STUDENT INFORMATION ON THE REGENTS' TEST

Why is there a Regents' Test?

The Board of Regents, which sets policies for the University System of Georgia, concluded that some students were receiving undergraduate degrees from state colleges and universities without adequate reading and writing skills. The Regents' Test was then designed to identify students with deficiencies in their reading and writing abilities. All undergraduate students enrolled in University System colleges and universities must take the Regents' Test to demonstrate certain reading and writing skills before they can graduate.

What kind of examination is the Regents' Test?

The Regents' Test is divided into two sections: essay and reading. The essay section requires you to write an essay on one of the two topics given. The reading section is a comprehension and vocabulary test made up of 10 passages followed by questions about each passage.

What do I have to make to pass the test?

If you have not ever taken the test, you must take both sections at the same time. However, you do not have to pass both sections at the same time.

On the reading section of the test, you must score 61. To score 61 you must answer about 70 percent of the items correctly.

On the essay section, which is rated from "1" to "4" ("1" represents low quality, and "4" represents high quality), you are judged independently by three readers. Your essay must be rated "2" or higher by at least two of the readers in order to be passed.

When will I know if I passed the test?

Scores will be mailed to you within 6 to 8 weeks after the test. Also, your next quarterly grade report will show your scores.

What happens if I don't pass the test?

You should retake it as soon as possible. If you have passed one part of the test, you must repeat only the part you have failed. If you have not passed the Regents' Test by the time you have earned 75 hours of credit, you will be required to register for an appropriate remedial course each quarter that you are in attendance until you pass the test. If you have not passed the essay section, the appropriate remedial course is RGTE 0199. If you have not passed the reading section, the appropriate remedial course is RGTR 0198

Are there any tips for doing well on the reading portion?

Yes. On the reading section, try to answer all questions. Since you are not penalized for wrong answers, as with some standardized tests, it pays to attempt even those you are not sure of. Before reading each selection completely, make an overview of it. For a passage or selection consisting of several paragraphs, begin by reading the first sentence of each paragraph. If the selection is one long paragraph, begin by reading the first and last sentences of the paragraph. If you take time to look over the selection in this manner, you will then have a better grasp of its subject, be able to read with a purpose, and be alert to notice certain specific details. Note that your overview is a first step, not a substitute for in-depth reading.
Are the answers to the questions always stated directly in each reading selection or passage?

No, and it can be a waste of time to try to locate the answer to many of the questions in the passage itself. In other words, a number of questions ask for you to draw a conclusion or make an inference. Although the passage will imply the answer, it will not state it directly. To try to match a phrase in the question with a phrase in the passage is a waste of time because such a phrase does not exist. A question such as "The author implies that this period of history was..." is worded in such a way that you know the answer is not going to be stated directly in the passage, and to attempt to find the answer written in black and white is useless. Instead, you should draw the most logical inference you can and go on to the next question. Phrases such as "what conclusions can you make," "the author's tone (or style)," "apparently," "you would infer," "this was intended to," or "the purpose of the passage" are often used in inferential questions.

What about questions that are not inferential?

Other types of questions are so-called "main-idea" and "detail" questions. Phrases such as "primarily (or mainly) about," and "most emphasis" signal main-idea questions. Your overview may help you with such questions, and you might keep in mind that main ideas are frequently in the first or last sentence of a passage. Also, a word or phrase that reappears in several places in the passage, perhaps in slightly different forms, may be a cue to the author's main thought.

In answering main-idea questions, notice that some of the optional answers may be correct as far as being details in the passage, but the correct answer is the one that expresses the author's central point about the topic. Don't, then, select as an answer to a main-idea question an option that is a minor detail in the passage. Instead, select the option that best restates the central thought.

Detail questions are generally the simplest type of question to answer since the information relevant to such questions is stated specifically in the passage. In one sense, however, detail questions can be difficult. Although the answer to the question does appear in the passage, the wording of the correct answer may be a paraphrase of the information presented in the passage. As such, you must be careful not to select an answer that only appears correct. For example, the text may read, "Of the representatives, only six supported the bill." The correct answer to a question about support for the bill might be "a half-dozen representatives." An incorrect answer might be "six senators." Although the number six might stand out in your memory, it is not used in the correct answer. An incorrect answer, in fact, often contains words or phrases that appear in the passage, but is--as a whole--inaccurate. Unless you are sure that you recall the answer, refer back to the passage. You must, however, be aware of time. Skim quickly for the answer. Do not re-read the entire selection to locate the answer.

There are very few main-idea and detail questions on the Regents' Test; the questions are primarily inferential. For this reason, it is important to read the passages carefully and think about what is being said.

How is vocabulary tested?

Vocabulary is tested on the reading portion of the Regents' Test by questions that relate to certain words that appear in the reading passages. For these vocabulary questions, it is essential to select an answer that defines the target word as it is used in the passage. Many words in the English language have multiple meanings. The simple word run, for example, may be used to refer to the game baseball, to a physical action or to a flaw in a woman's stocking. Some of the incorrect answers for
the vocabulary items may be legitimate dictionary definitions of the word but are not the meaning of
the word as it is used in the passage. It may be helpful as you are answering such questions to re-
read the entire sentence in which the word was used in the passage; and it may also be necessary to
re-read the sentence immediately before and the sentence immediately after the sentence in which the
word appears. By reviewing the context in which the word occurs, you will be in a better position to
select the correct answer.