Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments – Modified

Reading

Achievement Level Descriptors

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Contents

Achievement Level Descriptors for Reading MCA-III, MCA-Modified and MTAS

Overview

Minnesota issued its revised *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts* in 2010. For this revision of standards, Minnesota supplemented the Common Core English language arts standards, which were adopted in their entirety. The first operational assessments based on the reading strand of the revised standards were administered in spring 2013.

The 2010 *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts* represent greater expectations in reading comprehension over what was expected in the 2003 academic standards. These expectations are operationalized in the test specifications and assessments through increased complexity and rigor in the reading passages and test items. A goal of the revised standards and assessments is to ensure that students demonstrate college and career readiness.

Minnesota Reading Assessments

The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) in this document are written for three reading assessments administered as part of the Minnesota assessment system. The test specifications and ALDs for all the Minnesota reading assessments are anchored on the reading strand of the *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts*. The ALDs for the three tests describe performance expectations that differ significantly according to the population taking the test, what is assessed in the test and how it is assessed.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments–Series III (MCA)

The Reading MCA is administered to students in the general population. All but a small percentage of students in grades 3-8 and 10 take the Reading MCA. The majority of students receiving special education services take this test as their reading assessment for accountability purposes.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Modified (MCA-Modified)

The Reading MCA-Modified is an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams may select this assessment for students who have disabilities that preclude their demonstrating proficiency on the MCA. The MCA-Modified is based on the same test specifications as the MCA, but test difficulty and length are reduced. The U.S. Department of Education is withdrawing support for this assessment, and its last administration in Minnesota occurs spring 2014.

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

The Reading MTAS is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. IEP teams may select this assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Reading MTAS test specifications are based on a reduced number of the grade-level standards assessed by the MCA and MCA-Modified. These selected standards have been reduced in depth, breadth and complexity.

Achievement Standards

Following the first administration of new assessments, the Minnesota Department of Education must convene content area experts and stakeholders to determine, through a standard setting process, the

levels of performance that are reported to students, parents and schools. Standard setting committees set the cut scores that delineate four levels of achievement on Minnesota statewide assessments. The achievement levels for the general, modified and alternate assessments are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Achievement level labels

MCA	MCA-Modified	MTAS
Does Not Meet the Standards	Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards	Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards
Partially Meets the Standards	Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards	Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards
Meets the Standards	Meets the Modified Achievement Standards	Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards
Exceeds the Standards	Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards	Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students who achieve the "Meets" and "Exceeds" levels on the MCA, MCA-Modified or MTAS are considered proficient with regard to the knowledge, skills and processes (KSPs) described in the academic standards.

The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) for the Minnesota assessments in reading provide a description of grade-level student performance for each of the achievement levels. The reading strand of the Minnesota English language arts academic standards outlines the goals teachers and students work toward over the course of an academic year. The Minnesota assessments measure students' attainment of these goals, and the ALDs explain grade-level student performance in each level of achievement based upon assessment results. Students who are proficient on the Minnesota assessments are considered to be on a trajectory for postsecondary success, and this high expectation is reflected in the ALDs for performance in the "Meets" and "Exceeds" achievement levels. Students who are proficient readers by this measure are on a path to leave high school well prepared for entry-level coursework without remediation in post-secondary education or training. As may be noted in the ALDs for the Minnesota reading assessments, post-secondary readiness for education, training or engagement in the workforce represents quite different expectations for students taking alternate assessments from those for students taking the assessment administered to the general population.

There is a range of student performance represented within each achievement level described by the ALDs. As they wrote the descriptors for each grade and at each achievement level, the ALD development team members envisioned a student whose performance falls in the middle of the range. To capture the KSPs that differentiate student performance at one level from another, it was also necessary to keep in mind the upper and lower thresholds of the range within an achievement level in order to adequately distinguish the level from adjacent levels.

During the standard setting process, content area experts—the majority of whom were educators— created a second type of ALDs to be used for setting cut scores. Working from the ALDs in this document, standard setters described student performance that "just barely meets" the criteria for inclusion in an achievement level. These "just barely meets," or threshold, ALDs and the resulting cut scores, represent the minimum performance required to meet a given achievement level's expectations.

