harmful substances, active people can usually protect themselves from the bad effects of dust.