



Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

**An Alternate Assessment for Students
with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities**

Test Specifications for Reading

**Based on the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards
in Language Arts, 2003**

Updated May 2011

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills Test Specifications For Reading

Based on the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Reading, 2003

For a copy in an alternate format, contact:

Division of Research & Assessment
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113
Phone 651.582.8200 • Fax 651.582.8874
mde.testing@state.mn.us

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THE MINNESOTA TEST OF ACADEMIC SKILLS

Introduction

The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is Minnesota's alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is designed exclusively for use with students who receive special education services and whose participation has been determined on an individual basis by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. A document titled *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Requirements* has been developed to provide guidance to assist IEP teams in identifying students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who would be appropriately assessed with the MTAS. This document can be found in the Testing section of the [Minnesota Department of Education's website](http://education.state.mn.us) (<http://education.state.mn.us>). Participation information for MTAS is also included in Chapter 5 of the *Procedures Manual for Minnesota Assessments*, available in the Testing section of the MDE website.

As required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), this assessment is aligned with grade-level content standards in reading. ESEA requires that all students – including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities – be measured against an assessment aligned to grade-level academic standards, although the breadth, depth and complexity of the grade-level standards may be reduced for alternate assessments or may be modified to reflect prerequisite skills.

The MTAS will include seven grade-level assessments in reading (grades 3 – 8 and 10) and seven grade-level assessments in mathematics (3 – 8 and 11). Students taking the MTAS must be administered the appropriate assessment for their enrolled grade.

The Purpose of the MTAS

The MTAS serves a number of purposes:

- It meets the requirements of ESEA by providing Minnesota students who meet the eligibility guidelines for the MTAS with an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards that are aligned with grade-level academic standards.
- It promotes access to the general education curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities, as required by both ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- It provides educators with a tool for measuring the progress students are making toward proficiency on academic standards in reading.
- It provides results that can be used to inform instruction at the classroom level.

The MTAS Test Specifications

All tests—from off-the-shelf, norm-referenced tests to customized, standards-based tests like those given in Minnesota—have test specifications. The primary purpose of a set of test specifications is to help test developers build a test that stays consistent over time. Test specifications clarify, define and/or limit how test items will be written to any given strand, sub-strand, standard or benchmark. Test specifications for the MTAS indicate which strands, sub-strands, standards, and benchmarks have been selected as priorities for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Content limits clarify, define and limit how performance tasks should address each benchmark (benchmark extensions); they are intended to represent essential understandings and are not intended to describe all instruction. Content limits for the MTAS incorporate the content limits for the MCA with additional limits for the MTAS added.

Test specifications indicate only what is assessed, not what should be taught. Test specifications also do not indicate how children should be taught; this remains the responsibility of the classroom teacher who best knows the child. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should receive instruction on the full range of grade-level academic standards to the extent appropriate.

The test specifications presented in this document were developed from input provided by Minnesota teachers participating in a Benchmark Extensions panel meeting in November 2006. Many of the teachers were recommended by various education organizations, school districts and

other stakeholder groups. The substantive parts of this document are true to their work. The department thanks these people for their invaluable contributions to the development of this assessment.

The MTAS test specifications help achieve the goal of a technically sound instrument that respects teachers' concern for the time students spend taking tests. They have taken into account the impact of the students' cognitive disabilities, their needs for extensive supports, their varying modes of communication, their age and their right to access grade-level curriculum.

As with any test, the MTAS is a sampling of student knowledge and does not test every standard or benchmark. There are standards and benchmarks that cannot be assessed with a standardized test as well as standards and benchmarks that have not been identified as the top priorities for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This does not mean that these skills should not be taught or assessed. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should receive instruction on the full range of grade-level academic standards to the extent appropriate. The IEP team is responsible for developing an individualized program for each student that addresses identified needs, including, but not limited to, how students will access the general education curriculum as outlined by the Minnesota Academic Standards, which can be obtained from the Standards section of the [Minnesota Department of Education website](http://education.state.mn.us) (<http://education.state.mn.us>).

