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TIME
FOR KIDS

Practicing for Today's Tests

Level 3

Language
Arts



Table of Contents

Introduction

Today's Next Generation Tests	4
Categories of Questions	7
Making It Meaningful	10

Informational Practice Exercises

Bats on the Brink	13
The Scoop on Sugar	18
A Woman Up a Tree	24
The Coral Reef Crisis	29
Undersea Volcanoes	34
She Gives Them Food for Thought	39
For Sale: Rare and Stolen Pets	43
Threads of Kindness	48

Literature Practice Exercises

The Long Trail	52
Paul Bunyan	56
Go Fly a Kite!	60
A Bedouin Tale	65
The Lion and the Wild Boar	70
Racing a Tornado	74
The Treasure Hunt	79
It's a Dog's Life	84

Poetry Practice Exercises

Windy Nights	89
A Pleasant Day	93
The Plumpuppets	97
Mr. Macklin's Jack O'Lantern	101

Appendices

Appendix A: References Cited	105
Appendix B: Question Types	106
Appendix C: Testing Tips	110
Appendix D: Answer Key	112

Today's Next Generation Tests

“To be college and career ready, students must now read across a broad range of high-quality texts from diverse cultures and times in history.”

—Delia E. Racines, Ph.D.

Education is currently undergoing a dramatic shift when it comes to the ways we measure and assess for learning. Educational standards across the nation are designed to provide clear and meaningful goals for our students. These standards serve as a frame of reference for educators, parents, and students and are most critical when decisions must be made about curriculum, textbooks, assessments, and other aspects of instructional programs (Conley 2014). Part of the disconnect with standards in the recent past has been the vast differences and lack of consistency in expectations that became a major concern for the quality of education students were receiving across the country (Conley 2014; Wiley and Wright 2004).

Standards in education in the United States are not a new concept. However, the role of educational standards has recently shifted to not only ensure that all students have access to equitable education no matter where they live, but also to ensure a more consistent national expectation for what all students should know to be successful in a rapidly changing economy and society (Kornhaber, Griffith, and Tyler 2014).

Scales, scores, and assessments are absolutely necessary to ascertain the current status of students. This kind of data is vital for teachers to understand what is missing and what the next steps should be. The real question about assessment isn't whether we should assess but rather what kinds of assessments should be used. Along with the current shift to more consistent and rigorous standards, states now measure student progress with assessments that require higher-order thinking skills necessary for preparation for college and/or careers.

So, what is this new yardstick that is being used? How is it better than yardsticks of the past? And how do we best prepare students to be measured with this yardstick in a way that tells the whole story? The next generation tests intend to provide results that are comparable across all states and will use more performance-based tasks as well as technology-enhanced items. This is very different in comparison to the standardized testing that teachers, students, and parents are used to (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2010; Rothman 2013).

The following descriptions serve as explanations of how the three most prominent next-generation tests are different from assessments of the past.

Categories of Questions

In order for students today to be better prepared for college and/or careers, they must be able to read widely and deeply across a range of informational and literary texts (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2010). In today's standards, there are often three categories of reading standards. On assessments, these categories are represented by three categories of questions. The questions include new terminology that defines specific skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. **Note:** See *Appendix B* (pages 100–103) for how these categories are represented in each practice exercise in this book.

Overall, today's college and career readiness reading standards depict the picture of what students should be able to exhibit with increasing proficiency and on a regular basis. To be college and career ready, students must now read across a broad range of high-quality texts from diverse cultures and times in history. The reading standards emphasize the skills necessary to critically read and continuously make connections among ideas and texts. Students also learn to distinguish poor reasoning as well as ambiguities in texts. The following explanation of the terms related to each of the three reading categories will better prepare educators and parents for today's tests.

Key Ideas and Details

This category stresses the importance of understanding specific information in various texts. Overall, students must be able to identify specific details and then gain deeper meaning from what is read. Specifically, this category requires students to be able to do the following things.

