

# **ADVANTAGE** Test Prep

Grade

4

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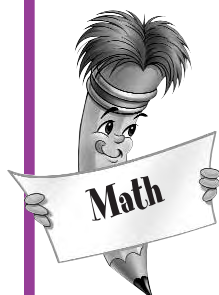
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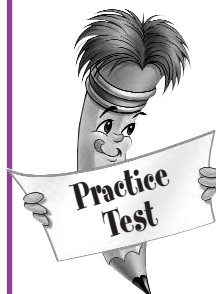
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# Introduction

Testing is a big part of education today, and this workbook is designed to help students become better prepared to succeed at taking standardized and proficiency tests. This workbook contains skills and strategies that can be used in any kind of testing situation. Even if students don't have to take standardized tests, they will still benefit from studying the skills and strategies in this workbook.

## Standardized Tests

Standardized tests get their name because they are administered in the exact same way to hundreds of thousands of students across the country. They are also referred to as *norm-referenced tests*. Norms give educators a common standard of measurement of students' skills and abilities across the country. Students are ranked according to their test scores and then assigned a percentile ranking. This ranking tells what percent of all students scored better or worse than the norm.

## Proficiency Tests

Many states develop their own statewide proficiency tests. Proficiency tests are also known as *criterion-referenced tests*. This means that the test is based on a list of standards and skills (criteria). States develop standards for what students should know at each grade level. The proficiency test evaluates how well students have mastered these standards.

Although both tests may look similar, they measure different things. A proficiency test measures a student's mastery of set standards. A standardized test compares a student's achievement to others who took the same test across the country.

Many tests were reviewed in developing the material for this workbook. They include the following:

- **California Achievement Tests (CAT)**
- **Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS)**
- **TerraNova**
- **Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)**
- **Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT)**
- **Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT)**
- **Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)**

It is important to recognize that all national standardized achievement tests work essentially the same way. They ask multiple-choice questions, have specific time limits, and compare your child's results to national averages. The goal of this test-prep series is to teach **test-taking strategies** so that no matter which test your child is required to take, he or she will be successful.

# Introduction

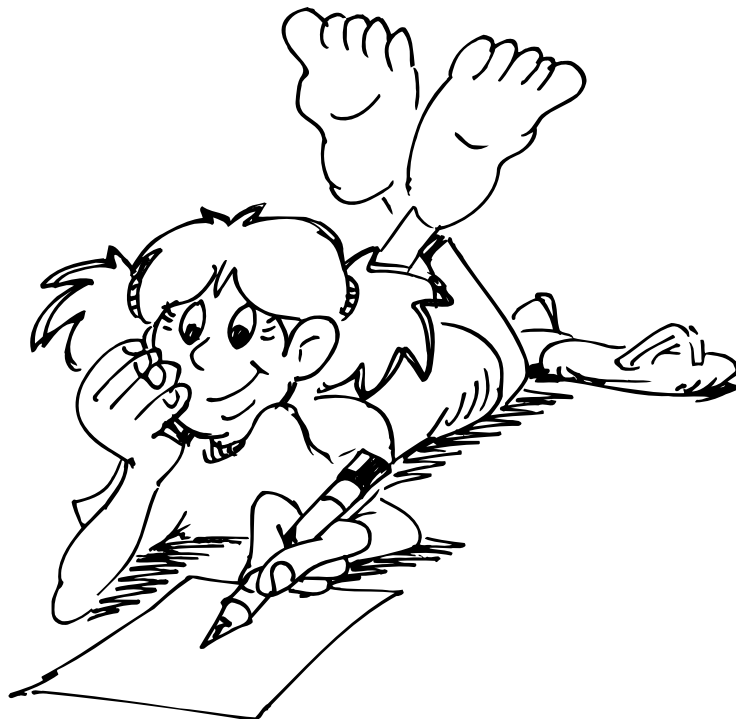
## Preparing for Tests

The more students are prepared for taking standardized and proficiency tests, the better they will do on those tests. A student who understands the skills commonly measured and who practices test-taking strategies will be more likely to be a successful test-taker. The more the student knows and knows what to expect, the more comfortable he or she will be in actual test-taking situations.

### Standardized and proficiency testing is used to:

- evaluate students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses.
- show how each student's school achievement compares with other students on a local and nationwide level (standardized).
- show an individual student's achievement of set standards (proficiency).
- select students for remedial or achievement programs.
- tell educators whether school systems are succeeding.
- evaluate the success of school programs.
- help educators develop programs to suit their students' specific needs.

