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KEY STAGE  
2

YEARS  
3–6

National curriculum assessments

# Key stage 2 English reading test framework (draft)

National curriculum tests from 2016

2016

**For test developers**



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

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2016 Key stage 2 English reading test framework:  
national curriculum tests from 2016

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# 1. Overview

This test framework is based on the national curriculum programme of study (2014) for English, introduced for teaching in schools from September 2014 and first assessed in summer term 2016. The framework specifies the purpose, format, content, cognitive demand and test specification for the key stage 2 English reading tests; it is not designed to be used to guide teaching and learning or to inform statutory teacher assessment.

This document has been produced to aid the test development process and is therefore draft at this stage. Although any changes are expected to be minor, the document will be updated as required following evidence from trialling the tests. The document will be finalised and published on the Department for Education's (DfE's) website in advance of full sample test materials being released for schools in summer 2015.

## 1.1 Purposes of statutory assessment

The main purpose of statutory assessment is to:

- ascertain what children have achieved in relation to the attainment targets outlined in the national curriculum (2014) in English reading.

The main intended uses of the outcomes as set out in the Bew Report<sup>1</sup> and the Government's consultation document on primary assessment and accountability are to:

- hold schools accountable for the attainment and progress made by their children
- inform parents and secondary schools about the performance of individual children
- enable benchmarking between schools, as well as monitor performance locally and nationally.

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1 Independent review of key stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability (2011), Lord Bew. <https://media.education.gov.uk/MediaFiles/C/C/0/%7BCC021195-3870-40B7-AC0B-66004C329F1F%7DIndependent%20review%20of%20KS2%20testing,%20final%20report.pdf>

## 2. What is a test framework?

The purpose of the test framework is to provide the documentation to guide the development of the tests. The framework is written primarily for those who write test materials and to guide subsequent development and test construction. It is being made available to a wider audience for reasons of openness and transparency; it is not designed to be used to guide teaching and learning or to inform statutory teacher assessment.

Some elements of the statutory national curriculum are not possible to assess using the current form of testing; they will need to be assessed by teachers as part of their statutory assessment of the complete national curriculum.

The framework includes those parts of the programme of study as outlined in the national curriculum (2014) that will be covered in the test (the 'content domain'). The cognitive processes considered central to the English reading test are also detailed in the cognitive domain.

Also included in the test framework is a test specification from which valid, reliable and comparable tests can be constructed each year. This includes specifics about test format, question types, response types and marking as well as a clear test-level reporting strategy.

By providing all of this information in a single document, the test framework answers questions about what the test will cover, and how, in a clear and concise manner. The framework does not provide information on how teachers should teach the national curriculum.

The test development process used by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) embeds within it the generation of validity and reliability evidence through expert review and trialling. Given the nature of the evidence collected it is not anticipated that any additional studies will be required in order to demonstrate that the tests are fit for purpose. The test framework does not provide detail of the validity and reliability of individual tests; this will be provided in the test handbook which will be published on the DfE's website following the administration of the test.

The test framework should be used in conjunction with the national curriculum (2014) and the annual 'Assessment and reporting arrangements' (ARA) document.

## 3. Nature of the test

The key stage 2 English reading test forms part of the statutory assessment arrangements for children at the end of key stage 2.

The test is based on the relevant sections of the national curriculum (2014) statutory programme of study for English reading at key stage 2.

The key stage 2 English reading test will cover the aspects of comprehension that lend themselves to paper-based, externally-marked testing.

### 3.1 Population to be assessed

All eligible children who are registered at maintained schools, special schools or academies (including free schools) in England and are at the end of key stage 2 will be required to take the key stage 2 English reading test, unless they have taken it in the past. Independent schools may choose to participate in the statutory assessment arrangements on a year by year basis.

Some children are exempt from the tests. Further details are in the ARA which can be downloaded from the Department's website at [www.education.gov.uk/ks2](http://www.education.gov.uk/ks2).

### 3.2 Test format

The English reading test is comprised of a single component. The test is administered on paper and the total testing time is one hour. The testing time includes time for reading and responding to questions; there will not be separated reading time.

**Table 1: Format of the test**

Component	Description	Number of papers	Number of marks	Timing of component
English reading test: <b>paper 1</b>	Reading booklet with associated answer booklet  (a selection of texts, 1 800 – 2 300 words)	1	50	60 minutes (including reading time)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>

## 4. Content domain

The content domain draws out the relevant elements from the national curriculum (2014) programme of study for English at key stage 1 that are assessed in the English reading test. The tests will, over time, sample from each area of the content domain.