Strand, Substrands, Skill Domains and Standards

As indicated above, the Minnesota reading assessments test the reading strand of the *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts*. The reading strand is composed of two substrands: Literature and Informational Text. The literature and/or informational text substrands are referenced in each of 10 standards. Seven of the 10 standards are assessed on the MCA and MCA-Modified. Four of the 10 standards are assessed on the MTAS. The three reading standards that are excluded from Minnesota statewide assessments do not lend themselves to standardized, large-scale testing formats and are to be evaluated by teachers in the classroom.

The 10 standards in the Reading strand are grouped by skill domains. Table 2 shows how the substrands, skill domains and standards are represented in the ALDs.

Table 2. Skill domains, standards and substrands included in reading assessments

Skill domains and standards*	Substrands assessed	Assessments
Key Ideas and Details		
Standard 1	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Standard 2	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Standard 3	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Craft and Structure		
Standard 4	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Standard 5	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified
Standard 6	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
Standard 7	—	—
Standard 8	Informational Text only	MCA, MCA-Modified
Standard 9	—	—
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity		
Standard 10	—	—

*Standards 7, 9 and 10 involve extended tasks or projects that are assessed by the teacher over time. They are not included in the Minnesota reading assessments and are not addressed in the ALDs.

Development of the Achievement Level Descriptors

The ALD development team included Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) staff as well as Minnesota educators. After this team wrote draft ALDs, the drafts for one grade were submitted for review to HumRRO, an independent organization. HumRRO has done extensive work in the evaluation of achievement and performance level descriptors, as well as the alignment of test items to content standards. The draft ALDs and HumRRO's evaluation were then prepared for presentation to Minnesota's Technical Advisory Committee for review. A second draft of the ALDs was then prepared incorporating recommendations as appropriate. This second draft was used during the standard setting process. The standard setting committee recommended no substantive changes to the ALDs, and the ALDs were thus considered final when the Commissioner of Education approved the cut score recommendations of the standard setting committee.

MDE staff on the ALD development team included two Reading MCA assessment specialists, a Reading Alternate Assessment specialist, and a Reading Academic Standards specialist. The MDE assessment

director and the supervisor of alternate assessments helped facilitate the meetings. MDE staff was joined by a high school English Language Arts teacher and a literacy coordinator for the elementary grades.

Before beginning its work, the ALD development team reviewed the draft ALDs issued by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The team appreciated the work Smarter Balanced has done to distinguish threshold performance at each next higher level in addition to providing descriptions of the range of performance. The ALD development team also noted with interest the Consortium's policy descriptors for college and career readiness at each of its four achievement levels.

Because these ALDs are essential to the standard setting process for the reading assessments, the ALD team relied primarily on the academic standards for Reading and the MCA, MCA-Modified and MTAS test specifications to create the descriptions. Several questions were critical to the process:

- How does text range in complexity within a grade level and across grade levels?

- To what degree do students master each of the standards at each of the achievement levels?

- For which KSPs is it possible to describe gradations of performance across four levels and for which KSPs is it not feasible?

- How, according to the test specifications, are students able to show their mastery of KSPs?

By keeping these questions in mind, the ALD developers are certain they created descriptors that can be supported by evidence in the test design and in student performance on both statewide and classroom assessments. Understanding how test items can tease out partial comprehension of reading passages and understanding of textual analysis is vital to the process of creating ALDs. Variables that can be managed in test items include the degree of specificity or abstraction to which students must drill down, the amount of scaffolding provided directly or through carefully chosen wording, and the alignment to measures of cognitive complexity. It is also necessary to understand how the level of granularity of KSPs determines the extent to which they can be described across a continuum of performance levels. It is possible to distinguish four levels of performance in many KSPs, but in others it is not. For example, for some KSPs, we expect students to demonstrate mastery at the "Meets" level and the KSP will not be carried through to the "Exceeds" descriptor. In another instance, a KSP may not lend itself to fine distinctions in levels of performance. In this case, the KSP may appear only at the "Meets" level, and students are either able to do it or not.

A key assumption in the development of these Reading ALDs is that text increases in complexity and sophistication with each successive grade. Although there are identical or nearly identical descriptors across some grades, it must be understood that the texts students are using to demonstrate these skills are increasingly difficult.

