

MTEL Communication & Literacy Cheat Sheet

2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

77 Scored questions	4h 15m Time limit	240 scaled score on eac... Passing score
\$112 Exam fee	Massachusetts Departm... Governing body	— Pass rate

The numbers to remember

- Reading subtest (101): 42 multiple-choice questions
- Writing subtest (201): 35 multiple-choice questions + 7 short-answer sentence-correction items + 2 open-response assignments
- Total appointment time: 255 minutes (4 hours 15 minutes), including a 15-minute tutorial
- Passing standard: 240 scaled score on each subtest
- Fee: \$112 for both subtests together, or \$69.50 per subtest if taken separately
- Retake wait: 30 days (for candidates registered after July 22, 2024)
- Recent first-time pass rates: Reading 78.9%, Writing 77.9%

Subtests and scores

Reading and Writing are scored independently, and each has its own 240 scaled-score threshold — a high Reading score cannot make up for a Writing score below 240, and vice versa. The Writing scaled score blends three formats: multiple-choice grammar recognition, short-answer sentence correction (you produce the fix, not just spot it), and two scored open-response writing assignments.

High-yield review areas

- Reading: main idea, supporting detail, author's purpose, tone, organizational structure, and evidence-based reasoning — always answer from the passage, not outside assumptions.
- Grammar mechanics: subject-verb agreement, modifier placement, parallel structure, and punctuation — practice both recognizing errors and rewriting them, since the short-answer format demands the rewrite.
- Open-response assignments: read the full prompt, outline briefly, address every part of the task, and leave time to proofread for mechanical correctness.
- Pacing: rehearse the full 255-minute span at least once so appointment length isn't a surprise on test day.

Top traps

- Treating Reading and Writing as one combined score — they are graded and must each individually clear 240.
- Answering short-answer grammar items the way you'd answer multiple-choice — you must supply the actual correction, not just identify that something is wrong.
- Rushing the open-response assignments and skipping the outline step, which tends to produce disorganized responses that score lower even with correct grammar.
- Running out of proofreading time — mechanical errors in an otherwise strong open-response answer still cost points.
- Assuming a passing percentage of raw correct answers guarantees a 240 scaled score — the scale accounts for question difficulty, so treat 240 as the real target, not a percentage estimate.

- Forgetting the retake wait period — plan your registration calendar around the 30-day minimum if a retake becomes necessary.

Official sources

- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MTEL program, administered by Pearson/Evaluation Systems) — MTEL Communication and Literacy Skills (101 & 201) Test Page:
https://www.mtel.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/MA001_TestPage.html
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MTEL program, administered by Pearson/Evaluation Systems) — MTEL Test Results: Communication and Literacy Skills (July 21 - September 14, 2025):
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/results/2025-0914.html>
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MTEL program, administered by Pearson/Evaluation Systems) — MTEL Retake Policy:
https://www.mtel.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_RetakePolicy.html

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/practice/exams/education/mtel-communication-literacy