

Test Assessing Secondary Completion Transition Plan



Since the onset of the TASC Test Assessing Secondary Completion™ product development, the items in these tests have been written to align to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects; the Next Generation Science Standards; and an aggregate of national Social Studies standards and frameworks. TASC test items are developed by assessment specialists with long-standing and extensive experience in writing items that are well aligned to the constructs and standards to be measured, that is, items that will elicit evidence of examinees' proficiency relative to the targeted standards. These specialists apply the criteria of alignment rubrics when evaluating items and meet with TASC test customers, including specialists from Departments of Education as well as educators of adults, to review the TASC test items during development in order to ensure the items' alignment to standards and their appropriateness for the high school equivalency test-taking population.

Throughout development of TASC tests, design assumptions have acknowledged the nation's shifting instructional and assessment climate from measurement of foundational skills and concepts to measurement of more rigorous standards and expectations associated with the standards identified above. As states fully embrace the new standards and shifts occur in secondary school instruction, shifts will also occur in the TASC tests. That is not to say that items will become more difficult, but that items will require more critical thinking on the part of the examinee. For example, foundational skills or memorization of facts will not be measured, but reasoning and problem solving will be. The abilities to reason, to think critically, and to solve problems are strong indicators of readiness for post-secondary education and careers.

College and Career Readiness Standards

In April 2013, after the TASC test development was initiated, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (now named the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education) completed a project identifying a subset of the Common Core State Standards most appropriate for adult preparation for college and/or careers and issued its report, "College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education." As stated in the introduction of this report, the purpose of the project's effort was "to forge a stronger link among adult education, postsecondary education,

and the world of work.” The report “presents a starting point for raising awareness and understanding of the critical skills and knowledge expected and required for success in colleges, technical training programs, and employment in the 21st century.”¹

The TASC test item pools for Mathematics, Reading, and Writing are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) as well as to other essential high school equivalency Common Core standards. New development for these content areas will be targeting the CCR standards, while also monitoring for other changes in standards through the ongoing item development of the TASC tests.

Text and Linguistic Complexity

Throughout item and test development, developers moderate and control the language and complexity of the stimuli and items in all content areas. For stimuli that meet length requirements, readability scores are generated to ensure that the stimuli’s complexity levels are appropriate for the TASC test-taking population. Additionally, for tests in all content areas, approved word lists are consistently used to confirm linguistic appropriateness and readability levels of the language used.

The range of text and linguistic complexity will be maintained throughout the TASC test development, unless changes are warranted. The TASC test language and texts have been analyzed and deemed to be appropriate and adequately rigorous; however, TASC test assessment developers will continue to monitor closely the nation’s high school assessments, the educational climate, and the TASC test data, and adjustments to the TASC tests will be made as necessary in order to ensure that the assessments align to high school equivalency expectations. For no reason will more than modest, controlled shifts in text complexity or language be implemented.

It is fundamental to the validity of the TASC tests that they reflect the rigor, including that associated with text complexity, of contemporary high school expectations. As the nation transitions to the most current standards, TASC test developers will carefully monitor the changes to states’ curricula and assessments and will make modest, controlled shifts in TASC test content that support both the comparability of TASC test forms over time and the correspondence of TASC test content to that of the nation’s high school curricula and assessments.

¹ Pimental, Sue. April 2013. College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. MPR Associates, Berkeley CA and Washington DC; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

Rigor and New Item Types in TASC Tests

States' transition to the most current standards affects instructional practices and focus. The developers of TASC tests closely monitor educational shifts and TASC test data to determine if and when periodic and moderate adjustments should be made to the TASC tests.

