

**SAMPLE MATERIALS: REGENTS' GSTEP
FORM 1**

Part 2. Reading and short answer responses (45 minutes)

Directions: Read the following two passages that are arguing for two different sides of the same issue. After you finish reading, you will write the answers to 8 questions based on the reading passages. In this section you will be graded on content and language: what you say and how you say it. You will have 45 minutes.

A. Excerpt from an essay entitled "Why Bilingual Education?" by Stephen Krashen.

When schools provide children quality education in their primary language, they give them two things: knowledge and literacy. The *knowledge* that children get through their first language helps make the English they hear and read more comprehensible. *Literacy* developed in the primary language transfers to the second language. The reason is simple: Because we learn to read by reading--that is, by making sense of what is on the page--(Smith, 1994) it is easier to learn to read in a language we understand. Once we can read in one language, we can read in general.

The combination of first-language subject-matter teaching and literacy development that characterizes good bilingual programs indirectly but powerfully aids students as they strive for a third factor essential to their success: English proficiency. Of course, we also want to teach in English directly, via high-quality English-as-a-second language (ESL) classes, and through sheltered subject-matter teaching, where intermediate-level English language acquirers learn subject matter taught in English.

The best bilingual education programs include all of these characteristics: ESL instruction, sheltered subject matter teaching, and instruction in the first language. Non-English-speaking children initially receive core instruction in the primary language along with ESL instruction. As children grow more proficient in English, they learn subjects using more contextualized language (e.g., math and science) in sheltered classes taught in English, and eventually in mainstream classes. In this way, the sheltered classes function as a bridge between instruction in the first language and in the mainstream. In advanced levels, the only subjects done in the first language are those demanding the most abstract use of language (social studies and language arts). Once full mainstreaming is complete, advanced first language development is available as an option. *Gradual exit plans*, such as these, avoid problems associated with exiting children too early (before the English they encounter is comprehensible) and provide instruction in the first language where it is most needed. These plans also allow children to have the advantages of advanced first language development.

From: <http://gopher.ael.org/~eric/digests/edorc968.html> Accessed on September 25, 2001

B. Excerpt from an essay entitled "Unblocking the Door" by Mauro E. Mujica, president of US English.

Children who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken are often segregated from the rest of the student body into "bilingual" programs, which teach most subjects in a student's native language. *In theory*, such programs allow students to keep up with their English-speaking peers in subjects like math and history, while rapidly teaching them English so they could integrate into regular classes. *In practice*, bilingual education programs have not been achieving that objective.

With a fervor that would do the old-style Southern segregationists proud, the bilingual education lobby seems to shout, "Bilingual education now, bilingual education forever!" Many students do seem to be trapped in bilingual classes forever. In 1997 in California (where about forty percent of the nation's children with limited English proficiency live), only one out of every fifteen students in bilingual education learned enough English to transfer out. And while parents technically have the right to request that their children be moved into English-speaking classes, the bureaucrats block the doorway—seventy immigrant families were forced to boycott a Los Angeles school for two weeks before their children were allowed to take classes in English.

Parents know that the English language is the most important thing their child needs to learn in school. By blocking reform of bilingual education, the educational establishment is denying many children the key to future success: as the foreman on a ranch in Texas so eloquently put it, "My children learn Spanish in school so they can grow up to be busboys and waiters. I teach them English at home so they can grow up to be doctors and lawyers."

From: <http://us-english.org/inc/news/op-eds/umblock.asp> Accessed on September 25, 2001

*Directions: Answer the following questions based on the readings. There are several possible ways to answer each question. You should use your own words as much as possible; you will not find the answers written word for word in the readings. Your answers will be graded on content and accurate use of English. Be sure to write complete sentences. **NOTE:** Your answer may be marked down if it contains fewer than 10 words or if your answer consists mainly of words taken directly from the readings.*

1. What is the main argument in passage A?

2. What are some of the most important benefits of bilingual education, according to passage A?

3. According to Passage A, how is instruction in a child's first language useful?

4. What is the main argument in passage B?

5. What are some of the most important effects of bilingual education, according to passage B?

6. What future concerns are there for children who are in bilingual education programs, according to Passage B?

7. What do the authors of the two passages agree on with regard to the education of non-native speakers of English?

8. How might the author of Passage A respond to a parent's statement in Passage B that "My children learn Spanish in school so they can grow up to be busboys and waiters. I teach them English at home so they can grow up to be doctors and lawyers"?

Part 3: Writing an Argumentative Essay (45 minutes)

Directions: Write a well-organized academic essay on the topic below. Your essay will be graded on content, organization, and appropriate use of English. You may refer to the reading passages while you are writing.

ESSAY TOPIC:

Some people believe that bilingual education is the best way to educate children in the US whose first language is not English. Others believe that bilingual education prevents these children from learning English. Which position do you support? Use specific information from **at least one** of the two articles to support your ideas.

You may use this space for notes. Write your essay on the lined paper. You will have 45 minutes to write your essay.