The ALD development team drafted the MCA ALDs over the course of six working sessions. During these sessions, the team referred frequently to the academic standards and the test specifications, as noted above. The team also relied on the language of Webb's Depth of Knowledge scale to describe cognitive complexity and on the Lexile metric to anchor discussions of textual complexity and sophistication. Multiple points of view were represented in the working sessions, and discussions were lively. The ALD team began work on each grade level by first describing the "Meets the Standards"

performance of students working with literature and informational text. The "Meets" level separates proficient performance from performance that is partially proficient or not proficient. Because the reading assessments are targeted to make the distinction between proficient and less than proficient, there is more evidence of student performance to draw upon at this achievement level. It is also important to develop an accurate description of the "Meets" level since it is critical for purposes of accountability. After describing "Meets the Standards," the ALD team turned its attention to "Exceeds the Standards," and then worked its way down the scale to "Partially Meets" and "Does Not Meet."

The draft ALDs that resulted from these sessions were subsequently reviewed and revised by MDE's reading assessment specialists to ensure that the team's intentions and commentary were accurately reflected in the descriptors. They also reviewed the articulation of the descriptors across achievement levels within a grade as well as the articulation of each of the four achievement levels across grades. In other words, did descriptions of what students know and can do increase appropriately from "Does Not Meet the Standards" to "Exceeds the Standards" within a grade? And did descriptions of what students know and can do at a level such as "Meets the Standards" increase appropriately across the grades?

After the draft of the MCA ALDs was complete, the alternate assessment staff at MDE used the ALDs as the starting point for the MCA-Modified and MTAS ALDs. The MCA-Modified is aligned to the same academic standards as the MCA; the regulations for the MCA-Modified require that grade-level standards be assessed but allow states to increase accessibility for students with disabilities and to set modified achievement standards. Accessibility is addressed in the MCA-Modified by reducing the complexity and number of passages students must read and by presenting fewer test questions overall. In addition, items are embedded in the passage, items have three answer options rather than four and language simplification guidelines are carefully applied. The modified achievement standard for this population of students with disabilities allows students to be proficient while demonstrating a reduced number of KSPs with lower levels of cognitive complexity.

The MTAS ALDs are based on Standards 1 through 4, which have been greatly reduced in depth, breadth and complexity. MDE refers to these standards as "extended standards" because the low end of the range of performance expected on these standards has been extended downward to include very basic skills of low cognitive complexity. MDE's alternate assessment staff wrote the MTAS ALDs last and relied heavily on the MTAS test specifications where the extended standards are described (Minnesota does not publish alternate academic standards).

Finalizing the ALDs

The ALDs were presented to the standard setting committees in June 2013 as a policy document. It is the state's intention that students who achieve a given proficiency level can demonstrate the knowledge, skills and processes described in these ALDs, and the purpose of standard setting was not to review or revise this document but to apply it in the determination of cut scores. The standard setting committees were required to create threshold or "just barely meets" descriptors from these ALDs and to apply them to the performance they saw demonstrated in the standard setting materials. The standard setting committees reported no issues with the performance descriptions at each level of the ALDs. The ALDs were then finalized when the Commissioner of Education approved the cut scores recommended by the standard setting committees.

Guide to Understanding the Reading MCA-Modified Achievement Level Descriptors

The **Achievement Level Descriptors** (ALDs) listed in each of the four achievement levels below describe the knowledge and skills assessed on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment-Modified (MCA-Modified) in Reading.

Helpful Terms for Understanding the Structure of the Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) and What They Represent

ALD: Describes student performance at each of the four specific levels of achievement associated with a particular reading skill. An ALD can be classified in one of four achievement levels: Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards, Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards, Meets the Modified Achievement Standards, Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards. See the description listed under each achievement level heading.

Strand: This is the content area under assessment. The title of the strand for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills MCA-Modified is **Reading**.

Sub-strand: The Reading standards are organized under two subcategories called sub-strands. The two sub-strands assessed on the Reading MCA-Modified are Literature and Informational Text. The description of the types of texts found within these sub-strands is taken from the MCA-III Grades 3–8, 10 and MCA-Modified Grades 5–8, 10 DRAFT Test Specifications: Reading (2010 standards), pages 3-4 and 15, which are found on the Minnesota Department of Education website. [View the MCA-III Grades 3–8, 10 and MCA-Modified Grades 5–8, 10 DRAFT Test Specifications: Reading (2010 standards)](#).

