

PSSA and Keystone Exams
Fall 2015
Item Writing and Handscoring Training Workshops

Keystone Literature

Handscoring Nonscore Codes

PENNSYLVANIA NONSCORABLE CODES

For PSSA Reading, Science, and Mathematics and all Keystone Open-ended Items (items with zero as a valid score point):

Nonscoreable Code	Definition/Example/Notes
B – Blank	Completely blank response. This includes responses that: • Are completely erased (so that words are unreadable) • Are completely crossed out (so that words are unreadable) • Online responses that consist solely of “white space” (e.g., spaces, tabs, returns)
R – Refusal	Response indicates a refusal to attempt the task. This includes: • <i>I don’t care; I’m not taking this test; This is stupid; I won’t do it; you can’t make me answer this question</i> • <i>I don’t know; IDK; we never learned this; X; NA</i> • <i>Unrelated song lyrics/rap lyrics/poetry (e.g., the lyrics to Hotel California in answer to a writing prompt asking whether backpacks should be allowed in class)</i> • <i>Intentionally off-task response (e.g., a detailed description of what the student ate for breakfast that morning in answer to a question about Mozart’s childhood)</i> This also includes responses that consist solely of scribbles, random keystrokes (yyyyyyy, av:aeoiahvb;e, hhrttuuvv), indecipherable writing/keystrokes (swensts mengetstets arawnstets) emoticons, stray marks, doodles, drawings, circles, underlines, a couple of random letters (not a word), copying the question and/or test directions, or other evidence that no attempt was made to address the task.
K – Off task/topic	Response makes no reference to the item or (if applicable) the passage provided, but does not seem to constitute an intentional refusal. If any part of the response relates to the item in any way, score the response.
F – Foreign Language	Responses written entirely in a language other than English. Note that mathematics responses may still be scoreable if they also contain mathematical language (numbers, operators, etc.) that can be assessed by the rubric. Also note that a Spanish language version of the test is available for students for mathematics and science assessments. These are scored by qualified Spanish-speaking scorers.
U – Illegible	This category includes: • Responses that are completely illegible due to poor handwriting.* • Online or typed responses that are incoherent due to consisting of random strings of words that are not clearly a Refusal or Off Topic (e.g., <i>best day school teacher inspired so I rode my car</i>) * If a response is difficult to read, every effort is made to read the response. Multiple people, including a Team Leader and/or a Scoring Director, will attempt to decipher the response, and the original answer document will be reviewed if necessary. If, ultimately, only a portion of the response is legible, that verbiage will be scored on its own merits.

Note: In reading, copied irrelevant text receives a score of 0.

Note: Responses that consist of a couple of words and do not represent a complete thought (e.g., *I think that, Ramps are*) receive a score of 0.

Note: Crossed out, but legible/partially legible, responses are scored according to the rubric based on whatever verbiage is legible.