The content domain also identifies elements of the programme of study that cannot be assessed in the key stage tests (see Table 4). Attainment in these elements will be monitored through teacher assessment.

The following tables detail content from the national curriculum (2014). Elements from the curriculum are ordered to show progression across the years. The curriculum has been grouped into subdomains and these are detailed in the strand column. A referencing system is used in the content domain to enable classification of questions during test development.

Table 2 shows the content domain for texts and table 3 shows the content domain for questions.

Elements of the curriculum that can only be teacher-assessed are shown in square brackets.

## 4.1 Content domain relating to texts

Table 2: Content domain relating to texts

Strand	National curriculum reference Years 3, 4	National curriculum reference Years 5, 6	Assessable elements
<b>Range of texts</b>	<b>1a</b> [listening to and] discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks	<b>1a</b> continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks	<b>2RT1</b> Tests to include age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction, from a variety of origins and traditions, covering over-time, a wide range of text types, forms and purposes.
	<b>1b</b> reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes	<b>1b</b> reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes	
		<b>1c</b> increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions	
	<b>1d</b> increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including fairy stories, myths and legends [and retelling some of these orally]		



## 4.2 Content domain relating to questions

Table 3: Content domain relating to questions

Strand	National curriculum reference Years 3, 4	National curriculum reference Years 5, 6	Assessable elements
Themes and conventions	1e identifying themes and conventions in a wide range of books	1e identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing	2TC1 Identify the themes and conventions of a range of texts 2TC2 Discuss / comment on themes and conventions in different genres and forms
	2c drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence	2c drawing inferences and justifying these with evidence from the text 9 providing reasoned justifications for their views	2MI1 Make inferences from the text 2MI2 Explain inferences and justify them with evidence from the text
Making inferences	2d predicting what might happen from details stated and implied	2d predicting what might happen from details stated and implied	2MI3 Predict what might happen from details stated and implied
	2a [checking that the text makes sense to them], discussing their understanding, and explaining the meaning of words in context	2a [checking that the book makes sense to them], discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context	2C1 Give the meaning of words in context 2C2 Explain and explore the meaning of words in context
Comprehension	2e identifying main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and summarising these	2e summarising main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas	2C3 Identify main ideas 2C4 Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph 2C5 Identify key details that support main ideas

Strand	National curriculum reference Years 3, 4	National curriculum reference Years 5, 6	Assessable elements
<b>Comprehension</b> (continued)	<b>2f</b> identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning	<b>2f</b> identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning	<b>2C6</b> Identify language, structural and presentational features of texts  <b>2C7</b> Explain how the language, structural and presentational features of a text contributes to meaning
	<b>3</b> retrieving and recording information from non-fiction	<b>5</b> retrieving and recording [and present] information from non-fiction  <b>1f</b> making comparisons within and across books  <b>4</b> distinguishing between statements of fact and opinion	<b>2C8</b> Retrieve and record information from non-fiction  <b>2C9</b> Make comparisons within the text  <b>2C10</b> Distinguish between fact and opinion
<b>Language for effect</b>	<b>1g</b> discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination	<b>3</b> discussing and evaluating how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader	<b>2LFE1</b> Identify and / or comment on writers' use of words, phrases and language features including figurative language  <b>2LFE2</b> Discuss and evaluate how writers use words, phrases and language features to have an impact on the reader, at word, sentence and text level

### 4.3 Elements of the curriculum that cannot be assessed in this format

The table below identifies areas that are difficult to fully assess in a paper-based format. Some of the points below may be partially assessed.