1. Literature: Passages with terms aligned to the Literature sub-strand may include, but are not limited to, the following text types: stories and poetry.
2. Informational Text: Passages with items aligned to the Informational Text sub-strand may include, but are not limited to, the following text types: literary nonfiction, historical and scientific texts.

Standard: Standards provide the general description of knowledge and skills in reading that all students must satisfy to meet state requirements. Seven of the ten Reading standards are assessed on the Reading MCA-Modified.

Skill Domain: This is a general categorization of standards related to reading as presented in the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts (2010), which are found on the Minnesota Department of Education website. [View the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts (2010).](#)

Three of four skill domains are assessed on the MCA-Modified:

1. Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3: e.g., text evidence, making inferences, main idea, theme, text features, and characteristics of individuals, events, ideas)
2. Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6: e.g., vocabulary, figurative language, format of texts, author's purpose, author's methods and style)
3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only: e.g., author's credibility and methods of presenting evidence)

ALDs listed in each of the four achievement levels can apply to one or more of the standards in each skill domain. If the features of a given skill do not change from one achievement level to the next, the skill is not repeated in the higher achievement level. ALDs, including those repeated across grades, describe skills applied to more rigorous text complexity with each successive grade.

GRADE 5 – MODIFIED ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills inconsistently and with minimal accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
    Identify the clearly stated main idea/central message of a reading passage
    Recall details from a reading passage
    Identify emotions of characters in a reading passage
    Make simple predictions partially based on information in a reading passage
    Identify clearly stated opinions in text
    Identify the basic sequence of events in a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
    Locate obvious context clues in text to understand word meanings
    Locate learned technical terminology in content-area texts
    Locate obvious transition words (e.g., and, but, soon, usually)
    Identify author's purpose when clearly expressed in a reading passage

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
    Identify obvious evidence in text (e.g., logical connections between sentences)

Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with limited consistency and accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
    State the main idea/central message or topic from a portion of a reading passage or from passage as a whole
    Locate key details in a reading passage
    Recognize basic elements of characterization in a reading passage (e.g., emotions, motives)
    Make simple predictions based on explicit information in a reading passage
    Identify clearly stated fact or opinion in text
    Sequence the primary events in a reading passage
    Use explicit text evidence to make logical conclusions
    Identify an effect when given the cause
    Make simple comparisons based on clearly presented information in a reading passage
    Recognize basic literary terms (e.g., character, setting, plot)
    Identify literary elements of setting and topic

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
    Use obvious context clues in text to understand word meanings
    Define learned technical terminology in content-area texts
    Use common prefixes and suffixes to determine the meaning of grade-level vocabulary
    Identify obvious transition words (e.g., and, but, soon, usually)
    Recognize the features, format and function of basic text
    State author's purpose when clearly expressed in a text
    Recognize the use of literary devices (e.g., mood)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
   Make basic judgments about author's credibility based upon clearly presented evidence in a reading passage

Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills consistently and accurately.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
   Summarize main idea/central message, plot and topic from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
   Identify details that support conclusions drawn from a reading passage
   Identify characters' motives and emotions
   Make simple generalizations and predictions based on explicit information in a reading passage
   Make inferences supported by ample evidence in a reading passage
   Distinguish fact from opinion in text
   Sequence basic plot events or steps in a process
   Use text evidence to make logical conclusions
   Identify clearly stated cause and effect relationships in a reading passage
   Make simple comparisons based on explicitly stated information in a reading passage
   Identify basic literary terms (e.g., character, setting, plot)
Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
   Use context clues in text to understand word meanings
   Categorize technical terminology in content-area texts
   Use common prefixes, suffixes, affixes and roots to determine the meaning of grade-level vocabulary
   Use obvious transition words (e.g., and, but, soon, then) to recognize standard transitions
   Connect connotation to meaning
   Identify the features, format and function of basic text
   Identify author's purpose within a text
   Identify the mood (emotional atmosphere) of a text
   Identify literary devices (e.g., mood)
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
   Judge author's credibility based on clearly presented information in a reading passage
   - Locate obvious argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
   - Recognize evidence that supports an argument
   - Recognize how the author presents fact and opinion

Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with a high degree of consistency and efficiency.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
   Summarize main idea/central message, supporting details, plot and topic from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
   Identify relevant details that support conclusions drawn from a reading passage
   Understand characters' motives and emotions
   Use generalizations to make predictions about a reading passage
   Make inferences about a reading passage

