TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS

PROVIDE FOCUS + FACILITATE ACHIEVEMENT

South Carolina

User Guide

Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies

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http://www.tfhs.net/

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OVERVIEW

For some time now South Carolina public school educators have been testing their students on the material specified by the *South Carolina Academic Standards* and ***Tests for Higher Standards*** (*TfHS*) has offered appropriate content for these assessments over the years.

On May 30, 2014, Governor Nikki R. Haley signed Act 252, "Statewide Standards and Assessments," initiating major changes in instruction and testing within South Carolina. The new ***South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards*** in Mathematics and English Language Arts were subsequently developed, and will be implemented for SY 15-16 and beyond (SC READY). Science and Social Studies continue to utilize the existing ***South Carolina Academic Standards***, with the current *Palmetto Assessment of State Standards* (*SC PASS*) tests in Grades 3-8, and *End-of-Course Examination Program* (*EOCEP*) for high school continuing for those subjects.

The ***Tests for Higher Standards*** products were originally modeled on the successful Virginia *Literacy Passport Test* materials created by Dr. Stuart Flanagan, Professor Emeritus of the College of William and Mary. These materials were used by **eight of the ten top scoring school** districts in Virginia. In one particular case, King and Queen County students achieved the highest scores in the state during two of the last three Literacy Passport Test years, in spite of the fact that 85% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches. See our Success Stories at http://www.tfhs.net/success sc.pdf.

The current ***Tests for Higher Standards*** assessment materials, like the materials that preceded them, are designed to enable teachers to focus instruction on specific standards. This model forms the basis for *TfHS*'s Virginia SOL tests that has been used by over 90 districts in Virginia, from some of the largest districts to some of the smallest. So it has been with South Carolina. We believe that the sum total of our experience has benefited the students and teachers of South Carolina as our assessments promote a data driven approach to instruction.

Our products are currently offered in four instructional areas — **Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies** — for students in Kindergarten through high school. The assessments are standards-referenced, *i.e*. the questions are aligned individually and uniquely to the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* and the *Academic Standards*. Each test is designed to provide ample practice with the SC READY/SC PASS/EOCEP formats. The tests were developed by experts in each subject area field and with the help of consultants/teachers from South Carolina and the nation.

There are two different products for the four content areas: ***Grade-Level Tests***, and ***Item Banks***. These products provide a set of flexible assessment tools for an ongoing diagnostic/remediation approach to instruction by providing consistent feedback to students, teachers, schools, and districts. Please request information about our ***Diagnosis-Remediation Approach to Instruction.***

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Grade-Level Tests, which serve as a simulation of the State tests for grades 3-8, can point to specific standards in need of remediation. The ***Item Banks*** may be used in constructing tests to measure which standards have been mastered ongoing, including for after-school or summer school programs. Additionally, the ***Item Banks*** can easily be a means to evaluate your programs themselves by **developing nine-week tests or interim benchmark tests for a shorter time period**. We would be delighted to assist in developing a diagnostic/remediation approach through our materials. Our approach allows you to determine the progress of each student and/or each class, school, and your district. Our reporting forms allow for a diagnostic approach, which we believe is critical in meeting the demands of the new era**.**

We now have assessments for the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* in grades K-high school in Mathematics and ELA that are 100% aligned. This set of assessments is complete with an ***Item Bank*** for grades K-12. Each individual item is identified/coded to match the corresponding *SCCCR* Standard. This promotes a diagnostic/remediation approach to a data driven instruction model. For English we include Grades K-11. For Mathematics, we include Grades K-8 and Algebra I. Science and Social Studies continue to utilize the existing ***South Carolina Academic Standards***, with the current *Palmetto Assessment of State Standards* (*SC PASS*) tests in Grades 3-8, and *End-of-Course Examination Program* (*EOCEP*) for high school.

The ***TfHS*** products provide a way for students and teachers to focus on specific grade-level content. The material included on the tests is challenging, often evocative, and always useful to students as they prepare to do well on the State assessments. We believe our assessments are essential for a standards-based instructional program.

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Tests for Higher Standards **is a member of the Association of Test Publishers.**

About the Publishers

S. Stuart Flanagan, Ed. D. – is a mathematics educator with substantial experience in research and student testing. Education: Washington and Lee University – BS, University of Virginia – M.Ed., and Ed.D. He served as chair of the math department at St. Christopher's School (grades K-12) in Richmond, Virginia. Thereafter, he was a professor at the College of William and Mary for 30 years teaching mathematics and mathematics education-related courses including research, testing, and curriculum development. He is now Professor Emeritus.

During his tenure, he developed test items for several projects at the local and state level, directed several NSF grants, consulted with school divisions statewide, authored numerous articles, and was a senior consultant to CBS Publications for the mathematics series *Mathematics Unlimited*. Additionally, he was a grader for the ETS Advanced Placement Program. During the late '80s and early '90s, he was known throughout Virginia for his

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highly successful *Literacy Passport Test* materials, used extensively throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. These materials, by providing data for each child on every standard, enabled a number of districts to dramatically increase their student-passing rate. The conceptual model for those materials is the basis for the *Tests for Higher Standards*.

Special honors include being the first president of both the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Peninsula Council of Teachers of Mathematics. He also served as president of the Greater Richmond Council of Teachers of Mathematics and was presented the William C. Lowry Outstanding Mathematics Teacher award. Additionally, he was an E. I. DuPont Fellow at the University of Virginia and was awarded a Shell Merit Scholarship and NSF grant for study and independent research at the University of Virginia. He now works with Dr. Mott in developing high stakes testing and instructional materials.

