



UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO LANGUAGE CENTER

Office of Language Assessment



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ACADEMIC READING COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENT (ARCA™)



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Understanding the ARCA Format



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- ARCA has been designed to measure graduate students' ability to read for academic and research purposes in a secondary language.
 - ARCA is accepted by many departments as fulfillment of graduate programs' requirement of reading comprehension ability in a secondary research language.



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- The test format of the ARCA is as follows:

Part 1: Reading & Note Taking 60 minutes		Part 2: Summary Protocol 30 minutes		Part 3: Short-answer questions & Translation 40 minutes
Students receive the text. They read, annotate, and take notes with the help of a print dictionary	The text is taken away *	Students write the summary protocol	The text is given back	Students respond to short-answer questions and translate a short paragraph



Part I: Reading and Note Taking

- The students are asked to read a text carefully (i.e. analyze the information in the text and identify main ideas), annotate and take notes as needed (e.g. the main ideas presented in the original text), then to put the text aside.
- The text is taken away from students after Part 1 to encourage a synthetic reading process during Part 1 and to discourage translation during the Summary Protocol (Part II).

Part II: Summary Protocol

- Summary protocol intends to measure students' ability to synthesize the whole text, isolating what they think to be the central arguments and leaving out what is less important.
- It measures the comprehension of the main points of the argument or the crucial evidence stated in the text that supports the main claims in the argument.



Part III: Short-response Questions

- Short-answer questions intend to measure students' ability to connect isolated concepts or phrases with the larger argumentative structure of the text.
- It measures students' ability to understand the function of a particular concept or term within a paragraph.
- In addition, it measures students' ability to understand the author(s)' intent or stance for particular claims or towards particular concepts.

Part III: Translation

- In this task, students are asked to translate a short paragraph from the text into English. This paragraph would be the type of passage that students might cite in a footnote or quote in their own paper, thesis, or dissertation.
- This task is meant to evaluate students' ability to render the relationship between finely detailed information accurately.
- The emphasis in this task is on comprehension rather than on a literal re-creation of the grammatical structures of the original.



Understanding the Task Types in ARCA



Summary Protocol

- Students should synthesize the text to isolate the main points of the argument.
- Students are NOT expected to have a verbatim reproduction of the sentences/main arguments in the original text.
- There is some amount of flexibility in how students phrase things and state the information (the main/central arguments).
- The central ideas/main claims do not need to be presented in the same order as the original text.



Short-response Questions:

- require the student to understand more than the literal meaning of the terms in the text.
- challenge students to understand what function these terms play within the claim of a particular passage or larger piece of an argument.
- ask students to make inferences about information that may be implicit in the text but is central to the meaning.

Translation

Requires students to render the relationship between finely detailed information accurately.

The paragraph chosen for the translation:

- is between 50 and 60 words
- does not include any citations
- does not include any specific technical term/jargon, or any words that would be hard to find in a dictionary

A Sample English Exam



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- This sample English exam has been created so that exam takers can become familiar with the format of the comprehension exam, the grading rubric, and the expectations for responses. Please use this sample exam as a guide for reference when looking at the sample exams in French, German, and Spanish and for gauging your preparation to succeed on the exam.

An annotated sample exam can be found on the 'Understanding the ARCA Format' page.



THANK YOU!



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