

Introduction to the Multiple-Choice Questions

The multiple-choice section of the RICA is composed of 70 questions, although only 60 questions actually count toward your score. Ten of the questions are experimental and may be used on future tests. The 70 questions are taken from the four RICA Domains as follows:

Domain I	20% (about 14 questions)
Domain II	30% (about 21 questions)
Domain III	30% (about 21 questions)
Domain IV	20% (about 14 questions)

The 70 multiple-choice questions appear first on the exam. Be sure to allow approximately 1 minute per question, but never spend more than 1½ minutes on a question. Since you are given 4 hours to complete the entire exam, pace yourself accordingly to allow no more than 90 minutes or an hour and a half for the multiple-choice questions.

Some questions will be single questions, but others may be in groups, that is, two or three questions referring to the same information.

Remember to use the strategies mentioned earlier.

Applying the Plus-Minus System

Try to answer all of the questions but don't deliberate over any one question or group of questions at great length. Remember, each question is of equal value. Use the plus-minus system mentioned earlier so you don't get stuck on any one question.

Using the Elimination Strategy

If you are uncertain, use a process of elimination to choose your response. Since there are only four choices, if you can eliminate one or two, your guessing odds increase tremendously. Since there is no penalty for guessing, never leave a question without at least taking a guess.

Avoiding the Misread

Remember to watch out for the common mistake of misreading the question. Be sure to focus on what the question is asking.

Sample RICA Questions and Strategies

The following multiple-choice questions are grouped by domain and identified by content area. Read the sample questions, pay special attention to the strategies given for each question, and then focus carefully on the explanation.

Domain I

Planning and Organizing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment

Content Area 1: Conducting Ongoing Assessment of Reading Development

1. A first-grade teacher administers running records to assess her students' reading. When listening to one of her students read an unknown text, the teacher notices that the student is able to read most of the words in the text accurately and use appropriate decoding strategies to figure out unknown words. After the student has read the text, the teacher asks him questions about the story. The student is unable to provide any correct answers and responds, "I don't know." What does this information tell the teacher about the student's reading ability and what do the results suggest for the teacher's future reading planning?
 - A. This information assists the teacher in selecting books for the student at this reading level and suggests that the classroom needs to provide books for students on many reading levels.
 - B. The student is able to comprehend what he has read accurately, and the teacher needs to select more challenging text for the student to read.
 - C. The student is able to decode the text but has weak comprehension skills; therefore, the teacher needs to provide direct instruction in comprehension strategies and demonstrate what needs to be understood from the text.
 - D. This student is able to decode the text accurately and would benefit from paired reading, flexible guided reading group instruction, and small group instruction on specific phonetic skills.

Strategies to Use

First underline or circle key words. Note that the question includes the grade level of the student—underline "first grade." The question also provides the information that the student can decode accurately but does not comprehend the text adequately—this is necessary information. The question also includes two parts: What does the **information provide** and what are the **next steps for teaching**? Be sure that the answer you choose addresses the two parts asked in the question.

Explanation

The best answer is **C**. The student's comprehension skills are weak if he cannot answer any of the subsequent questions about the story. The teacher will need to address this weakness in planning her future reading lessons. Choice D also correctly surmises that that student can decode accurately but supplies next step strategies that would not wholly address the student's deficits and, therefore, is an incorrect answer. Neither Choice A nor Choice B answers the question correctly. Reading is the active act of combining decoding and comprehension. The goal of all beginning reading programs should be that all students comprehend grade-level material. The teacher should be sure that the student in question is given an opportunity to discuss the meaning of any words or concepts he might not understand, use strategies such as literature circles that promote discussion of text and further facilitate comprehension, support the reader by tapping into any prior knowledge as it relates to the story, discuss the pictures before reading the story, and give clues to the story line beforehand.

Adequate reading comprehension is the ultimate result of effective instruction in reading. If a student is able to decode but not comprehend, then the student is not able to enjoy and understand written language. The knowledge and active application of certain reading strategies are necessary for comprehension.

