

A National Board Candidate's

# Assessment Center Resource Handbook

2008



**WEA**  
WASHINGTON  
EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION

Assessment Center  
Resource  
Handbook



# Assessment Center Resource Handbook

for Candidates Pursuing Certification through the  
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards®

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This resource handbook and information contained therein was current at publishing in February, 2008. The definitive and most current resource for all certification and Assessment Center questions is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website ([nbpts.org](http://nbpts.org)). To report inaccuracies, outdated web links, or to submit feedback, please contact Jim Meadows in WEA's Learning & Education Policy Center at: [jmeadows@washingtonea.org](mailto:jmeadows@washingtonea.org).




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HELPFUL HINTS

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 Valuable information

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 Resources

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## Where Do The Assessment Center Exercises Fit In The Certification Journey?

*There are two distinct parts to achieving National Board Certification®: the portfolio entries and the Assessment Center exercises. Which comes first? Can I work on them simultaneously?*

The complete National Board Certification process includes 10 separate activities in which Candidates provide evidence of accomplished teaching and positively impacting student learning. The Assessment Center (AC) portion of the National Board Certification process consists of six exercises, each allowing up to 30 minutes for response and each designed to elicit evidence of the Candidate's fundamental content knowledge as outlined in the Standards for that specific certificate area. The Assessment Center exercises are designed to give Candidates the opportunity to “demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio because of [their] specific teaching assignment” (nbpts.org). These exercises are designed to reflect what a teacher may encounter on a daily basis in his/her classroom.

After the full fee payment has been made, you've been deemed eligible as a Candidate for National Board Certification, and you've received your Authorization to Test, you may make your Assessment Center testing appointment at your convenience. The NBPTS Web site provides details regarding how to make an appointment, a list of Assessment Center locations, instructions regarding what to bring, and an overview of the testing day itself. NBPTS also offers an online tutorial that simulates screens that Candidates will experience at Assessment Centers. It is important to note that the “new” tutorial is not interactive. This is very different from the tutorial that many NBCTs and some Retake may remember.

The AC exercises, according to the NBPTS.org website, “are based on content standards for what accomplished teachers should *know*, not have to study for” (December, 2006). As a matter of fact, the NBPTS's 2007 Assessment Center Orientation: Policy and Guidelines (ACOPG) publication states AC exercises are “**not** [about] the textbook or resource materials that you might acquire.” However, it is important that Candidates remember that the AC exercises **do** reflect the entire range of content and ages for the certificate area. This means that a Candidate may feel he/she wants to refresh in a particular area or age appropriate content.

 NBCT Mary recommends Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14 : A Resource for Parents and Teachers. She says it was especially helpful as it thoroughly described the range of

behaviors and developmental stages she could expect assessed in the Early Childhood Generalist exercises.

NBPTS does not require Candidates complete and submit their portfolio entries before taking the Assessment Center exercises. In fact, you can choose to complete the Assessment Center exercises when you feel best prepared. There are some who advise that waiting to make the Assessment Center appointment until after the portfolio entries are submitted helps because Candidates will have their certificate area's NBPT Standards, the Five Core Propositions, and possibly some current research internalized and fresh.

Other accomplished teachers, however, take the AC exercises before submitting their portfolio entries because they feel it fits best into their hectic schedules. What is most important is that you select the time that works best in your schedule. Remember, however, that waiting to the last minute may limit testing availability at the testing center of choice and that no deadline extensions beyond the Candidate's testing window are offered for any reason.

✉ According to the NBPTS ACOPG, missing your appointment, canceling your appointment, or arriving more than 30 minutes late, **CANCELS** the eligibility for the testing year. If a Candidate wishes to reinstate within the same testing year, he/she must call 1.800.22TEACH and pay additional fees.

✉ Retake Candidates ONLY may defer completion of AC exercises for one year as long as they remain eligible as Candidates. Additionally, Retake Candidates must notify NBPTS in writing no less than 10 business days prior to their appointment or the close of the testing window. Exercises may only be deferred once, and Candidates will incur additional fees. Please contact NBPTS for specific and current information regarding this option.

## What are the Assessment Center Exercises?

The six Assessment Center exercises were developed by practicing teachers in each of the certificate areas (or school counselors for the school counseling certificate). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website (nbpts.org) states that the AC portions of the certification process

- ◆ are designed to assess fundamental content knowledge that supports quality instruction on a daily basis, not the textbooks or resource materials that one might acquire [note: the authors of this resource handbook interpret this to mean that Candidates are assessed on what they know and the application of that knowledge to students' learning instead of texts or specific curriculum;
- ◆ cover the entire developmental age range included in the certificate. Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge across the full age range of the certificate area;
- ◆ can focus on any number of things germane to the content knowledge outlined in the standards for the particular certificate area;
- ◆ may consist of one or more prompts or questions designed to elicit evidence of content knowledge related to the focus of the exercise. Or, a scenario or a student profile may be presented for consideration before responding to a

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prompt or set of prompts [note: this means that each AC exercise may actually consist of several “sub-questions” after the initial prompt;

- ◆ may ask for a specific number of examples as part of the response. Candidates should submit only the number of examples requested because assessors will only evaluate the number requested. Assessors will be looking for depth and quality of the response not the quantity provided.

These assessments, like the portfolio entries, are aligned to the Five Core Propositions and Standards specific to the Candidate’s certificate area.


- 📁 An NBCT from North Carolina sees the difference in this way: The portfolio shows work over a period of time which allows you highlight students' growth. Assessment center exercises are based on your knowledge---the things you use and do every day as a teacher.

## Assessment Center Logistics

*Responding to the Assessment Center exercises requires consistent, clear, convincing evidence just as your classroom-based portfolio entries. However, there are some fundamental differences.*

### Scheduling the Assessment Center Appointment

You must receive a testing confirmation or an Authorization to Test (ATT) from NBPTS before you can make an AC appointment. Be sure to make the appointment as soon as possible as times fill quickly. Although there are nearly 400 Prometric™ Testing Centers nationwide (nbpts.org), a few Candidates reported having to drive several hours because they were unable to get appointments at the nearest Assessment Center to their homes. The general rule is to schedule the AC appointment 45 days before your desired test date; however, some Prometric Testing Centers cannot book this far in advance.

 One Candidate said that he was surprised at how busy his testing center was. He even saw people he knew there preparing for other tests. This is important because testing centers provide services for several assessments.

Have the following information handy before calling the Assessment Center:

- ◆ Your name, exactly as it appears on the Authorization to Test—this is extremely important. If the names on the photo identification and ATT do not match exactly, you will be denied entry to test. Make sure they are the same! --Marriage certificates or divorce decrees will not be accepted by Assessment Centers as proof of name changes.
- ◆ Two-digit certificate number and certificate area name
- ◆ NBPTS Candidate ID number
- ◆ If applicable: specialty area. You MUST select the same specialty area that you selected at the time of application.

A sample Authorization to Test can be viewed on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website ([http://www.nbpts.org/UserFiles/File/authorization\\_test.pdf](http://www.nbpts.org/UserFiles/File/authorization_test.pdf)). If any of the information on the ATT is incorrect, contact 1.800.22TEACH immediately.

Candidates requiring name changes: If you require a name change, please send a written request along with a copy of a valid driver's license (enlarged 200%) to:

**NBPTS Processing Center  
11827 Tech Com Way, Suite 200  
San Antonio, TX 78233**

Do NOT schedule the assessment appointment until verifying with Prometric that the change has been made. Candidates can call 1.800.226.7958 to check.

If you've already made your appointment AND then require a name change, please allow 10 business days prior to your scheduled appointment for the name change to be processed.

Once you have the required information and a calendar to check and verify your commitments, you're ready to schedule your AC appointment. NBPTS's ACOPG provides the following phone numbers for Candidates:

U.S. Candidates: 1.800.226.7958

International Candidates (from outside the U.S.): 1.443.751.4848

Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EDT)

**Some Candidates will be asked to select a specialty area during the test. Candidates MUST select and test in the specialty area shown on their ATT. Official changes to a Candidate's specialty area can only be made prior to scheduling an Assessment Center appointment, and no later than the deadline for making changes to the selected certificate or specialty area (nbpts.org).**

The following certificates will have a specialty area designated on the ATT:

- ◆ *AYA/Science* (Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Space Science, Physics)
- ◆ *ECYA/Exceptional Needs Specialist* (Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Early Childhood, Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Severe and Multiple Disabilities, Visual Impairments)
- ◆ *EAYA/Career and Technical Education* (Agriculture and Environmental Sciences; Arts and Communications; Business, Marketing, Information Management, and Entrepreneurship; Family and Consumer Sciences; Health Services; Human Services, Manufacturing and Engineering Technology; Technology Education)
- ◆ *EMC/English as a New Language (Path 1: EC/Generalist, MC/Generalist; Path 2: English Language Development Specialist)*
- ◆ *EAYA/English as a New Language (Path 1: EA or AYA Mathematics, Science or Social Studies/History; Path 2: English Language Development Specialist)*
- ◆ *EMC/Music* (Band, Orchestra, Vocal)
- ◆ *EAYA/Music* (Band, Orchestra, Vocal)
- ◆ *EAYA/World Languages Other than English* (French, Spanish)

Your responses will be scored according to the specialty area requirements designated on the ATT. It is imperative that Candidates required to select a specialty area verify that the ATT is printed with the correct certificate area.

## LOGISTICS

When you call for the AC appointment, many Prometric Testing Centers will book you into their “first available appointment” for the day regardless of your preference. Be sure to ask before accepting the appointment. This may be important if you have a long drive or know you’ll have other transportation issues.

☞ NBCT Susan said, “The nearest testing center to my home was a two hour drive *without traffic*. When I called, the time she offered me was 8:00 in the morning. I was afraid to take the morning appointment and felt the afternoon would allow me more travel time. I got my afternoon appointment after explaining my situation and asking for some options.”

EMC/EAYA ART: Candidates must schedule appointments at least 10 business days prior to the preferred testing date. Because some art exercises require hardcopy stimulus materials to be shipped to the Assessment Center, it is imperative that you make the appointment with enough time for the appropriate materials to be packed, shipped and delivered to the testing center. It is your responsibility to alert the AC administrator about the testing materials upon arrival.