David E. W. Mott, Ph. D. – by training and work is a psychologist and psychometrician. Education: Vanderbilt University – BA, American University – MA, Virginia Commonwealth University – Ph.D. He worked at the Virginia Department of Education for nearly twenty years within the student testing division. While there, he was Supervisor of Test Development and *Virginia State Assessment Program* (VSAP) Administrator, among other duties and positions. His activities covered a full range of testing activities: test construction, validation, equating, and utilization. He was involved in test adoption procedures and worked with curriculum development. He was involved with statewide tests such as: the *Basic Learning Skills Tests*, the *Graduation Competency Tests*, the *Standards of Learning – Teacher Resource Materials* (1st and 2nd editions), the *Literacy Passport Tests*, the *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP), and the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT), as well as with VSAP. He was the testing unit's liaison with the computer support group. He is past-president of the Virginia Research Educational Association, and a member of the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. He is also a member of Phi Delta Kappa, and ASCD. He has worked alongside Dr. Flanagan in developing innovative assessment materials for over 15 years.

Dr. Mott also offers the *Reports Online System* (ROS) — an online and paper-based scoring and reporting system. ROS is an easy-to-use, intuitive, non-resource-intensive, test-scoring system that features powerful, immediate, and detailed online reports. The online testing elements offered can help prepare for the coming assessments.

Publishers' Acknowledgments

We are extremely grateful for the work and support of so many throughout South Carolina over the past four years. We have had wonderful, insightful feedback from teachers, supervisors, and directors of instruction. We wish to thank the staff members at the South Carolina Department of Education for their help in understanding events and developments in South Carolina. However, we want to emphasize that the South Carolina SDE has not reviewed, nor does it endorse our products or others as a matter of policy. However, we do follow closely the directives and policies of the Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Education Oversight Committee to understand better the educational goals and climate in South Carolina so that we can be most effective in assisting school districts. At the start of school each year, our policy is to have assessments that measure the South Carolina Academic Standards being assessed. Hence, ongoing and systematic feedback is essential.

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We wish to especially acknowledge and thank the following contributors. Their contributions in the areas of curriculum direction, test design, question writing, reviewing, and editing have made the assessments more appropriate for the needs of education in South Carolina than the assessments could have been without the help of these people. However, their presence on this list does not imply that these individuals or their districts endorse the *TfHS* materials. The test authors are responsible for the final products.

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S. Stuart Flanagan, David E. W. Mott, July, 2021

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I. GRADE-LEVEL TESTS — TEST RATIONALE, DESCRIPTION, AND DEVELOPMENT

Meeting the Challenge

In order to prepare students to meet the challenge of high-stakes testing, South Carolina's schools must use instructional resources in a highly focused way. Teachers must teach and students must master the content and processes included in the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* and the *South Carolina Academic Standards*. Only an ongoing, systematic approach, including assessment, will ensure that students do their best on the state-mandated tests and that schools will meet the goals behind the testing program — improving the comprehensive education of South Carolina's students.

The ***Grade-Level Tests*** for Mathematics and ELA Grades 3-8 have a SC READY format, where we have TE items for appropriate grades, items with 4-6 distracters, and the like. Science and Social Studies test are in SC PASS format. ***End-of-Course*** tests for high school are laid out to meet State specifications also. Each of these ***Grade-Level Tests*** has an accompanying matrix, Excel document, to facilitate in-depth diagnosis.

In addition to their important role in helping teachers with *content* that challenges their students, the ***Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS) Grade-Level Tests*** can also familiarize and empower students to handle the *context* of high-stakes testing. Though no practice tests can simulate exactly the forms and features of a high-security test, the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** provide significant practice in the types of questions that students face on the State tests, and that they will face on college entrance exams and other high stakes testing. Creating good practice items is both difficult and time consuming, and few teachers have had training in writing quality test items. Skill in answering multiple-choice questions is the "coin of the realm" for our students; it makes sense to use available resources for practice and improvement.

Test Coverage of our Assessments

The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** in the areas of Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies for Kindergarten through high school have been developed to help teachers focus instruction on the content and processes of the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* and the *South Carolina Academic Standards*.

Test Description

TfHS Grade-Level Tests are standards-referenced survey tests. The tests are multiple-choice, except in Mathematics and English/Language Arts where some open-ended items are included. The tests are designed to be given in one or two classroom periods (sittings). Grades K-3 may need more time to complete the test. Each test question measures one or more aspects of *a single* Grade-Level Standard. The resulting ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** have high content-validity. The standard for each question is shown above it.

Of course, not all facets of all Standards can be measured by any test of reasonable length, nor are all Standards measurable in either the multiple-choice or the open-ended formats. Reasonable compromises have been made. We believe the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** measure, directly or indirectly, all *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* in Mathematics and English Language Arts and the *South Carolina Academic Standards* in Science and Social Studies.

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The tests provide a snapshot of student mastery of the individual Grade-Level Standards at a point in times. In addition to helping teachers focus instruction on the Standards, these tests are designed to allow schools and school districts to gauge overall performance on South Carolina standards so that instructional resources can be allocated. Finally, the tests are designed to be instructionally sound within the broad scope of each of the disciplines. They have been written by educators, for educators — *and for students*.

Testing the Tests

Because it is important that any test be both reliable and valid, teachers, administrators, and students have had numerous opportunities to review and field-test the passages and test questions in the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests***.

