

1. Question Formats

You may see the following types of multiple-choice questions on the test:

- Single Questions
- Clustered Questions

Single Questions

The single-question format presents a direct question or an incomplete statement. It can also include a reading passage, graphic, table or a combination of these. Four or more answer options appear below the question. The following question is an

example of this type. It tests knowledge of Bilingual Education Supplemental Competency 002: *The beginning bilingual education teacher understands processes of first- and second-language acquisition and development and applies this knowledge to promote students' language proficiency in their first language (L1) and second language (L2).*

Example

A group of English-language learners (ELLs) encounters various words in a short story in their first language that are no longer in common use today. Which of the following linguistic concepts should the teacher use to best help the ELLs understand this phenomenon?

- A. Interlanguage
- B. Language extinction
- C. Linguistic assimilation
- D. Language change

Suggested Approach

Read the question carefully and critically. Think about what it is asking and the situation it is describing. Eliminate any obviously wrong answers, select the correct answer choice, and mark your answer.

As you read this question, you need to determine which of the response options refers to the linguistic phenomenon encountered by the English-language learners (ELLs) in this classroom situation. Frequently, bilingual teachers must rely on their understanding of basic linguistic concepts to help support ELLs first (L1) and second language (L2) development. In this instance, the ELLs have encountered words in their L1 that are no longer in common use in that language today. To help the students understand this phenomenon, the teacher needs to rely on a general understanding of how languages evolve over time.

The term presented in option A is *interlanguage*. According to theories of second- language acquisition, an interlanguage evolves within a person during the process of acquiring a second language. This intermediate language contains properties of the learner's first and second languages and increasingly approximates the second language as the second language develops. Knowledge of this concept will not help explain the phenomenon the students encountered in their reading.

The term presented in option B is *language extinction*. This term refers to a process by which speakers of a language slowly stop using it, resulting in the language dying out. Clearly, in the situation described, the students' primary language is a living language. Only certain words in the language are no longer in common use. That phenomenon, in fact, provides evidence of the language's vitality, rather than of its demise. Thus, it would be inaccurate to use the concept language extinction to explain the loss of specific words.

The term presented in option C is *linguistic assimilation*. This term refers to a process in which one sound influences one or more features of another sound that precedes or follows it in a word or utterance (e.g., a voiceless sound becomes voiced), so that the sounds become more similar or even alike. This process is phonological and not related to the phenomenon the students encountered in their reading.

The term presented in option D is *language change*. This term refers to a process that is related to the dynamic nature of language, in which major components of a language (e.g., phonology, syntactic features, lexicon) change over time. Such changes take place for a variety of reasons. In the classroom situation described, the students encountered words that were no longer in common use in their L1. This is an example of a change in the language's lexicon. Lexical changes may take place as the objects certain words refer to are no longer in common use or as the words are replaced by new words. Thus, the phenomenon the students encountered represents a clear example of language change. Using a basic knowledge of how languages evolve over time, the teacher can help the ELLs develop an appreciation for the dynamic nature of their language. The correct response is option D.

In this way, analysis of the four options should lead you to select **option D as the best response.**

Clustered Questions

Clustered questions are made up of a stimulus and two or more questions relating to the stimulus. The stimulus material can be a reading passage, description of an experiment, graphic, table or any other information necessary to answer the questions that follow.

You can use several different approaches to respond to clustered questions. Some commonly used strategies are listed below.

Strategy 1

Strategy 2

Skim the stimulus material to understand its purpose, its arrangement and/or its content. Then read the questions and refer again to the stimulus material to obtain the specific information you need to answer the questions.

Read the questions *before* considering the stimulus material. The theory behind this strategy is that the content of the questions will help you identify the purpose of the stimulus material and locate the information you need to answer the questions.

Strategy 3

Use a combination of both strategies. Apply the “read the stimulus first” strategy with shorter, more familiar stimuli and the “read the questions first” strategy with longer, more complex, or less familiar stimuli. You can experiment with the sample questions in this manual and then use the strategy with which you are most comfortable when you take the actual test.

Whether you read the stimulus before or after you read the questions, you should read it carefully and critically. You may want to note its important points to help you answer the questions.

As you consider questions set in educational contexts, try to enter the identified teacher's frame of mind, and use that teacher's point of view to answer the questions that accompany the stimulus. Be sure to consider the questions only in terms of the information provided in the stimulus — not in terms of your own experiences or individuals you may have known.

Example

Use the information below to answer the questions that follow.

When selecting English-language reading materials for English-language learners (ELLs) who are beginning- or intermediate-level readers of English, a bilingual teacher makes sure to include English-language versions of stories, folktales, and other narratives from the ELLs home cultures.

Now you are prepared to respond to the first of the two questions associated with this stimulus. The first question tests knowledge of Bilingual Education Supplemental Competency 001: *The beginning bilingual education teacher understands the foundations of bilingual education and the concepts of bilingualism and biculturalism and applies this knowledge to create an effective learning environment for students in the bilingual education program.*

1. The materials described most likely contribute to an effective learning environment by

1. Providing the ELLs challenging content, the materials will motivate them to learn correct English grammar and use it in their communications with peers.
2. Validating and affirming the ELLs home cultures, the materials will promote their development of a bicultural identity.
3. Introducing the ELLs to key aspects of their home cultures, the materials will prompt them to examine the values and beliefs of the majority culture.
4. Exposing the ELLs to new literary genres, the materials will enhance their understanding of language diversity and variation.