Prioritizing the Grade-Level Academic Standards

One of the first steps for Minnesota educators in helping to design this assessment was to prioritize the grade-level academic standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Panel members, including special educators and content specialists in reading, identified six benchmarks that, in their view, represented the most critical learning outcomes for this population. The prioritized benchmarks for the MTAS are a subset of the benchmarks assessed on the MCA. The following criteria were established for prioritizing the benchmarks:

- The benchmark is assessed on the MCA.
- The benchmark reflects the pattern of emphasis on the test blueprint for the MCA.
- Proficiency on the benchmark will help the student in the next age-appropriate environment (i.e., the next grade in school or a post-school setting).
- Proficiency on the benchmark will aid future learning in the content area.

- The benchmark can be written as a performance task without creating bias against a particular student population.

Essence Statements

The next step for Minnesota educators who served on the Benchmark Extension panel was to determine the critical learner outcome represented by each prioritized benchmark in reading . The critical outcome is referred to as the *essence* of a benchmark and can be defined as the most basic skill inherent in the expected performance. Panel members then wrote sample instructional activities to show how students with the most significant cognitive disabilities might access the general education curriculum represented by the essence statement. Once panel members had a clear picture of how a skill might be taught, they wrote benchmark extensions. Benchmark extensions represent a reduction in the depth and complexity of the benchmark while maintaining a clear link to the grade-level content standard. Three extensions were written for each benchmark to show how students who represent the diversity within this population could demonstrate proficiency on the benchmark.

Performance Tasks

The MTAS is designed to allow for appropriate flexibility within a standardized assessment environment. Each student will be given a number of tasks to complete in a one-on-one test administration. The test administrator, who will most likely be the child's classroom teacher, will present each task in a way that allows the student to understand what is being asked (i.e., an appropriate presentation mode). It is imperative that each student be given an opportunity to access the content in a way that is appropriate for the individual. For example, students who gain understanding by listening may have a reading passage read aloud. Student may also need manipulatives or illustrations to aid their understanding of the mathematics tasks. Tactile, visual and auditory presentation modes are allowable on the MTAS.

Student Responses

It is critical that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities have a way to show what they know and can do. Clearly, students who meet the guidelines for the MTAS would not be appropriately assessed with a multiple-choice test that is designed for general education students. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities often have ways of communicating what they know and can do that are different from the general education population. Students may communicate through a variety of modes which include, but are not limited to, speaking, using

gestures such as eye blinks or using assistive technology such as a language-based augmentative communication device. The critical feature of a meaningful response is that the student clearly communicates a message.

Evaluating the Student’s Performance on a Task

The teacher uses a scoring rubric to evaluate the student’s performance. Test administrators are trained on the use of the scoring rubric in the spring each year.

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) Scoring Rubric

3	2	1	0
Correct Response	Correct Response with Additional Support	Incorrect Response	Unrelated or No Response
The student responds correctly without assistance.	The student responds correctly to the task after the teacher provides additional support as indicated in the task script.	The student responds incorrectly to the task after the teacher provides additional support as indicated in the task script.	The student does not respond to the task or the student’s response is unrelated to the task.

Overall Considerations in Reading

Overall considerations are broad test development issues that should be addressed during the development of passages and performance tasks. Each of these issues is considered for all of the tasks developed for the Reading MTAS.

1. Each task for reading is written to primarily measure one benchmark; however, other benchmarks may also be reflected in the content of the performance task. When benchmarks are combined for assessment, the item code indicates which benchmarks are combined.
2. Tasks are appropriate for students in terms of grade-level content, age and typical life experiences for the majority of this population.
3. Tasks are developed to allow students with varying modes of communication to demonstrate proficiency, given sufficient instruction and opportunity to learn.
4. Tasks do not disadvantage or offend any segment of the population in regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status, disability or geographic region.
5. Each task is written in order to clearly and unambiguously elicit the desired response.

6. Tasks may assess benchmarks using fiction or nonfiction unless specifically restricted within the content limit.
7. Performance tasks that assess vocabulary must be passage-based using sufficient context for students in this population to derive meaning. Performance tasks must assess decodable, grade-level appropriate words in passages. Students will not be required to define the meaning of a word on the basis of prefix, suffix or root word.
8. Students may use all necessary supports during testing as identified in the IEP. Supports include, but are not limited to, illustrations, visual cues such as symbols, manipulatives and assistive technology.
9. Tasks are reviewed for content characteristics, potential bias and any issues that may be of concern. Minnesota educators with experience and expertise in special education instruction, reading instruction and serving the needs of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities review the performance tasks for each passage in terms of content, bias (gender, racial/ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, socioeconomic and issues related to individuals with disabilities) and psychometric data collected from field-testing.
10. Advisory panels will review all performance tasks prior to their presentation to students.

