

Help Your Students Pass the TExES STR Exam with Professionally Graded Practice Essays

Emma Garcia & Nacole Whittington

Breakout Session 3G Monday, October 11, 2:45-3:30 PM

EPP@240Tutoring.com

Inside views of our study material and graded practice tests included in the live session

1. What is the STR exam and what is the CRQ portion?

- The Science of Teaching Reading exam is a new requirement in 2021 for teachers seeking all elementary and most middle certifications
 - Strict passing standard implemented in September
- 1 constructed-response question (CRQ or essay) worth 20% of overall score
 - Presents a case study of 1 student who has a need in each of these 2 areas: foundational reading skills and reading comprehension skills
 - Provides 4 exhibits with information about the student's performance
 - Directions include a list of 5 tasks - test-takers have to identify the student's need, describe an instructional strategy to address the need, and explain its effectiveness (for each of the 2 areas)

2. What do 240's study materials consist of?

- STR study guide includes a comprehensive CRQ section, including:
 - A detailed breakdown of the prompt requirements and scoring guide
 - A video walkthrough of our suggested strategy with helpful graphics to sketch your response
 - Handy tips sections with everything students will need to answer correctly: common student weaknesses and go-to instructional strategies, relevant TEKS chart, "BAM" strategy to tackle task 5 in the directions
- 3 Study Prompts for students to practice responding to
 - Each includes the 4 student exhibits (including a video of real students reading)
 - Sample high- and low-level responses to review
 - Video series in which a tutor walks you through each step of the process - from reviewing exhibits to writing and revising your response

The screenshot shows a video player interface. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with buttons: Study, Sketch, Review, Outline, Write, and Check. The main content area is titled 'Exhibit 2' and contains a video of a young girl reading. To the right of the video is a text passage with handwritten annotations in red and yellow. The text passage is as follows:

Dad and Grandpa Joe and Sue are going to the park. It is a sunny day. Sue is happy to go play.

"Would you like to take the cookies?" asks Mom.

"Yes!," says Sue. She thinks back on baking them, adding the flour and other things.

"I think it is time to go!" says Dad. "Be kind to the other kids," Mom says to Sue.

Sue winks her eye and says, "Yes, mom."

Annotations in red include: *said*, *four*, *king*, *kings*, and *would*. Annotations in yellow highlight the words *says*, *flour*, *says*, *kind*, *kids*, *says*, and *winks*.

At the bottom of the video player, there is a progress bar, a volume icon, and a timestamp of 2:54. The 240 Tutoring logo is in the bottom right corner.

3. How does professional grading work?

- We offer 3 unique full-length practice tests, each with its own CRQ prompt
 - Designed to mirror the experience of the real exam

- After submitting their responses, students choose to **Self-Grade** (free and ready instantly) or have their CRQ **Professionally Graded** (\$29.99 and ready in 5-7 days)
 - Both options utilize our checklist-style rubric, which covers every required task and was developed using a weighted formula that automatically computes a final score of 1-4
- Our team of professional graders is made up of current and former teachers who:
 - Have 5-17 years of experience teaching reading
 - Have completed 5 months of extensive STR training
 - Effective communicators who give constructive yet friendly feedback
 - Are available for grading 7 days a week
- Graded CRQ includes a score, overall comment, completed rubric, and color-coded, in-line comments personally written by your grader

The screenshot displays a user interface for a graded CRQ. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a logo, 'Courses', 'Profile', and user options 'Megan' and 'Sign Out'. Below this, a 'Return to course' link is visible. The main content area is divided into three panels:

- Professional Review:** Shows a large purple circle with the number '3' and the text 'Your Grade'. Below it, a section titled 'Overall Comment' contains a paragraph of feedback. At the bottom, a task '[1] Identify a foundational reading weakness' is marked 'Accomplished'.
- Your Response:** Displays a paragraph of placeholder text. A portion of the text is highlighted in green, corresponding to a 'Glow' comment. Below this, another paragraph of placeholder text is shown.
- Grader Comments:** A list of comments from graders, each with a tag like '[1.1] Glow' or '[1.2a] Grow'. The first comment is a 'Glow' comment about citing evidence. The second is a 'Glow' comment about identifying a weakness. The third is a 'Glow' comment about citing exhibit numbers. The fourth is a 'Grow' comment about phrasing and digraphs.

4. How will this help me and my students?

- Comments are marked “Glow” or “Grow” and tagged to a section of the rubric as well as the relevant piece of highlighted text in the essay - allowing students to understand exactly why credit was or wasn't awarded for each specific task and what they need to do to improve
 - The official exam gives a blurb explaining why you *might* have earned that score. Our personalized, meaningful feedback takes the mystery out of grading
- Instructors can use the overall comment as a snapshot of student performance
 - The completed rubrics can reveal trends among groups of students to guide your instruction