**Table 4: Elements of the curriculum that cannot be assessed in this format**

National curriculum reference years 3,4	National curriculum reference years 5,6	Explanation
<p><b>1c</b> using dictionaries to check the meaning of words they have read</p>		<p>This is impractical in terms of either requiring class sets of dictionaries, which raises issues to do with costs, logistics and comparability of different editions, or requiring lengthy contextual passages in the question.</p>
	<p><b>1d</b> recommending books they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices</p>	<p>Recommendations are a writing / oral skill that cannot be assessed in this format.</p>
<p><b>1f</b> preparing poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action</p>	<p><b>1g</b> learning a wider range of poetry by heart</p> <p><b>1h</b> preparing poems to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding and through appropriate intonation and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience</p>	<p>It is not possible to include aspects of the curriculum requiring oral skills in a paper-based assessment.</p>
<p><b>1h</b> recognising some different forms of poetry (eg: free verse, narrative poetry)</p>		<p>This would limit the question types available and result in predictable tests. There is also an issue with lack of clarity between the different forms, eg: a narrative poem could be written in free verse.</p>

National curriculum reference years 3,4	National curriculum reference years 5,6	Explanation
<p><b>2b</b> asking questions to improve their understanding of a text</p>	<p><b>2b</b> (also repeated at 8) asking questions to improve their understanding</p>	<p>It is not possible to include aspects of the curriculum requiring oral skills in a paper-based assessment.</p>
<p><b>4</b> participating in discussion about books that are read to them as well as those they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say</p>	<p><b>6</b> participating in conversations about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously</p>	<p>It is not possible to include aspects of the curriculum requiring oral skills in a paper-based assessment.</p>
	<p><b>7</b> explaining and discussing their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary</p>	<p>It is not possible to include aspects of the curriculum requiring oral skills in a paper-based assessment.</p>

## 5. Cognitive domain

The cognitive domain seeks to make the thinking skills and intellectual processes required for the key stage 2 English reading test explicit. Each question will be rated against the five strands of the cognitive domain listed in the tables below. Information on how the questions are rated is shown in section 5.1.

The cognitive domain will be used during test development to ensure comparability of demand as well as difficulty for tests of successive years.

The cognitive domain for the English reading test was based on 'The revised PISA reading item difficulty scheme'<sup>2</sup>, as STA's research indicated that the range of question types used in the PISA assessments are similar to the requirements of the national curriculum tests. The PISA model also considers the text and the added dimension this brings to a cognitive scale, which STA felt was an essential feature of measuring test and question demand.

### 5.1 Descriptions of each strand of the cognitive domain

In the following tables, descriptors are provided for the top and bottom of the rating scale. Judgement is then used to categorise questions appropriately on the rest of the scale. The cognitive scale presented in this framework assumes age-appropriate texts and is a stand-alone scale for national curriculum assessments at the end of key stage 2.

#### 5.1.1 Accessibility of the target information

This strand relates to the accessibility of the target Information that is needed to answer the question. This means the:

- number and proximity of features that need to be located in the text
- extent to which the location of the information within the text is identified in the question
- extent to which competing information in the text and / or distractors may mistakenly be selected.

It can be thought of as 'Where can the information be found?'

2 Lumley, Tom; Routitsky, Alla; Mendelovits, Juliette; and Ramalingam, Dara, 'The revised PISA reading item difficulty scheme', (2012). <http://research.acer.edu.au/pisa/5>

**Table 5: Strand A - Accessibility of the target information**

A1 (Low)	A2	A3	A4 (High)
The information that needs to be located is basic, is highly prominent and limited to one or two pieces. It is clearly located by question wording and limited to a short section of the text. Competing information is limited.			The target information is not strongly located by the question. It is not prominent within the text, and not limited to one or two pieces. There is significant competing information, either within the text or in the form of functional distractors.

### 5.1.2 Complexity of the target information

This strand relates to the complexity of the target information that is needed to answer the question. This means the:

- lexico-grammatical density of the stimulus
- level of concreteness / abstractness of the target information
- level of familiarity of the information needed to answer the question.

It can be thought of as 'What is the language of the text like?'

**Table 6: Strand B - Complexity of the target information**

B1 (Low)	B2	B3	B4 (High)
Target information has a low level of abstractness and lexico-grammatical density, is largely familiar to pupils and is easily cued by the wording of the task.			Target information has a high level of abstractness and lexico-grammatical density and a low level of familiarity. There is a low level of semantic match between task wording and relevant information in the text.

### 5.1.3 Task-specific complexity

This strand relates to task-specific complexity. This means the:

- degree of cognitive complexity involved in answering the question, from retrieval through to inference and higher level skills.

It can be thought of as 'How much work is needed to answer the question?'

**Table 7: Strand C - Task-specific complexity**

C1 (Low)	C2	C3	C4 (High)
Requires only simple retrieval, with little or no inference and has concrete task requirements.			There are complex inference and abstract task requirements.