Because Music and WLOE Candidates test at Supplemental Testing sites, they must be aware of additional testing deadlines. The following dates were drawn from the NBPTS website (accessed December 28, 2007):

### Supplemental Testing Dates for WLOE & Music Candidates

#### For WLOE Candidates

Testing Date	Applications Must Be Received By
Aug. 4, 2007	June 22, 2007
Sept. 8, 2007	July 27, 2007
Oct. 27, 2007	Sept. 14, 2007
Nov. 17, 2007	Oct. 5, 2007
Jan. 12, 2008	Nov. 30, 2007
Feb. 9, 2008	Dec. 28, 2007
Mar. 8, 2008	Jan. 25, 2008
May 10, 2008	Mar. 28, 2008

#### For Music Candidates

Testing Date	Applications Must Be Received By
Aug. 4, 2007	June 22, 2007
Sept. 8, 2007	July 27, 2007
Oct. 27, 2007	Sept. 14, 2007

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Nov. 17, 2007	Oct. 5, 2007
Jan. 12, 2008	Nov. 30, 2007
Feb. 9, 2008	Dec. 28, 2007
Mar. 29, 2008	Feb. 15, 2008
May 17, 2008	Apr. 4, 2008

For up-to-date information, Candidates and Retake Candidates are encouraged to check [nbpts.org](http://nbpts.org) and their specific certification area.

### Where Are AC Located?

Candidates choose their testing location from nearly 400 Prometric Testing Centers located nationwide. To locate a nearby Prometric Testing Center, Candidates in most certificate areas can use the ETS website which is conveniently linked from the National Board website. Log onto: [http://etsis4.ets.org/tcenter.cbt\\_dm.cfm](http://etsis4.ets.org/tcenter.cbt_dm.cfm). Candidates simply enter their ZIP code and follow one or two additional steps to access a list of Assessment Centers within a predetermined radius.

A sampling of testing centers from the ETS website (accessed November, 2007):

Prometric Testing Center  
125-3030 Lincoln Avenue  
Coquitlam, British Columbia  
604.464.6401

Prometric Testing Center  
22003 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Suite 4-A1  
Seattle/Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043  
No phone listed

Prometric Testing Center  
22002 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Suite B  
Terrace Village Shopping Plaza  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043  
425.697.3798

Prometric Testing Center  
8536 North Wall Street  
Spokane, WA 99208  
509.467.8715

Prometric Testing Center  
12020 Meridian Avenue East, Suite D  
Puyallup, WA 98373  
253.848.0771

University of Idaho  
1210 Blake Avenue  
Continuing Education Building  
Moscow, ID 83844  
208.885.6716

Central Washington University  
400 East University Way,  
Testing Service, Boullion Hall- Room 125  
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7427  
509.963.1847

Prometric Testing Center  
1122 NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 106A  
Portland, OR 97230  
503.254.4159

While most Candidates will test at a Prometric Testing Center near their home, Candidates for the

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Music certificate use a separate registration process and test at an institutional setting (instead of Prometric Testing Centers) because of the aural stimuli and requirements unique to the Music certificate. This separate registration process is also used for Exercise 1 of the World Languages Other than English certificate. These Candidates are strongly advised to pay careful attention to the testing details that are unique to their certificates, including special administration dates.

📁 WLOE NBCT and Washington resident Sonya was scheduled for her Supplemental AC exercises in Provo, Utah at Brigham Young University. She said it was the closest Supplemental AC testing center to her. However, after notifying NBPTS of the situation, they were able to move her assessments to a university within one mile of her home.

📁 Music Candidates found the only Supplemental AC testing site in Washington State is located at the University of Washington.

Be sure to refer to your specific instructions and the NBPTS website for the most current information.

### Getting to the AC

Double-check driving directions before leaving for the AC. Candidates and NBCTs strongly recommend, if it is at all possible, driving to the site a few days before the scheduled testing date. Many felt this reduced their stress on “test” day and gave them the chance to time the actual trip from “door to door.” Getting directions online, from an automobile association (such as AAA), or checking a print road map proved helpful for several Candidates as most had to drive to another section of town or even another city for the Assessment Center exercises. While many Candidates have used Internet-based mapping programs, a few have reported problems with inaccurate and/or difficult to understand directions.

📁 NBCT Pat said she was glad she got directions online. But there was road construction, and she had to detour. She barely made it before her scheduled time. Her advice to Candidates: Leave extra early! (yahoogroups.com)

📁 NBCT Benita recommends finding the AC well in advance of the test. She went one day early only to find her location in the midst of a construction zone with traffic rerouted all around the testing center. She said to top it off, “There was no sign on the door of the building where it was located. I would have been a wreck if I had waited until test morning to do that!” (email)

Remember, anything you can do ahead of time to prepare for the trip to the AC will relieve stress the day of the Assessment Center exercises.

Due to a variety of factors, you may not end up testing at the center closest to your home. For example, Candidates participating in Western Washington University’s cohort program found a testing center immediately across the border (and within a few minutes’ drive of home). However, most Candidates chose the longer drive south toward Seattle, even staying overnight in hotels, instead of risking a long wait at the border.

Again, First-time WLOE and Music Candidates will test at TWO different sites (does not

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apply to all Retake Candidates). After fees are paid and eligibility requirements are met, WLOE and Music Candidates will receive additional information via “snail” mail on how to register for their AC exercises.

If you arrive more than 30 minutes after your scheduled testing time, you will be deemed to be a no-show and required to reinstate eligibility before scheduling a new appointment. This means additional fees and stress. If the appointment was booked late into the testing window, you risk not having enough time to reschedule. In that case, you would miss the opportunity to complete the certification process! (Note: With stipulations, Retake Candidates can defer the AC exercises for a fee.)

### **Can I Take Someone With Me?**

Generally, the answer is NO. The Assessment Centers are often quite small and busy. Candidates testing for National Board Certification will not be the only people there. It is strongly recommended that you attend the AC site alone. In fact, most testing centers will not allow people without appointments to wait in the center. However, you may want to have someone drop you off and/or pick you up after the testing. For Candidates testing several miles from home, it may be worth the expense to get a hotel and spend the night.

📁 NBCT Nancy says spend the night at a hotel so you can celebrate and relax after the test. Do something just for you! Shop, enjoy a latte, go for a fancy lunch or dinner, read a book, get a massage.

### **What to Expect at the AC**

After arriving at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment time, you will be required to sign in and show acceptable photo identification. In fact, the NBPTS website states that Candidates must be prepared to have their picture taken for identification purposes. Remember, the name on the picture identification must match the ATT. Be sure to have the necessary paperwork so the process isn't slowed. For some certificate areas, this means Candidates will need bar codes and any hard-copy stimulus that might have been sent to earlier by NBPTS. Pay attention to the communication sent by NBPTS that details these instructions.

Acceptable primary photographic identification must be valid (not expired) and clearly show your first and last name, a recent photograph, and your signature. The policy guidelines clearly state there are five Acceptable Primary Identification Documents:

- ◆ Driver's license
- ◆ Passport
- ◆ State issued identification card

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- ◆ National identification
- ◆ Military identification

If the primary identification supplied at the AC testing center is missing either a photograph or signature, a secondary identification will be required **IN ADDITION TO** the primary identification.

Secondary identification may include:

- ◆ Student identification
- ◆ Government issued identification document that has not expired (one of the above five primary identifications)

Candidates **MAY NOT** use the following for identification purposes (list not exhaustive):

- ◆ Any expired identification card
- ◆ Employee identification
- ◆ Social Security card
- ◆ Credit card of any kind
- ◆ International driver's license
- ◆ International student identification
- ◆ Learner's permit (or any temporary identification card)
- ◆ Notary-prepared document or letter

Name variance exceptions: While Candidate name, name on ATT, and name on the primary identification must match, the Assessment Center Orientation guidelines notes that there are a few exceptions:

- ◆ One uses a variation of another (Louis/Lou)
- ◆ Single letter variation of spelling (Cathryn/Kathryn)
- ◆ First and last names are reversed (Jane Doe/Doe Jane)
- ◆ Suffixes (Jr., Sr., III)
- ◆ Name changes submitted by Candidates affecting the **middle name** will update the Candidate record; however, middle name changes will not update to the Candidate appoint record at the testing site. These permitted exceptions include: (1) the absence or presence of a middle initial/name; (2) including maiden name versus given middle name.

## Can I Take Anything into the Testing Room?

Candidates will not be allowed to take anything into the testing area, so it's best to leave personal items in the car. Most Prometric Testing Centers provide a small locker for items such as a snack, wallet, or purse. It is also the place to leave cell phones and other electronic devices (turned off or in the “silent” mode). Because there will be many people there testing for several reasons, the center may be crowded or even somewhat noisy with several people typing at the same time. For this reason, testing administrators will provide Candidates with headsets or earplugs to block ambient noise.

NOTE: EA/Math, AYA/Math, EA/Science, AYA/Science, EMC/Art, EAYA/Art, EAYA/WLOE, EMC/Music, and EAYA/Music Candidates will bring bar code labels into the testing room with them. Make sure these are the bar code labels received with the ATT. These are different from the bar code labels received in the portfolio box (nbpts.org).

A few Candidates reported that taking in personal items such as Kleenex was forbidden. The people at the AC will provide tissue if you need it. Scratch paper will be provided (as noted below), but it CANNOT remove it from the workstation. Use of this scratch paper is forbidden during the tutorial or other untimed sections of the test appointment time. Maximum time spent in the tutorial and other untimed sections of the test should not exceed 30 minutes.

Do not take anything out of the secured testing room. Removing items from the secured room nullifies your responses for the exercises. All unauthorized items brought into the testing area are collected and sent directly to NBPTS for review. Additionally, you will be required to sign in to and out of the testing room (and when leaving the testing center).

The best way to ensure compliance with testing regulations concerning personal items is to confirm rules with the specific AC location's staff.

### **To Review:**

**ONLY** the following materials are permitted in the testing room:

- >Pens (black ink) and pencils
- >Art Product in a plastic bag (EMC/Art and EAYA/Art Candidates only)
- >EA/Math, AYA/Math, EA/Science, AYA/Science, EMC/Art, EAYA/Art, EAYA/WLOE, bring the sheet of Candidate bar code ID labels received with the Authorization to Test (PDF format).