Passage Development

Reading passages for the MTAS are different than those appearing on the MCA. The passages are shorter (approximately 200 words or less), and the overall difficulty level is reduced. The content of the passages is less complex. Passages are written to include simple sentence structures, high frequency words, decodable words and repeated words and phrases. MTAS passages feature clear, concise language. In general, passages mirror high interest/low level materials that are accessible for instruction for this population.

The MTAS in reading includes both fiction and nonfiction passages. Passage topics will mirror, to the extent appropriate, those appearing on the MCA and are age-appropriate and generally familiar to the population assessed. Concepts presented in the passages are not abstract.

There will be greater flexibility in terms of the presentation of the passages. Students may have passages read to them. The formatting of the passages may be adapted to meet an individual student's needs. Passages may also be supported by illustrations, visual cues such as symbols and/or manipulatives.

Readability of MTAS Passages

The Degree of Reading Power (DRP)¹ readability scale, as is used on the MCA, is not appropriate for reading passages on the MTAS due to the brevity of the passages. The following are features considered for passages that will appear on the MTAS:

- Passage length
- Sentence length
- Grade level of vocabulary
- Complexity of sentence structure
- Familiarity of topic
- Level of concreteness/abstraction of content
- Coherence/organization of content

Reading Test Design by Grade Level

Each operational administration of the MTAS consists of nine tasks distributed across the sub-strands within Strand I of the academic standards for Language Arts. Additional tasks are field tested during each administration in order to construct assessments in future years.

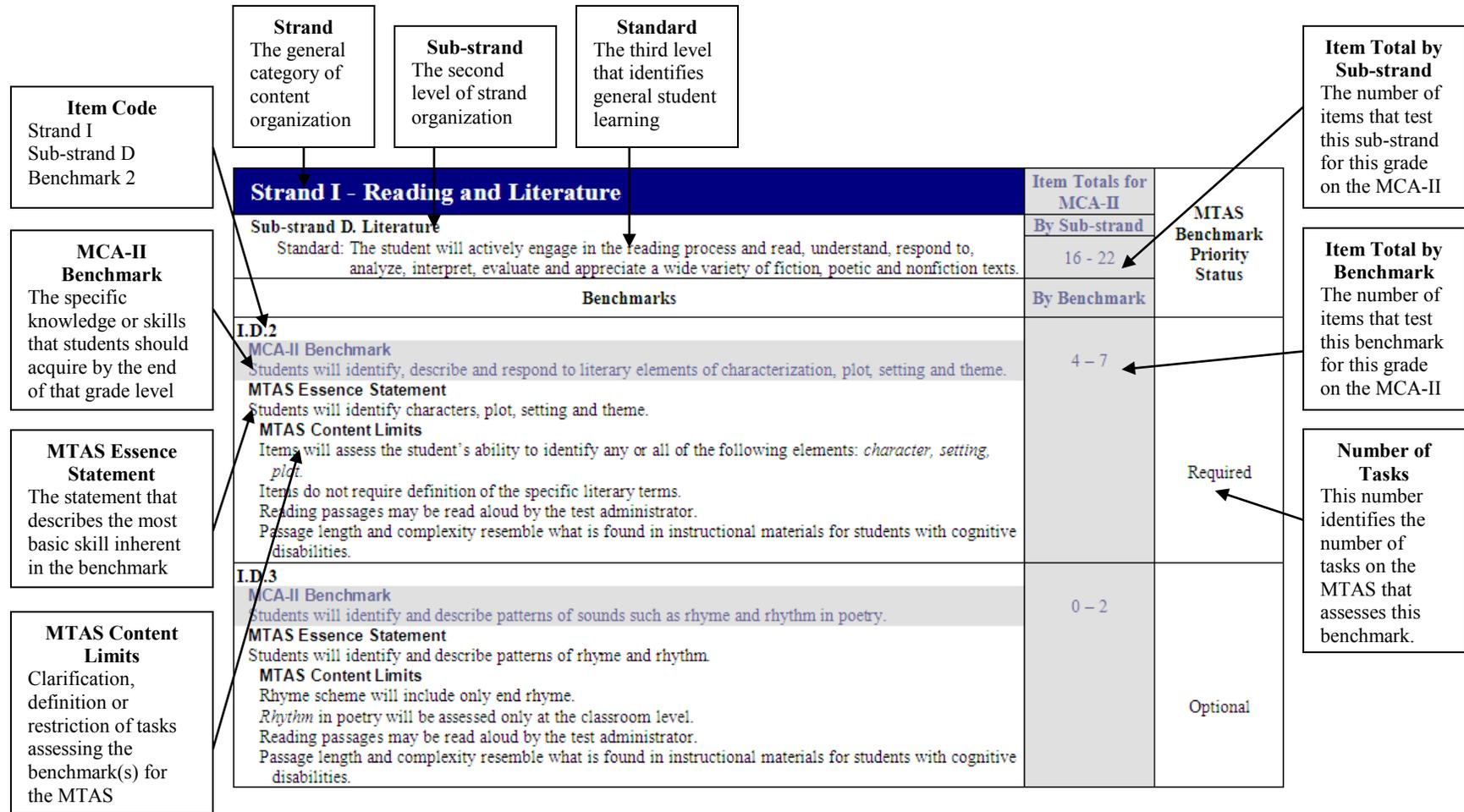
Number of Passages and Tasks	Grades 3-8 and 10
Narrative passages	1-2
Expository passages	1-2
Total passages	3
Tasks per passage	3
Operational passage-based tasks	9