Reviewers have carefully critiqued and edited the tests, evaluating them for:

- the content match with *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* and the *South Carolina Academic Standards*.
- readability for a particular grade level;
- the correct difficulty of content (challenging, but not *too* hard);
- an appropriate format; and
- in ELA a high level of passage appropriateness and student engagement.

Following these evaluations, authors have revised extensively; adjusting questions and answers to address problems noted by teachers across South Carolina. In most cases, teachers have again evaluated the tests.

It is safe to say that the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** have undergone the closest scrutiny. We have worked with over 25 districts in South Carolina. We have heeded their advice when they have made suggestions. Without a doubt, the tests are useful to students, and the tests provide teachers a way to focus instruction so that all South Carolina students master the content and processes included within the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* and the *South Carolina Academic Standards*.

Using the Tests

Pre – Post Testing

The ***TfHS*** can be used before and after instruction to determine the progress of learning. We recommend testing students over the course of a school year, but some circumstances may dictate a shorter pre-post test period. In addition, we suggest these guidelines:

- Students who take a ***TfHS Grade-Level Test*** as a pretest at the beginning of a school year should either take the test designed for that grade level or the test from the prior level depending on the purpose of the tests.
- If at least six months intervene between pre- and post- testing, it is practical to use the same form of the same grade-level test (unless the grade level below was used as a pretest).
- The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** are necessarily challenging. Teachers who work with students whose achievement is consistently below grade level may find the test for that grade level too difficult. In such cases, instructional leaders may choose to administer tests from earlier levels.

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End-of-Year Testing

The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** may also be used as summative, end-of-year tests, without any pre-testing. In this case, student progress is measured against the previous year's performance for grades 1-8.

The ***Grade-Level Tests*** may certainly be used *as a portion* of a local district- or teacher-written final examination. To do this successfully:

- the ***Grade-Level Tests*** should be supplemented with locally relevant assessment and
- final grades and promotional decisions should be based on a combination of teacher judgment, cumulative evaluation of student work, as well as other criteria, rather than on the results of a single test.

Mid-Year Testing

Another way to use the ***Grade-Level Tests*** is to administer them during the year, after the students have had substantial instruction on the course material. In this case, the test would be administered and scored. The results would allow teachers to plan effective remediation on Standards already covered and initial instruction on Standards not yet covered. Results from a January or February testing can be useful as a predictor of student success on the spring state-mandated tests. ***TfHS*** has also developed custom semester tests for school districts based solely on the Grade-Level Standards covered in each semester. We can do this for your district.

End-of-Unit Testing

Some teachers may choose to use portions of individual ***Grade-Level Tests*** as end-of-unit tests. For example, a mathematics teacher might choose to administer only the section of the ***Grade-Level Test*** that assessed knowledge of number theory. Or a language arts teacher, following a unit of instruction on persuasive writing, could ask students to answer only the questions about persuasive writing. ***Grade-Level Test*** questions used in this way would need to be supplemented with additional questions or other assessments because it is difficult to establish test reliability if only three or four test questions are used.

Six- or Nine-Weeks Testing (Interim Benchmark Testing)

One approach to testing that we have seen increasing interest in recently is the use of six- or nine-weeks tests. This allows for a data driven approach to instruction. Teachers have selected items from ***TfHS Item Banks*** indexed to the standards taught in a marking period, and used the resulting tests as an ongoing evaluation of student progress throughout the year. This provides a clearer picture of developing ongoing achievement, and pinpoints areas of weakness to be remedied as the school year progresses. See **Section II, *Item Banks***, for more details.

Simulation

The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** provide the student with a means to experience a test that resembles the State's SC Ready tests for Grades 3-8. The requirements spelled out in the State test's blueprints and the formats presented in the sample items are followed. The State's reporting categories are used for scoring. We have years of experience making Simulation tests in Virginia. Read our SUCCESS STORIES at http://www.tfhs.net

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Our ***Grade-Level Tests*** in Mathematics and English/Language Arts provide "synthetic" Technology Enhanced items for grades 6-8. As an example, in place of a computer "drag and drop" item, we would ask the student to circle the correct choices etc. This action is the same-more than one correct answer out of several along with motion; drag and drop versus circle or X answers**. Our item bank for making snapshot and benchmark tests includes a section of TE-like items also to give students the flavor of the State tests. These TE items match the standards assessed on the traditional all-multiple-choice form.**

We provide a matrix for each test in the form of an MS Excel spreadsheet yielding the individual student error scores when summed across rows and the specific class SC standard score for each SC standard when summed down columns.

Calculators are not permitted Grades 3-5 Mathematics tests. The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** **for Grades 6-8 are divided into two sections:** the first does not permit calculator usage; the second section does. The first section of the test is marked "NO CALCULATORS" at the top of the page. Teachers should give these sections of the test first.

Some Recommended Uses

1. Give these tests under the same conditions the State requires:
   - *About 5 days prior to the State tests*. Work through the results with the students and have them psychologically ready for the real test. You will have limited time and information for carrying out a diagnostic remediation strategy, but you can make a start in that direction. Use the testing experience to ease test anxiety and teach productive test-taking strategies. The learning that results will probably not be long term, but the activity will almost certainly improve most students' test scores somewhat — which, after all, is the goal!
   - *Two to four weeks before the State tests*. Use the results to develop a diagnostic-remediation crash program.
   - *Toward the last of the first semester.* Use the period of the winter break to score the test and devise a combination crash program and an augmented, regular instructional process. Remediate the weak spots in already covered content and ensure the coverage of uninstructed areas.
2. The tests can be used in summer school to determine categories of weakness and learn what instructional focus is needed.
3. *Caution:* We warn against using the ***Simulation Tests*** for detailed diagnosis, as they contain only a small sample of all the Standards being tested.
4. *Note:* Teacher themselves should take this test well before giving it to students. This will make it clear what needs to be covered for the State test.