Standardized tests are only one measure of student achievement, however. Teachers use many other methods to gain insights into each student's skills, abilities, and knowledge. They evaluate students through day-to-day observation, evaluation, and assessment.



# Introduction

## How Can Parents Help Children Succeed at Standardized Testing?

The following list includes suggestions on how to prepare your child for testing.

### Tips for Parents

- Monitor your child's progress.
- Get to know your child's teacher, and find out what he or she thinks you can do to help your child at home.
- Be informed about your state's testing requirements.
- Motivate your child to prepare.
- Make homework part of your child's daily routine.
- Set aside a period of time each day to study with your child.
- Read aloud to your child.
- Share learning experiences with your child.
- Make sure your child is getting the sleep and nutrition he or she needs to succeed.
- Always nurture your child's curiosity and desire to learn.
- Encourage your child to learn about computers and technology.
- Encourage your child to take tests very seriously but to have healthy expectations and keep testing in perspective.
- Offer encouragement and support so that your child wants to make a good effort.

### Where Can I Learn More About Testing?

ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation  
209 O'Boyle Hall  
The Catholic University of America  
Washington, DC 20064  
(202) 319-5120  
<http://ericae.net/>

National Center for Fair and Open Testing, Inc. (FairTest)  
342 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
<http://www.fairtest.org/>

## Introduction to Reading



Reading is an important part of life and a big part of standardized and proficiency tests. Good reading skills will help you achieve success in all you do. The best way to improve your reading skills is to become an avid reader. Get in to the habit of reading. Read often, and read many different types of reading materials. Read alone and with others. Read aloud and to yourself. The more you read, the better you will get at it. The better you get at it, the more you will enjoy it, and the better you will score on tests.

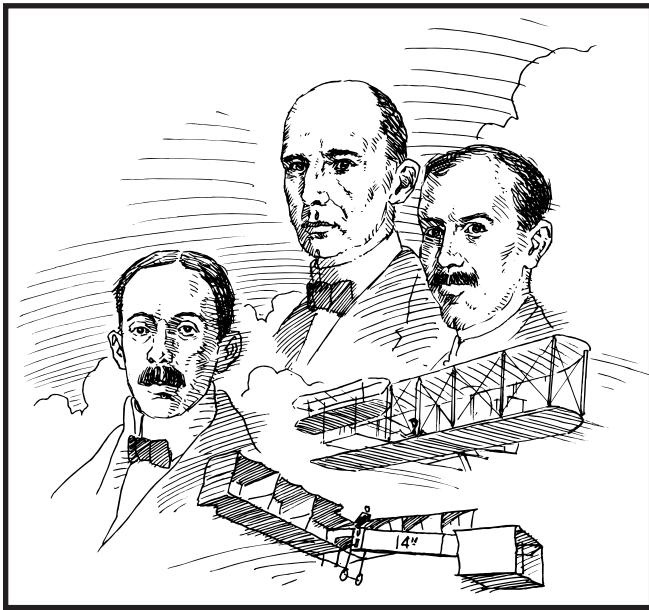
Nearly every standardized or proficiency test includes a section on reading. The reading passages may be fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. They may also be graphic information like maps or reference information like library catalog cards and dictionaries. You will be asked questions to recall, interpret, and reflect on what you read.

In the following pages, you will review reading skills. You will practice the skills with questions just like ones you'll be expected to answer on tests. If you understand and practice these skills now, you'll perform better later. In this workbook section, you will learn to:

- find words that have the **same or similar meaning**.
- find words that have **opposite meanings**.
- understand the **main idea** of a passage.
- identify **details** and understand how they support the main idea.
- see the connection between **cause and effect**.
- recognize details that **compare or contrast**.
- know the difference between **fact and opinion**.
- know the **author's purpose**, what the author wants you to understand.
- see the **sequence of events**, the order in which things happen.
- know the **characters** in a story.
- **make generalizations** about what you read.
- **extend meaning** by understanding more than what the author said.
- understand **graphic information** such as maps and schedules.
- use **reference sources** such as library catalog cards, dictionaries, and indexes.

# THE BIRTH OF *Aviation*

**I**F YOU ASK SOMEONE FROM BRAZIL WHO INVENTED THE AIRPLANE, THE ANSWER WILL PROBABLY BE “ALBERTO SANTOS-DUMONT.” BUT IF YOU ASK AN AMERICAN, THE ANSWER WILL BE “ORVILLE AND WILBUR WRIGHT.” WHO’S RIGHT?