Additional teaching strategies to develop reading comprehension in all grades, not only first grade, might include the following:

- using open-ended questioning techniques
- using drama activities that are good for supporting literacy development
- guided oral retellings
- question the author
- guided reflection
- small discussion groups
- reciprocal teaching (an approach using multiple strategies to support students in understanding text; students ultimately take on the role of the teacher)
- helping students to make inferences
- think-alouds—teacher modeling the mental processing of print

- 2.** At the beginning of the new school term, the school district has provided a fifth-grade teacher with standardized testing results on each of the students enrolled in his class. Each grade level in the school meets to discuss standardized testing results and to utilize them to better know the students' capabilities. What would be the best assessments that the teacher might administer next to provide more information about the students to enable the teacher to better plan reading instruction?
- A.** More information is needed on each student in order to plan reading instruction, and the teacher could administer a Phonological Awareness Screening Test, a Phonics Survey, and a reading comprehension assessment to provide him with more data.
 - B.** The assessments that would provide the most information would be a Spelling Inventory and an Alphabet Recognition Survey.
 - C.** A Reading Comprehension Test and an Oral Reading Test could be administered next to provide the teacher with diagnostic information that would assist the teacher in planning.
 - D.** After analyzing each student's performance on standardized tests, a Phonemic Awareness Test and a Phoneme Segmentation Test would help the teacher with planning for classroom instruction in reading.

Strategies to Use

First, circle or underline what you are looking for—in this case, *the best assessment that the teacher might administer next to provide more information*. Notice that this is a fifth-grade classroom. The question is asking about the next steps after analyzing standardized testing data. In general, standardized testing information is not diagnostic and the question asks about how the teacher would obtain more student information for planning instruction.

Explanation

The best answer is **C**. The teacher needs to be competent in selecting appropriate assessments and interpreting their results in order to plan reading instruction. A test that assesses reading comprehension, the ultimate goal of reading, is appropriate for fifth graders. This type of assessment requires that students can accurately decode words; have an understanding of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary; and are able to apply critical reading strategies. This assessment would give the teacher information on which students have reading difficulties and might benefit from additional assessments to help pinpoint their reading difficulties. Additionally, an oral reading test could give an indication of the student's reading fluency and whether the student decodes accurately. Good fluency often impacts a student's comprehension, and a student who reads haltingly with incorrect phrasing and intonation will likely have difficulty reading grade level material. In Choice A, a phonological awareness test is mostly appropriate for students in grades K–2, but a phonics survey might be administered to a fifth-grade student who is having difficulty with decoding. In Choice B, a spelling inventory would be an appropriate test for a fifth grader and would give the teacher information on the student's orthographic knowledge, but an alphabet recognition survey would not be an appropriate test for a fifth grader. In Choice D, a phoneme segmentation test would be appropriate for a fifth grader who is significantly behind in reading and would help determine (reveal) where the deficits might be decoding weaknesses, but a phonemic awareness test would not normally be appropriate for this grade level.

Content Area 2: Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction

3. In a multiple-choice exercise a student who speaks a second language at home is asked to identify the word that matches a picture of a “throne.” The choices are:

- a. thrown
- b. throne
- c. throwne

The student chooses answer “a” but doesn’t understand why his answer is marked wrong. What could this error suggest to the teacher for further instruction?

- A. This student’s difficulty is with correct spelling, and the teacher should recognize that the student would benefit from adding this word to his/her weekly spelling list.
- B. This student is confusing homophones, and the teacher can provide individualized instruction to help the student differentiate between words that sound the same.
- C. The teacher needs to provide an environment that promotes independent reading to help this student with vocabulary.
- D. This student’s reading and vocabulary development can be furthered by extra classroom lessons provided by a teacher, aide, or parent volunteer.

Strategies to Use

First, underline or circle key words. Next, focus on the information that is provided with the question. The information states that the student speaks a second language at home and makes an error on a multiple-choice question. Notice the answers that the student has to choose from are homophones. This will help lead you to the best answer to this question. You need to be sure that the answer you choose specifically answers what the question is asking.

Explanation

The best answer is **B**. Confusing “throne” and “thrown” is a very common error for students who might hear another language at home. Additionally, they might be more familiar with the word “thrown” and possibly would have seen it in print before. The teacher should recognize that this student needs some additional individualized instruction to clarify these words. Choice A is incorrect because this student is not experiencing a spelling problem. Although independent reading promotes increased vocabulary, as suggested in Choice C, this is not the best solution to this student’s difficulty. Choice D contains correct statements but does not specifically address the question.

