



New York State Grades 3–8 Testing Program English Language Arts Q & A

Scoring the Editing Paragraph

- Q1: Should students be told how many errors there are in the editing paragraph?*
- A: No, students should not be told how many errors to look for. Students might stop reviewing the rest of the paragraph because they believe they have found all the targeted errors when, in fact, they have misidentified one or more elements in the paragraph as being incorrect. It is best to encourage students always to review the entire paragraph.
- Q2: What is the definition of a “neutral” correction?*
- A: A neutral correction is a revision made by the student (to any part of the paragraph) that is not grammatically or mechanically incorrect. Such a revision does not result in any penalty to the student.
- Q3: If a student changes a word in a paragraph, but the word is grammatically correct and fits the sentence, is that revision acceptable?*
- A: Such a revision is acceptable, provided that the revision does not alter the meaning of the sentence to such a degree that it no longer fits the context of the paragraph. This is an example of a neutral correction.
- Q4: How do we score a response in which a student has crossed out a serial comma before the word “and”?*
- A: Since the serial comma before “and” is considered optional, the change is treated as a neutral correction. The change does not make the sentence incorrect and so is permitted.
- Q5: Why have commas been included in the editing paragraphs?*
- A: Knowledge of commas is part of the New York State Learning Standards. Please refer to the English Language Arts Core Curriculum, at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elacore.pdf>, for grade- specific information.
- Q6: If a student introduces a spelling error in the process of revising the paragraph, will the introduced spelling error count against the student’s score?*
- A: No. Since spelling is not assessed via the editing paragraph, spelling errors introduced by the student will not be counted either.
- Q7: Is the misuse of homophones (e.g., “to/too/two”) considered to be a spelling error or a usage error? Would a student be penalized for introducing a homophone error?*
- A: Homophones are considered to be usage errors. In Grades 5 and 7, students will be held accountable for introducing such errors. Since the Grade 3 editing paragraph assesses only capitalization and punctuation and does not assess usage, students at that grade will not be held accountable for introducing homophone errors.

Q8: If the error calls for a student to correct the tense of a verb, and the student misspells the new word, can that correction be given credit? (Example: If “hear” should be corrected to “heard,” can “herd” be given credit?)

A: The correction should be given credit, provided that the word clearly and accurately represents the correction in tense despite the misspelling.

Q9: Is a student permitted to cross out an entire sentence or part of a sentence rather than making the necessary correction? How much deleted text can be allowed?

A: A student is not permitted to cross out an entire sentence to avoid making a correction. If a student crosses out a small portion of a sentence, but the sentence is still grammatically intact and the meaning of the sentence remains unchanged, such a revision is acceptable.

Q10: Will students be given credit for corrections made via the use of proofreading marks?

A: Proofreading marks will be allowed, provided that the errors are clearly indicated and corrected by the proofreading marks.

Q11: Can a student be penalized if the scorer does not recognize proofreading marks?

A: If a scorer is unfamiliar with proofreading marks, the scorer should consult the table facilitator or scoring leader.

Q12: If a student corrects an error by using means other than proofreading marks or the revision method described in the directions, will the response still receive credit?

A: If the correction is made clearly and accurately, full credit may be given. Some examples of acceptable corrections include:

- circling the error rather than crossing it out
- crossing out the part of the word that is incorrect rather than crossing out and rewriting the entire word
- crossing out an unnecessary punctuation mark rather than crossing out the preceding word and punctuation mark and rewriting the word without the punctuation mark
- directly inserting missing punctuation rather than crossing out the surrounding words and rewriting them above the crossed out section, with the correct punctuation inserted.

In each of these cases, as long as the correction made is accurate and clear to the scorer, the correction is acceptable.

Q13: Is a correction acceptable if a student makes the correction but does not cross out the original error?

A: Such a correction is acceptable, provided that the correction is completely clear, with no further interpretation necessary on the part of the scorer.

Q14: If a student makes more than one error of a particular type (e.g., failing to capitalize a proper noun), is each instance considered an error, or are these errors grouped together and considered to be a single error?

A: In order to be considered a single error, the repeated error needs to be identical. For example, if a student repeatedly fails to capitalize a particular name, that is considered a single error, even though it occurs more than once. However, if the error occurs in two different names, then that is considered to be two separate errors.

Q15: Is there a list of the types of errors that will be included in the editing paragraphs?

A: While there is no comprehensive list of assessable errors, the English Language Arts Learning Standards and the Core Curriculum (accessible at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elacore.pdf>) provide guidelines regarding grade-specific content coverage, and the Sample Test provides examples of grade-level-appropriate concepts.

November 14, 2005