### 5.1.4 Response strategy

This strand relates to response strategy. This means the:

- complexity of the written response required
- extent to which children need to organise / structure their response.

It can be thought of as 'How easy is it to organise and present the answer?'

**Table 8: Strand D - Response strategy**

D1 (Low)	D2	D3	D4 (High)
Answers will be limited to multiple choice or a few words and will require little organisation. The structure of response required will be clearly indicated in the question or answer booklet.			Answers are extended, and require children to fully structure and organise their own responses.

### 5.1.5 Technical knowledge required

This strand relates to the technical knowledge required. This means the:

- extent of knowledge of vocabulary required by the question
- subject-specific technical language and knowledge required that is not given in text.

It can be thought of as 'How complex is the language of the question and / or the knowledge needed to answer it?'

**Table 9: Strand E - Technical knowledge required**

E1 (Low)	E2	E3	E4 (High)
No complex word meanings or subject specific technical language is required.			Answers are extended and require children to fully structure and organise their own responses.

## 6. Test specification

This section provides details of the test.

### 6.1 Summary of test

The English reading test consists of a reading booklet and a reading answer booklet.

**Table 10: Format of the test**

Component	Description	Number of papers	Number of marks	Timing of component
English reading test: <b>booklet 1</b>	Reading booklet with associated answer booklet  (a selection of texts, 1 800 – 2 300 words)	1	50	60 minutes (including reading time)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>

### 6.2 Breadth and emphasis

The content and cognitive domains for the English reading tests are specified in sections 4 and 5. The test will sample from the content domain in any given year. Although each element may not be included within each test, the full range of content detailed in this document will be assessed over time. Consolidation of the key stage 1 material is assumed within the key stage 2 programme of study and therefore material from key stage 1 may appear within the key stage 2 test. The questions are placed in order of difficulty, where possible, while maintaining chronology with the text.

The following sections show the proportion of marks attributed to each of the areas of the content and cognitive domains in a test.

#### 6.2.1 Range of texts

The texts included in the tests will be a balanced range chosen from fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Texts will be appropriate in terms of content and difficulty for children aged 11. This will include texts that are age-appropriate (themes in narratives will be familiar and non-fiction texts will be suitable for 10-11 year olds) and that require inference and comprehension skills as well as an increased understanding of how language is used for effect. The texts will be ordered by increasing reading demand within the reading booklet.



## 6.2.2 Profile of content domain

The national curriculum coverage within the test is specified in the content domain in section 4. Content is broken down into four areas which will be covered in the tests in the proportions shown below.

**Table 11: Profile of marks by content area**

Content domain reference	Number of marks	Percentage of total mark
Themes and conventions	0 – 5	0 – 10%
Making inferences	10 – 20	20 – 40%
Comprehension	20 – 30	40 – 60%
Language for effect	5 – 13	10 – 25%

The content domain references are further broken down into assessable elements within the content domain given in section 4.

## 6.2.3 Profile of cognitive domain

The cognitive domain is specified in section 5. Taking into account the target information and the task itself, each question will be rated in terms of demand against each of the five strands of the cognitive domain.

For the cognitive strands A, B and C there will be questions across the range of demand 1 to 4, predominantly at 2 to 4.

For strand D, the range of questions across the cognitive domain will be in the following approximate proportions.

**Table 12: Profile of ratios for strand D**

Strand	Percentage of the total mark
D1	15 – 25%
D2 and D3	55 – 75%
D4	10 – 20%

For strand E, the majority of questions will be at E1 and E2.

## 6.3 Format of questions and responses

The table below shows how marks will be distributed across different mark tariffs.

**Table 13: Profile of mark tariffs**

Mark Tariffs	Range of marks at mark tariff
1 mark questions	25 – 35 marks
2 mark questions	10 – 16 marks (5 – 8 questions)
3 mark questions	3 – 12 marks (1 – 4 questions)

The question types in the test will be distributed across the selected and constructed response questions in the proportions shown in the table. The range of question types are exemplified by, but not limited to, those listed in the table below.