Domain II

Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading

Content Area 3: Phonemic Awareness

4. During a phonemic awareness activity, a primary student is unable to blend phonemes said aloud by the teacher. The teacher explains that she will say the sounds in a word very slowly and then the students are to tell her what word she is stretching into sounds. The student listens attentively to the sounds and then orally says an incorrect word, not relying on any of the sounds the teacher has said. For example, after hearing /s/ - /a/ - /t/, the child says, “kitten.” What does this information suggest to the teacher?
- A. It would be beneficial to the teacher to include the use of magnetic letters in small group instruction, and the teacher needs to instruct the student in matching sounds to the letters.
 - B. The teacher could help this student with blending skills by assigning independent practice with a volunteer or teacher’s aide.
 - C. The teacher needs to provide this student with explicit instruction in blending and to select appropriate activities and materials to practice sound segmentation and blending.
 - D. This student would benefit from additional instruction in phonemic awareness, since phonemic awareness is an essential reading skill and students need to understand how language works in order to be successful readers.

Strategies to Use

First, underline or circle key words in the question. Note that the question provides the exact task and the exact response of the child. Knowing that this is a phonemic awareness task will help you narrow down the choices.

Explanation

The best answer is C. Choice A involves matching sounds to letters, not a phonemic awareness task. Choice B would help the student practice the skill with an adult, but this student needs more instruction in the skill before practice can begin. Choice D is true; the student would probably benefit from added instruction in phonemic awareness but is too general an answer and does not specifically address what the question is asking. Choice C specifically addresses this student’s weakness. Blending is an important prerequisite to reading, and students need practice and explicit instruction in this skill. In teaching this skill, the teacher needs to select activities and materials that are appropriate for this student’s stage of development. Some good activities for this student would be oral games such as play a guessing game by identifying a familiar item in the classroom and say: “What am I thinking of? I’m thinking of something in the room that you can sit at. I’m thinking of a /d/-/e/-/s/-/k/. What am I thinking of?” Or you can use student’s names, stretch them into sounds, and ask the students to tell you what name you are saying.

Content Area 4: Concepts About Print

5. After reading a big book to her students who are gathered on the rug at the front of the room, the teacher asks a kindergarten student to find a word on the page of text and to frame that word with her hands. The teacher requests that the student frame any word on the page before her. The student comes to the front of the room where the big book is displayed and uses her hands to frame a whole line of text instead of just one word. After the teacher ascertains that the student has understood the task, what kind of classroom intervention could the teacher plan for this student?
- A. The teacher should engage the student in activities that promote understanding of “word.” Some activities that the teacher could use are having the students track print as the teacher reads, counting words, and explaining that there are empty spaces between words.
 - B. The ability to frame a word needs to be practiced by this student in order to foster her understanding of phonics. Some activities that could help this student understand the concept of a word are writing in sand, singing songs, cut-and-paste activities, and being read to.
 - C. A good intervention for this student is to participate in learning center activities that are carefully planned by the teacher. Some learning centers that would benefit this student are writing centers, listening centers, computer centers, and independent reading.
 - D. This student could benefit from additional activities that support these skills. Some suggested intervention activities for this student are letter matching, cut-apart sentences, and oral reading activities.

Strategies to Use

First, underline or circle key words. Next, review the information given carefully. Note that this question describes a classroom scenario in which students are gathered to listen to the teacher read a big book. This is a common activity in early primary classrooms. The task that the teacher is asking the student to perform is described. Additionally, it is noted that the student understands the task.

Explanation

The best answer is **A**. This question deals with Print Concepts. The mastery of Print Concepts is a reliable predictor to reading success.

Some benchmarks in Print Concepts include identifying the front/back of the book, discriminating between a letter and a word, recognizing word and sentence boundaries, knowing where to begin reading on a page, understanding that print goes from top to bottom and left to right. Choice B incorrectly states that framing a word will aid the understanding of phonics. The other activities in the answer are appropriate activities for early primary but would not be appropriate interventions for this student. In Choice C, the learning centers mentioned would not aid this student in mastering Print Concepts. Finally, Choice D suggests intervention activities would not all be appropriate for helping this student in mastering Print Concepts.

Content Area 5: Systemic, Explicit Phonics and Other Word Identification Strategies

6. In small group instruction, the teacher leads her group through the following activities:

First, the teacher segments the following words:

chin	into	/ch/ - /i/ - /n/
reach	into	/r/ - /ea/ - /ch/
cherry	into	/ch/ - /err/ - /y/

Then the students try to guess the word that the teacher is saying.