**NO PHOTOCOPIES of any materials — whether provided by NBPTS or others — are permitted. Absolutely no materials other than those listed above are permitted. It is the Candidate's responsibility to comply with these procedures and failure to do so can result in the Assessment Center exercises being canceled or disqualified. If this should be necessary, no scores will be reported for the Assessment Center exercises and fees will not be refunded.**

**Please note:** For Assessment Center security reasons, Candidates will be asked to surrender all materials brought into the testing room before leaving the testing room. Therefore, any of the permissible materials Candidates wish to retain after the assessment should not be brought into the testing room at the Assessment Center (nbpts.org).

### *What if I need a calculator?*

Candidates may NOT bring a calculator into the testing room. For certificate areas that may require a calculator, an online scientific calculator is available during testing. A tutorial on how to use the calculator is available prior to testing. It is the only calculator available to Candidates.


Candidates will be given a “Computer Testing Tools Icons” sheet that describes the tools and keys used during the assessment exercises.

### **What Are the Computers Like at the AC?**

Most of the certificate areas require computer-based testing; however, there are a few exceptions (e.g., Music and WLOE, Exercise 1). At every Prometric Testing Center, all Candidates complete a tutorial that demonstrates how to use the special word processing tool. For Candidates responding to the prompts via computer, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. The AC computers will NOT allow Candidates to change font, format into lists, spell or grammar check, or do other “advanced” word processing functions.
2. If a Candidate chooses to answer in the form of a list or bullets, he/she MUST create them by using >, \*, or some other designation. Candidates will not have access to formatting shortcuts.
3. Some AC computers are newer than others, so be prepared for anything technology-wise.

Although not interactive, NBPTS’ online Assessment Center tutorial is an excellent resource that allows Candidates to preview what they will see at the Assessment Center. Candidates can find the tutorial at <http://www.nbpts.org/tutorial/index.html>.

 NBCT Patty says it helped her to complete all parts of the tutorial when she began testing. She says, “Even if you know how to use a mouse and scroll bars, complete the tutorial at the testing center. It will familiarize you with the [specific] computer software used and help take away some of the apprehension.”

### **Additional AC Protocol**

In order to maintain the integrity and validity of National Board Certification, there are several additional expectations you should be aware of before arriving at the Assessment Center. While using cell phones, highlighter pens, or even mechanical pencils may seem common place, it is imperative that you understand the importance of following the expected procedures before, during, and even after the testing. If you have any questions, it is best to ask your test administrator before entering the test room. Remember, during the exercises, you are to raise your hand if you have any questions, concerns (barring content, of course!).

## LOGISTICS

The Assessment Center administrator is authorized to dismiss Candidates from the test session (and NBPTS reserves the right to investigate any/all of the following) for actions such as, but not limited to (accessed December 2007):

- ◆ Attempting to take the test for someone else or having someone take the test for you
- ◆ Failing to provide acceptable identification
- ◆ **Using a telephone or cellular phone during the test session OR DURING BREAKS**
- ◆ Using any aids in connection with the test, such as mechanical pencils, pages, beepers, hand-held calculators, watch calculators, books, pamphlets, notes, rulers, highlighter pens, radios with headphones (leave your iPod at home!), stop watches, cellular phones
- ◆ Tampering with the computer
- ◆ **Leaving the test room without permission or leaving the test center during the break**
- ◆ Attempting to remove from the test room any test content, scratch paper, or notes relating to the test or using scratch paper during breaks or untimed sections of the test

### Can Responses Be Handwritten?

The general answer is NO—handwritten responses WILL NOT be scored. However, there are exceptions. Music and WLOE Candidates, due to the nature of the content areas and the limitations of the testing center computers, will be required to respond to one or more exercises in writing. Candidates in Math and Science are also permitted to supplement their online, typed responses with diagrams or graphs.

Whether you are required to respond in writing, or need to supplement an on-line response, you **MUST** use a response book provided by the Assessment Center. Notify the test administrator of your need to ensure you are supplied with a response book that contains the lined paper and graph paper (graph paper is provided at the end of each exercise). NBPTS states that Candidates must “begin each exercise on the first page of the corresponding tab in the response booklet” ([ACOPG](#)).

NBPTS reminds Candidates to add the following before submitting the response book at the end of the test (adapted from [ACOPG](#)):

1. Affix the bar code label (provided with the ATT—not the bar codes sent with “the box”) and complete the Candidate information on the front cover.
2. Write Candidate Identification number on the first page of EACH AC exercise you’re responding to in the response book.

- Write the exercise title and eight-character prompt number (applicable only if the test is being administered via computer) in the response book where indicated.

In review--In order for supplemental materials to be scored, they must include the eight-character prompt number, Candidate ID number and the exercise title.

### How Long Will I Be at the Assessment Center?

First-time Candidates in most certificate areas follow the same testing schedule as shown below. At this time, Music and World Languages Other Than English have modified testing schedules which are shown below the Retake Candidate schedule.

**First-time Candidates** can expect to be at the Assessment Center for a little over four hours. This allows for the 30 minute early arrival, check-in, computer tutorial, Assessment Center exercises, and a 15-minute break.

According to the NBPTS website, the testing schedule will look like this:

Check-in	15 minutes
Computer Tutorial	30 minutes
Exercises 1-3	90 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Exercises 4-6	90 minutes <b>Total time: 4 hours</b>

**Retake Candidates** who are not taking six Assessment Center exercises will have a modified schedule depending on the number of exercises he/ she chooses to retake:

Check-in	15 minutes	
Computer Tutorial	30 minutes	
Exercise 1	30 minutes	<b>Total time: 1 hour, 15 minutes</b>
Exercise 2	30 minutes	<b>Total time: 1 hour, 45 minutes</b>
Exercise 3	30 minutes	<b>Total time: 2 hours, 15 minutes</b>
Break	15 minutes	
Exercise 4	30 minutes	<b>Total time: 3 hours</b>
Exercise 5	30 minutes	<b>Total time: 3 hours, 30 minutes</b>
Exercise 6	30 minutes	<b>Total time: 4 hours</b>

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**Music Candidates:** All six of the AC exercises require a handwritten response instead of a computer response. Due to the potential distractions that CD players and music may cause during the testing, Music Candidates are required to complete their AC exercises in alternate locations referred to as supplemental Assessment Centers. There are fewer of these supplemental testing centers, and the procedure for making the appointment differs from the generic directions—refer to the specific testing directions and the National Board website.

Music Candidates can expect to spend no more than 3 hours and 45 minutes at the Assessment Center. The schedule is as follows:

Check-in, reading instructions	30 minutes
Exercises 1-3	90 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Exercises 4-6	90 minutes
	<b>Total time: 3 hours, 45 minutes</b>

**World Languages Other than English:** The AC exercises are split into two separate testing days. Five of the six exercises are taken at a computerized testing center; one will be taken at a supplemental Assessment Center. AC Exercise 1 requires Candidates to respond to aural prompts in their target language. Candidates will listen to prompts and record responses on a cassette recorder (provided by the Assessment Center staff). AC exercises 2-6 are computerized and are taken at a Prometric Testing Center.


World Languages Other than English testing schedule:

Assessment Center

Check-in	15 minutes
Computer Tutorial	30 minutes
Exercises 2-4	90 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Exercises 5-6	60 minutes
	<b>Total time: 3 hours, 30 minutes</b>

Supplemental Assessment Center

Check-in, reading instructions	30 minutes
Exercise 1: Oral Proficiency	30 minutes
	<b>Total time: 1 hour</b>

 Regardless of candidacy, it is strongly recommended that Candidates take the full 15 minutes for break. Candidates report that a small snack, a brisk walk to the locker, a trip to the restroom, and

a few minutes away from the computer were rejuvenating for the final three exercises. Candidates will not, however, be allowed to talk about the prompts with anyone or to make cell phone calls.

## The Day Before the Appointment

- ◆ One or two days before the scheduled appointment, call the AC to confirm the time and date. At this time, Candidates may also want to check directions, road construction updates, and other travel arrangements (ferry boat, bridges, hotel, taxi, etc.).
- ◆ Review study materials
- ◆ Relax

📁 NBCT Patty says don't try to cram the night before or morning of your appointment. Trust your preparation and leave for the testing center early.

## What If I Experience Problems at the AC?

For test security purposes and to help ensure the integrity of each Candidate's Assessment Center experience, a testing proctor is always present, all testing sessions are video-recorded, and every keystroke is electronically recorded and transmitted to NBPTS.

If a problem occurs while you are testing, you are encouraged to report it to the Assessment Center administrator immediately (while at a computer, raise your hand). It is important to note that complaints to the administrator must also be reported directly to NBPTS.

Any complaints regarding an Assessment Center must be submitted by the Candidate in writing within 7 days of his/her appointment. NBPTS needs to know quickly so that they can help. NBPTS must be contacted directly in order to fully investigate the complaint, even if it was reported to the Assessment Center administrator when it happened.

Mail: NBPTS Processing Center  
11827 Tech Com Way, Suite 200  
San Antonio, TX 78233  
Fax: 1.888.811.3514  
Web: [www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs)

If a problem occurs that the on-site administrator is unable to resolve to your satisfaction, you may call 1.800.22TEACH from the Assessment Center. Customer support representatives are available Monday through Friday (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST).

## After the AC Exercises

Candidates must never discuss Assessment Center prompts with anyone. Candidates are also advised to avoid accessing list-serves and other online chat groups for a period of time following their testing appointment. Remember, this is a high-stakes assessment that requires strict

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adherence to all confidentiality agreements, and there are negative consequences for those found to be in violation.

Confidentiality is important to the rigor and integrity of both the AC exercises and National Board Certification. As a Candidate for National Board Certification, you sign multiple confidentiality statements. One of those requires that you sign a confidentiality statement before being allowed to begin the AC exercises. Additionally, when you sit at the computer, you will be prompted through several screens reminding you that **You are not allowed to talk about the specific prompts at any time.**

NBPTS strongly encourages Candidates to report anyone who they suspect of cheating or disclosing specific prompts. This is serious. Instead, Candidates can find two released prompts for each certificate are, exercise descriptions, and scoring rubrics in the Scoring Guides available on the NBPTS website. These, Candidates may discuss freely—with the caveat that NBCTs should not be asked to “score” practice answers. This will be discussed more in detail later.