To meet evolving assessment demands, TASC tests will undergo a controlled and moderate transition to the inclusion of more items at the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) 2 and 3 levels and fewer at the DOK 1 when warranted by the standards being measured. This should not be interpreted to mean that the TASC tests will become more difficult, but rather that new, more robust item types will be included in the TASC tests. The 2015 TASC tests include a moderate number of both constructed response (CR) and technology-enhanced (TE) types that will provide more diverse opportunities for examinees to demonstrate evidence of learning and knowledge—or depth of knowledge—than selected-response item types typically do. In 2016 and beyond, TASC test developers will continue to monitor student performance on these newer types of items and the ability of adult education providers to prepare students for rigorous assessments. The evidence provided by traditional item types is valid, but use of CR or TE item types will support the use of items that elicit evidence more naturally across a broad range of cognitive levels.

CR items will give examinees opportunities to provide more evidence of learning as examinees will need to explain a solution or concept or provide support for a conclusion. TE items use technology enhancements to elicit greater depth of examinees' knowledge and understanding of a topic than is typically possible with selected-response items. TE items also provide scoring efficiencies for items measuring more complex concepts. Inclusion of these item types in TASC tests, which have been introduced in 2015 and which will be fully operational in 2016, ensure fuller alignment to the rigor and expectations of the contemporary standards being measured.

The new TE items include the following item types and functionalities:

- Drag-and-Drop, with and without sequencing
- Evidence-Based Selected Response
- Multiple-Select Response

Reading

The TASC Reading subtest will employ CR and TE items to elicit evidence of examinees' ability to analyze text. For example, a CR item may require the examinee to support a conclusion or inference drawn from an informational or literary text by providing details from the text. Items like this will typically align to more than one standard, such as these two CCR standards:

- RI.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.11-12.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

The Reading subtest will include TE items using multiple functionalities, as listed above, to elicit examinees' understanding of texts. For example, an Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR) item includes two parts. Part A of an EBSR is a traditional selected-response item that requires an examinee to analyze a text and select a correct conclusion or inference drawn from the text, typically from among four options. Part B of an EBSR requires the examinee to select evidence from the text that supports the conclusion or inference selected in Part A. Part B may offer from four to eight options to the examinee. When there is more than one correct answer, a Multiple-Select Response (MS) item type is used to give examinees opportunities to demonstrate depth of understanding and knowledge about a text.

The following are examples of these new item types of the Reading subtest:

Sample TE: Evidence-Based Selected Response with Multiple-Select Response

[Examinees first read a text excerpt from the novel *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis.]

Part A

Which phrase **best** describes how the main character feels when she first rides into Gopher Prairie?

- A. reluctant and angry
- B. curious but doubtful
- C. excited and optimistic
- D. uncertain but open-minded

Part B

Which two sentences in the text provide evidence that supports the answer to Part A?

- A. That one word—home—it terrified her.
- B. Had she really bound herself to live, inescapably, in this town called Gopher Prairie?
- C. His neck was heavy; his speech was heavy; he was twelve or thirteen years older than she; and about him was none of the magic of shared adventures and eagerness.
- D. They had looked charming . . . hadn't they?
- E. And she saw that Gopher Prairie was merely an enlargement of all the hamlets which they had been passing.
- F. It was not a place to live in, not possibly, not conceivably.
- G. She stood up quickly; she said, "Isn't it wonderful to be here at last!"

In the item above, the correct answer to Part A is answer choice B, and the correct answers to Part B are answer choices B and D.

Some EBSR items will use the traditional selected-response item for both Parts A and B; that is, each part will offer four possible answers with only one answer correct for each part.

Sample Constructed-Response Item

[Examinees first read a text excerpt from the novel *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis.]

Analyze the impact of the author’s choices in the development of the setting in the excerpt from *Main Street*. In your response, use evidence from the excerpt to support your analysis.

Note: The expected response is 1-2 paragraphs that will be scored based on the appropriateness of the ideas presented and the degree of evidence the examinee provides to support his or her analysis.

Writing

The TASC Writing subtest comprises two parts. For the writing performance assessment, an examinee writes a text-based essay, either an informative essay, which draws upon information from two texts on a related topic, or an argumentative essay, which develops and supports a claim based on ideas presented in two texts. In as much as multiple reading, thinking, and writing skills are required to complete the task successfully, the writing performance assessment is considered a DOK 4 (Extended Thinking) task. The following rubrics provide the criteria used to evaluate examinees’ essays; the first is the rubric for an informative essay, and the second is the rubric for an argumentative essay.