Students should be able to . . .	To show how they know this, students must . . .
read text closely to really understand what it says.	identify specific details from the text.
make conclusions based on what they identify from a text.	say or write specific details to support their conclusions.
determine the main idea or theme from a text and analyze its development.	identify and summarize key supporting details that support the theme or main idea.
figure out how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	explain details about how characters and/or the story develop at different times throughout the text from the beginning to the end.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Scoop on Sugar

Directions: Read this text and respond to the questions on pages 21–23.

- 1 Can you imagine eating 20 teaspoons of sugar? Does that sound gross? The typical American kid gets that much sugar each day.
- 2 A recent report said kids get about 16 percent of their calories from sugar that has been added to food. “It’s too much,” says Dr. David Katz. He’s a nutrition expert at Yale University. “It’s one of the major problems with our diet,” he told TIME For Kids.
- 3 Some of that sugar comes from foods like candy, soda, and cereal. You expect them to be sweet. But much of the sugar that kids eat is hidden. Food companies add sugar to lots of things, from ketchup to crackers. “There are pasta sauces that have more added sugar than ice-cream toppings,” says Katz.
- 4 As a result, people get used to eating very sweet foods. “If you soak taste buds in sugar all day long, they just get used to it,” Katz says. “Everything needs to be highly sweetened to be satisfying.”