Strand I: Reading and Literature Number of Tasks by Sub-strand	Grade						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
Sub-strand B: Vocabulary	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sub-strand C: Comprehension	4	4	4	5	5	5	4
Sub-strand D: Literature	4	4	4	3	3	3	4

¹ Bormuth, J. (1966). Readability: A new approach. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 1(3), 79-132.

A Guide to the Reading Grade Level Tables

The Test Specifications that follow provide information about how the Minnesota Academic Standards will be assessed on the MTAS. The diagram below explains the format of the Reading Test Specifications.



Reading, Grade 3

An Explanation of Terms on the Reading Grade Level Tables

Strand: This is the most general categorization of content in the Minnesota Academic Standards. Only one language arts strand is assessed on the MCA and the MTAS: Reading and Literature.

Sub-strand: This is a subcategory of a strand in the Minnesota Academic Standards. Reading has three sub-strands in the Reading and Literature strand (Vocabulary Expansion, Comprehension and Literature).

Standard: This statement explains the general goal of student learning within each sub-strand. One standard exists in each sub-strand.

MCA-II Benchmark: Each standard is divided into several benchmarks. The benchmark identifies the specific knowledge or skills that students should acquire by the end of that grade level.

MTAS Essence Statement: This statement describes the most basic skill inherent in the benchmark. It represents a reduction of the complexity of the benchmark for assessment on the MTAS.

Item Code: Test developers use this code to identify the strand, sub-strand and benchmark to which a test item or performance task is aligned.

MTAS Content Limit: These statements provide additional clarifications, definitions or restrictions for the benchmark as it is expressed in the Essence Statement and as it is assessed on the MTAS.

Item Totals for MCA-II

By Sub-strand: This number is the total number of items measuring the sub-strand that could be on the MCA for the indicated standard.

By Benchmark: The number of items on the operational MCA is listed next to each benchmark.

MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks

By Benchmark: The number of tasks listed for each benchmark is indicated. For each grade, there are nine required benchmarks. Required benchmarks will be assessed on all forms of the operational MTAS.

Reading, Grade 3

Grade 3

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.	By Sub-strand 6 – 8	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.B.3 MCA-II Benchmark The student will use context and word structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. MTAS Essence Statement Students will understand the meaning of unfamiliar words using information from the text. MTAS Content Limits Vocabulary items require context clues to determine word meanings. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	4 - 6	1

Reading, Grade 3

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of texts using a variety of comprehension strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.3 MCA-II Benchmark The student will generate and answer literal, inferential, interpretive and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding about what is read.	10 - 16	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will ask and answer various types of questions to demonstrate an understanding of what is read. MTAS Content Limits Items require information obtained solely from the text given. These items may include the identification of main idea and/or relevant details. Items for this benchmark must assess main idea and relevant details in fiction text. (Main idea and relevant details in other genres may be assessed in I.C.5 .) Items will only assess literal and inferential comprehension. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	4 - 7	
I.C.4 MCA-II Benchmark The student will retell, restate or summarize information orally, in writing and through graphic organizers.	0 - 2	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will retell a story using one of various methods. MTAS Content Limits Items require information obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	10 - 16	