The response is a well-developed essay that examines a topic and presents related information.

- Effectively introduces the topic to be examined
- Uses specific facts, details, definitions, examples, and/or other information to develop topic fully
- Uses an organizational strategy to present information effectively
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

The response is a well-developed essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Effectively introduces a claim
- Uses logical, credible, and relevant reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational strategy to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Acknowledges and counters opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

The other part of the Writing subtest has included all selected-response items that measure selected Writing and Language standards, including language progressive skills that are introduced in earlier grades (e.g., subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement or punctuation usage) but the context for application of those skills increases in complexity through high school. In 2015, both CR and TE items have been introduced to better measure the application of writing and language usage knowledge and skills, such as those described in these standards:

- L.9-10.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- WR.9-10.1a: Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence
- W.9-10.1b: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying the evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- W/WHST.9-10.1: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Many of the items will continue to be associated with stimuli that represent a writer's draft essay that needs further revision or editing. A brief CR item may be associated with the stimulus, and the examinee may, for example, be directed to write an introductory or concluding paragraph for the essay, to revise a paragraph of the essay, or to use a set of notes to write a paragraph that further develops the topic. TE items will provide opportunities for examinees to demonstrate application of multiple skills, such as word or punctuation usage in a

sentence or paragraph, or to order sentences of a paragraph so that they form a coherent and logical progression of ideas.

Sample TE: Multiple-Select Response

Which two sentences **correctly** use a semicolon?

- A. He thought twice about reading the book; which was 850-pages long.
- B. Primarily, Elizabeth chose to read classic novels; such as *Moby Dick* and *Pride and Prejudice*.
- C. Stephen asked for a five-percent raise; he was awarded double that by an employer who appreciated his work ethic.
- D. Mozart was just five years old when he started composing musical scores; consequently, he was hailed as a gifted musician.
- E. With few new ideas to offer voters; Joe Johnson proved to be a middle-of-the-road candidate.
- F. The information in the third paragraph was irrelevant; weakening the writer's claims.

In the item above, the correct answers are answer choices C and D.

Sample Constructed-Response Item

Read this excerpt of a draft of an informative essay.

[Draft essay about the Olivieri brothers and their claim to fame, the Philly cheesesteak; what they did before becoming restaurateurs; how they became restaurateurs; and the success of the cheesesteak sandwich.]

Write a concluding paragraph for the essay that follows logically from and supports the information presented in the essay.

Mathematics

The TASC Mathematics subtest assesses mathematical comprehension, proficiency, and understanding at a variety of levels. The initial development of items in 2013 focused on SR and gridded-response approaches. The use of CR and TE item types will better support the measurement of deeper mathematical thinking strategies including problem solving and mathematical modeling. As noted earlier, the evidence provided by traditional item types is valid, but use of CR or TE item types will support the use of items that elicit evidence more naturally across a broad range of levels.

Consider an item in which an examinee is asked to model a set of conditions or relationships using mathematics. The conditions or relationships are described, and the item is written to

elicit evidence that the examinee can create an equation that models the situation. There are a number of different ways to approach this:

- In a selected-response item, the examinee is offered a number of different equations and must select the one that matches the situation.
- In a TE item using a drag-and-drop function, the examinee is given a response area and various mathematical elements—including numerical and/or alphabetic variables and operators—with which to create an equation as a response.
- In a CR item, the examinee is given a response area and asked to type in his or her equation, perhaps with an explanation or justification of why this equation does indeed match the problem situation.

There are benefits and advantages to each of the three above approaches. The goal is to have a robust pool of items for TASC tests that utilize a variety of approaches to measure skills across a broad range of achievement and at various depths of knowledge.

The following items are examples of the new mathematics item types for TASC tests.

Sample TE: Drag-and-Drop

A manager is using data to determine the amount of time it takes for customers to go through the checkout line in a grocery store. She has determined that the average checkout time for 5 customers is 12 minutes.