Sequence basic plot events, real events or steps in a process
Make logical conclusions based on clearly stated information in a reading passage
Use text evidence to understand cause and effect relationships
Make simple comparisons based on information implicit in a reading passage
Identify literary terms (e.g., tone, mood)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)

Identify the purpose of technical terminology in content-area texts
Use morphology (word structure) to determine the meaning of words or phrases
Use word relationships, key words and phrases to understand standard transitions
Recognize connotations within familiar contexts
Analyze the features, format and function of basic text
State author's purpose within and across text(s)
Identify the mood (emotional atmosphere) and style (author's technique and approach to meaning, e.g., word choice and sentence structure) of a text
Define meaning of literary devices (e.g., mood, tone)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Judge author's credibility based on clearly presented information in a reading passage

- Locate and understand argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Recognize sufficiency of evidence
- Understand how the author presents fact and opinion

GRADE 6 – MODIFIED ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills inconsistently and with minimal accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Identify the clearly stated main idea/central message of a reading passage
Recall key details from a reading passage
Identify emotions of characters in a reading passage
Make simple predictions based on explicit information in a reading passage
Identify clearly stated facts in text
Identify the basic sequence of events in a reading passage
Draw conclusions partially supported by information in a reading passage
Recognize an effect when given a cause

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use basic context clues in text to understand word meanings
Define basic technical terminology in content-area texts
Identify obvious transition words (e.g., again, also, however, of course) in text
Identify author's purpose when clearly expressed in a reading passage

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
Make basic judgments about the author's credibility based upon clearly presented evidence in a reading passage
Understand that evidence can be used to support an argument

Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with limited consistency and accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
State the main idea/central message from a section of a reading passage or the whole passage
Identify how some supporting details are connected to conclusions from the text
Recognize basic characterization (e.g., emotions, motives)
Contrast characters in a reading passage
Use explicit evidence from text to:
  - make logical conclusions
  - make simple predictions
  - identify simple cause/effect relationships
  - identify fact
  - make simple comparisons
Sequence basic events in chronological order
Recognize basic literary terms (e.g., hero, villain, etc.)
Identify literary elements of setting and topic

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use explicit context clues in text to understand word meanings
Define technical terminology in content-area texts
Use common prefixes and suffixes to determine the meaning of grade-level vocabulary

Identify standard transition words/phrases (e.g., again, also, however, of course) to recognize transitions in text

Recognize the features, format and function of basic text

State author's purpose when clearly expressed in a text

Identify literary devices (e.g., metaphor, simile)

Identify mood (emotional atmosphere) of a text

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Make judgments about the author's credibility based upon clearly presented evidence in a reading passage

- Identify obvious argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Identify credible evidence (e.g., interviews with experts, current research) that supports an argument
- Recognize how the author presents fact and opinion

Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills consistently and accurately.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Summarize main idea/central message, plot, topic and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage

Identify key details that support conclusions drawn from a reading passage

Identify methods of characterization (e.g., motives, emotions)

Contrast ideas or characters

Use explicit evidence from text to:

- make logical conclusions
- make simple generalizations and predictions
- identify simple cause and effect relationships
- identify fact and opinion
- make inferences
- make comparisons

Sequence key plot events or steps in a process in chronological order

Identify basic literary terms (e.g., hero, villain, etc.)

Recognize the use of literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, setting or topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)

Use context clues in text to understand word meanings

Categorize technical terminology in content-area texts

Use word structure to construct meaning of a word or phrase

Use word relationships, key words and phrases to recognize standard transitions

Connect connotation to meaning

Identify the features, format and function of basic text

Identify author's purpose within texts

Identify the mood (emotional atmosphere) and style (author's technique and approach to meaning, e.g., word choice and sentence structure) of a text

Recognize the use of literary devices (e.g., metaphor, simile)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
>Judge author's credibility based on clearly presented information in a reading passage
>- Locate obvious argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
>- Recognize sufficiency of evidence
>- Identify how the author presents fact and opinion

Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with a high degree of consistency and efficiency.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
>Summarize main idea/central message, supporting details, plot, theme and topic from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
>Identify relevant and key details that support conclusions drawn from a reading passage
>Understand the use of characterization (e.g., motives, emotions)
>Compare and contrast ideas or characters
>Use explicitly stated or implied text evidence to:
>- make logical conclusions
>- make generalizations and predictions
>- understand cause and effect relationships
>- distinguish fact from opinion
>- make inferences
>- quote accurately from the text
>
>Sequence key plot events, real events and steps in a process in chronological order
>Make simple comparisons based on information implicit in a reading passage
>Identify literary terms (e.g., resolution, exposition, etc.)
>Identify the use of literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, setting or topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
>Evaluate the use of technical terminology in content-area texts
>Use word structures and multiple meanings to construct the meaning of words or phrases
>Use word relationships, key words and phrases to understand various types of transitions
>Recognize connotations within familiar contexts
>Identify simple figures of speech
>Analyze the features, format and function of text
>State author's purpose within and across text(s)
>Recognize interactions between mood and style
>Understand the purpose of literary devices (e.g., metaphor, simile)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
>Judge author's credibility based on information in a reading passage
>- Locate and understand argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
>- Evaluate relevancy and sufficiency of evidence
>- Understand how the author presents fact and opinion
>- Recognize obvious fallacies of logic (e.g., stereotyping)

GRADE 7 – MODIFIED ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills inconsistently and with minimal accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Identify the clearly stated main idea/central message of a reading passage
Recall key details from a reading passage
Identify emotions of characters in a reading passage
Make simple predictions based on explicit information in a reading passage
Identify clearly stated fact and opinion in text
Identify the basic sequence of events in a reading passage
Identify cause and effect
Recognize basic literary terms (e.g., plot, conflict resolution)
Identify setting in a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use basic context clues in text to understand word meanings
Define basic technical terminology in content-area texts
Recognize standard transition words/phrases (e.g., besides, instead, after all) in text
Connect connotations to meaning
State author's basic purpose within text

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
Make judgments about the author's credibility based upon clearly presented evidence in a reading passage
Understand that the author's credibility may be questioned

Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with limited consistency and accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Summarize or paraphrase the main idea/central message from a section of a reading passage or the whole passage
Identify key details related to conclusions from the text
Recognize basic characterization (e.g., emotions, motives)
Compare and contrast characters in a reading passage
Use explicit evidence from text to:
  - make logical conclusions
  - make simple predictions
  - identify simple cause/effect relationships
  - identify fact and opinion
Sequence steps in a process in chronological order
Identify basic literary terms (e.g., plot, conflict resolution, etc.)
Identify basic literary elements (e.g., main idea, supporting details, plot)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use context clues in text to understand word meanings
Define technical terminology in content-area texts
Use word structures to construct meaning
Identify standard transition words/phrases (e.g., besides, instead, after all)
Recognize that the features, format and function of basic text impact meaning
Recognize connotations within familiar contexts
Recognize simple figures of speech
State author's purpose within a text
Recognize the use of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)
Identify mood (emotional atmosphere) of a text

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
Make judgments about the author's credibility in a reading passage
- Locate obvious argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Identify credible evidence (e.g., interviews with experts, current research) that supports an argument in text
- Identify how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews, research)

Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills consistently and accurately.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Summarize or paraphrase main idea/central message, plot, topic and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
Use key details to support conclusions drawn from a reading passage
Identify methods of characterization (e.g., motives, emotions)
Compare and contrast ideas or characters based on text
Use explicit evidence from text to:
- make logical conclusions
- make simple generalizations and predictions
- identify cause and effect relationships
- distinguish fact from opinion
- make inferences
- quote accurately from text
Sequence key plot events or steps in a process in chronological order
Identify basic literary terms (e.g., plot, conflict, resolution, etc.)
Recognize the use of and connections between literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, conflict, setting or topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Recognize how context leads to intended or precise word meanings
Categorize technical terminology across content-area texts
Use explicit evidence to understand word meanings
Use word structure to construct meaning of a word or phrase
Use word relationships, key words and phrases to recognize standard transitions
Identify connotations within familiar contexts
Identify the features, format and function of basic text
Understand author's purpose within text

Identify the mood (emotional atmosphere) and style (author's technique and approach to meaning, e.g., word choice and sentence structure) of a text

Identify literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Judge author's credibility based on text

- Locate and understand obvious argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Identify sufficiency of evidence
- Identify how the author presents fact and opinion
- Recognize how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews with experts, current research)

Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with a high degree of consistency and efficiency.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Summarize or paraphrase main idea/central message, plot, theme, topic and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage

Use relevant and key details from the text to support conclusions

Understand the use of characterization (e.g., motives, emotions)

Compare and contrast ideas or characters in multiple text types

Use explicitly stated or implied text evidence to

- make logical conclusions
- make generalizations and predictions
- understand cause and effect relationships
- make inferences
- quote accurately from text

Sequence key plot events, real events and steps in a process in chronological order

Define literary terms (e.g., antagonist, protagonist, etc.)