**Table 14: Profile of marks by question type**

Selected or constructed response	Question types	Example questions
<b>Selected response</b> 15 – 25%	Multiple choice	Where would you be most likely to see this text?  Tick one of the options below.
	Ranking / ordering	Number the events below to show the order in which they happen in the story.
	Matching	Match the text to the purpose.
	Labelling	Label the text to show the title.
<b>Short constructed response</b> 40 – 60%	Find and copy	Find and copy one word that suggests...
	Short response	What does the bear eat?
<b>Extended constructed response</b> 20 – 40%	Open ended response	Look at the paragraph beginning: <i>Once upon a time...</i>  How does the writer increase the tension throughout this paragraph?  Explain fully referring to the text in your answer.

## 6.4 Marking and mark schemes

The tests will be externally marked on-screen by trained markers.

The mark scheme will give the general principles for marking the test to ensure consistency of marking, together with specific guidance for the marking of each question.

The mark scheme will provide the total number of marks available for each question and the criteria by which markers should award the marks. Where multiple correct answers are possible, examples of different types of correct answer will be given in the mark schemes. Where applicable, additional guidance will indicate minimally acceptable responses and unacceptable responses.

For all questions, the mark schemes will be developed during the test development process and will combine the expectations of experts with examples of children's responses that have been obtained during trialling.

For multi-mark questions, if the correct answer is not reached and, therefore, full marks cannot be awarded, the mark scheme will provide details of how partial credit can be awarded.

The mark schemes will contain the following information:

- the question
- a content domain reference
- the mark allocation
- square bullets indicating the required responses or acceptable points
- round bullets exemplifying children's responses from the trials
- on 2 or 3 mark questions, the examples awarded higher marks should be placed before the examples awarded lower marks
- open 2 and 3 mark questions should also consider the child's ability to express their reasoning through developed answers.

## 6.5 Reporting

The raw score on the test (the total achieved marks out of the total 50 marks) will be converted into a scaled score. Translating raw scores onto scaled scores ensures performance can be reported on a consistent scale for all children. Scaled scores retain the same meaning from one year to the next, so a particular scaled score reflects the same level of attainment in one year as in the previous year, having adjusted for any differences in difficulty of the test.

Additionally, each child will receive an overall result indicating whether or not he or she has achieved the required standard on the test. A standard-setting exercise will be conducted on the first live test in 2016 in order to determine the scaled score needed for a child to be considered to have met the standard. This process will be facilitated by the performance descriptor in section 6.7 which defines the performance level required to meet the standard. In subsequent years the standard will be maintained using appropriate statistical methods to translate raw scores on a new test into scaled scores with an additional

judgemental exercise at the expected standard. The scaled score required to achieve the expected level on the test will always remain the same.

The exact scale for the scaled scores will be determined following further analysis of trialling data. This will include a full review of the reporting of confidence intervals for scaled scores.

## 6.6 Desired psychometric properties

While the focus of the outcome of the test will be whether a child has achieved the expected standard, the test must measure children's ability across the spectrum of attainment. As a result, the test must aim to minimise the standard error of measurement at every point on the reporting scale, particularly around the expected standard threshold.

The provision of a scaled score will aid in the interpretation of children's performance over time as the scaled score which represents the expected standard will be the same year on year. However, at the extremes of the scaled score distribution, as is standard practice, the scores will be truncated such that above or below a certain point, all children are awarded the same scaled score in order to minimise the effect for children at the ends of the distribution where the test is not measuring optimally.

## 6.7 Performance descriptor

This performance descriptor describes the typical characteristics of children whose performance in the key stage 2 tests is at the threshold of the expected standard. Children who achieve the expected standard in the tests have demonstrated sufficient knowledge to be well placed to succeed in the next phase of their education having studied the full key stage 2 programme of study in English. This performance descriptor will be used by teachers to set the standards on the new tests following their first administration in May 2016. It is not intended to be used to support teacher assessment since it only reflects the elements of the programme of study that can be assessed in a paper-based test (see content domain in section 4).

### 6.7.1 Overview

Children working at the expected standard will be able to engage with all questions within the test. However, they will not always achieve full marks on each question, particularly if working at the threshold of the expected standard.

Questions will range from those requiring only simple retrieval in concrete tasks with little or no inference to those requiring complex inferences in abstract tasks. There will be a variety of question formats including selected response, short answer and extended answer, which require fully structured, organised and accurately communicated responses.