Complete the equation to show how the manager determined that 25 customers can be checked out in 1 hour. Drag and drop the terms to make the statements true.

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Answer} \\ \text{Area} \end{array}} \times \boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Answer} \\ \text{Area} \end{array}} = \frac{25 \text{ customers}}{1 \text{ hr}}$$

$$\boxed{\frac{5 \text{ customers}}{12 \text{ min}}}$$

$$\boxed{\frac{1 \text{ hr}}{60 \text{ min}}}$$

$$\boxed{1 \text{ hour}}$$

$$\boxed{\frac{12 \text{ min}}{5 \text{ customers}}}$$

$$\boxed{\frac{60 \text{ min}}{1 \text{ hour}}}$$

$$\boxed{5 \text{ customers}}$$

Sample TE: Multiple-Select Response

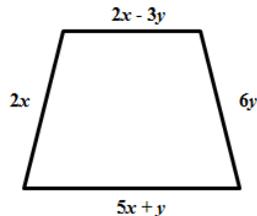
A storage tank holds 120 liters of a chemical solution. The tank is being emptied at a rate of 5 liters per hour. The formula $y = -5x + 120$ calculates the number of liters, y , remaining in the tank after x hours.

Select all of the correct statements about this equation: $y = -5x + 120$.

- A. y is a function of x .
- B. The graph of $y = -5x + 120$ is a line.
- C. When $x = 5$, $y = 145$.
- D. The y -intercept of $y = -5x + 120$ is $(0, -5)$.
- E. The x -intercept of $y = -5x + 120$ is $(24, 0)$.

Sample Constructed-Response Item

The side lengths of a figure are marked, as shown in the diagram.



Using the fewest number of terms, write an expression to represent the perimeter of the figure.

Social Studies

CR and TE items will be used to elicit examinees' evidence of learning and ability to analyze and interpret social studies content. For example, a CR item may require the examinee to support a conclusion drawn from a stimulus and to use his or her social studies knowledge to support that conclusion. CR items will also be used to assess concepts with broader interpretations, especially those aligned to TASC social studies standards that require students to evaluate a historical event and to describe the significance of the event or the societal dynamics that lead to subsequent controversy surrounding the event. Examinees may be asked to apply their own

knowledge to describe how to reduce the effects of human changes to environment or to describe why diversification should be considered for financial investments.

The Social Studies subtest will also include TE items. For example, a multiple-select item type will be employed to measure knowledge when there is more than one correct answer possible. This item type can be used to provide evidence that examinees understand that there are many causes for and effects that occur as a result of a historical event or that there are many reasons that a price of a product may increase. Drag-and-drop items, with and without sequencing functionalities, will also be employed in the TASC Social Studies subtest. Drag-and-drop items will require examinees to classify events or typical responses of the U.S. government to changes in the economy. A drag-and-drop item with sequencing will require students to sequence steps of a political process. Social Studies subtests will also use EBSR items, as explained and illustrated for Reading.

Because many of the items in the Social Studies subtest include short stimuli, tables, or graphics for examinees to interpret or analyze, the items are at a depth of knowledge 2 or 3. Examinees are not merely recalling historical facts but applying critical thinking and understanding of social studies concepts.

The following are examples of social studies Drag-and-Drop, Multiple-Select Response, and Constructed-Response items:

Sample TE: Drag-and-Drop

Teacher Note: Please provide a transcript of the speech to students if audio is not available.

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.
The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.
The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants everywhere in the world.
The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world

— Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms Speech"
Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, January 6, 1941

4. Study the list in the box below. These are examples of freedoms being denied to people around the world when President Roosevelt gave this speech. Select each event from the box. Then, drag the event under the heading that describes the freedom being denied.

- The lives of Jewish people were restricted and threatened based on their religion.
- Italians were forced to vote for fascist leaders.
- Italians who spoke out against fascist regimes were beaten or jailed.
- People throughout Europe and Asia were displaced because of Japanese and German expansion.
- Food shipments to the Netherlands were blocked by Germany.
- Japan acquired new territories through military force.