Identify the use of literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, setting or topic)

Evaluate the connections between literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, conflict, setting or topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)

Understand technical terminology across content-area texts

Recognize how context and word structure lead to intended word meanings

Use word relationships, key words and phrases to understand various types of transitions

Identify simple figures of speech and connotations

Analyze the features, format and function of text and their impact on meaning

Interpret author's purpose within text

Recognize interactions between mood and style

Understand the purpose of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Judge author's credibility based on text

- Locate and understand argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Evaluate relevancy and sufficiency of evidence
- Understand how the author presents fact and opinion
- Identify fallacies of logic (e.g., stereotyping)
- Understand how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews with experts, current research)

Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills inconsistently and with minimal accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Identify the clearly stated main idea/central message and/or supporting details in basic text
Recall key details from a reading passage
Identify emotions or motives of characters in a reading passage
Make simple predictions based on explicit information in a reading passage
Identify clearly stated fact and opinion in text
Identify the basic sequence of events in a reading passage
Identify cause and effect
Make comparisons based on explicit information in text
Identify setting in a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use basic context clues in text to understand word meanings
Define basic technical terminology in content-area texts
Recognize standard transition words/phrases (e.g., besides, instead, for example) in text
Connect connotations to meaning
State author's basic purpose within text

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
Make judgments about the author's credibility based upon clearly presented evidence in a reading passage
Identify obvious argumentation in text (e.g., details, examples)

Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with limited consistency and accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Summarize or paraphrase the main idea/central message from a section of a reading passage or the whole passage
Identify how key details are related to conclusions from the text
Recognize basic characterization (e.g., appearance, motives)
Contrast characters in a reading passage
Use explicit evidence from text to:
- make logical conclusions
- make predictions
- identify cause/effect relationships
- identify fact and opinion

Sequence steps in a process in chronological order
Identify basic literary terms (e.g., plot, conflict resolution, etc.)
Identify basic literary elements (e.g., main idea, supporting details, plot, setting, topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
  Use context clues in text to understand word meanings
  Define technical terminology in content-area texts
  Use word structures to construct meaning
  Identify standard transition words/phrases (e.g., besides, instead, for example)
  Recognize that the features, format and function of basic text impact meaning
  Identify connotative meanings of some words and phrases
  Recognize simple figures of speech
  State author's purpose within a text
  Recognize the use of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)
  Identify mood (emotional atmosphere) of a text
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
  Make judgments about the author's credibility in a reading passage
  - Locate obvious argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
  - Identify credible evidence (e.g., interviews with experts, current research) that supports an argument in text
  - Identify how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews, research)

Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills consistently and accurately.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
  Summarize or paraphrase main idea/central message, plot, topic, theme and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
  Use key details to support conclusions drawn from a reading passage
  Differentiate methods of characterization (e.g., appearance, motives)
  Compare and contrast ideas or characters based on text
  Use explicit evidence from text to:
  - make logical conclusions
  - make generalizations and predictions
  - identify cause and effect relationships
  - distinguish fact from opinion
  - make inferences
  - quote accurately from text
  Sequence plot events or steps in a process in chronological order
  Identify basic literary terms (e.g., antagonist, protagonist, etc.)
  Recognize the use of and connections between literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, conflict, setting or topic)
Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
  Use evidence to understand word meanings
  Recognize how context and structure lead to intended or precise word meanings
  Categorize technical terminology across content-area texts
  Use explicit evidence to understand word meanings
  Use word structure to construct meaning of a word or phrase
  Use word relationships, key words and phrases to understand various types of transitions
  Identify figures of speech and connotations
  Identify connotative meanings of words and phrases
  Identify the features, format and function of basic text structures and their impact on meaning
  Understand author's purpose within text