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Practice Testing and Instruction

Any use of the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** will do at least two things:

- provide students with practice for state-mandated tests, and
- give teachers the chance to see the Grade-Level Standards content *embodied in actual test questions*.

Some tests, such as the English Language Arts ***Grade-Level Tests***, will be particularly useful as instructional texts. The Writing tests contain writing in passages and answer choices that can become useful subject matter for class discussion. Similarly, the Reading tests contain literature, both old and new, that may supplement other class reading.

For many reasons, teachers will want to take the tests prior to administering them to students. Teachers who are familiar with the ***Grade-Level Test*** questions will be better able to assess:

- personal knowledge of content;
- instructional methodology; and
- student readiness for testing.

Grade K-1 Test Directions and Considerations

Due to the limited reading ability of students in Grades K and 1, we have a special set of instructions for evaluating at this level.

The directions and considerations of Grade K-1 tests and the tests you make with our software, **MAKING CUSTOM TESTS**, are as follows:

1. This test should be given in a group setting. The teacher should determine the size of the group– ranging from individual to large groups including the total class in select situations.
2. The teacher should be in the student's view at all times.
3. The teacher needs to make sure the student is on the proper question.
4. The teacher will read each direction, question, and answer choice.
5. The teacher may use the pictures in the left margin to direct students to the proper question; for example, "Place your finger on the bananas."
6. The teacher may name the picture in the question if they feel the student will not know what the picture is.
7. If a student needs a question repeated, the teacher may do so as many times as needed.
8. The teacher should NOT define or explain concepts being tested; for example, "What is a rhyming word?" or "What does reptile mean?"
9. The student will select the best answer choice for each question and then circle the letter in front of the answer choice.
10. The student will write in the tests as directed and may mark on the test.
11. The test may be given in more than one testing period.

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Grade 2 Grade-Level Test Directions and Considerations

As we attempt to give suggestions for administering the 2nd grade test, we want you to know there is great variability within and between 2nd grade classes. Hence, you need to use your best judgment in deciding on what and how much to either read the test or pace the class. Here is what has worked:

Science and Social Studies tests: Read the whole test, both pre and post, as reading ability is not being tested here and many of the words may be difficult to read at this age.

English Language Arts test: Read everything except the stories for the pre-test; read the directions to each section and allow the children to read the rest of the post-test themselves. However, make sure they know how to follow the directions given.

Mathematics test: Read everything on the pre-test; read only the directions on the post-test and have the students work on their own. You may want to do each group of questions together. For example, you might say, "Now do the next three problems on your own. When you are done, stop and wait."

Math Facts Tests: Grades 2 and 3

We believe that basic mathematical facts are essential for a student to know. This skill requires the ability to recall those facts in some reasonable time frame; hence we provide a systematic assessment of this knowledge through timed ***Facts Tests*** (Grade 2: addition and subtraction in ATO.2, and Grade 3: multiplication and division in ATO.7). This skill is basic to doing either mathematical computations and/or estimation. You will be the ultimate judge of the time limits involved but we will offer a suggestion: For addition, allow 2-3 minutes and for subtraction, allow 3-4 minutes. We suggest you break the tests into sections, as you want to see how well the student can either add and/or subtract. The same approach to multiplication and division is suggested: 3-4 minutes each for multiplication and division.

— NOTES FOR TEACHERS —

To teach is to be responsible for student success. This has always been so, but the State tests have underscored that responsibility. More than ever, you need the support of good instructional materials, and we feel confident that the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** for your subject and your grade level will help *you* enable your students to succeed.

Using the Pre-Post Test Model

In the following discussion, we will assume that you and your colleagues have decided to use the tests as pre-tests in the fall and post-tests in spring. This is one way the tests may be used, but not necessarily the best way.

Before You Test: Before the day of pre-testing, you'll need to review the tests themselves, as well as all accompanying materials. Make sure that you have a test copy and a scoring sheet for each of your students. A complete package of test materials includes:

- ample copies of the test for your subject and grade level;
- a Classroom Matrix (for viewing class test results);
- scoring sheets; and
- an answer key.

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You'll want to give the test during the first week or two of the school year, so that you can complete the Class Matrix by the second week of school.

The Classroom Matrix: The Classroom Matrix will help you focus instruction, guiding the way you spend instructional time, and helping you make decisions about the sequence in which you teach the content and processes for the Grade-Level Standards for your subject and grade level. The Matrix gives you a picture of your students' strengths and weaknesses as individuals, as a class, and ultimately as a district. The Matrix also provides performance data about each Standard.

Skill Maintenance: This is a vital part of any instructional program. Skills, once learned, need to be reinforced from time to time throughout the school year. This idea of skill maintenance is extremely important for all grades. **We urge you to develop a plan for doing this systematically, as maintenance is a vital part of instructional planning**.

And If the Scores Are Low: Don't be surprised if your students' scores on these tests are low. The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** are difficult because they are written to a challenging set of Standards. If your students are able to answer fewer than 20-25% of the questions correctly, you may want to give the test for the grade level just completed. In these subjects, students use many of the same processes from year to year; so testing at a lower level will give you good information about what your students can do.