The teacher then asks what sound was commonly heard in each of the words.

Next, the teacher prints the letters *ch* on the board and shows the students a picture of some cherries. The teacher asks the students to think of some more words that have the /ch/ sound at either the beginning or the end. These words are written on the board and the students practice saying the words.

Finally, the students practice this skill by reading selections on their own in which most of the words are decodable and include *ch* or high frequency words that have already been taught. The teacher carefully monitors each student's reading and makes corrections if necessary.

What are the benefits of using the aforementioned strategies?

- A. These strategies reinforce concepts of print and the ability to recognize specific sounds.
- B. These strategies will help students recognize this digraph when decoding, spelling, and writing.
- C. These strategies will assist students achieve mastery in spelling.
- D. Students need to hear the way language sounds and see the print before them for extended periods of time to finally master the skill.

Strategies to Use

First, underline or circle the key words. Note that the question very specifically asks what would be the “benefits” of the lesson. Which response specifically addresses the benefits of the lesson described? There could be other possible benefits to this lesson, but the choices might not provide appropriate answers, so you must eliminate them.

Explanation

The best answer is **B**. This lesson would be a part of systematic, explicit phonics lesson within an organized program. The lesson describes instruction in letter clusters known as digraphs and begins with identifying them in words where they are heard, then seeing how they are written, and finally practicing reading them in connected text. These strategies play a critical role in decoding, reading fluently, and ultimately comprehending text. Therefore, the best answer to this question is B. These strategies do not constitute a phonemics awareness lesson as mentioned in Choice A, nor would it necessarily be a benefit to students to copy the words generated from the board. In Choice C, these strategies certainly would assist students in spelling words that contain the digraph *ch* but would not help students achieve mastery in spelling.

7. In a small group, a first grade nonfluent reader is asked to read the following passage from the first-grade reader.

Jack and Matt were friends. They had known each other for a very long time. They liked to play together. Sometimes they would play at Jack's house, and sometimes they would play at Matt's house. They were good friends.

The words the student has the most difficulty decoding are “were,” “friends,” “known,” “very,” “they,” and “would.” The student attempts to sound out these words but is not successful and arrives at the completion of the text with limited understanding of what he has just read. What interventions should the teacher plan for this student?

- A. If a child reads most words in the text correctly but misses some of the words, the teacher could provide opportunities for this student to practice reading fluently with support. Some activities that could help this student are choral reading, rereading, and listening to stories on tape.
- B. If a child misses so many words that comprehension is affected, then the teacher could help this student by activating prior knowledge, encouraging predicting before the text is read, and using graphic organizers.
- C. Additional phonics instruction could benefit this student and assist him in improving his decoding. Some activities that would help this student are instruction in word families, playing word games, and doing tongue twisters.
- D. The words that seem to be most difficult for this student are sight words or high frequency words. The teacher should provide some activities that would help this reader such as using word walls, maintaining a personal dictionary, and word study after reading.

Strategies to Use

The key words in this question are “interventions” and “teacher plan.” Mark these key words. Note that the question mentions that this is a first-grade classroom and that the student is a nonfluent reader being asked to read a grade-level passage. The primary problem that this student is having is the inability to recognize the high frequency words within the text. Be careful that you are correctly diagnosing what the problem is, in order to arrive at the correct answer.

Explanation

The best answer is **D**. This student apparently is having difficulty in recognizing sight words or high frequency words. These are the errors mentioned in the information given. Readers need to build a repertoire of these words that occur most frequently in text (high frequency words). These are the words that can't be sounded out. It is helpful to try and connect these words to the student's experience to promote long-term memory. It's also beneficial to call students' attention to these words within and out of text. Some activities that help build high frequency word banks are word walls, personal dictionaries, word-study after reading, and student writing. Therefore, the correct choice is D. Choice A doesn't correctly diagnose this student's problem, although the activities mentioned in the answer would promote fluency. Choice B correctly concludes that when a student makes many miscues when reading, comprehension is ultimately affected. This student's understanding of the text must be affected. The strategies mentioned in Choice B would help with comprehension. It's quite likely that if the student could correctly decode the high frequency words, he or she would understand the text, and so difficulty with comprehension would be a secondary problem. Choice C, additional phonics instruction, would not help this student decode the high frequency words that the student is decoding incorrectly and is, therefore, an incorrect answer.