Reading, Grade 3

Benchmarks	By Benchmark	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
<p>I.C.5</p> <p>MCA-II Benchmark Students will infer and identify main idea and determine relevant details in nonfiction text.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify main idea and important details in nonfiction text.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items will require the identification of the main idea and/or its relevant details solely from the nonfiction text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>	1 – 3	2

Reading, Grade 3

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.2	4 – 7	2
<p style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">MCA-II Benchmark Students will identify, describe and respond to literary elements of characterization, plot, setting and theme.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify characters, plot, setting and theme.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items will assess the student’s ability to identify any or all of the following elements: <i>character, setting, plot.</i> Items do not require definition of the specific literary terms. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>		
I.D.8	8 – 12	2
<p style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will respond to literature and use text to support their reactions.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities</p>		

Reading, Grade 4

Grade 4

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.	By Sub-strand 6 - 8	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.B.4 MCA-II Benchmark The student will use context and word structure to determine word meanings. The student will use knowledge of prefixes and suffixes to determine the meaning of unknown words. MTAS Essence Statement Students will understand the meaning of unfamiliar words using information from the text. MTAS Content Limits Vocabulary items require context clues to determine word meanings. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	4 – 6	1

Reading, Grade 4

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of texts using a variety of comprehension strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.3 MCA-II Benchmark Students will generate and answer literal, inferential, interpretive and evaluative questions about what is read to demonstrate understanding.	5 – 8	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will ask and answer various types of questions to demonstrate an understanding about what is read. MTAS Content Limits Items will only assess literal and inferential comprehension. Items will require a demonstration of understanding solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		
I.C.4 MCA-II Benchmark Students will summarize and paraphrase what is read.	1 – 3	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will retell a story, or part of a story, using one of various methods. MTAS Content Limits Items must assess retelling or restating elements of a fiction or nonfiction text. Summary will include beginning, middle and end. Items will require a retelling solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		

Reading, Grade 4

Benchmarks	By Benchmark	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
<p>I.C.5</p> <p>MCA-II Benchmark Students will infer and identify main idea and determine relevant details in nonfiction text.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify main idea and important details in nonfiction text.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items must assess main idea and important details in nonfiction text. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>	2 – 4	2

Reading, Grade 4

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.2 MCA-II Benchmark Students will identify, respond to and compare and contrast the literary elements of characterization, plot, setting and theme.	4 – 7	2
MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify, describe and respond to literary elements of characterization, plot, setting and theme. MTAS Content Limits Items will assess the student’s ability to identify any or all of the following elements: <i>character, setting, plot.</i> Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		
I.D.9 MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.	8 – 12	2
MTAS Essence Statement Students will respond to literature and use text to support their reactions. MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		

Reading, Grade 5

Grade 5

Strand I - Reading and Literature		Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.		By Sub-strand	
		6 - 8	
Benchmarks		By Benchmark	
I.B.4		4 – 6	1
MCA-II Benchmark The student will analyze word structure and use context clues in order to understand new words.			
MTAS Essence Statement Students will understand the meaning of unfamiliar words using information from the text. MTAS Content Limits Vocabulary items require context clues to determine word meanings. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.			

Reading, Grade 5

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of texts using a variety of strategies, and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	15 - 21	
	By Benchmark	
I.C.3 MCA-II Benchmark Students will summarize and paraphrase key ideas from text. MTAS Essence Statement Students will summarize (beginning, middle and end) and paraphrase important details from a text. MTAS Content Limits Summary will include beginning, middle and end. Items will require a summary or paraphrase solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	1 – 3	1
I.C.5 MCA-II Benchmark Students will infer main idea and determine relevant details in nonfiction text. MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify the main idea and important details in text. MTAS Content Limits Items will require the inference of the main idea and/or its relevant details solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities	2 – 5	1