Planning for Testing: In most cases, students will complete the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** in one or two class periods. The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** are — with the exception of the ***Facts Tests*** in Grades 2 and 3 — power tests, not speed tests. Some students are likely to complete tests earlier than others, so you will want to plan for this. Perhaps you can arrange for students who are still testing to use another quiet space; or you might plan an activity away from the testing area for students who complete the test quickly.

Because these tests are relatively difficult, you'll need to watch students carefully. While it's true that the tests are not timed, it is a mistake for students to become too frustrated. If a test is *much* too hard for a student, discontinue it and provide him or her with another activity. If the purpose of your testing is diagnosis, you may want to give the student the test from an earlier grade level.

On the Day You Give the Test: At the time of the testing, you will need to issue these materials to your students:

- a test booklet
- an appropriate amount of scratch paper (for example, two or three sheets for mathematics tests; more for writing tests)
- two or three pencils
- other items, as needed, such as graph paper for math students and/or graphing calculators for certain ***TfHS Grade Level Tests*** in Mathematics
- an individual response sheet (or other machine-scored answer sheet)

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Contact Us

Contact us if we can help you as you use ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests***, and please know that we welcome your suggestions for new test questions, changes in old questions, or other materials you would like us to develop, especially semester exams.

Scoring and Reporting

DIRECTIONS FOR HAND-SCORING THE GRADE-LEVEL TESTS

You can score the Individual Response Sheet or note the scores on the Classroom Matrix. Using the Answer Key supplied with the test for your subject area and grade level, mark each **incorrect** answer with a check. If you are fortunate enough to have Scantrons, this will alleviate much labor on the part of the teacher. If you have programmable Scantrons, they can be used to produce the Class Matrix automatically. This would be a major timesaver for the teacher.

Individual Response Sheet

If you use the Individual Response Sheet:

- Count the number correct on each Standard and place the number on the sheet.
- Compute number correct and percent scores for the strands and for the test as a whole.
- After you score all individual response sheets, transfer the strand scores to the Classroom Matrix to show the results for your class.

Note: This scoring method gives more individual diagnostic information, but slightly less information about the class as a whole.

Classroom Matrix

If you use the Classroom Matrix:

- Place a check mark in the correct question location for each incorrect response.
- Total the number of incorrect questions and write the number-correct score in the space provided.

This scoring method gives less individual diagnostic information but slightly more for the class as a whole. You may choose to record the information on both forms. Your district may have the technology to produce the matrix electronically.

Post-Testing

Give the test during the last two weeks of school, or 2-3 weeks before State testing. Again, record the results on the Classroom Matrix (use a new one, if you used a different level of the test as a pre-test). This time, note errors with a red "X". Ideally, this record of pre- and post-test results would go with the student to the next grade or to summer school and provide a focus for remediation and instruction.

Additional Assessment

At this point you have an assessment package that allows for pre-post testing. We also offer short assessment tools to be used as an evaluation of knowledge of individual standards, called ***Item Banks***. If you develop your own assessment, you should add it to the Classroom Matrix.

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Using Scanners and Online Testing, Scoring, and Reporting

In the past, most ***TfHS*** customers have scored our tests and completed reporting documents by hand. We realize that this places a large burden on teacher time, a resource always in short supply. For this reason, we will support systems to relieve this burden by automating much of this work, thereby reducing the demand on time and resources. ***Tests for Higher Standards*** supports a product developed by ***ROSworks, LLC*** in close cooperation with ***TfHS*** called the ***Reports Online System (ROS)***. A brief description of ***ROS*** follows. More information is available in the CD Info folder of the ***TfHS*** disk.

Reports Online System (ROS)

The ***Reports Online System (ROS)*** is a powerful, flexible, test scoring and reporting system designed to be used with printed tests and online computer-administered assessments. It provides for plain paper, bubble-sheet scanning and scoring, as well as online test administration and scoring, vertical data aggregation, NCLB disaggregation, and reporting. All operations except local scanning are accessed through the web. The system has been in use and in continued development and refinement for over 10 years. The online testing function is a new option, with beta testing in the previous year. An online test construction system is now in development. You may contact the ***ROSworks, LLC*** at 1-866-724-9722, 1-804-282-3111, or send an e-mail to Dr. Mott at dem@rosworks.com for more information. The web site is: http://rosworks.com.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

As an instructional leader, you can help plan for the use of the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests***. Teachers need your support. Students benefit when administrators and teachers make joint instructional decisions. In most cases, the principal in charge of instruction can do the following:

1. Supply ample copies of the tests to teachers, along with Classroom Matrices;
2. Determine a beginning-of-year schedule for test administration and completion of the Matrices;
3. Determine suitable times to interact with teachers about initial test results and plans, and about progress throughout the school year;
4. Assist teachers as they develop appropriate class assessment for evaluating student achievement throughout the school year;
5. Develop an end-of-year assessment schedule.
6. Arrange for student test results to be forwarded to receiving teachers the following year and/or appropriate summer-school teachers;
7. Assist teachers in getting the support of aides, parents, and others who can tutor students needing remediation.
8. Dr. Flanagan (stuflanagan@aol.com) has extensive instructional experience. You are invited to request assistance if needed.

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GENERAL TESTING CONSIDERATIONS

Strengths

The ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** are designed to:

- simulate the experience of taking the state-mandated tests;
- provide data about individual students and whole classes;
- provide diagnostic information about individual students on individual standards;
- provide a focus for instruction.