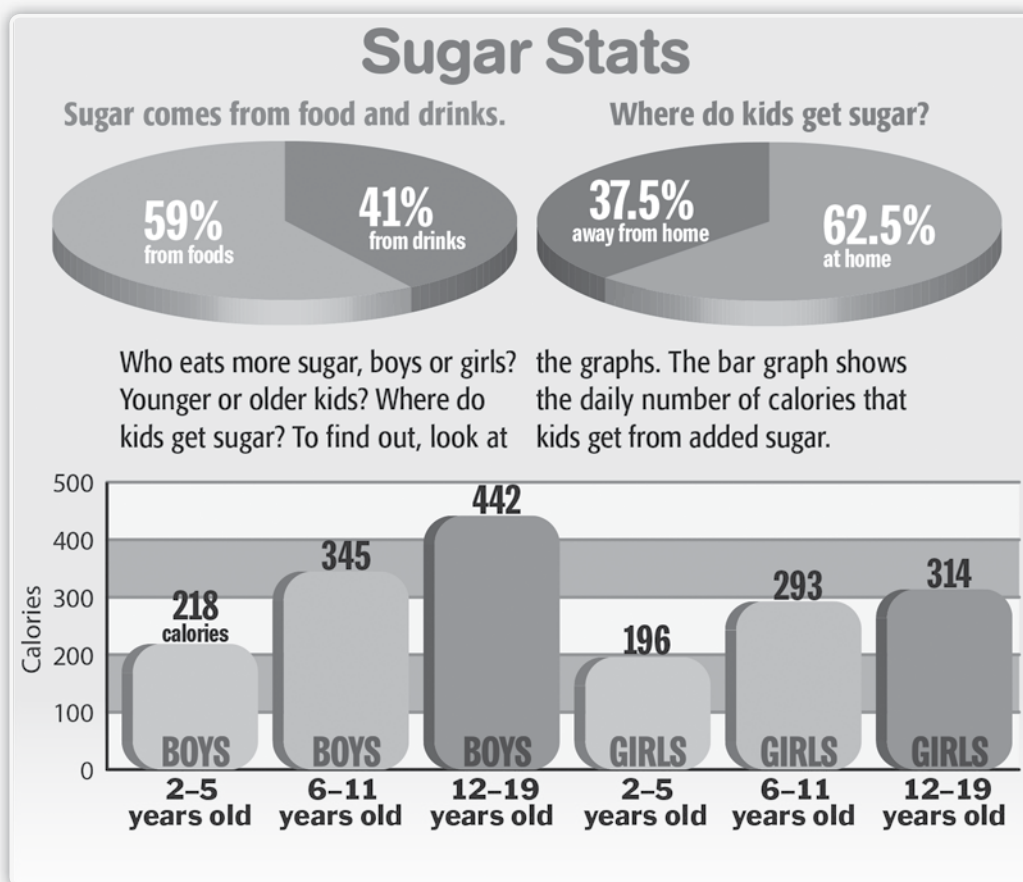
Cut the Sugar

- 5 Most kids know that eating too much sugar is not healthy. Sugar can cause cavities. And filling up on sweets means not eating more nutritious foods. Some experts think that eating too much sugar can also lead to serious health problems.
- 6 Three scientists have called on the government to help people eat less sugar. They want to ban the sale of sugary drinks to kids. They want to keep sugary foods out of schools. And they want to add taxes to heavily sweetened foods. “We need to unsweeten our lives,” Dr. Robert Lustig, one of the scientists, told TIME For Kids.