Content Area 6: Spelling Instruction

8. A fourth-grade classroom teacher is asked to submit student writing from her class to be published in a school newspaper. The students in the class are asked to interview a classmate, friend, or relative who immigrated to the United States. The students are to generate a list of questions to ask regarding the person's experience when arriving in a new country. One student submitted the following writing sample:

My Mom

When my mom came, she did not *speek* English because she was born in a *diffirent* country. No one could understand her because of her *axcent*. She was good in *swiming*. I think my mom is *amazing*.

In analyzing the student's spelling errors, how does the teacher begin to interpret the student's spelling development and how might the teacher plan for further spelling instruction?

- A. First of all, the teacher must identify the spelling errors in this student's paper. She can then return the paper to the student for correction. Then, the student can add the misspelled words to the student's weekly spelling list.
- B. After identifying the students' spelling errors, the teacher can add these words to her class's weekly spelling list to enable her students to achieve mastery of these words. In future spelling lessons, the teacher can group her students according to the words they are having difficulty spelling and then provide activities to help them with these words.
- C. The teacher should identify the misspelled words in this student's writing sample and should add this sample to other samples of this student's work. For further information about this student's spelling development, the teacher should administer a spelling inventory and analyze the results. This would provide her with more information on which to base word study lessons for her class.
- D. The teacher notices on this sample that this student has made many errors with words that have doubled consonants, but she needs more information in order to determine this student's spelling development. Future lessons should include activities with the misspelled words of each student.

Strategies to Use

Notice that the question states that this is a fourth-grade class. This student is making appropriate errors for a fourth grader. If the students made errors in other skills that should be mastered by the fourth grade such as beginning/ending consonants or short vowels, further assessments might be necessary. Importantly, the question asks about how the teacher "begins" to interpret her students' spelling development and how the teacher might "plan for further instruction."

Explanation

The best answer is C. A good starting point for the instructor is to gain more information about her students' spelling stages by collecting samples of student writing from both formal inventories and from daily writing. Then the teacher can begin to compare the students' spelling abilities. Additionally, administering a spelling inventory to the class will assist the teacher in determining students' spelling stages of development. Although all students will pass through the same stages of development, they pass through at different rates. The inventory can provide the teacher with valuable information about each student's spelling developmental stage and subsequently help her in planning spelling instruction.

Additionally, presenting students with spelling words that are matched to their spelling developmental stage creates lessons in developing concepts rather than memorizing words. That's why Choice A is an incorrect answer. Merely adding the misspelled words to a weekly list will not further this student's spelling development as would doing activities that promote the learning of the skill with which she is having difficulty. Similarly, the first sentence in Choice B is also incorrect although the next sentence suggests appropriate activities to do after spelling assessment to determine the students' developmental spelling levels. In Choice D, the teacher correctly notices the type of errors that the student has made on this particular sample but needs more than this one sample to determine her future spelling instructional plans for this student and the rest of the class.

Domain III

Developing Reading Comprehension and Promoting Independent Reading

Content Area 7: Reading Comprehension

9. A fifth-grade teacher puts the following chart on the board:

Story Title: _____

Setting	
Characters	
Problem	
Solution	

Students receive their own copy of this story map to complete. The students had received instruction and practice with this strategy beforehand when the teacher modeled how to complete the chart while reading a previous story in a whole group setting. The teacher explains that the students are to use the story map to help them identify the key elements in the story they are about to read.

What might be the teacher's purpose for having students complete the story map, and what does this activity demonstrate about her understanding of developing reading comprehension in her students?

- A. The teacher is demonstrating her understanding of the reading process by having her students complete this story map. By correctly completing the activity, the students demonstrate their understanding of cause-effect relationships and literal comprehension.

- B. This teacher understands that reading comprehension is necessary learning for all students. By having her students complete this story map, she is providing effective instruction in reading comprehension and demonstrating her knowledge of what students need to comprehend the text.
- C. The teacher is demonstrating her understanding that a story map assists students in clarifying text. By providing instruction in identifying story elements, this teacher has provided an activity that will help her students identify the important story elements and help her students identify and organize the relationship between them.
- D. This teacher is showing how to explicitly demonstrate a comprehension technique. Additionally, she is demonstrating the importance of finding the main idea, something that these students will be able to do after completing this activity.