Results indicate that the ***Grade-Level Tests*** do all of these things, and in some cases, more. Many students can feel more confident about taking the state-mandated tests because they have had practice with the ***TfHS Tests***. And many students have begun to take the South Carolina standards themselves more seriously because they are able to see their own strengths and weaknesses, as measured by the ***Grade-Level Tests***. Perhaps the greatest strength of the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests*** is that they place necessary emphasis on the Grade-Level Standards at every grade level and the questions make the instructional objectives clear.

Limitations of These Tests

The ***TfHS Grade-Level Test*** questions were developed for only those Standards deemed testable in the multiple-choice or open-ended format; thus, not every Standard is tested. The Standards excluded are the same as those excluded from the state-mandated tests.

Limitations of All Multiple-Choice Tests

Certain Grade-Level Standards require students to *create* problems, patterns, or constructions. These skills are important and need to be taught, but it is very difficult to test these skills directly on a multiple-choice test.

Current Testing Materials

All of the tests and other materials published by ***TfHS*** are available electronically in Microsoft Word® format. The documents should be readable in either Word for Windows 2000 or later or Word for Macintosh 2001 or later. The ancillary materials (answer keys, student response sheets, class matrices, and time-sequence planning charts) are in either Word or in Microsoft Excel®. All of the tests are also available in camera-ready paper format (hard copy).

Copies printed from the available electronic media should be checked for satisfactory appearance before mass duplication. Various computer/printer combinations may cause the materials to output differently. Difference in line breaks, page breaks, and fonts, for example, can cause very substantial changes in appearance. Graphics can appear in the wrong position or on the wrong page. Also check the graphics: we have found that with some printer-computer combinations graphics may not print clearly. We can supply paper copy if you cannot get satisfactory copies for some pages of our tests.

Customizing Tests for Your District

If you desire to modify our Grade-Level Tests, permission needs to be granted by the publisher. The publisher will willingly give permission provided that certain safeguards are met.

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II. ITEM BANKS

Description

The major portion of this ***User Guide*** is devoted to describing the various possible uses, rationale, and development of the ***TfHS Grade-Level Tests***. With those tests in place, we felt a need to provide teachers and students with a means for ongoing feedback about student achievement. Hence, we produced ***Item Banks***. We believe this item bank will fill a present instructional void in Grade-Level Standard-specific assessment content. For a data-driven approach to instruction, the use of our Item Banks is crucial. Moreover, we provide easy to use and teacher friendly software for producing snapshot and benchmark tests. The materials are located on your CD in the folder labeled **MAKING CUSTOM TESTS.** Please be aware that each test item is provided on a Word document, and can be modified to better suit your needs. This suggestion has many applications, such as rewriting or changing numbers on a Math item, using maps and figures to create different items, etc. For assistance, please contact Dr. Flanagan (stuflanagan@aol.com).

The ***Item Banks*** exist for all content areas, in Kindergarten through high school. The *Items Banks* for Mathematics and English/Language Arts include multiple-choice, multiple-answer, and open-ended TE items, so that the tests developed from the *Item Banks* will conform to SC READY. Be reminded that each item is a stand-alone Word document, and hence multiple-choice and TE items can easily be modified from one type to another**.** The ELA ***Item Banks*** include rubrics which can assist in diagnosing student weaknesses. Each grade has one stand-alone TDA section, along with a TDA Scoring Guide.

The index/matrix page for each ***Item Bank*** indicates the number of questions available to measure each Grade-Level Standard for that grade. We have provided a sufficient number of test questions to yield a reliable means of determining either satisfactory or unsatisfactory student achievement on a Standard.

A number of the English passages in the ***Item Banks*** are now in a format that we refer to as "Extra Items Passages." These passages come equipped with up to 22 items per passage. The large number of items available per passage is a feature designed to make it easier to construct benchmark (or snapshot) tests. Using these passages and their items would allow a district to follow its pacing guide without need to write new items or to require too much reading per item. Passages can be selected, the unneeded items deleted, and the benchmark is almost done. In the Extra Items passages, the correct alternative is colored blue. This makes constructing the key for one of these tests very simple — just "follow the blue." After the key is made, the text of the entire test is selected and the font color is set to "black." Then the test is ready to go! Be careful, as a passage may have up to 30 items make sure, that as you select items, you **do not make a selection** that gives the answer away in another selection.

In establishing the questions to include, we used carefully considered teacher judgments of the number and variety of questions necessary. Again, *we developed enough questions to evaluate the various components of each Standard so that a teacher could make a reliable judgment about a student's individual Grade-Level Standard achievement.*

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Answer Keys for the Item Banks

Please note that the correct answer to an item in an ***Item Bank*** is noted on the item itself. The correct item is in blue. When you are using these items to make a snapshot or benchmark test, buy copying and paste the items, first make the answer key using the colors from the test document and then simply highlight the entire tests and change the font color to black! Off you go. Open-ended ***Item Banks*** have a separate key to indicate correct or acceptable responses.

Uses

There are many possible uses for these ***Item Banks***. If the Grade-Level Standards are taught in some combination, several assessments from the ***Item Banks*** can easily be combined into one test. You might shorten the combination by eliminating certain questions for given time constraints. Additionally, you might add open-ended or essay questions to the test. We see this as highly desirable. It could be a means to increase the evaluations of higher order, analysis-like objectives. Multiple-choice questions can easily be turned into open-ended assessments by simply eliminating the distracters. However, be aware that this can make the same question somewhat more difficult or much, much harder. Occasionally it can make a question easier, all depending on the individual question.