Freedom of Speech and Expression	Freedom to Worship	Freedom from Want	Freedom from Fear

Sample TE: Multiple-Select Response

Look at the advertisement.

**“The Brockton 5000”
Personal Computer**

Includes:
monitor
keyboard

~~\$1195~~
~~\$995~~

**Now only
\$895 !!!**

Available at
Cathy's Computer Center
236 Eldon Avenue
Glen Oaks
555-3607

Which statement(s) would explain why Cathy's Computer Center created this advertisement? Click on all statements that apply.

- The demand for these computers has increased.
- The supply of these computers has increased.
- The cost of shipping these computers has decreased.
- The cost of producing these computers has increased.
- The number of stores selling these computers has increased.
- The cost of operating the store has increased.
- The variety of products in the store has decreased.
- The number of hours the store is open has decreased.

Sample Constructed-Response Item

This is an image of the Code of Hammurabi and a list of some of the laws in the code. The Code of Hammurabi is a collection of laws from the Mesopotamian city-states.



197. If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.

202. If any one strike the body of a man higher in rank than he, he shall receive sixty blows with an ox-whip in public.

215. If a physician make a large incision with an operating knife and cure it, or if he open a tumor (over the eye) with an operating knife, and saves the eye, he shall receive ten shekels in money.

Archaeologists use artifacts, such as the Code of Hammurabi, to draw conclusions about how people lived long ago.

What conclusion can you draw about Mesopotamian society using the Code of Hammurabi? In your response, explain what led you to that conclusion.

Science

For the TASC test Science subtest, item specifications are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Performance Expectations (PEs). The TASC test Science item pool covers a range of complexity. Stand-alone items may contain a scenario and/or a graphic (typically a data table or graph). In addition, the TASC Test Science subtest includes shared stimuli sets (3 or 4 items) that most often include some type of scenario development and a graphic (again, usually a data table or graph). The most common type of stimulus content in both stand-alone and shared stimuli is experimental data—actual or realistic data from common scientific experiments and documented scientific laboratory or field studies. Development of both shared stimuli sets and discrete items for the TASC test Science subtest starts with the assumption that examinees possess the fundamental scientific skills and knowledge acquired from grades K-8 (e.g., scientific method, familiarity with key scientific terms such as photosynthesis, atoms, and

DNA). All TASC test items fully or partially align to an NGSS PE and/or one or more of their associated elements, which include Science and Engineering Practices, Disciplinary Core Ideas, and Cross-Cutting Concepts. Items that fully align to an NGSS PE are considered “proficient,” and items that partially align are considered “basic” (e.g., the item may not assess a given PE directly, but may cover a precursor or related concept that is required to understand a particular PE). The fact that TASC Test item development for science follows the NGSS lends itself very well to open-ended item types, especially those standards that target evidence-based explanations. Further, NGSS standards that focus on investigations involving components, such as models, cycles, systems, and complex processes, may complement the use of TE items, in which perhaps more robust or multiple correct answers apply.

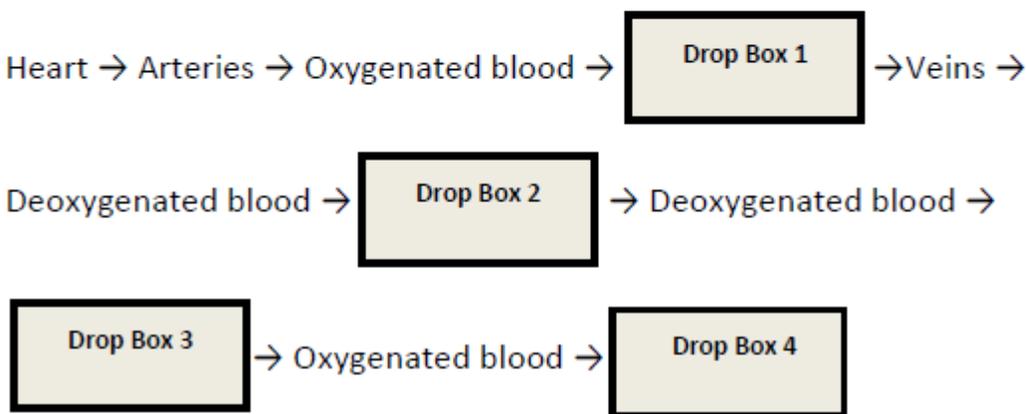
Two common TE item types that will be used in the TASC Science subtests include Drag-and-Drop (DND) and Multiple-Select Response (MS) items. An example of each is shown below.