Question difficulty will be affected by the strands of the cognitive domain such as the accessibility and complexity of the target information within the reading text and the complexity of the technical language or other vocabulary in the question. This should be borne in mind when considering the remainder of this performance descriptor. Children working at the threshold of the expected standard may not give correct responses to questions where target information is not strongly located in the question or it has a high level of abstractness and lexico-grammatical density, or where there is significant

competing information in the text that functions as a distractor. This will be true even when the performance descriptor determines that a skill should be within the child's capacity if working at the expected standard.

The following sections describe the typical characteristics of children in Year 6 working at the threshold of the expected standard. It is recognised that different children will exhibit different strengths, so this is intended as a general guide rather than a prescriptive list.

### 6.7.2 Range of texts

Children working at the threshold of the expected standard will be able to read the full range of text types and forms specified in the key stage 2 programme of study. This will include texts that are age-appropriate (themes in narratives will be familiar and non-fiction texts will be suitable for 10–11 year olds) and that require higher order inference and comprehension skills as well as an increased understanding of how language is used for effect.

### 6.7.3 Themes and conventions

When considering texts overall, children working at the expected standard are able to:

- accurately identify the features, themes and conventions of a range of fiction [2TC1]
- accurately identify the conventions of a range of non-fiction text types and forms [2TC1]
- draw on evidence within texts to explain how themes emerge and conventions are applied in a range of genres and conventions of fiction and non-fiction [2TC2].

### 6.7.4 Making inferences

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- make developed inferences drawing on evidence from the text [MI1]
- explain and justify inferences, providing evidence from the text to support reasoning [MI2]
- make developed predictions that are securely rooted in the text [MI3].

### 6.7.5 Comprehension

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- show an understanding of the meaning of vocabulary in context [2C1 and 2C2]
- accurately and selectively summarise main ideas, events, characters and information in fiction and non-fiction texts [2C4]
- identify language, structural and presentational features used in texts [2C6]
- provide developed explanations for key information and events and characters' actions and motivations [2C3 and 2C5]
- Provide straightforward explanations for the purpose of the language, structure and presentation of texts [2C7]
- retrieve key details and quotations from fiction and non-fiction to demonstrate understanding of character, events and information [2C3, 2C5 and 2C8]
- make accurate and appropriate comparisons within texts [2C9]
- correctly distinguish between statements of fact and opinion [2C10].

### 6.7.6 Language for effect

Children working at the expected standard are able to:

- identify a range of figurative language [2Lfe1]
- explain the effect of figurative language [2Lfe2].

## 7. Diversity and inclusion

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the principles by which the national curriculum assessment and associated development activities are conducted. During the development of the tests, STA's test development division will make provision to overcome barriers to fair assessment for individuals and groups wherever possible.

National curriculum tests will also meet Ofqual's core regulatory criteria. One of the criteria refers to the need for assessment procedures to minimise bias: 'The assessment should minimise bias, differentiating only on the basis of each learner's ability to meet national curriculum requirements' (Ofqual, [www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2011-regulatory-framework-for-national-assessments.pdf](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2011-regulatory-framework-for-national-assessments.pdf)).

The end of key stage 2 English reading test should:

- use appropriate means to allow all children to demonstrate their skills in reading
- provide a suitable challenge for all children and give every child the opportunity to achieve as high a standard as possible
- provide opportunities for all children to achieve, irrespective of gender, including children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, and children from all social and cultural backgrounds
- use materials that are familiar to children and for which they are adequately prepared
- not be detrimental to children's self-esteem or confidence
- be free from stereotyping and discrimination in any form.

The test development process uses the principles of universal design, as described in the 'Guidance on the principles of language accessibility in national curriculum assessments' (Ofqual, 2012; [www.ofqual.gov.uk/news/new-language-accessibility-guidance-published](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/news/new-language-accessibility-guidance-published)).

In order to improve general accessibility for all children, where possible, questions will be placed in order of difficulty. Accordingly, to be consistent with all national curriculum tests, attempts have been made to make the question rubric as accessible as possible for all children, including those who experience reading and processing difficulties, and those for whom English is an additional language, while maintaining an appropriate level of demand to adequately assess the content. This includes applying the principles of plain English and universal design wherever possible, conducting interviews with children, and taking into account feedback from expert reviewers.

For each test in development, expert opinions on specific questions are gathered, for example, at inclusion panel meetings which are attended by experts and practitioners from across the fields of disabilities and special educational needs. This provides an opportunity for some questions to be amended or removed in response to concerns raised.