The NBPTS Code of Ethics is very clear on the issue of confidentiality. Failure to maintain confidentiality can result in consequences such as losing your National Board Certification and/or a lawsuit. Do not jeopardize your National Board Certification.

The following is excerpted from NBPTS website’s Certification Denial or Revocation Policy:

**I. Certification may be denied or revoked for any candidate or certificate-holder, who in the sole judgment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,**

**(A)** Has knowingly misrepresented or falsified material information in connection with an application, credentials, assessment documentation, or other materials or information submitted to NBPTS, or

**(B)** Has knowingly engaged in inappropriate conduct in connection with the certification process or renewal of the certification process, including, but not limited to:

1. noncompliance with assessment procedures, regulations or instructions,
2. violation of confidentiality agreements signed in accordance with the candidate application and/or assessment administration,
3. obtaining improper access to secure assessment materials or information prior to the administration of the assessment,
4. sharing, publishing, electronically posting or otherwise reproducing secure assessment materials or information,
5. violation of the NBPTS guidelines that describe collaboration with others, or
6. any other form of cheating or misconduct that compromises the integrity of the certification process.

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To report possible misconduct at an Assessment Center, send an e-mail to [ethics@ets.org](mailto:ethics@ets.org), or call: 1-800-779-3339 (Select Option 3) Monday - Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm EST.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards does not tolerate cheating or confidentiality breaches of any type. Help protect the integrity of National Board Certification by immediately reporting breaches of security, misconduct and/or unethical practice.

## NOTES:

## What Can You Do to Prepare Yourself?

*Reading and understanding NBPTS' Five Core Propositions, your certificate area's Standards, and working on your portfolio entries began your content preparation for the AC exercises.*

### Familiarize Yourself with the Computer

One of the most important factors in preparing for the Assessment Center exercises is knowing how to use the computer and the testing software. While understanding the prompts and knowing what is asked for in the response is important, understanding how to use the computer is imperative. Accessing the National Board's Assessment Center online tutorial, available at <http://www.nbpts.org/tutorial/index.html>, will get Candidates started in practicing for the AC.

Many Candidates found that once they completed the computer tutorial, they felt more comfortable with the idea of keyboarding in all responses. Many Candidates and NBCTs report that they then responded to practice prompts via the computer. This assisted them because they got familiar typing responses. Some even set up a timer to create the pressure they expected to experience during live testing.

A few Candidates who felt they were not “computer savvy” even invested in typing classes to improve their keyboarding speed and accuracy. This is a personal choice that only you can make after assessing your keyboarding skills. Remembering that there are very few exceptions to the rule that all AC exercise responses are keyboarded, the importance of keyboarding with confidence cannot be over-stressed.

📁 One NBCT put it this way, “Learn how to type! Don't try to *hunt and peck* your way through this assessment.”

### *The Timer*

One important aspect to familiarizing yourself with the computer screens is to know how the timing of each assessment is conducted. An onscreen timer is provided to assist Candidates in managing time. However, some Candidates prefer not to see the timer, so you will have the option of “hiding” it. Regardless of a Candidate's preference, the timer automatically appears (and cannot be hidden) when there is five minutes remaining for the

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exercise.

Some Candidates report being flustered at the beginning of the first exercise. It appeared to them that the timer started at 29 minutes. Knowing that the timer does not report seconds until the five minute mark would have relieved their unnecessary stress. Candidates do have a full 30 minutes to complete responses; however, the timer only shows 00:30 for one second before moving to 00:29. Although it does not show at this point, the clock is counting down from 00:30:00(hours, minutes, seconds), so after the first second, it then reads 00:29.

Beginning at the 5 minute mark, the timer automatically appears and stays on screen. From that point on, the timer WILL include seconds. Thus, it will appear as 00:05:00 (in three sections).

## Focused Study of Exercises

### *Gather the Prompt Descriptors*

To begin your focused study for the AC exercises, you'll need to first gather the six AC exercise descriptions and the corresponding Level 4 rubrics. Having the materials in one place will make it easier as you gather more information regarding each area of concentration.

1. Print the Assessment Center exercise descriptions for your certificate area. You'll find these by going to the Candidate section of the NBPTS website. If you haven't bookmarked this as a favorite, do so now.

Here's a sample exercise description from NBPTS website:

### **Middle Childhood Generalist (Age Range: Students 7-12)**


#### **Exercise 1: Supporting Reading Skills**

Teachers will demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret student errors and patterns of errors in reading. Teachers will be asked to analyze and interpret a transcript of a given student's oral reading of a given passage. Teachers will also be asked to identify and justify appropriate strategies to address the identified student's needs.

In fact, some Candidates keep a copy of the exercise descriptions on their computers for later study (the unpacking of the prompts) while others prefer to handwrite their study materials. At this point it is a personal preference issue—remember, the AC does require typing (with previously noted certificate area exceptions).

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2. Using the same website, find the Scoring Guide for your certification area and print the Level 4 rubric for each of the six Assessment Center exercises. You will not find note-taking guides for the Assessment Center exercises.
3. Create a notebook, files, or other organizational study system that you'll be comfortable using. Divide it into six sections—one for each Assessment Center exercise.
4. File the corresponding exercise description and the rubric together.
5. Find your Standards. Although the AC exercises do not specifically list each Standard addressed (like the portfolio entries), they are aligned and address the Standards. It is important that you keep them in mind as you study.

 Many Candidates and NBCTs report that accessing, reviewing, and studying the Assessment Center exercises for the levels immediately adjacent to their certificate level as helpful. This means if you are AYA/MATHEMATICS (Adolescence and Young Adulthood, Math—Ages 14-18), you would also review and study the EA/MATHEMATICS (Early Adolescence, Math—Ages 11-15) exercises.

The Candidates and NBCTs who used this strategy said they found it helpful because the AC exercises encompass the breadth of knowledge expected for the entire age range/content area of the certificate. Some reported that they used the released prompts as additional practice. Furthermore, Candidates said they felt after many years of teaching only one or two grade levels, they were no longer “experts” in a wide range of age-specific content or research. Utilizing this strategy gave them confidence when approaching the AC exercises.


For example, exercise 6 for AYA/MATHEMATICS certificate area is Technology. Among other things, Candidates demonstrate their knowledge regarding the “errors and limitations associated with graphing calculators” (nbpts.org). One math teacher commented that her students don't even use graphing calculators! It's not the type of math classes she regularly teaches. Reading the descriptors reminded her that she needed to be prepared for the entire range/content area of her certificate.

### *Demystifying the Exercise Description (Prompt)*

Each of the AC exercise descriptions contains the guideposts for the prompts you'll see during the live testing. A close reading and “unpacking” of each descriptor (also called a *prompt*) will help you to understand exactly what is expected.


There are several different ways of unpacking the descriptors. However, many Candidates have reported that the sentence by sentence method (or phrase by phrase) was most helpful for them. Breaking the descriptor down by sentence means that you'll scrutinize, question, and compare each sentence of the prompt with the NBPTS Standards, your current knowledge, and the Level 4 rubric.

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 Candidate Mary said that this method caused her to pause and reflect on every section of the descriptor. By slowing down, it helped her to generate a list of possible recourses for additional study and support. For example, the title *Supporting Reading Skills* made her think of Johns and Davis' text, Improving Reading: A Handbook of Strategies.

The unpacking process adapted from the book by Martha Hopkins called Navigating the National Board Certification Process (2004) and Western Washington University's cohort support group model can look like this:

1. Copy the item description.
2. Separate the sentences or phrases, leaving a few lines between each one for your comments and notes. Or, if you prefer, create a table inserting each into a separate box.
3. Read each sentence one at a time and write down what it means to you. Don't think about the descriptor as a whole, just the sentence or phrase. You may find it helpful to turn the sentence into a question.
4. Review the prompt as a whole. What patterns do you see in the description? For example, this explicitly states Candidates will have to identify and justify appropriate strategies.
5. Based on your analysis, what areas of content does this exercise address? What standards are being addressed? What do you know? What do you need to brush up on?
6. Examine the Level 4 rubric for the exercise. Are there any words repeated from the descriptor? What patterns do I notice? What specific targets does it ask for in the response? How does the rubric match the assessed standards (what I believe from step 5)?
7. After you've unpacked the prompt, make a list of people who can answer your questions or fill in content area. This may include the Reading Specialist, Math Specialist, Librarian, Principal, Curriculum Director, teacher next door. Not only will these people be excellent resources, but they also have access to current research. You may want to do some reading to update yourself.
8. Gather the research, file it with the appropriate AC exercise for later study and review.

 The following is one Candidate's response as he unpacked the MC/GEN descriptor given previously:

Steps 1-3: copying the title, phrases and/or sentences

(Candidate's response in italics)

**Supporting Reading Skills—**

*I think this exercise is about reading and helping students who may be struggling readers. Perhaps it will have comprehension, reading strategies, or assessments included. I do not think it will focus on writing.*

**Teachers will demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret student errors and patterns of errors in reading.---**

*I think they are going to give me a student example to look at because it says I'm going to analyze and interpret student errors. This means I have to understand the reading process and places where students may get lost—it also means I need to have some ideas on WHY the student is having trouble. I have to remember to analyze AND interpret—not just one. I notice it says “patterns of errors” – I'm not sure exactly what that means: maybe if the student keeps mixing up the same sounds or something. I'll have to think about that one.*

**Teachers will be asked to analyze and interpret a transcript of a given student's oral reading of a given passage.---**

*Oh, I have to understand oral reading. I think this means I will have a student example. It may be fluency, decoding, or something...Again, I have to analyze AND interpret the transcript. I wonder if I'll have the passage and then a copy of what the student said? I wonder if this will be like the one minute readings we use at school?*

**Teachers will also be asked to identify and justify appropriate strategies to address the identified student's needs. –**

*I need to have several reading strategies ready to apply for this student. I must be able to explain the strategy and WHY it is appropriate to help the problems I noted in the transcript. I have to remember that I'm writing about a particular student and not the entire class. The strategy should fit with what I identified earlier. I think three or four strategies should be enough. I can't forget that this is about the student's reading, reading, reading--*

Step 4: After you've finished examining the descriptor sentence by sentence (or by phrase), think about the descriptor as a whole. What patterns do you see emerging? What questions do you think may be asked for this AC exercise?