The Scoop on Sugar *(cont.)*

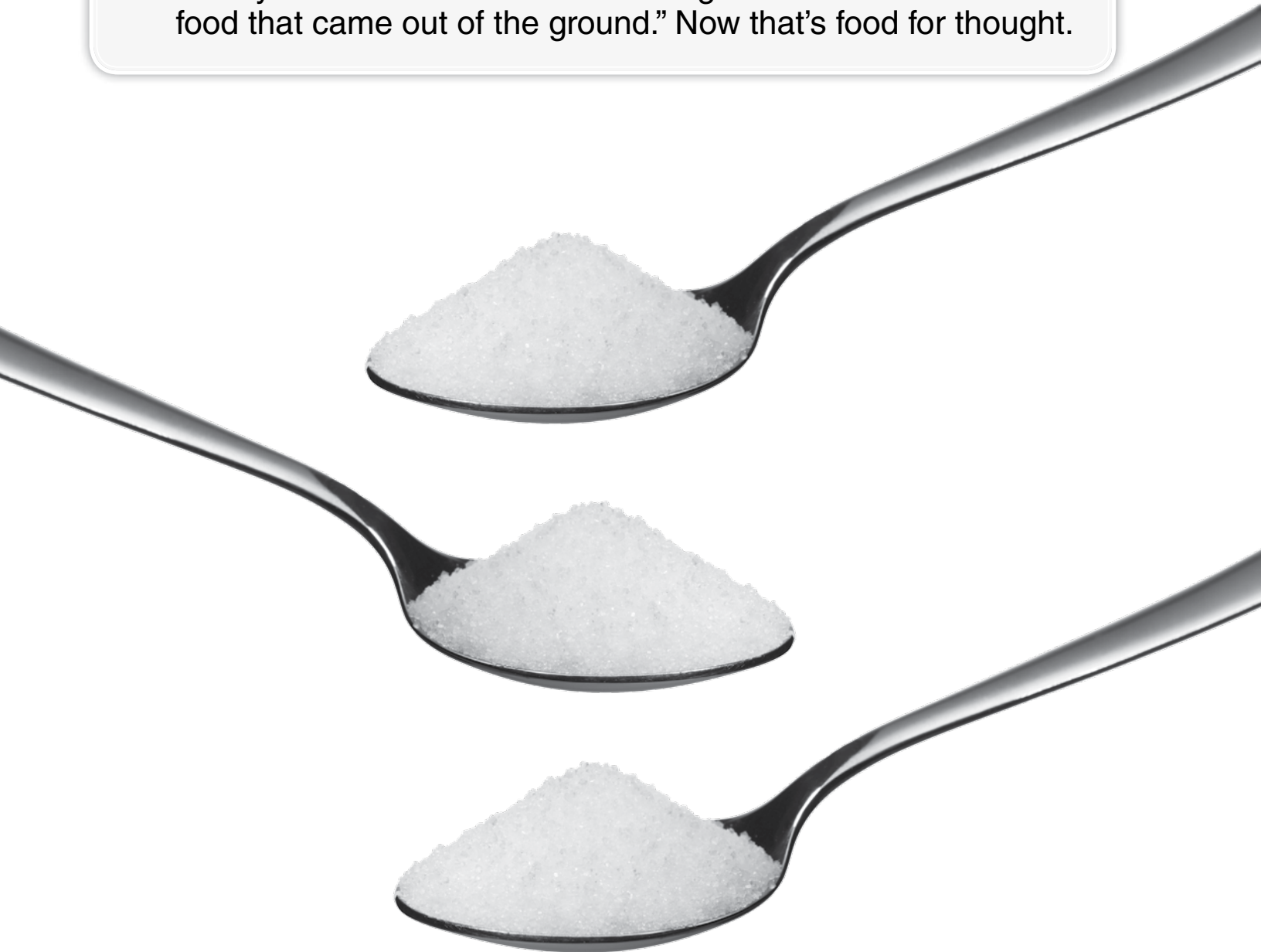
Expand Your Choices

- 7 We need food to live. It should help keep us healthy. Now we're learning our food may be doing the opposite. Perhaps someday the changes scientists want will happen. In the meantime, what can you do to cut down on extra sugar? Changing our eating habits isn't easy. We like the foods we like. The good news is, you don't have to give up your favorite cereal or soda completely. The key is to find balance.
- 8 First, look at the ingredients list on food packages. Packages may use different names for sugar. Ingredients that end in *ose* are sugars. Sucrose and fructose are two examples. The word *syrup* means it's a sugar, too.



The Scoop on Sugar *(cont.)*

- 9 Second, try new things! Replace some of those sugary foods with ones that don't have added sugar. Expand your choices. You'll find lots of different foods that also taste great.
- 10 Dr. Lustig says to eat natural foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Stay away from processed foods. "Eat real food," he says. "Food that came out of the ground or animals that ate food that came out of the ground." Now that's food for thought.



Name: _____ Date: _____

The Scoop on Sugar *(cont.)*

Directions: Fill in the bubble of each correct answer choice.

1. What change does the author suggest the reader make?

- Ⓐ Eat a balance of healthy foods and sugary foods.
- Ⓑ Stop eating sugar.
- Ⓒ Only eat fruits and vegetables.
- Ⓓ Don't eat pasta sauce.

2. Which sentence from the article supports the answer to number 1?

- Ⓔ "First, look at the ingredients list on food packages."
- Ⓕ "Food companies add sugar to lots of things, from ketchup to crackers."
- Ⓖ "Stay away from processed foods."
- Ⓗ "Replace some of those sugary foods with ones that don't have added sugar."

3. How much sugar does the average American kid eat daily?

- Ⓐ 2 teaspoons
- Ⓑ 16 teaspoons
- Ⓒ 20 teaspoons
- Ⓓ 20 tablespoons

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Scoop on Sugar *(cont.)*

Directions: Fill in the bubble of each correct answer choice.

4. What is the author's main message?

- Ⓐ Eating too much sugar is bad for us.
- Ⓑ Food companies are trying to harm children.
- Ⓒ The government needs to add taxes on sugary foods.
- Ⓓ Crackers, ketchup, and pasta sauce are bad for us.

5. What is a *nutrition expert*?

- Ⓐ a person who does not like sugar
- Ⓑ a person who knows which foods are good and bad for us
- Ⓒ a scientist who studies sugar
- Ⓓ a person who works for the government

6. Why does the author include the Sugar Stats graph?

- Ⓐ to prove that sugary foods do not always taste sweet
- Ⓑ to show which foods contain the most sugar
- Ⓒ to prove that most kids eat sugar away from home
- Ⓓ to show who is eating sugar at various ages

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Scoop on Sugar *(cont.)*

Directions: Answer the questions.

7. Write a paragraph telling how you can change your diet to reduce the amount of sugar you eat. Include at least two ideas from the article in your paragraph.

8. Complete the graphic organizer with food items mentioned in the article.

Foods That Contain Too Much Sugar	Foods That Are Better For You