Americans and Brazilians can both be proud of their early aviators. The Brazilian Santos-Dumont and the American Wright brothers were excellent scientists and inventors. In many ways they were different, but they also had a lot in common.

Santos-Dumont was born to a wealthy family in Brazil. His family owned a huge coffee farm. Alberto loved to work with machines. He even learned how to drive tractors as a boy.

The Wright brothers were born in Indiana. Their family was not wealthy or poor. Like Santos-Dumont, they loved to work with machines. After high

school, the brothers opened a bike shop just a few miles from home, in nearby Ohio.

After high school, Santos-Dumont moved to Paris. He studied science at a university and became interested in aviation. He soon devoted himself to building flying machines. His first flying machines were huge balloons filled with hydrogen. He was the first pilot to steer a balloon, not just float with the wind.

The Wright brothers didn't go to college. They learned from books and experiments. They read about gliders, kites, birds, and balloons. Slowly they figured out how things fly. They experimented with kites. In 1903, they built a plane and flew it at Kittyhawk, North Carolina. It was the first time anyone ever flew a machine.

Santos-Dumont built and flew his first plane in 1906. He did not know the Wright brothers had already invented and flown a plane. Very few people knew. News of the Wright brothers' feat was not believed in America or Europe. It was many years before everyone knew the Wright brothers had already invented an airplane.

It is fair to say that both Santos-Dumont and the Wright brothers invented the airplane. The Wright brothers invented their plane first. Then Santos-Dumont invented his. All three men were great scientists, inventors, and aviators. Today, Santos-Dumont has an airport named after him in Brazil, and the Wright brothers have an airport named after them in Ohio.



## VOCABULARY

### KNOW THE SKILL: **SIMILAR MEANINGS**

Sometimes different words have the same or similar meanings. For example, *rich* means *wealthy*, or *college* is similar to *university*. Some test questions ask you to find words with same or almost the same meanings.

### DURING THE TEST

When answering a test question about a word you don't know, look at the answer choices first. Then go back to the passage and find the word. Read the sentences before and after the word. Often you can determine what the word means through clues in the sentences around the word. Try each answer in the sentence that the word appears in.

### TEST EXAMPLE

**1** Which word means the same as *aviator*?

- (A) doctor
- (B) pilot
- (C) scientist
- (D) inventor

### THINK ABOUT THE ANSWER

The answer is B, *pilot*. Option A (*doctor*) is not correct because the passage does not mention medicine. The last paragraph of the passage describes the men as “*great scientists, inventors, and aviators.*” This tells you that these three things have different meanings. That rules out options C and D. The only other option is B, *pilot*.

### NOW YOU TRY IT

**2** The passage says news of the Wright brothers' feat was not believed in America or Europe. Which of the following has the same meaning as *feat*?

- (F) disaster
- (G) sickness
- (H) education
- (J) achievement

Check your answer on page 109.



### Be Prepared!

If you show up prepared for a test, you will be better able to focus. Arrive early, and make sure to bring everything you need. Bring pencils and pens, some paper, and a calculator and dictionary, if allowed. Wear a watch so you can keep track of time.





## VOCABULARY

### KNOW THE SKILL: **OPPOSITE MEANINGS**

Some test questions will ask you to choose a word with an opposite meaning. For example, *up* has the opposite meaning of *down*. *Help* means the opposite of *hurt*. *Big* is the opposite of *small*.

### DURING THE TEST

Read the question and look at the answer choices. Then go back to the passage and find the word. Read the sentence before and after it, too. Then consider the answer choices. Replace the word in question with the option that might be the opposite. The sentence should still make sense but have the opposite meaning.

### TEST EXAMPLE

- 1 Which is the opposite of *wealthy*?
- (A) different
  - (B) poor
  - (C) huge
  - (D) rich

### THINK ABOUT THE ANSWER

The answer is B, *poor*. One sentence in the passage says the Wright family wasn't wealthy or poor. If you know the meaning of *poor*, the sentence gives you a clue that *wealthy* is the opposite of *poor*. *Wealthy* has the same meaning as *rich*, so option D is not correct. *Different* (option A) and *huge* (option C) do not make sense when substituted in the sentence in the passage.