Issues likely to be encountered by children with specific learning difficulties have been considered in detail. Where possible, features of questions that lead to construct irrelevant variance (for example, question formats and presentational features) have been considered and questions have been presented in line with best practice for dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

Issues likely to be encountered by children with specific learning difficulties have been considered in detail. Where possible, features of questions that lead to construct irrelevant variance (for example, question formats and presentational features) have been modified in line with best practice for dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

## 7.1 Access arrangements

The full range of access arrangements applicable to key stage 2 assessments as set out in the relevant ARA will be available to eligible children as required.

## 7.2 Children with English as an additional language (EAL)

Children with English as an additional language (EAL) should be registered for the national curriculum tests. If a child's limited ability to communicate in English means that he or she is unable to access the test, then they will be working below the standard of the English tests and should not take them, as set out in the ARA.



## Appendix: Glossary of terminology used in the test framework

<b>cognitive domain</b>	<p>Cognitive processes refer to the thinking skills and intellectual processes that occur in response to a stimulus. The cognitive domain makes explicit the thinking skills associated with an assessment.</p> <p>The cognitive domain, as shown in this framework, also identifies other factors that may influence the difficulty of the questions.</p>
<b>component</b>	<p>A section of a test, presented to children as a test paper or test booklet. Some tests may have two or more components which each child needs to sit in order to complete the test. The key stage 2 English reading test has one test component.</p>
<b>content domain</b>	<p>The body of subject knowledge to be assessed by the test.</p>
<b>construct irrelevant variance</b>	<p>Construct irrelevant variance is the variation in children's test scores that does not come from their knowledge of the ideas being tested. It can result in children gaining fewer marks than their knowledge would suggest or lead to the award of more marks than their knowledge alone would deserve.</p> <p>The former can occur, for example, when questions in a mathematics test also unintentionally measure reading ability. The latter often occurs when unintended clues within questions allow children to answer correctly without having the required subject knowledge.</p>
<b>distribution</b>	<p>The range of possible scaled scores.</p>
<b>domain</b>	<p>The codified definition of a body of skills and knowledge.</p>
<b>mark scheme</b>	<p>The document explaining the creditworthy responses or the criteria that must be applied to award the mark for a question in the test.</p>
<b>national curriculum</b>	<p>For each subject and key stage, the national curriculum outlines the content and skills that should be taught in schools.</p>
<b>performance descriptor</b>	<p>Description of the typical characteristics of children working at a particular standard. For these tests, the performance descriptor will characterise the minimum performance required to be working at the appropriate standard for the end of the key stage.</p>
<b>programme of study</b>	<p>The statutory curriculum of subject knowledge, skills and understanding for a key stage. The key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study are published online at at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum">www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum</a>.</p>

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<b>raw score</b>	<p>The unmodified score achieved on a test, following marking. In the case of these tests it is the total marks achieved.</p> <p>For example, if a child scores 27 out of 60 possible marks, the raw score is 27. Raw scores are often then converted to other measures such as percentile ranks, standardised scores or grade.</p>
<b>scaled score</b>	<p>A score which has been translated from a raw score onto a score on a fixed, defined scale. This allows performance to be reported on a consistent scale for all children, which retains the same meaning from one year to the next. Therefore, a particular scaled score reflects the same level of attainment in one year as in the previous year, having adjusted for any differences in difficulty of the specific tests.</p>
<b>standard</b>	<p>The required level of attainment in order to be classified into a particular performance category.</p>
<b>standard error of measurement</b>	<p>A reliability estimate that allows the user to determine a confidence interval around a test score. It is a measure of the distribution of scores that would be attained by a child had that child taken the test repeatedly under the same conditions.</p>
<b>standard setting</b>	<p>The process of applying the standard onto a particular test in order to determine the score required for a child to be classified within a particular performance category.</p>
<b>test framework</b>	<p>A document that sets out the principles, rationale and key information about the test and contains a test specification.</p>
<b>test specification</b>	<p>A detailed specification of what is to be included in a test in any single cycle of development.</p>
<b>truncate</b>	<p>To shorten by removing ends.</p>

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# About this publication

## Who is it for?

This document is primarily aimed at those responsible for developing the key stage 2 national curriculum test in English reading. It may also be of interest to schools with children in key stage 2 and other education professionals.

## What does it cover?

Detailed information to ensure an appropriate test is developed, including the:

- content domain
- cognitive domain
- test specification

## Related information

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