Suggested Approach

Carefully consider the information presented in the stimulus. Then read and consider this first question, which asks how the materials described in the stimulus are likely to contribute to an effective learning environment. Recall that the teacher is selecting English-language reading materials for the ELLs. The stimulus focuses on the fact that in making these selections, the teacher includes English-language versions of stories, folktales, and other narratives from the ELLs home cultures.

Option A suggests that the ELLs will find these materials challenging and that this will motivate them to improve their English grammar. There is no evidence in the stimulus that the teacher's focus is on selecting materials that are written at a level that the ELLs are likely to find challenging. On the contrary, the teacher is actively seeking out materials that are likely to be familiar to the ELLs. To promote second language (L2) development, ELLs must be exposed to L2 input that is comprehensible. Selecting overly challenging L2 materials would not contribute to an effective learning environment for ELLs because such materials would not be readily comprehensible.

Option B suggests that the materials described in the stimulus would contribute to an effective learning environment by validating and affirming the ELLs home cultures, thereby promoting their development of a bicultural identity. To reinforce ELLs bilingual and bicultural identity, it is critical that their home language and culture are regarded with high esteem in the classroom and, ideally, in the larger school community as well. One way to convey respect for ELLs home cultures is to incorporate aspects of the home cultures throughout the curriculum. In the stimulus, the teacher is clearly following this practice by making sure to include materials from the ELLs home cultures in the English-language reading curriculum.

Option C suggests that the materials selected by the teacher will prompt the ELLs to examine the values and beliefs of the majority culture by introducing them to key aspects of their home cultures. There is no evidence in the stimulus that the teacher plans to use the selected materials to introduce ELLs to aspects of their own cultures. Also, while the materials are likely to prompt ELLs to reflect on their home cultures, no evidence in the stimulus suggests that the teacher plans to use the materials to focus the ELLs attention on the majority culture.

Option D suggests that the teacher will use the selected materials to introduce ELLs to new literary genres, thereby enhancing their understanding of language diversity and variation. Again, while some of the materials may be new to some of the ELLs, there is no evidence in the stimulus to suggest that the teacher is selecting these materials to introduce the ELLs to new content. On the contrary, an important reason bilingual teachers select instructional materials representing ELLs home cultures is that the structure and content of such materials are likely to be familiar to them and thereby more comprehensible.

In this way, analysis of the four options should lead you to select **option B as the best response.**

Now you are ready to answer the next question. The second question measures Bilingual Education Supplemental

Competency 003: The beginning bilingual education teacher has comprehensive knowledge of the development and assessment of literacy in L1 and the development and assessment of biliteracy.

2. According to convergent research related to reading in a second language, which of the following best explains why the materials described would be effective in supporting ELLs reading in English?

1. Reading comprehension is reinforced by materials that conform to ELLs prior knowledge of basic concepts about print
2. Reading fluency and comprehension are enhanced when ELLs are provided with materials that contain easily decodable text
3. Reading fluency is reinforced when ELLs are provided with frequent opportunities to read materials that are written at their independent reading level
4. Reading comprehension is enhanced by materials that are based on contextual and textual schemata that are familiar to the ELLs.

Suggested Approach

Again, carefully consider the information presented in the stimulus. Then read and consider this second question, which asks you to use your knowledge of convergent research related to reading in a second language to determine why the materials described would be particularly effective in supporting ELLs reading in English.

In carefully analyzing the options in the previous question, it is evident that, besides the correct response, all the other options were based on either faulty or inaccurate reasoning. On reading through this second question, however, all the response options are accurate statements regarding reading fluency and/or comprehension. In this situation, it becomes especially important to refer to the stimulus to determine which of these statements best addresses the situation described.

Option A focuses on reading materials that conform to ELLs prior knowledge of basic concepts about print. Concepts about print include concepts such as understanding that print has meaning and recognizing the directionality of print. In the stimulus, the focus is on selecting reading materials related to the ELLs home cultures. While such materials would likely conform to basic English print conventions, so would materials that are completely unrelated to ELLs home cultures. Therefore, this response option does not directly relate to relevant information in the stimulus.

Option B focuses on reading materials that contain easily decodable text. While the materials described in the stimulus may contain easily decodable text, this is not the teacher's primary criterion in selecting them.

Option C focuses on providing ELLs with frequent opportunities to read materials that are written at their independent reading level. While the selected materials may include ones written at the ELLs independent reading level, it is also likely in the situation described that some of the materials could be written at their instructional reading level.

Option D focuses on enhancing ELLs reading comprehension by using materials based on familiar contextual and textual schemata. In the stimulus, the teacher is selecting materials reflecting ELLs home cultures. Such materials are very likely to address familiar topics and content and to follow textual patterns (e.g., story structures) that are also familiar to the ELLs.

In this way, analysis of the four options should lead you to select **option D as the best response.**