For Grades K-11, the questions were developed primarily according to the item specifications given in the test blueprints published by the State. In Grades 2 and 3, you may need to assist the individual student by clarifying or explaining the question. Students who read very poorly could be tested separately in a small group. The questions could be read aloud to this group. Beyond Grade 3, this should not be necessary, but we recommend giving individual question clarification if that is needed. Usually, students in Grades K and 1 will need to have the test read to them as individuals or in groups.

Making Benchmark and Snapshot Tests

Data driven instruction seems to be very effective and there is research to support this assertion and is provided in **Section IV** of this document. For a more ongoing diagnostic/remediation approach to instruction, we encourage the development of nine-weeks (six-weeks) Benchmark tests with an accompanying Class Matrix. In conjunction with this practice, we also encourage ongoing, systematic Snapshot testing: 3-7 items on a single page. This is a trend among our present users. We have developed software to assist in the development of Benchmark and Snapshot testing. Without charge, we will be delighted to share samples of these types of tests and related matrices. We will also provide additional instructions on how to select items and build the tests. On your CD under CD Info, see **MAKING CUSTOM TESTS** where we provide you with a blank cover and a blank 2-column page with headers and footers to facilitate the necessary cut-and-paste work. Just email your request for assistance to Dr. Flanagan (stuflanagan@aol.com).

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What does research suggest regarding feedback?

- **The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. The simplest prescription for improving education must be "dollops of feedback".**

MAXIMUM POTENTIAL GAIN UP TO 35%

Hattie, J. A. (1992). Measuring the effects of schooling. *Australian Journal of Education, 36(1)*, 5-13

***TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS*,** through simulation tests, grade level tests, 9-week Benchmark and Snapshot tests, and ongoing assessments such as *TfHS's Item Banks*, provide "dollops of feedback" that is based squarely on the State's standards and only on the State's standards. (For more on this topic, see Section IV of this guide.)

Using the Item Banks for English Language Arts

These ***Item Banks*** were developed to assist teachers in evaluating student achievement on a short-term basis. Unlike the ***Grade-Level Tests***, these tests are not to be taken in one sitting. Rather, they are to be used in evaluating achievement for individual or clusters of Grade-Level Standards as you normally teach and test — ongoing.

As students in the earlier grades need to have materials read to them, we have paid special attention to this by giving directions on the test. You may need to employ small groups for some assessments in combination with using description/checklist type of evaluations. The student must clearly understand the question to have an opportunity to answer it correctly.

It is not usually practical to isolate, teach, and subsequently test the English Language Arts Grade-Level Standards one at a time. This can be done in clusters.

The Passage Item Maps can be a very helpful feature when constructing tests from groups of passages. The map tells you which standards any given passage has items to measure. This is so you can choose a passage that best fits you needs. You can easily remove items that measure standards you do not need measure, but if a passage does *not* have any items measuring a standard you do need, you will have to write (an) item(s) that measures the standards. (***Hint:*** If you need to do this, look in the passage map for a passage that does measure that standard. Find those standard-related items and modify them to fit the passage you are using.) To find the maps, go to folder under ELA for the correct grade labeled "Item Bank-Multiple Choice." (Here is the path: TfHS SC 2019-2020\English Language Arts\Grade #\Item Bank-Multiple Choice\SC Item Map Gr #.xls.) There will be an MS Excel workbook called SC Item Map Gr #.xls. When the sheet opens, click on the left tab "Grade #". You should see something like the Item Map below:

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Module Maps				Modules highlighted in yellow do appear in the Grade Level Test.				
SC Item Bank	N/A indicates an error in F-K reading level analysis or invalid passage length due to non-traditional passage type.							
Grade 7								
Title	Type	Passage Length	F-K	Description	# Items on test	W7.4.1a	W7.4.1b	W7.
Vermont Advertisement	NF	N/A	N/A	Advertisement for tourism opportunities in Vermont.	2			
Casey at the Bat	P	595	N/A	The popular poem about the big baseball slugger who goes down swinging.	11			
Eldorado	P	103	N/A	Edgar Allen Poe poem that recalls images of Don Quixote and the search for El Dorado.	3			
Mirrors	P	107	N/A	A poem that addresses our image and the impressions people make on others.	3			
The Innovator (A Pharoah Speaks)	P	138	N/A	A pharoah makes a bad decision that ruins him.	6			
You Are Old Father William	P	282	N/A	Poem by Lewis Carroll. An old man reflects on all the things he used to be able to do.	8			
An Interview	W	N/A	N/A	Heath interviews a local golf pro to ask him about his life.	4			
Jacob's Short Story	W	N/A	N/A	Jacob has to write a short story about someone leaving home for a week to attend summer camp.	6			
My Trip to Baltimore	W	N/A	N/A	Maya is writing a descriptive essay about a trip she took to Baltimore.	10		2	
Picabo Street	W	N/A	N/A	Olivia is writing a biography about Picabo Street, the Olympic skier.	13	1	2	
Redwood National Park Project	W	N/A	N/A	Shane is writing about the Redwood National Park and its history.	13	2		
Tamika's Story	W	N/A	N/A	Tamika is writing a story for her High School English class.	8			
Types of Sentences	W	N/A	N/A	An exercise that addresses standard W7.4.1b.	7		7	
The Election Process	W	N/A	N/A	Jane is writing a report about the election process in her hometown.	14	3		
Writing an Autobiography	W	N/A	N/A	William has to write an autobiography of himself.	11	3	1	
Total Passages:	45			Total Items:	426	9	12	

Three Helpful Steps:

1. Gather the information.

Give either a Grade-Level version of the appropriate test that covers all the Grade-Level Standards for a grade, or use an ***Item Bank Passage*** targeted to a particular cluster of Standards. Score the assessment using the answer key provided.