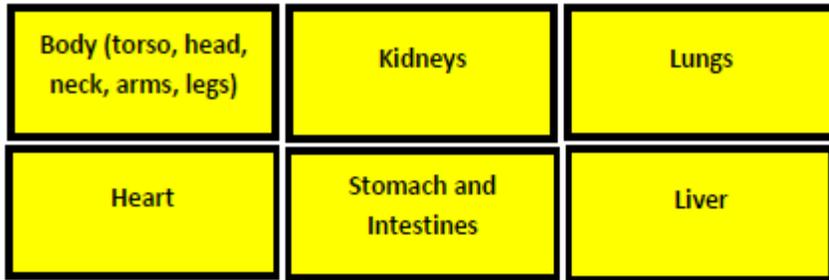
Sample TE: Drag-and-Drop

NGSS Alignment: HS-LS1-2. Develop and use a model to illustrate the hierarchical organization of interacting systems that provide specific functions within multicellular organisms.

The circulatory system helps provide the body with a constant supply of needed gases, nutrients, and hormones, as well as helping facilitate the removal of waste products from the body. The incomplete simplified diagram shows the flow of blood through the human circulatory system.

Drag the correct tiles into each of the boxes. Boxes may contain more than one correct tile. All six tiles must be used and tiles may be used in more than one box.

