TASC Preparation – Language Arts Reading Part 1

Course Overview

The TASC Preparation Courses were developed by aligning Plato Courseware with the strands and topics that are assessed on the 2014 TASC Test. Each unit aligns to one or more strands within the 2014 TASC Test and the modules within each unit target the essential concepts of the Common Core State Standards as assessed on the TASC Test for Language-Arts Reading. This course focuses on the study of different reading strategies and vocabulary skills for informational texts. In this course, you will find a variety of lessons and activities to improve your knowledge of these strategies.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will:

- Explore different reading strategies to make inferences from text.
- Explore how to use context clues, prior knowledge and mental images to understand expository text.
- Understand how to summarize text, and identify and analyze the main idea of the passage whether it is stated or not stated in the text.
- Analyze text structures and logical sequence in informational text.
- Understand cause and effect relationships and use of illustrations and examples in text.
- Understand ways to improve vocabulary, and the usage of dictionaries and other word references.
- Explore the use of context clues and prefix clues to determine meaning of unknown words as well as figurative language used in text.
- Explore ways to expand vocabulary and strategies to enhance writing.
- Understand author's purpose and variety of techniques used in the text.
- Explore how to evaluate information to detect stereotypes, biases and generalizations.
- Explore the use of graphics and visual aids to support information in text.
- Understand how to write, support and prove arguments.
- Explore different grammatical conventions and correct usage of language.
- Understand how to effectively select suitable reading material and remember what one reads.
- Understand strategies for answering questions on a reading test.

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Complete basic operations with presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Docs presentation.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Course Materials

- notebook
- pencils or ink pens
- computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

Course Structure

Unit 1: Informational Reading: Key Ideas and Details

Summary
Unit 1 focuses on different reading strategies to make inferences and the use of prior knowledge to predict and support details in the expository text. The unit shows how to use context clues and mental images to understand and answer questions from expository text. Identification of cause and effect relationships and the usage of illustrations and examples in the text are described in this unit. Students learn to use a variety of techniques to improve reading comprehension, writing skills, grammar and mechanics. Students also learn to identify the main idea, arrangement of sequence of ideas in a logical manner and the structure of the text in nonfiction and informational text. The concluding part of the unit includes strategies to understand different logical relationships within the text.

Unit 2: Informational Reading: Craft and Structure

Summary
Unit 2 focuses on the use of context and prefix clues to determine the meaning of unknown words as well as figurative language used in the text. Students learn to use precise vocabulary, and to use dictionaries and other references to examine specific word

connotations to enhance their writing skills. Students learn to write in a formal style by choosing words carefully and by improving text structure through identifying and eliminating wordiness, unclear meaning and improper use of voice in paragraphs. Students learn to identify different text structures, including sequence of events, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect. Students also learn to identify the author's purpose in the text and how to interpret a variety of techniques used by the author. The concluding part of the unit explains how to identify important information from the text and understanding texts from different perspectives.

Unit 3: Informational Reading: Integration of knowledge and Ideas

Summary

Unit 3 explores the usage of graphics and visual aids to support information in expository text. The unit focuses on the skills required to evaluate information and the knowledge to identify whether sources are reliable. This unit provides an understanding on writing well supported arguments and proving these arguments with the right evidence. This unit explores how to detect biases, stereotypes and generalizations in a text. The concluding part of the unit includes different strategies to tackle questions from a particular passage.

Unit 4: Informational Reading: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity.

Summary

Unit 4 begins by showing students vocabulary building strategies. Students will learn how to select the text that should be read first, based on its importance. This unit also explains how to distinguish between expository and narrative texts and how to find text aids. The concluding part of the unit includes how to tackle reading tests and learn different methods to help remember what one reads.