**I think I may see the following questions at the AC:**

*\*Analyze and interpret the student's misconception in this passage. Why did student make errors? What is the evidence of the misconception? How do you know?*

*\*Identify and justify reading strategies you would use to assist the student. Why are they appropriate for this student?*

*\*How would you assist the student in learning the material he/she missed?*

*\*Identify strategies you would use to assist the student in reading the next passage.*

*\*What will you do next to assist the student?*

*\* Is this student an English Language Learner?*

*\*What are this student's strengths as a reader? What are this student's growth areas?*

*\*What would you have the student read next?*

Step 5: Based on your analysis, what content areas are addressed? Which standards are being assessed?

**Content Areas/Study Areas:**

*Based on my review, I need to study reading strategies for before, during, and after reading. I'm not sure at what point in the reading process the oral transcript will come from, so I need to be ready for everything. I need to brush up on why students have trouble reading and then when it happens and why is it happening? Also, I think I'll have someone make transcripts of student's reading so I can practice. The rubric states that I must be clear, convincing, and consistent, so I have to stay focused when writing. This descriptor did not mention anything about a student's writing process, so I do not think it will address anything about writing.*

*Hmmm....I've been teaching 11 and 12 year olds forever. I wonder if their reading issues are the same as a 7 year old's? I better look into the idea of reading strategies and developmental learning stages ...*

**NB Standards:** *Based on my examination of the descriptor, I believe the following Standards are relevant and appropriate to this exercise:*

- I. Knowledge of Students*
- II. Knowledge of Content and Curriculum*
- III. Learning Environment V. Instructional Resources*
- VIII. Assessment*

*I think it would be appropriate to review these standards as they apply to Level 4 rubric.*

Step 6: Access the Level 4 scoring rubric for the exercise you are “unpacking”. For this example, it is the MC/GEN certificate area, AC exercise 1. Scoring rubrics and released prompts can be found on the NBPTS website under the Candidate section.

Level 4 indicators for this exercise are as follows—

**Exercise 1—Supporting Reading Skills  
Level 4 rubric**

The response offers clear, consistent, and convincing evidence of content and pedagogical knowledge of reading by accurate identification of given student's errors or patterns of errors and planning of effective instructional strategies that develop the given student's reading skills.

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### Characteristics:

- Two errors or patterns are identified. Descriptions of errors or patterns are accurate and specific.
- Cited examples from text (passage and student's reading) are tightly connected to the identified errors and patterns of error.
- Two effective instructional strategies are described and thoroughly and in detail. Both instructional strategies effectively address one of the individual errors fully.
- Thorough rationales that justify each instructional strategy are given. The rationales are significantly connected to the reading needs of the student.
- Significant evidence of developmental appropriateness of the instructional strategies is given.

(Level 4 rubric accessed December 1, 2007)

Examine the Level 4 rubric descriptors and characteristics as closely as you did the exercise descriptor. This Candidate noted the following after examining the rubric:

*\*Of course I have to be clear, convincing, and consistent. I need to make sure I know what I want to say and don't ramble or talk about other things.*

*\*AH HAAA....I'm going to have to identify TWO errors or patterns in the student response and then accurately explain why they are appropriate.*

*\* I need to be specific—I suppose this means about the problem and about the strategy.*

*\*I'm going to have to use textual examples in my response.*

*\*I'm going to have to supply TWO strategies to help the student. Then I'm going to have to give my rationale for why THOSE strategies are the best.*

*\*Hmmm....I need to make sure that I don't list two strategies for one problem and then nothing about the other problem. I also need to make sure that I see two "different" problems in the student's reading.*

*\*Hmm...I also need to make sure that I know strategies that are appropriate for all age levels—I can't supply a strategy that would work for my 12 year olds but would not make sense for a 7 year old.*

*\*I'm wondering how I might assess my progress—I thought Assessment would be a Standard; I'll have to think more on this one. I don't want to talk too much about testing when it says to give instructional strategies.*

Another method of examining the rubrics requires that you read "across" the four levels and enter information in a chart. This Candidate might have completed the additional step using the following graphic organizer:

*(sample is excerpted for demonstration purposes; a full graphic organizer is provided with other samples)*

RUBRIC  
Exercise 1: Supporting Reading Skills

Level 4 ~ CCC	Level 3 ~ Clear	Level 2 ~ Limited	Level 1 ~ Little or no
Two errors or patterns (E/P) identified; accurate and specific	Two E/P correctly identified	At least one E/P is correctly identified	One or no E/P identified
Cited examples are tightly connected to above	Examples are connected but one may have better connection	Example may be connected to one E/P	Examples do not support either E/P
Two effective instructional strategies: thorough & in detail	Two strategies, both appropriately address one E/P	Strategies only somewhat address one E/P	Strategies may be missing, irrelevant, or not address E/P
Strategies effectively address one error fully	Two strategies worthwhile and connected	Two strategies simplistic and loosely connected	
Rationales for each strategy	Clear rationale to justify each strategy	Rationale is unclear or inappropriate	Rationale may be missing

Using the above graphic organizer allows the Candidate to see the level 4 expectations in comparison to the other levels. While always working to meet the level 4, it can be very helpful to understand the other levels.

Step 7: If you determine there are areas of study and/or research for you, what is your strategy? Where can you go for additional assistance?

**Resources:**

*I think I should talk to the Literacy Specialist in my building for some tips. Also, I can pick up some books on how to help struggling readers. I think I should talk to my ELL specialist for some strategies also. Janet next door can help me with pre-reading strategies and perhaps she will transcribe some of her students' reading so I can practice. Jim Burke has some good texts—I will look into buying Reading Reminders. I think searching the internet will be helpful too—but it may be too general.*

*Perhaps I can set up a meeting with some of the other grade level teachers to find out what they're seeing in class. I think that by having them talk about*

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*real students and how they're helping students will help me with the range of student's ability I may be expected to see included in this prompt.*

*A detailed and thorough review of these standards, including the language and descriptions, will assist me in preparing for this assessment exercise. I think it will be important to pull key words and phrases from these standards as I study.*

*Wow! I feel like I have a stronger understanding of what I'm going to see during this exercise. Now I just have to do some brushing up and practicing.*

Step 8: Complete the research and file it with the descriptors for later study and review.

Through the unpacking process, you closely examine each AC exercise description, its Level 4 rubric, and what you believe are the corresponding NBPTS Standards in order to determine which areas you may desire further study. Additionally, it will help you focus your understanding of what is being asked in each exercise. The ability to provide clear, consistent, and convincing evidence is assisted by the fact that you have worked with the language of the descriptor already.

Remember, you will have up to 30 minutes to read and respond to each AC exercise. However, familiarity with the AC exercise descriptors will give you confidence and assist in your preparation.

### **Is There a Shorter Version of Unpacking Descriptors?**

Absolutely. There are many methods for close reading and analyzing text. Not all Candidates will use the in-depth unpacking process. Some will read descriptors and use a deep questioning technique. You will need to use the method, or blend of methods that works best for you.

For another example, examine an EA/ELA exercise description:

#### **Early Adolescent/English Language Arts (Age Range: Students 11-15)**

##### **Exercise 1: English/Language Arts**

Teachers will show an understanding of the relation between literary passages and universal themes. Given a literary passage and a universal theme, teachers will analyze how a literary passage relates to a universal theme. They will also identify one type of mass media/resource and will tell how it can be used to explore both the passage and the theme.

**Based on the Descriptor, what questions do I have? What will be asked of me?**

*\*What is a literary passage? Will it include non-fiction, fiction, poetry? Will it be one passage?*

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*\*I wonder if it will be American, British or a World author? I might want to do a little reading.*

*\*Will I get to choose my universal theme? Should I have one or two prepared?*

*\*What are universal themes and what might some of those themes be?*

*\*Can themes be one word? Should I have some theme sentences prepared?*

*\*What are mass media/resources as they apply to this prompt?*

*\*What types of non-print texts do I currently use in class?*

*\*How do we analyze literary passages for a universal theme? What am I already doing?*

*\*What are the strategies I might use to teach theme in my classroom?*

*\*How do I teach students to connect two disparate texts? Should I start practicing compare/contrast now?*

*\*In a way, this reminds me of the portfolio response with the non-print reading. I think I can review some of the texts I used for that for teaching ideas.*

For Candidates with limited preparation time or for one who is doing a quick review, this method is not only helpful, but also appropriate. This Candidate may also want to use the “read across” method to examine the rubrics.

Asking the above questions will help the Candidate stay focused when responding to the prompt. It would be easy to drift onto the subject of mass media and its effects on today’s youth; however, that is neither the focus nor the apparent intent of the prompt. The Candidate also knows that he/she must do several things to fully answer the prompt which include, but are not limited to, analyzing a literary passage, determining universal theme, choosing and connecting a non-print text with a rationale, justifying the use of the non-print text, and providing strategies for exploring the theme in both texts.

This abridged method does not, however, include examining the Level 4 rubric or reviewing possible Standards, which are highly recommended activities. Only you, the Candidate, can determine what is the best study method based on your available time, materials, and resources.

### **Is There Anything Else I Should Do With the Descriptor/Rubric?**

There are many study strategies available that utilize the descriptors and rubrics. It is important to remember that Candidates are to choose the methods that they are most comfortable using and they find allow them “into” the descriptors. While some Candidates insist on reviewing the adjacent certificate area’s descriptors, other do not. Some Candidates

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will only have time to review briefly before taking the AC exercises while others will spend several hours in intensive study.

Some Candidates report that examining the Level 4 rubric was helpful, but what really clarified the scoring was doing a comparison between the rubrics. Candidates may want to expand the review to look at the differences among the Level 4, Level 3, Level 2 and even the Level 1 rubrics.

### **Do I Have to “Unpack” All of the Descriptors?**

To fully prepare and feel confident, for some the answer is *yes*. Understanding the descriptors (prompts) gives Candidates an advantage because they are less likely to be surprised at the AC.

Candidates working with the prompts from the adjacent certificate area may not need to unpack those prompts. However, Candidates and NBCTs report that the more they worked with the descriptors and released prompts, the more comfortable and prepared they felt for the actual Assessment Center exercises.