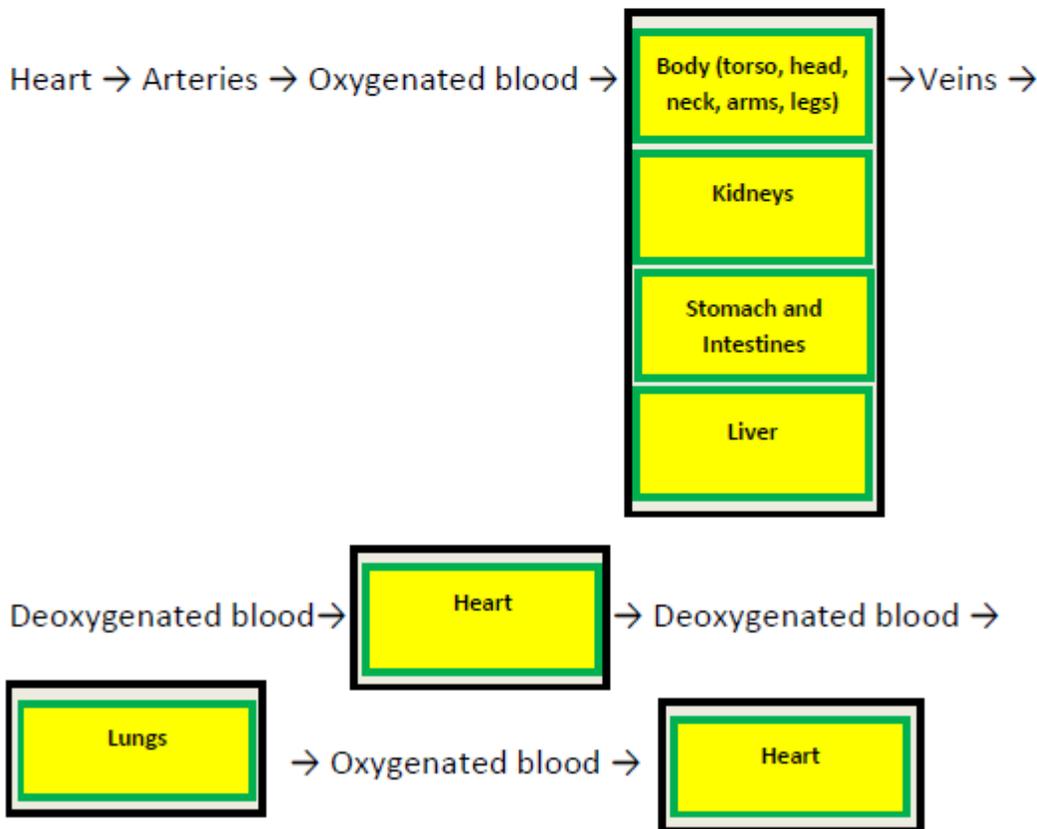




Solution

The circulatory system helps provide the body with a constant supply of needed gases, nutrients, and hormones, as well as helping facilitate the removal of waste products from the body. The incomplete simplified diagram shows the flow of blood through the human circulatory system.

Drag the correct tiles into each of the boxes. Boxes may contain more than one correct tile. All six tiles must be used and tiles may be used in more than one box.



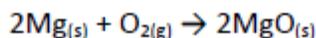
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Note: The preceding DND item would be scored as a 4-point item (1 point per correctly completed drop box area).

Sample TE Item: Multiple-Select Response

NGSS Alignment: HS-PS1-7. Use mathematical representations to support the claim that atoms, and therefore mass, are conserved during a chemical reaction.

The chemical equation shows a complete reaction between magnesium and oxygen gas in a closed system. In this reaction, 36.6 grams of magnesium was reacted with 24.1 grams of oxygen to produce 60.7 grams of magnesium oxide.



Which three statements may be used as evidence to support the claim that the reaction shown by the equation demonstrates conservation of mass? Click on each answer in the list that applies.

- The same kinds of atoms are present on both sides of the equation.
- The total mass of the reactants is equal to the total mass of the products.
- The atoms within product molecules are arranged differently than the reactant molecules.
- The total number of product molecules is less than the total number of reactant molecules.
- The two reactant molecules have all of the same chemical and physical properties as the product molecule.
- The number of each kind of atom on the reactant side is equal to the number of each kind of atom on the product side.

Note: The correct responses are indicated by a check mark.

Alignment to Consortia Assessments

In the years ahead, many states will be administering assessments developed by two consortia: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). While the TASC test product uses specifications developed to guide TASC Test item development specifically, many of the specifications have been informed by the two consortia's interpretations of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. The Next Generation Science Standards and emerging national Social Studies frameworks have similarly informed the development of the TASC Science and Social Studies subtests, respectively. In particular, the CR and TE item types that will be added to the TASC test over the transition period are akin to those of the consortia in that they allow examinees to demonstrate evidence of knowledge and understanding with greater depth.

Testing Times

The addition of new item types, especially CRs, may affect the timing of the tests. Throughout the transition period, assessment developers and research scientists will carefully use field test data to determine whether adjustments to testing times are warranted as moderate adjustments to the tests are made. While stability is desirable, adjusting testing times, if necessary, will support the validity and reliability of the assessments. It is not yet clear that testing times will need to be adjusted. That is, because CR and TE items typically provide more information than SR items due to their polytomous scoring rubrics, one CR or TE item may replace multiple SR items, which may offset the need to adjust testing times.

Additionally, there are plans to offer examinees the opportunity to take an adaptive version of the TASC test within the next few years, which is expected to result in significantly shorter testing administrations.

Research Foundations of TASC Test Transition

Research scientists carefully monitor and provide input into the development of TASC test forms to support the validity of reported scores and the comparability of forms within and across years. Thus, the use of optimal test design will be used to develop new forms that are comparable in terms of test difficulty and that meet test blueprints with respect to content structure and item types. Empirical data is used to select forms with evidence supporting the comparability of scores from form to form and year to year. The transition plan, based on modest, controlled shifts in content, supports the goal of comparable forms.

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