Strategies to Use

Firstly, review the chart that the question provides. Think about what responses might be appropriate and the purpose for this type of chart. Is it asking for cause-effect relationships? Or is it asking for important story elements? Now focus on key words in the question. Be careful when answering questions that are asking about more than one item—in this case, *the teacher’s purpose and what is demonstrated*. Be sure that the answer that you select adequately and specifically answers the complete question. Finally, notice that the question states that this is a fifth-grade classroom. The purposes for this chart might vary with the grade level.

Explanation

The best answer is **C**. This type of activity facilitates student comprehension. Good readers are able to clarify text but need to be taught how to find the most important elements of a story. The teacher needs to create opportunities for students to learn and then independently practice comprehension techniques. Additionally, by having students write, before, during, or after reading, they are deepening their understanding of text. Choice A isn’t correct because it makes a very general statement about the teacher demonstrating her understanding of the reading process. This activity does not demonstrate that. Additionally, the purpose of story mapping isn’t to teach cause-effect relationships or literal comprehension. Choice B provides correct statements but is not specific. Choice D might also be accurate, but does not address identifying the different story elements, which is a main purpose of this chart.

Content Area 8: Literary Response and Analysis

- 10.** A fourth-grade teacher selects a core literature book for her students to read. After her students have completed reading the book, she asks them to go back through the text and find situations that the main character has experienced that remind the students of something in their own lives. The students are to use a response log to record their ideas. The teacher might choose this strategy as a follow-up to reading the book because:
- A. The teacher understands that helping her students connect real-life experiences to those of a character will deepen their understanding of a book, and she can analyze their responses to plan future appropriate instruction.
 - B. The student responses can be used to evaluate the students’ understanding of the text and will provide the teacher with information she can use to plan further assessments and testing.
 - C. Writing in response logs provides good daily writing practice for students and are an appropriate strategy for fourth graders.
 - D. Each teacher needs to be familiar with her district’s core literature selections in order to provide appropriate material for her students.

Strategies to Use

The teacher in the question provides a strategy for her students. You might think of the benefits that this strategy provides for students before reading the choices. Don’t let the choices that state correct teaching practices distract you from the correct answer. Remember to find the best answer to the question.

Explanation

The best answer is **A**. Encouraging students to connect text with personal experiences helps students relate what they're reading to their own lives. These types of connections might also be incorporated into students' writing. Besides connecting what they are reading to their experiences, connections can be made between different story versions, books by the same author, and connecting characters to people they know. Choice **B** is correct in that the teacher can gain information about her students' understanding of the text by reading their responses but is not the *best* answer to this question. Choice **C** is also correct, but again, is not the *best* answer. Choice **D** focuses on *the teacher being familiar with the district's core literature selections to provide appropriate material*, which does not answer the question.

Content Area 9: Content-Area Literacy

- 11.** An eighth-grade history teacher is beginning a unit on the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. He begins by systematically collecting documents on the incident that involved a woman being asked to give up her bus seat in the Southern United States in 1955. Besides the school district provided history text, he collects artifacts to be contained within an archive bin that will give the students more information to read about the incident and that are correlated to the text. Some of the documents that the teacher includes regarding the incident are a newspaper article, an interview with the woman, photos, a letter to the woman, and an eyewitness account of the incident written by the woman involved. Next, the teacher involves the students in retrieving information about the incident from the various sources. The students will use the information provided for research, formulating ideas, preparing reports, and taking a test. Some important concepts to be taught about understanding information in this unit are to:
- A.** help students understand the organization of the text, notice the visual clues that will identify the important ideas, and understand the relationship between those ideas.
 - B.** help the students understand the features of expository texts by including lessons regarding cause-effect relationships, how to compare/contrast, and how to summarize and identify the main idea.
 - C.** have students, with the help of the teacher, complete a K-W-L chart to identify what the students already know about the subject, what they want to learn, and what they have learned when the unit is completed.
 - D.** use graphic organizers to provide some important organizational skills for his students to process the information from the various sources.

Strategies to Use

Notice that the question is referring to an eighth-grade history class. All teachers are teachers of reading and need to possess the skills and knowledge to provide access for their students to the content areas. According to the question, all of the information that the students will need to read will be expository text. Also note that the question specifically asks about important concepts to be taught. Eliminate incorrect answers that do not answer the question, even if they are true.