### **Sample Graphic Organizers**

- ✉ After unpacking the prompts, Candidates often found it helpful to organize information into a graphic organizer for easy reference later. This allowed them to “see” what they needed to know for each of the exercises, what they already knew (strengths), what they needed to study (areas to brush up on), and where/who they would go to for information.

Notes:

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AC Exercise # \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Standards Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Content Addressed and/or Level 4 rubric	Content/Areas I'm Confident	Content/Areas for Growth	Resources? People/websites/texts

Plan for addressing growth/study areas:



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RUBRIC:

Exercise \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

Level 4 ~ CCC	Level 3 ~ Clear	Level 2 ~ Limited	Level 1 ~ Little or no

From this exercise, what direction do you expect the prompt to take?

What do you need to know and to do in order to complete these tasks?

What should you learn/do/ think about to prepare for this exercise?

## Responding to Prompts

After unpacking the exercise description, making a list of possible content areas assessed, and listing some resources, it's time to practice responding to prompts.

There are some released/retired prompts found in the Scoring Guides available on the NBPTS website for each certificate area. Naturally, these are the best and most reliable examples of what you can expect to see at the Assessment Center. However, most certificate areas have only two released prompts that Candidates can practice answering. This means you may want to generate some of your own practice prompts.

Many Candidates find that writing their own practice prompts based on their intensive study of the descriptors and rubrics is very helpful. However, remember at no time, in no instance, can you ask NBCTs or Candidates who have taken their AC exercises to create practice prompts for you, nor should they review the prompts or responses. This violates the confidentiality statements that Candidates sign at the AC.

If you should decide to create practice prompts, remember that you are creating them based upon what you “believe” will be assessed. There is no guarantee that you will write the perfect prompt aligned to the AC exercise. However, the more practice you have answering prompts, the more comfortable you're likely to be on test day.

Because the Assessment Center exercises are administered via computer, most Candidates do not practice handwriting their responses. Very few certificate areas allow handwriting, so it is best to practice keyboarding your answers. As noted above, many Candidates now practice their answers using the NBPTS tutorial website. Instead of answering the party planning question offered in the tutorial, you might consider answering your practice prompt. Or you may choose to simply keyboard onto a word document.

### *Set up your testing situation*

To recreate a testing situation, you will need 30 minutes of uninterrupted time to complete each prompt, a timer, computer, printer, and the practice/released prompt. Set the timer and begin reading the prompt (remember that the time includes reading AND responding to the prompt). At the Assessment Center, the exercise will timeout at the 30-minute mark, so be sure not to go over during the practice sessions (remember, the timer will automatically appear at the 5-minute mark). Print the response, and set it aside for a few days. You'll want to compare it with the rubrics, but not right away.

### *Answering the Prompt*

Just as there are several successful ways to create accomplished portfolio entries, there are several ways to approach answering the AC exercises. Your method for answering the

## PREPARATION

prompts will depend on your preferences. You may want to try several different ways of responding to prompts to help determine your comfort level.

**The one non-negotiable: read the prompt carefully.** Level 4 rubric responses are not only clear, consistent, and convincing, they are also appropriate and focused to the prompt.

☞ Candidates and NBCTs alike say to answer all of the prompts in the Assessment Center exercise first. Then go back and fill in with additional details as you have time. Don't waste all of your time on the first prompt of the Assessment Center exercise. If one prompt states: "List two strategies," list them. There's no need to write an essay about the history of that particular strategy.

The NBPTS 2007 Assessment Center Orientation publication specifically states that "assessors are looking for depth and quality" in the Candidate's response not "quantity." Additionally, and perhaps even more importantly, is that "if a prompt requests that you provide two examples of appropriate actions to take in a given educational situation, only the first two examples you provided will be scored" (4).

Based on the previous example of one Candidate's focused study of the MC/GEN Assessment Center Exercise 1, Supporting Reading Skills, the previous statement is interpreted to apply as follows:

The first bullet on the Level 4 rubric (available for every AC exercise) clearly states identify two errors or patterns (and descriptions of those errors). The assessors would score the first TWO the Candidate supplied in the response. Listing three, four, or more errors/patterns of errors would not only be inappropriate, but also a waste of the Candidate's testing time. Assessors would not read the Candidate's entire response evaluating the find the "best" two strategies and score those.

### *What's the best way to read the prompt?*

Many Candidates say that they found it helpful to read the entire prompt first before beginning their response. This means you would scroll through the screens that show all of the prompts for a single Assessment Center exercise. (The software prevents you from reading the prompts for all six Assessment Center exercises before responding.) One advantage to this method is that you will be aware of the entire question before beginning.

A few Candidates report running out of time before getting to the last screen—they either mismanaged time or didn't realize the Assessment Center exercise included three or even four prompts. Other Candidates reported that they did not look ahead because it increased their stress. They simply read one screen, answered the question and moved to the next.

## PREPARATION

*Do I have to write essays for each question?*

**NO!** In fact, bulleted lists are perfectly fine for some answers. One English/Language Arts Candidate reported that she felt she spent most of her time editing for conventions and fluency. While you want your response to be coherent, NBPTS assessors are trained not to score your response lower because you've misspelled words or have a run-on sentence.

Another thing to think about is repetition. Because you answer all of the prompts of a single Assessment Center exercise once and then, as time permits, go through to add more detail, it may feel as if you're repeating yourself. Don't worry about this. Assessors are trained to find the information within your response. In order to be consistent and convincing, you may need to state some of the same ideas in several different ways. This does not mean, however, that you want to "parrot" information or ramble unnecessarily.

Unlike the portfolio entries, which you had several months to review, revise and reread, these Assessment Center exercises are on-demand writing, meaning that you must read, think, draft, and publish your response within a limited time—30 minutes. The assessors know they are reading your first draft, so don't panic about perfect writing. You must read the prompt, think quickly, and write concisely without time to pre-write, outline, draft, and/or edit.

📁 NBCT Mark said he did not format his responses with any sense of rhetorical arrangement... they were essentially stream-of-consciousness...he just laid out his whole thinking process as it happened. For one of the exercises, which tied for his highest score, half of the response was an annotated bulleted list! He says, "One piece of advice I'd give would be to not concern yourself with organization or style (as we English teachers tend to). Begin typing immediately, as time is your only enemy!" He reminds Candidates that assessors are trained to look for evidence within the response.

*What if I can't remember the technical term?*

Remember Candidates and assessors are classroom teachers from around the country and even the world! What is a "hot" technical term in your district or even in your state may not be somewhere else. Instead of loading up your response with jargon, explain *what* you would do or *how* you would do it. Don't worry that you must use educational terms in your answers in order to score a 4. In fact, a close examination of the Level 4 (or other level) rubric shows an absence of technical terms, jargon or other "educational-ese."

*Do I have to use all of the screens?*

Yes, you should answer each of the prompts on their respective screen. Also, you will want to scroll through all of the screens for each exercise to ensure you've answered each question of the prompt. Don't try to answer everything on one screen.

## PREPARATION

*What if I finish one of the AC exercises in less than 30 minutes?*

Take a calming breath, it's okay. You are not required to use the full 30 minutes. If you find yourself in this situation, review your screens and answers. There may be places you can add detail, elaboration or extension to your responses. However, do not ramble unnecessarily. You do not want to continue writing about unrelated content or ideas just to fill time or space. If you have fully answered the prompt and time remains, then progress to the next Assessment Center exercise. Remember, you are writing to the Level 4, accomplished rubric, so you must be convincing, consistent, and clear. Is your response all of these things?

NOTES:

## Scoring the Assessment Center Exercises

*Like the portfolio entries, the AC exercises are scored using rubrics and the NBPTS Standards corresponding to the Candidate's certificate area.*

The scoring process is well-defined and rigorous. Assessors are trained and must qualify through a rigorous preparation process before scoring Candidate responses. In her book, *The Teacher's Guide to National Board Certification*, Adrienne Mack-Kirschner explains the general scoring process as follows:

Each performance is scored independently on a .75 to 4.25 Score Scale. Candidate performances are assigned a whole number score (1, 2, 3, 4) and then, if appropriate, the whole number score is augmented with a plus or minus. Plus and minus scores are represented numerically as an increment or decrement of .25 from the whole number score. For example, a 1+ is equivalent to a 1.25 and a 3- is equivalent to a 2.75. (75)

Ultimately, scores range from .75 to 4.25. The scores from the AC exercises are combined with the scores from your portfolio entries; next, a 12-point constant is added to reach your total weighted scaled score. Each AC exercise is weighted 6.67% for a total of 40%. The other 60% is weighted from the portfolio entries.

### **Is the scoring for the AC similar to the portfolio scoring process?**

YES. The assessors use rubrics, train, and qualify to score the Assessment Center exercises. All assessors follow the established NBPTS standards and are trained for bias. Unlike those scoring portfolio entries, AC exercise assessors do not use note-taking guides as they score responses, so you won't find these on the nbpts.org website.

The other major difference is that some AC exercises are scored using two rubrics or may have two different prompts. For example, EA/SS-H Exercise 3 consists of two prompts which are scored independently using a 2-1-0 rubric. The two scores are then combined and converted to the 4-point scale.

## SCORING

It is very important that you access the NBPTS website to view your certificate area's rubrics, exercise descriptions, and retired prompts. This information will assist you with the rest of your preparation.

The Level 4 rubric, the highest level of accomplishment, requires that a Candidate's response provide **clear, convincing, and consistent** evidence. The rubric also lists specific characteristics for each score point. For example, the following Level 4 rubric is from the NBPTS website:

### **EA/Social Studies-History**

#### **Exercise 5: Resources**

#### **Level 4 Rubric**

The response provides **clear, consistent, and convincing** evidence that the candidate is able to accurately describe and explain a graphical representation of data, provide a detailed explanation of two reasons for the trend displayed in the data, and analyze one economic and one geographic impact of the trend on the region identified.

Characteristics:

- Description of the trend displayed is accurate and appropriate.
- Explanation of the two reasons for the trend is detailed and substantive.
- An in-depth analysis of one economic and one geographic impact of this trend on the region identified is logical and informed.

