

## A Possible Sequence for a Unit of Study in the Reading Standardized Test

DAY	TEACHER'S WORK	STUDENTS' WORK
Orienting ourselves to the test Day #1	Teach students how to discover all the information about the test format.	Students study the outside covers and the inside content of their test prep booklets.
Day #2	Teach students how to discover all the information about the answer sheet.	Students study the bubble sheet and how it correlates with the test booklet.
Learning strategies for the content of the test Day #3	Teach how to approach the test like a scavenger hunt, searching for the right answers, by demonstrating a think-aloud for one reading passage.	Students practice some of the strategies that they noticed in my demonstration.
Day #4	Teach students to hold a few questions in their mind, and go between the questions and the passage.	Students practice this strategy in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #5	Teach students to underline key information and passages, by anticipating: "Oh, I bet they [the test makers] will ask a question about this!"	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #6	Teach students to write key words or phrases in the margins to help them find evidence that supports their answers.	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #7	Teach students how to figure out the genre and how the genre helps us to anticipate what to expect in the passage.	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #8	Teach students how prior knowledge can help us to understand what the passage is about.	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #9	Teach students how to narrow their choices (play 50-50), and make "educated guesses," then mark these difficult questions with an asterisk in order to return to them if there's time at the end.	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #10	Teach students how the block of print looks daunting, but may not be, by showing familiar texts that look just like the passages in the test prep booklet.	Students read some of these typed texts and study their own strategies for managing these blocks of print.
Day #11	Teach students how to make the block of print more manageable by using an index card.	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Day #12	Teach students strategy of marking the answers in the booklet, then filling in the bubble sheet after they complete all the questions for one passage.	Students practice this strategy (and others) in the reading passages of their test practice booklets.
Strategies for pacing Day #13	Teach reasonable ways to give yourself a break between passages: stretch, rub your eyes, gaze out the window, put your head down and rest for a moment.	Students try this during a simulated test. Teacher provides pacing structure during the simulated test.
Day #14	Review the simulated test and discuss students' strategies, especially for questions that the class found challenging.	Students rework questions that they had wrong answers for. They discuss in partnerships strategies that they will try next time.
Day #15	Test takers, like Marathon runners, prepare for the big day: rest, eat a healthy breakfast, stay calm, etc.	Students think about and discuss strategies and tips that might help them on the day of the test.

## **Minilesson on orienting ourselves to the test**

The Connection: As you all know, in a few weeks you will all be taking the reading standardized test. Before we begin an in-depth study, I want you to become familiar with the test. Do you know how in our genre studies in reading and writing, we got to know the genre, and that helped us to read and write in that form? For example, we learned what to expect from poetry, and that helped us to read and write our own poems. Well, that's what we will do to prepare for the test. So, today I want to teach you how to orient yourselves to the test.

Teach: When I'm about to read a new, unfamiliar book, I learn as much about it before I start. Let me show you what I mean. Here is a book that I have to read for a course I am taking. Before I start reading it, I am going to learn as much as I can about it. Let's see, I notice that it's called *A Teacher's Guide To Standardized Reading Tests: Knowledge is power*. Hmm...so this will help me to prepare all of you for the reading tests. I notice that Lucy Calkins is one of the authors. She's a well-known author. I have read other of her books. They are usually easy to read and full of information. I better have a highlighter ready...ETC. [Also demonstrate getting information from the back cover.] Now of course, I would open up the book and learn more.

Active Involvement: Now let's try it for our test prep booklets. Right now, look only at the front and back covers, and share with a partner all that you're noticing about these booklets. Wow! I heard some great comments. [Record some of these comments on chart paper to implicitly model note taking.]

The Link: Right now, I want you to continue working with your partner, and study the inside of your booklets. Do not do the practice test work. Just discuss whatever you are noticing about these test booklets. You may jot notes (as I did) if it helps you remember. Your goal is to become familiar with them, like we would with any genre we study. Let's get started.

The Share: Chart some of their noticings. Ask them: how does knowing this help you for the test?

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