Explanation

The best answer is **A**. The purpose of expository text is to provide facts and information. This type of text can often inform, explain, or persuade. As students progress through the grades, more and more time is devoted to this type of text. Often, this type of text is more difficult for students because it involves more high-level thinking than does narrative text. These are the key concepts that students need to be taught to process this type of text. In addition to the items included in the archive bin mentioned in the question, the Internet could provide students with more information on the topic. According to research, student understanding about the text structure is strongly linked to their comprehension, so any instruction that includes expository text must help students understand how this type of text is organized. Often maps, charts, and diagrams are included in expository text. These items provide visual clues that provide information, and students need to be taught how to use these items to help understand the concepts.

Choice B provides some features that might occur in expository text, but you are not able to infer from the question that these skills need to be taught. Choice C contains an effective strategy for processing expository text, the K-W-L chart (**K**now, **W**ant to know, **L**earned) but again, you cannot infer that the teaching of this strategy will help these students comprehend this specific text. In Choice D, the use of graphic organizers is a good strategy that will help students understand text, but this answer does not provide some key concepts and, therefore, is not as good as Choice A.

Content Area 10: Student Independent Reading

- 12.** What are the best reasons for a teacher to encourage her students to read on their own?
- A.** Independent reading should be a daily homework assignment, have a reward system for the amount of pages read, and follow teacher read-alouds.
 - B.** Independent reading helps students practice the reading skills they have learned in class, is a good classroom activity for transition periods, provides extra practice for better readers, and can be done after workbook assignments.
 - C.** Independent reading should be conducted outside of school, have a prescribed book list from which students can choose, and can also be done in the school library.
 - D.** Independent reading promotes life-long reading, builds vocabulary, increases reading comprehension, and increases background knowledge.

Strategies to Use

Circle or underline the key words in the question. You are looking for the *best* reasons to encourage students to read independently. Eliminate choices that are not accurate or don't give reasons. Then find the best answer. Remember, sometimes an incorrect answer will be close.

Explanation

The best answer is **D**. All of the items mentioned in this choice—*promotes life-long reading, builds vocabulary, increases reading comprehension, and increases background knowledge*—are exactly why students should read on their own. Choice A does not give a reason for a teacher to encourage students. Choice B is a good reason, but not the *best* of the ones given. Choice C is not accurate and does not give a reason for a teacher to encourage students.

- 13.** The best way for a classroom teacher to support student independent reading is by:
- A.** guiding her students in choosing books at their reading level.
 - B.** making sure that students have a wide variety of choices of books to read within the classroom.
 - C.** providing book bags containing material for the students to read at home with their parents.
 - D.** using a variety of strategies and incentives to motivate her students to read in their spare time and at home.

Strategies to Use

Focus on the key words in the question: best way . . . to support independent reading. Eliminate choices that do not address *student independent reading*.

Explanation

The best answer is **D**. Using motivational strategies and incentives is good way to support independent reading. Choice A is something a teacher should do, but is not specific to supporting independent reading. Choice B refers to books to read within the classroom only, and students need to be encouraged to also read outside of the classroom. Choice C mentions reading at home with their parents. The purpose is to get students to read independently.

Domain IV

Supporting Reading Through Oral and Written Language Development

Content Area 11: Relationships Among Reading, Writing, and Oral Language

14. After reading a chapter in their history text, a classroom of eighth graders are asked to form cooperative groups to compare and contrast the systems of transportation of the eighteenth century with those of today. Each group is provided with a chart to complete. The teacher knows that many of her students speak and write other languages at home. How might this strategy support these students' understanding of the text?
- A. Since expository text is more difficult for second-language learners to grasp, awareness of language similarities and differences will support student understanding of text varieties.
 - B. This teacher's support will benefit her students' understanding of the concepts learned in the chapter, and her next step might be to ask each group to prepare a report on their findings.
 - C. The teacher understands that her students would benefit from using graphic organizers to further student understanding of the ideas in the chapter and help relate them to students' present experiences.
 - D. The informal language opportunities provided by cooperative group participation will aid student understanding of text.

Strategies to Use

Underline or circle the key words in the question: strategy support . . . students' understanding. Be aware of the best answer to the question. In some cases, the incorrect choices provide correct information but do not provide the best answer to the question.