By reviewing this Level 4 rubric, the Candidate can determine the qualities of an accomplished response. For example, the importance of including TWO reasons in his/her response is clear. The Candidate will also see that the inclusion of economic and geographic impacts on specific regions is important to the response. These may or may not be areas of study for this Candidate.

Unpacking the prompt is an important process; however, carefully reading and reviewing each exercise's Level 4 rubric can also show you important aspects of accomplished responses.

## **Reviewing Your Practice Responses**

After you've written and responded to several practice prompts, you'll want to compare them with the Level 4 rubrics provided by NBPTS. Several NBCTs report that they were able to critically review their writing after they'd let it sit for a day. You may want to do the same thing. Then, using the rubrics and the NBPTS Standards, critically read your response comparing it to the characteristics listed in the Level 4 rubric.

## SCORING

Read your response looking specifically for things that are listed on the rubric. Remember, the assessors are looking for **clear, consistent, and convincing** evidence. Is your answer all of these? Does your response address all of the required parts of the prompt? Does your response fully and completely respond to the prompt without going off on unrelated tangents?

As stated previously, you may find it helpful to review the level 3, 2, and 1 rubrics (see next page for sample rubrics). Does your response fit one of these better? If so, review your writing to see where you can improve your answer. Reviewing your response and comparing it to the rubric will better prepare you for responding to prompts during your AC exercises. However, remember that this is not a guarantee that all of your responses will be determined to be Level 4s by the NBPTS assessors. This review of your response using the rubric should not be considered equivalent to the NBPTS scoring process, which entails a controlled scoring environment with highly trained scorers.

Although it is tempting to ask other NBCTs or teachers who have served as assessors to score or assess your answers, they cannot and must not. This would be a breach of confidentiality for them. By asking them to do this, you place their certification and/or scoring staff employment in jeopardy. The best judge of your writing, preparedness, and ability is you. Additionally, NBCTs and Candidates who have taken the Assessment Center exercises cannot assist you with writing or scoring practice prompts. Remember, you, too, will sign a confidentiality agreement.

**Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts (Age Range: Students 3-12)****Exercise 5: Interpreting Visual Text**

The candidate will interpret a piece of visual text by identifying the message and the use of graphics, text, and literary devices to convey that message. The candidate will identify the target audience for the visual text and explain how the text targets that audience.

**Scoring Rubric Level 4:** The response provides clear, consistent, and convincing evidence of an accurate interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text, an explanation of the use of graphics, text, and literary devices to convey a message, and a description of how the visual text targets a specific audience.

Characteristics:

- Insightful interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text.
- A thorough explanation of how the graphics and the text convey the message.
- An accurate identification of two literary devices.
- Tightly connected examples of how each literary device is used to convey the message.
- An accurate identification of the intended audience.
- A detailed explanation of how the visual text targets the audience.

**Scoring Rubric Level 3:** The response provides clear evidence of an accurate interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text, an explanation of the use of graphics, text, and literary devices to convey a message, and a description of how the visual text targets a specific audience.

Characteristics:

- Logical interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text.
- Sensible connections made to how the graphics and the text convey the message.
- A reasonable identification of two literary devices.
- Examples of how devices are used to convey the message are accurate.
- An appropriate identification of the intended audience.
- An adequate explanation of how the visual text targets the audience.

**Scoring Rubric Level 2:** The response provides limited clear evidence of an accurate interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text, an explanation of the use of graphics, text, and literary devices to convey a message, and a description of how the visual text targets a specific audience.

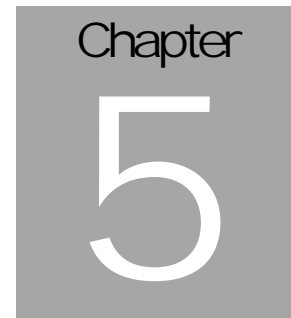
Characteristics:

- Vague interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text.
- Sketchy connections made to how the graphics and the text convey the message.
- Identification of literary devices may be incomplete or only somewhat accurate.
- Examples of how devices are used to convey the message may be weak or only partially accurate.
- The identification of the audience may be somewhat accurate.
- The explanation of how the visual text targets the audience may be inadequate.

**Scoring Rubric Level 1:** The response provides little or no evidence of an accurate interpretation of the message in a piece of visual text, an explanation of the use of graphics, text, and literary devices to convey a message, and a description of how the visual text targets a specific audience.

Characteristics:

- Illogical interpretation of the message.
- Connections to how the graphics and text convey the message may be inaccurate or nonexistent.
- Identification of literary devices may be incorrect.
- Examples of how devices are used by convey the message is illogical.
- The identification of the audience may be flawed.
- The explanation of how the visual text targets the audience may be unconvincing.



## Take Care of Yourself

*NBCTs and others remind you to take time to relax, rejuvenate, rejoice, and reflect while on your journey to achieve National Board Certification.*

### Prepare for the AC exercises

Your focused preparation for the AC exercises may have begun with the reading of this resource book. However, be assured that you have completed many things already to assist yourself in being prepared for the Assessment Center exercises including reading and understanding the Five Core Propositions and your certificate area's Standards and working on (or completing) your portfolio. Additionally, the AC exercises are designed to elicit evidence of your content knowledge in your certificate area.

### What else can I do?

Be confident. You have completed several additional tasks in preparation for the assessments. Familiarizing yourself with the computer software, reading and analyzing the prompts, responding to NBPTS.org released prompts, accessing the Level 4 rubrics, and brushing up on your growth areas are excellent ways to continue polishing and preparing yourself for the assessments.

When asked what advice they would give to Candidates about preparing for AC exercises, NBCTs responded with the following:

“You will learn the standards and values as you prepare your portfolio. Keep the Assessment Center questions in mind as you reflect on your content and teaching practice throughout the year.”

“I know it's easy to say, but ‘Don't Panic!’ Read the prompts closely to see what they want in the answer. Make sure you stick to the question.”

“Practice typing answers for 30 minutes to answer the released items.”

“Don’t try to cram. Trust your preparation!”

“I ...prepared by broadly studying all relevant grade level curriculum in my MC/Gen age range. I learned things I had never known. Several of these tidbits were real helpful in answering exam questions convincingly.”

“You’ve come this far. Trust in yourself. Each Assessment Center exercise is a small portion of the overall score. Stay positive.”

### **I think I have test anxiety!**

Many accomplished and successful NBCTs felt the same way on test day. One of the most important things to do is remain positive and confident. You are prepared. There are some techniques you can use to reduce your stress while increasing your confidence:

1. Make sure you know the location of your testing center to eliminate one potential stressor. Even if you know the location, check current construction and traffic conditions.
2. Check your identification. Does your identification meet the qualifications?—government issued, not expired, contains a recognizable picture and signature, name matches Authorization to Test.
3. Gather all required testing materials one or two days in advance so you don’t have to rush on test morning. Remember, what you take into the testing area differs based on certificate area.
4. Get a good night’s sleep. If you’re at a hotel, this may mean requesting a room in the back or away from the street. Get up a little early to have extra time to relax in the morning.
5. Eat something before the test begins. You will have a break, so be sure to bring a snack and beverage. (This may not apply to all Retake Candidates.)
6. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. You may want to wear layers or have an extra sweater in case you are too warm or too cold. In consideration of others, avoid excessive perfumes, colognes, and/or scented lotions.
7. Before entering the testing center, take a few minutes to relax. Take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and visualize yourself successfully completing the Assessment Center exercises. Or, stand-up, shake out stress, and gently roll your shoulders forward and back. You’re ready!

### **What do I do if I feel anxious during the assessments?**

It is normal to feel some anxiety during a testing situation. Barbara Probert, Ph.D., from the University of Florida, notes that is good to feel a little “up” while taking an exam

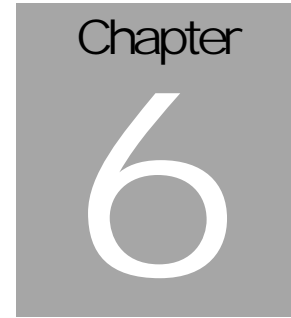
([www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)). Dr. Probert and NBCTs suggest the following test-taking strategies to manage text anxiety:

1. Complete the computer tutorial even if you know how to use a mouse and scroll bar. It will give you time to calm yourself.
2. Read the entire prompt carefully and thoroughly.
3. Focus your attention on the test. Don't waste time and energy worrying, thinking about what score you'll earn, whether or not you'll earn certification, or wondering what others are doing.
4. If you start to feel anxious, practice your relaxation techniques. Use anxiety as a cue to relax. Close your eyes, take three deep breaths, and then go back to the task.
5. Realize that you're as prepared as you can be and that your good teaching practices will come to your rescue as you write answers.
6. Have an "I can" attitude. Don't let one prompt ruin the whole test. Remember, point-wise, this is the smaller portion of your total score.
7. Close your eyes, sit up straight, gently roll your shoulders, neck/head, and flex your fingers. This may only take 30 seconds, but it can rejuvenate your spirit to tackle the rest of the prompt.
8. Concentrate on organizing your thoughts fairly quickly and then start typing your answer and keep going. Assessors don't expect you to have a polished answer, so it's not worth "freaking out" over a spelling error.

### **I made it through the AC exercises. Now what do I do?**

Congratulations! For many Candidates, this completes the 10 elements of the National Board Certification<sup>®</sup> process. Here's what NBCTs advise:

1. Treat yourself to something fun like a date with that special someone... You deserve it!
2. Try not to worry about the test. Leave the results to the future. It is now out of your hands. Instead, give yourself a form of congratulations for completing the Portfolio and the Assessment Center.
3. Get reacquainted with your family and friends. Completing the NBC process is an amazing accomplishment.
4. Take the rest of the day for yourself to relax and rejuvenate.
5. Don't second guess yourself. Realize that you've given it your all...It's out of your hands and you will either pass or not. You may even find yourself using what you have learned for this year's students—and doing so proudly.
6. Take a deep breath and shout, "Yahoo!" You did it!



## Resources and Review

*The following provides a list of websites (content area organizations, etc.), texts, and a condensed review of the information for the Assessment Center that you might find useful as you prepare.*

Please note that even though NBCTs and Candidates suggested these resources, neither they nor the publishers of this document endorse or recommend that current Candidates preparing for the Assessment Center exercises must purchase these texts in order to meet standard on any one or all of the exercises.