2. Sort the information.

- *Group answers*. Group the answers by Standard (defined here as the numbered Standard plus a bullet, indicated by a letter).
- *Determine proficiency*. Use the percentage of correct answers to determine proficiency.

3. Analyze the information.

- *Look for patterns.* In reading, for example, do scores show a problem in word analysis, information, or inference? Since this is a cognitive sequence — you can't get the literal information without the words, and you can't infer without the literal information — you need to see where the problem starts.
- *Consider the concepts involved.* More often than not, a student who has problems with a Grade-Level Standard never really grasped the essential concept(s) required by it. For example, it's hard to know much about free markets if all you understand about money is that it's something in your pocket.
- *Think about the mental operations required.* Go back and look at the questions and the answers connected to a student's score. How did the student have to think to get the correct answer? How might he/she have been thinking to get that incorrect answer? Where did he/she get off track?

Steps 1–3 will help to keep your instructional focus on the Grade-Level Standards.

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III. EOCEP EXAMS

End-of-Course Tests

Although we have described our ***Grade-Level Tests*** for high school in a previous section, we also have high school ***End-of-Course*** tests. The ***End-of-Course*** tests are our other primary assessment component for the high school courses. We have ***End-of-Course*** tests and the related ***Item Banks*** for: Algebra I, Biology, Physical Science, and United States History and the Constitution. These assessments should provide the basic tools necessary for teacher evaluation, diagnosis, and remediation. We supply high schools with all of our grades 6-8 ***Grade-Level Tests*** and ***Item Banks*** for diagnostic and remedial work. As each item on ***TfHS*** assessments is referenced to a specific South Carolina Grade-Level Standard, you can find the coding used by going to the South Carolina website where the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards* and the *South Carolina Academic Standards* are given.

IV. ACT PRACTICE TESTS

As a first step to assist with maximizing student performance on the ACT, we have produced simulation assessments for Mathematics and English as a start and will add to this work during the year.

At this time, for Mathematics, we have a 60-item ACT-like test. We produced items for this test from our item bank covering some 180 ACT CCRS Standards. This work was done independently of ACT. This bank can be used in conjunction with the school's regular Algebra 1&2 courses, Geometry, and any other course as the item bank has the standards identified by the actual ACT standard number. It is that specific. Our reference was:
http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-educator/about-the-act.html#math

At this time, for English, we have two 11th Grade Simulation Tests that cover ACT Standards for English and Reading. We are working on an item bank but the subject matter requires a different configuration. This work is now in progress. After this we will add ACT Science.

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V. RESEARCH ON ASSESSMENT

- **The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. The simplest prescription for improving education must be "dollops of feedback".**

MAXIMUM POTENTIAL GAIN UP TO 35%

Hattie, J. A. (1992). Measuring the effects of schooling. *Australian Journal of Education, 36(1)*, 5-13

TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS, through simulation tests, grade level tests, 9-week tests, and ongoing assessments such *as the TfHS Item Banks*, provide "dollops of feedback" that is based squarely on the State's standards and only on the State's standards.

- **Students need assessments that will tell them what they are doing is correct and what is incorrect. They need to know how to correct the performance and work on it until they do.**

MAXIMUM POTENTIAL GAIN UP TO 30%

Lysakowski, R. S. and Walberg, H. J. (1981). Classroom reinforcement in relation to learning: A quantitative analysis. *Journal of Educational Research, 75*, 69-77.

Lysakowski, R. S. and Walberg, H.J. (1982). Instructional effect of cues, participation, and corrective feedback: A quantitative synthesis. *American Educational Research Journal, 19(4)*, 559-578

Bangert-Downs, R. L., Kulik, C. C., Kulik, J. A., & Morgan, M. (1991). The instructional effects of feedback in test-like events. *Review of Educational Research, 61(2)*, 213-238

TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS provide diagnostic data so that the student and teacher will know specifically what needs correcting and the related assessment tools to determine the performance in question is correct. The feedback needs to be standards specific to maximize student gains.

- **Assessment results need to be immediate. The greater the delay the less impact there is on achievement.**

MAXIMUM POTENTIAL GAIN UP TO 20%

Bangert-Downs, R. L., Kulik, C. C., Kulik, J. A., & Morgan, M. (1991). The instructional effects of feedback in test-like events. *Review of Educational Research, 61(2)*, 213-238.

TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS provide assessments that allow for immediate feedback. There are several ways for this to happen depending on the scoring technique the teachers opt to employ: hand scoring, Scantron, online, student scoring, etc.

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- **Corrections should be specific to the task/objective.**

Crooks, T. J. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research, 58(4)*, 438-481.

TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS identify the specific standard that each and every test item measures. The standard is coded next to every item on each and every TfHS test. This better enables the teacher to assist the student in making specific corrections of specific, individual standards.

- **Students could use *TfHS's* Classroom Matrix and to know and evaluate their progress.**

Trammel, D. L., Schloss, P. J., Alper, S. (1994). Using self-recording and graphing to increase completion of homework assignments. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 27(2)*, 75-81.

TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS offer the student a means of mapping and/or seeing their own progress. Each and every *TfHS* test has an individual student response sheet that indicates the level of student achievement. For grade level pre-post tests and simulation tests, there is an individual student profile and related **Classroom Matrix** that demonstrates what the student knows and the related ongoing progress or lack thereof.

For more information on this topic that is in summary form, you might want to obtain the following *ASCD* publication:

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION THAT WORKS
Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement
Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, and Jane E. Pollock

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