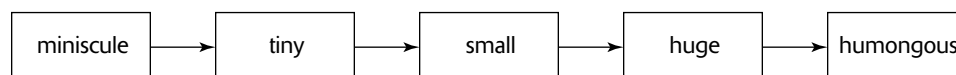
Explanation

The best answer is C. Choice A provides correct statements but does not address the question. Choices B and D are also correct, but are not the best, most complete or specific answer to the question. Teachers should be aware of the variety of graphic organizers and match the most appropriate one to the text that is being read and to the objective of the lesson. Visual aids help support the learning of the English learner (and of all students). Charts, realia, word organizers, and outlining also support understanding of expository text for all students.

Content Area 12: Vocabulary Development

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

The following diagram is provided for students in a third-grade classroom:



The students are told that one way to understand and remember new words is to think about how they are related. It is explained that one way to do this is to figure out how the word fits in a word hierarchy. This is a diagram in which the words are ranked. The teacher then leads a class discussion about each word, how it relates to the other words, and what the concept is about in each word. She then asks whether the students can add any words to the hierarchy. The students are then divided into small groups and given collections of other words to arrange into hierarchies. Finally, students are given general categories with which to develop word lists to arrange into hierarchies.

- 15.** What would be the purpose of using the preceding strategy?
- A.** Looking up words in a dictionary and using them in sentences is conducive to effective vocabulary instruction and constitutes purposeful learning at most grade levels.
 - B.** The purpose of this strategy is to increase students' word knowledge, although the knowledge of words doesn't directly determine how text is understood.
 - C.** The most important reason for using a similar strategy to teach vocabulary is for comprehending text and aiding students in acquiring new and varied vocabulary.
 - D.** This strategy will help students understand words with similar meanings and will increase student understanding of how words are related, including differences/similarities between words that have almost the same meaning.
- 16.** The best way for the teacher to determine the words to use in future similar lessons is to use:
- A.** recycled words selected from an old lesson including words from past weekly spelling tests.
 - B.** difficult words that the teacher selects in similar activities from the dictionary.
 - C.** words that the teacher selects from student writing or story selections read in class.
 - D.** words that the students select from daily or weekly reading activities.

Strategies to Use

First, underline or circle key words. Next, carefully analyze any chart or diagram included to help you to understand what information is being given. Remember to eliminate answers that are not true or give false information.

Explanation for 15

The best answer is **D**. Students need to have the ability to understand words that are similar in meaning. Oftentimes the inability to understand the shades of meaning of words contributes to poor comprehension of text. Good readers need to know a large number of words that can't only be acquired by wide reading, although encouraging student volume of reading can contribute to an increased vocabulary. This type of lesson can be extended to provide antonyms for the selected words.

Choice A, using the dictionary to look up words, does not contribute to effective vocabulary instruction. Eliminate Choice A. In Choice B, the first part of the statement is correct, but the second part is not true. Knowledge of words does directly determine how text is understood. In Choice C, increasing vocabulary contributes to better comprehension as does an increase in the volume of reading, but instruction in specific words and concepts is needed to produce in-depth vocabulary knowledge. This diagram shows how specific words are related.

Explanation for 16

The best answer is **C**. Although some of the other choices are possible, using words that the students use in writing or speech is probably more meaningful to students. The teacher should select the words to make sure that the students get the most out of the lesson.

Content Area 13: Structure of the English Language

- 17.** What are some effective assessments to use in analyzing student oral and written language in order to determine student understanding and use of effective English structure and conventions?
- A.** running records, multiple choice tests, student reports, individual student conferences, and parent conferences
 - B.** anecdotal records, teacher observation, student conferences, checklists, and collection of writing work samples
 - C.** mini lessons, cloze procedure tests, oral reading inventories, book lists, retellings, and writing rubrics
 - D.** analyzing student invented spelling, portfolio assessment, student self-assessment, and student work files

Strategies to Use

Notice that you are looking for effective assessments. You need to be aware of the information that the tests listed provide to the teacher. For example, a running record would help the teacher assess a student's reading level but would not adequately provide information on whether the student is grasping language conventions.

Explanation

The best answer is **B**. Assessing English language structures is an important Structure of the English Language content specification and is an integral part of the teaching process. The teacher frequently observes her students to determine what they already know and what they need to learn. Authentic assessment can provide the teacher with more information about students and the impact of the instructional program in the classroom. Most importantly, authentic assessments inform instruction. Standardized tests will also provide information to the next year's teacher on the students' grasp of the structure of the English Language. The other choices do not adequately address both the oral and written parts of the question.