Instead, after completing an inventory and review of *your* skills and knowledge, this document provides information of a few resources that others found helpful for them as they strengthened their skill and content base. Websites were active at the time of publication; however, due to the fluent nature of the Internet, there is no guarantee that all are maintained.

### **Career & Technology:**

National Educational Technology Standards: <http://cnets.iste.org/>

### **Counselors:**

American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

### **English Language Learners/Language Arts:**

American Library Association:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/proftools/21centurylit/21stcenturyliteracy.htm>

Analyzing Theme: [www.learner.org/exhibits/literature/read/theme1.html](http://www.learner.org/exhibits/literature/read/theme1.html)

Burke, Jim. [Reading Reminders](#).

----- [Writing Reminders](#).

College Board: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

Critical Reading: A Guide:

## RESOURCES

<http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/criticalreading.html>  
Echevarria, Jana and MaryEllen Vogt. Making Content Comprehensible for English Language Learners: The SIOP Model, Second Edition.  
ELL & ESL Websites for Teachers:  
[http://www.oasd.k12.wi.us/Schools/OHS/ell/esl-ell\\_teacher\\_websites.htm](http://www.oasd.k12.wi.us/Schools/OHS/ell/esl-ell_teacher_websites.htm)  
Glossary of Poetic Terms: <http://www.poeticbyway.com/glossary.html>  
Hacht, Anne Marie, ed. Literary Themes for Students: Examining Diverse Literature to Understand and Compare Universal Themes (Literary Themes for Students).  
Herrell, Adrienne L. Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners, Second Edition.  
Hill, Jane D. and Kathleen M. Flynn. Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners.  
International Reading Association: <http://www.reading.org/>  
National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www.ncte.org/>  
Poetry Analysis Fact Sheet: <http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/analysis.html>  
Questions for Theme Analysis: <http://www.northern.edu/hastingw/theme.htm>  
Rafoth, Ben. A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One, Second Edition.  
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages: <http://www.tesol.org/>  
Universal Themes: <http://literacy.owc.edu/abe/Reading-H/UniversalThemes.doc>

### **Exceptional Needs Specialist:**

Council for Exceptional Children: <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

### **Fine Arts/Music:**

Kennedy Center-Arts Edge: <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm>  
Summary Statement: Education Reform, Standards, and the Arts--*Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts*:: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsStandards.html>

Links to National Arts Standards:

<http://www.artteacherconnection.com/pages/standards.htm>  
National Association for Music Education:  
<http://www.menc.org/publication/books/standards.htm>

### **General:**

## RESOURCES

Hopkins, Martha H. [Navigating the National Board Certification Process: A Step-by-Step Workbook for Teachers.](#)

Mack-Kirschner, Adrienne. [The Teacher's Guide to National Board Certification: Unpacking the Standards.](#)

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning:

<http://www.mcrel.org/about/index.asp>

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)

National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University

Northwest Regional Laboratory: [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)

Washington Education Association: [www.washingtonea.org](http://www.washingtonea.org)

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)

### **Generalist:**

Bredenkamp, Sue and Teresa J Rosegrant. [Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children.](#)

Copley, Juanita V. [The Young Child and Mathematics.](#)

Davidson, Jane I. [Emergent Literacy and Dramatic Play in Early Childhood.](#)

Delmar, Carol. [Developmentally Appropriate Practice Curriculum and Development in Early Education](#)

Fuge, Glenda and Rebecca Berry. [Pathways to Play! Combining Sensory Integration and Integrated Play Groups.](#)

Heidemann, Sandra and Debra Hewitt. [Pathways to Play: Developing Play Skills in Young Children.](#)

Johns, Jerry. [Basic Reading Inventory.](#)

Johns, Jerry and Susan Davis. [Improving Reading: A Handbook of Strategies.](#)

Johnson, Madeline. [Never Too Early to Write: Adventures in the K-1 Writing Workshop.](#)

Neuman, Susan B., Carol Copple, and Sue Bredenkamp. [Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children.](#)

ProTeacher: <http://www.proteacher.com/>

Rasinski, Timothy V. [The Fluent Reader: Oral Reading Strategies for Building Word Recognition, Fluency, and Comprehension.](#)

Reys, Robert E. and Mary M. Lindquist, Diana Lamdin, Marilyn N. Suydam. [Helping Children Learn Mathematics.](#)

## RESOURCES

Rogers, Cosby S. and Janet K Sawyers. Play in the Lives of Children.

Sanders, Stephen. Active for Life: Developmentally Appropriate Programs for Young Children.

Sawyers, Janet K. and, Cosby S. Rogers. Helping Young Children Develop Through Play: A Practical Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers.

Teale, William and Timothy Shanahan. "Myths About Oral Fluency."

Wood, Chip. Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14: A Resource for Parents and Teachers.

### **Library Media:**

American Library Association:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/informationpower/informationpower.htm>

Buchanan, Jan. Flexible Access Library Media Programs.

Eisenberg, Michael. "This Man Wants to Change Your Job." School Library Journal.

Franklin, John. "Taking Up the Challenge."

Leavell, Judy, and Nancy Ramos-Machail. "The Power of Story."

[www.ascd.org/readingroom/classlead/0211/leavell\\_2.html](http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/classlead/0211/leavell_2.html)

Pearson, Richard. School Library Media Specialist's Tool Kit.

Smyth, Julie. "Study Says Boys Do Read, They just Don't Read Books." National Post.

Texas School Libraries Standards and Related Links:

<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/schoollibs/index.html>

### **Literacy: Reading/Language Arts:**

Block, Cathy C. Literacy Difficulties: Diagnosis and Instruction for Reading Specialists and Classroom Teachers.

Gillet, Jean W. and Charles Temple, Alan Crawford, Bernard Cooney. Understanding Reading Problems: Assessment and Instruction, Sixth Edition.

Sousa, David. How the Brain Learns to Read.

Tankersley, Karen. Literacy Strategies for Grades 4-12: Reinforcing the Threads of Reading.

Tompkins, Gail E. 50 Literacy Strategies: Step By Step, Second Edition.

### **Mathematics:**

California State Board of Education (mathematics):

## RESOURCES

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/mthmain.asp>

Curricular Options in Mathematics Programs for All Secondary Students:

<http://www.ithaca.edu/compass/>

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics: <http://www.nctm.org/>

### **Physical Education:**

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance:

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm>

Washington Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance:

<http://www.wahperd.com/>

### **Science:**

National Science Teachers Association: [www.nsta.org/](http://www.nsta.org/)

National Center for Science Education: [www.ncseweb.org/](http://www.ncseweb.org/)

### **Social Studies:**

Center for Civic Education: <http://www.civiced.org/wethepeople.html#text>

Human Population: Fundamentals of Growth and Change: [www.prblorg/ef/](http://www.prblorg/ef/)

Knox, Paul L. and Sallie A. Marston. Places and Regions in Global Context, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Mission Geography On Line. [www.missiongeography.org](http://www.missiongeography.org).

National Council for History Education: <http://www.history.org/nche/>

National Council for the Social Studies: <http://www.ncss.org/>

National Geographic Society

Newman, John J. and John M. Schmalbach. United States History: Preparing for the Advanced Placement Examination.

Rubenstein, James M. The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Washington State Council for the Social Studies: <http://www.wscss.org/>

### **Test Anxiety:**

Glencoe-McGraw Hill: <http://www.glencoe.com/ps/teachingtoday/weeklytips.phtml/44>

Penn State University:

<http://istudy.psu.edu/FirstYearModules/TestTaking/TestInformation.html>

## RESOURCES

University of Cincinnati: [http://www.uc.edu/psc/sh/SH\\_Test\\_Anxiety.htm](http://www.uc.edu/psc/sh/SH_Test_Anxiety.htm)

### **World Languages Other than English:**

Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages: <http://www.actfl.org/>

### **E-mail:**

**Public Education Network Weekly NewsBlast** — The PEN Weekly NewsBlast is a free e-mail newsletter featuring school reform and school fundraising resources. Sign up at: <http://www.publiceducation.org/>

Yahoo Group Listserve: [www.yahogroup.com](http://www.yahogroup.com)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

# AC

## The Assessment Center Exercises:

- ❖ Six exercises—up to 30 minutes each for response
- ❖ Content based—standards still apply, review them prior to completing the exercises
- ❖ Scored on a four-point scale (+/-) in the same manner as the portfolio entries—however, the rubrics are shorter and there are no note-taking guides
- ❖ For Retake Candidates there is no break allowed when retaking fewer than three Assessment Center exercises
- ❖ For all Candidates, a 15-minute break is offered after exercise number three when taking four or more Assessment Center exercises (take the break!)
- ❖ For Retake Candidates, only the Assessment Center exercises they have selected will be delivered during the testing session, and the overall testing time will be adjusted accordingly.
- ❖ To answer in the form of a list, you must create your own bullet format using the > or \* keys. A list is appropriate for some answers
- ❖ It is important that you identify quickly whatever is asked for, e.g., theme, misconception, concept, interrelationship, think rapidly how you want to state your ideas, and write concisely about your conclusions: See it, think it, say it
- ❖ Review the descriptions carefully—sentence by sentence for clues to possible prompts
- ❖ Believe the prompts! This is what you need to know. Stay on topic and focused—don't go off on tangents
- ❖ Know exactly what is being asked of you—each Assessment Center exercise asks multiple things (usually two or three). Watch the arrow for more prompts
- ❖ Scoring rubrics are available for all certificate areas
- ❖ Answer each prompt of a single Assessment Center exercise—then go back to fill in more details if you have time. A Candidate can review answers to specific prompts within an Assessment Center exercise, but cannot go back or forward to another Assessment Center exercise. If the Candidate hits “next,” he/she cannot return to the previous Assessment Center exercise.
- ❖ Stop worrying about whether or not to use jargon or technical terms—Candidates and assessors are from all over the country and terms may not transfer

# At

# A

# Glance

Sources for AC at a Glance: Florida Education Association. “Preparing Candidates for the Assessment Center Experience: Facilitator’s Guide.” Hopkins, Martha H. [Navigating the National Board Certification Process: A Step by Step Workbook for Teachers](#). National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. <nbpts.org>.