### NOW YOU TRY IT

- 2 The passage says Santos-Dumont lived on a huge farm and built and flew huge balloons. What is the opposite of *huge*?
- (F) big
  - (G) poor
  - (H) small
  - (J) distant

Check your answer on page 109.



### Keep Learning New Words

Continually expand your vocabulary. You can do this by reading books, magazines, and newspapers. You can use your fabulous vocabulary to provide vivid and interesting test answers.



## COMPREHENSION

### KNOW THE SKILL: **MAIN IDEA**

Every reading passage has a main idea. The main idea is the most important point the author is trying to make. Facts and details in the passage support and help clarify the main idea.

### DURING THE TEST

Pay particular attention to the first paragraph and the last paragraph. The first paragraph usually states the main idea. The last paragraph often summarizes the main idea. To determine the main idea, ask yourself, "What would I say if I wanted to tell someone about what I just read?"

### TEST EXAMPLE

- 1 Which is the main idea of this passage?
- (A) Santos-Dumont was a great inventor.
  - (B) Many people believe Americans invented the airplane.
  - (C) The Wright brothers were scientists who never went to college.
  - (D) Santos-Dumont and the Wright brothers were great inventors but they were different in many ways.

### THINK ABOUT THE ANSWER

The answer is D. Options A, B, and C are true, but they are only details that support the main idea.

### NOW YOU TRY IT

- 2 Here's the same question, but this time it requires a written answer. What is the main idea of the passage? Write two or more sentences about the main idea. Provide details to support your answer.

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Check your answer on page 109.



### Don't Panic!

If you find that you are getting anxious before or during the test, take several slow, deep breaths to relax. Visualize being in a peaceful and calm place. Remind yourself that you are well prepared. Don't talk to other students before the test. Anxiety can be very contagious!!



## COMPREHENSION

### KNOW THE SKILL: **FACT AND OPINION**

Facts are things that can be proven true. Opinions are things that people think. They may be true or not true. It is important to know the difference between fact and opinion.

### DURING THE TEST

In a test question about fact and opinion, read all the answers before you choose. The correct answer will be in the passage. Some of the options might be facts or opinions that are not in the passage. These are not correct. To be correct, the facts or opinions must be in the passage. While considering each answer, ask yourself if there is any possibility that it might not be true. If it might not be true, then you know it is an opinion.

### TEST EXAMPLE

- 1 Which sentence is an opinion?
- (A) Santos-Dumont flew balloons.
  - (B) Americans are the best aviators.
  - (C) The Wright brothers flew before Santos-Dumont.
  - (D) The Wright brothers flew their first plane in 1903.

### THINK ABOUT THE ANSWER

Option B is an opinion. It may be true, but it cannot be proved true. Options A, C, and D are facts from the passage that can be proven true.

### NOW YOU TRY IT

- 2 All of the following statements are opinions EXCEPT—
- (F) Brazil is a great place to grow up.
  - (G) The Wright brothers had good parents.
  - (H) Santos-Dumont filled his balloons with hydrogen.
  - (J) The Dayton-Wright airport is better than the Santos-Dumont airport.

Check your answer on page 109.



### Read the Directions Carefully

This is a no-brainer! Pay attention while you read the directions. It will help you avoid careless errors.



## COMPREHENSION

### KNOW THE SKILL: **COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

Sometimes authors compare two or more things by explaining how they are the same. Or authors contrast things by explaining how they are different.

#### DURING THE TEST

When you come to a question about comparing or contrasting, you may have to read the passage again. Look for the facts and details that explain how the things are the same or different. Look for clues that comparisons are being made. Words such as *like*, *same as*, *similar*, and *also* indicate that things are being compared. If you have to give a written answer, provide as many facts and details as you can.

#### TEST EXAMPLE

- 1 What did the Wright brothers and Santos-Dumont have in common?

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#### THINK ABOUT THE ANSWER

One correct answer is: The Wright brothers and Santos-Dumont liked to learn. They were good scientists, inventors, and aviators. Notice that this answer gives facts about the similarities among the men. It does not mention their differences.

#### NOW YOU TRY IT

- 2 How were the Wright brothers and Santos-Dumont different?

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Check your answer on page 109.



#### Preview the Test

If allowed, quickly flip through the pages of the test so that you will know what lies ahead. This will help you plan your time. Ask whether you can write on the test. If you can, jot notes to yourself. Quickly judge how much time you will need for each part.