Reading, Grade 5

Benchmarks	By Benchmark	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
<p>I.C.7</p> <p>MCA-II Benchmark Students will generate and answer literal, inferential, interpretive and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding about what is read.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will ask and answer various types of questions to demonstrate an understanding about what is read.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items will only assess literal and inferential understanding. Items will require a demonstration of understanding solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>	6 – 9	2

Reading, Grade 5

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature	By Sub-strand	
Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	15 - 21	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.2	4 – 9	2
<p>MCA-II Benchmark Students will identify and analyze literary elements and devices in works of fiction including characterization, plot, tone, and theme and the ways they convey meaning.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify, describe and respond to literary elements of characterization, plot, setting and theme.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items will assess the student’s ability to identify any or all of the following elements: <i>character, setting, plot.</i> Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>		
I.D.8	10 – 14	2
<p>MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will respond to literature and use text to support their reactions.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>		

Reading, Grade 6

Grade 6

Strand I - Reading and Literature		Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.		By Sub-strand	
		6 – 8	
Benchmarks		By Benchmark	
I.B.2		6 – 8	1
MCA-II Benchmark The student will analyze word structure and use cueing systems to understand new words.			
MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify the meaning of new words using a variety of strategies. MTAS Content Limits Items will only assess determining word meaning from context clues. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.			

Reading, Grade 6

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of informational, expository, or persuasive texts using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.1 MCA-II Benchmark Students will summarize and paraphrase what is read. MTAS Essence Statement Students will summarize and paraphrase what is read. MTAS Content Limits Summary will include beginning, middle and end. Items will require a summary or paraphrase solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	1 – 3	2
I.C.3 MCA-II Benchmark Students will generate and answer literal, inferential, interpretive and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding about what is read. MTAS Essence Statement Students will ask and answer various types of questions to demonstrate an understanding about what is read. MTAS Content Limits Items will only assess literal and inferential understanding. Items will require a demonstration of understanding solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	5 – 9	1

Reading, Grade 6

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.	By Sub-strand 18 - 22	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.5 MCA-II Benchmark <i>Students will identify the main idea and supporting details.</i> MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify the main idea and supporting details. MTAS Content Limits Items will identify main ideas and details in fiction and nonfiction text solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	3 – 7	2

Reading, Grade 6

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.3 MCA-II Benchmark Students will identify and describe the relationships among elements of fiction including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme and tone.	6 – 10	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify literary elements and explain how they affect each other. MTAS Content Limits Items will assess the student’s ability to identify any or all of the following elements: <i>character, setting, plot.</i> Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		
I.D.8 MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.	7 – 11	2
MTAS Essence Statement Students will respond to literature and use text to support their reactions. MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		

Reading, Grade 7

Grade 7

Strand I - Reading and Literature		Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.		By Sub-strand	
		6 - 8	
Benchmarks		By Benchmark	
I.B.2 and I.B.3		6 – 8	1
<p>MCA-II Benchmark Students will analyze word structure and use context clues to understand new words. Students will recognize and interpret words with multiple meanings.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will use a variety of strategies to learn new vocabulary.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items will only determine meaning using context clues. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>			

Reading, Grade 7

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of texts using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretative, inferential and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand 23 – 27	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.1 MCA-II Benchmark <i>Students will comprehend, interpret and evaluate text by asking and answering questions.</i> MTAS Essence Statement Students will demonstrate an understanding of a text by asking and answering questions about main idea and relevant details. MTAS Content Limits Items assessed may require the identification of the main idea and/or its relevant details in fiction and nonfiction text solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	8 – 12	2
I.C.4 MCA-II Benchmark <i>Students will make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information from a text.</i> MTAS Essence Statement Students will interpret text by making inferences and drawing conclusions. MTAS Content Limits Items for this benchmark assess main idea and relevant details solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	5 – 9	3

Reading, Grade 7

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.3	5 – 9	1
MCA-II Benchmark Students will identify and analyze the relationships among elements of fiction including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme and tone.		
MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify literary elements and how they affect each other. MTAS Content Limits Items will assess the student’s ability to identify the following elements: <i>character, setting, plot</i> (including conflict/resolution). Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		
I.D.10	7 – 11	2
MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.		
MTAS Essence Statement Students will respond to a text and use the text to support their reactions. MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		

Reading, Grade 8

Grade 8

Strand I - Reading and Literature		Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will apply a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.		By Sub-strand	
		6 - 8	
Benchmarks		By Benchmark	
I.B.2 and I.B.3 MCA-II Benchmark Students will determine the meaning of unknown words by using a dictionary or context clues. Students will recognize and interpret words with multiple meanings.		6 – 8	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify the meaning of new words. MTAS Content Limits Vocabulary items require context clues to determine word meanings. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.			

Reading, Grade 8

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of texts using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.1 MCA-II Benchmark Students will summarize and paraphrase main idea and supporting details.	10 – 14	3
MTAS Essence Statement Students will restate the main idea and supporting details. MTAS Content Limits Items will assess main idea and supporting details in fiction and nonfiction text. Items will require the identification of the main idea and/or relevant details solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		
I.C.4 MCA-II Benchmark Students will make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information from text.	10 – 14	2
MTAS Essence Statement Students will interpret text by making inferences and drawing conclusions. MTAS Content Limits Items may require inferences and/or a conclusion solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		

Reading, Grade 8

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.3	2 – 5	1
<p style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">MCA-II Benchmark Students will analyze a character's traits, emotions or motivation and give supporting evidence from the text.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify literary elements and how they affect each other.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items will assess the student's ability to identify the following elements: <i>character, setting, plot</i> (including conflict/resolution). Items will require analysis solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>		
I.D.12	7 – 9	2
<p style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.</p> <p>MTAS Essence Statement Students will respond to a text and use the text to support their reactions.</p> <p>MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Items may require identification of the author's purpose and/or support for that purpose. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.</p>		

Reading, Grade 10

Grade 10

Strand I - Reading and Literature		Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand B. Vocabulary Expansion Standard: The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.		By Sub-strand 6 – 8	
Benchmarks		By Benchmark	
I.B.2 MCA-II Benchmark The student will determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and metaphors by using dictionaries, context clues and reference books.		6 – 8	1
MTAS Essence Statement Students will understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.			
MTAS Content Limits Items will only determine meaning using context clues. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.			

Reading, Grade 10

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand C. Comprehension Standard: The student will understand the meaning of informational, expository or persuasive texts, using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.	By Sub-strand	
	26 – 33	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.C.5 <div style="background-color: #d3d3d3; padding: 2px;"> MCA-II Benchmark Students will summarize and paraphrase main idea and supporting details. </div> MTAS Essence Statement Students will restate the main idea and supporting details. MTAS Content Limits Items will assess main idea and supporting details in fiction and nonfiction text. Items will require a demonstration of understanding of main idea and supporting details solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	4 – 8	1
I.C.6 and I.C.9 <div style="background-color: #d3d3d3; padding: 2px;"> MCA-II Benchmark Students will trace the logical development of an author’s argument, point-of-view or perspective and evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of the author’s evidence in a persuasive text. Students will identify, understand and explain the various types of fallacies in logic. </div> MTAS Essence Statement Students will identify the author’s argument or perspective. MTAS Content Limits Items may require identification of the author’s purpose. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	3 – 7	1

Reading, Grade 10

Benchmarks	By Benchmark	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
I.C.7 MCA-II Benchmark Students will make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information from texts. MTAS Essence Statement Students will interpret text by making inferences and drawing conclusions. MTAS Content Limits Items will require inferences and/or drawing conclusions solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.	10 – 15	2

Reading, Grade 10

Strand I - Reading and Literature	Item Totals for MCA-II	MTAS Benchmark Number of Tasks
Sub-strand D. Literature Standard: The student will actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic and nonfiction texts.	By Sub-strand	
Benchmarks	By Benchmark	
I.D.6 and I.D.10 MCA-II Benchmark Students will analyze and evaluate the relationship between and among elements of literature: character, setting, plot, tone, symbolism, rising action, climax, falling action, point of view, theme and conflict/resolution. Students will interpret the effect of literary devices.	3 – 6	2
MTAS Essence Statement Students will interpret the effects of literary elements and devices. MTAS Content Limits Items will only assess <i>character, setting, plot</i> (conflict/resolution). Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		
I.D.14 MCA-II Benchmark Students will respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections.	3 – 6	2
MTAS Essence Statement Students will read, respond and react to literature. MTAS Content Limits Items that require a response to support reactions are restricted to ideas and details obtained solely from the text given. Passage length and complexity resemble what is found in instructional materials for students with cognitive disabilities.		