Identify the mood (emotional atmosphere) and style (author's technique and approach to meaning, e.g., word choice and sentence structure) of a text
Identify literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Judge author's credibility based on text
- Locate and understand argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Identify relevancy and sufficiency of evidence
- Identify how the author presents fact and opinion
- Recognize how credible information is presented in text (e.g., interviews with experts, current research)

Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with a high degree of consistency and efficiency.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Summarize or paraphrase main idea/central message, plot, theme, topic, setting, conflict and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
Use relevant and key details from the text to support conclusions
Compare methods of characterization (e.g., appearance, motives) and their impact on other literary elements
Compare and contrast ideas or characters in multiple text types
Use explicitly stated or implied text evidence to
- make logical conclusions
- make relevant generalizations and predictions
- understand cause and effect relationships
- make inferences
- quote accurately from text

Sequence plot events, real events and steps in a process in chronological order
Understand literary terms (e.g., antagonist, protagonist, etc.)
Identify the use of literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, setting or topic)
Evaluate the connections between literary elements (main idea, supporting details, plot, conflict, setting or topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)

Use reasoning and evidence to understand word meanings
Understand the use of technical terminology across content-area texts
Recognize how context and word structure lead to intended word meanings
Interpret word relationships, key words and phrases to understand more complicated transitions
Identify figures of speech and distinguish connotations
Analyze the features, format and function of text and their impact on meaning
Interpret author's purpose within text
Recognize interactions between mood and style
Understand the purpose of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Judge author's credibility based on text
- Locate and understand argumentation (e.g., details, examples) within text
- Evaluate relevancy and sufficiency of evidence
- Evaluate how the author presents fact and opinion
- Identify fallacies of logic (e.g., stereotyping)
- Understand how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews with experts, current research)

GRADE 10 – MODIFIED ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills inconsistently and with minimal accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Identify the clearly stated main idea/central message and theme of a text
Identify key and relevant details from a reading passage
Identify emotions or motives of characters in a text
Compare characters or ideas based on explicit information in text
Identify explicit evidence from text to support:
- general conclusions
- generalizations and predictions
- inferences
- obvious cause/effect relationships
- identification of fact and opinion

Sequence steps in a process in chronological order
Identify setting in a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use basic context and structure of words to understand word meanings
Define basic technical terminology in content-area texts
Identify standard transition words/phrases (e.g., finally, still, even though, of course) in text
Connect connotation to meaning
State author's general purpose within text
Recognize the features, format and function of text and their impact on meaning

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
Make judgments about the author's credibility based upon clearly presented evidence in a reading passage
- Identify obvious argumentation in text (e.g., details, examples)
- Recognize how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews, research)

Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with limited consistency and accuracy.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Summarize or paraphrase the main idea/central message, supporting details and topic from a section of a reading passage or the whole passage
Identify key details that support conclusions from the text
Recognize basic methods of characterization (e.g., appearance, behavior, motive)
Compare or contrast basic characters, simple ideas or events in a reading passage
Use explicit evidence from text to support:
- basic conclusions and simple inferences
- generalizations and predictions
- simple cause/effect relationships

- identification of fact and opinion
- recognition of basic symbols

Sequence plot events or steps in a process in chronological order

Identify basic literary terms (e.g., plot, conflict resolution, etc.)

Recognize obvious connections among literary elements within a text (e.g., main idea, supporting details, plot, subject, setting or topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)

Recognize how word relationships, context and structure lead to meaning

Use evidence to understand word meanings

Define technical terminology in content-area texts

Recognize word relationships, key words and phrases that signal transitions

Identify the features, format and function of text and their impact on meaning

Recognize the impact of word choices on meaning

Identify connotative meanings of some words and phrases

Recognize figures of speech

State author's main purpose within a text

Recognize the use of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Identify mood (emotional atmosphere) of a text

Identify literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Make judgments about text and the author's credibility based on evidence in a reading passage

- Recognize persuasive argumentation (e.g., "painting a picture," empathy)
- Identify how information is presented in text (e.g., interviews, research)

Meets the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills consistently and accurately.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Summarize or paraphrase main idea/central message, plot, topic, theme and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage

Use relevant/key details to support conclusions drawn from a reading passage

Understand methods of characterization (e.g., behavior, motivation)

Compare and contrast ideas or characters based on text

Use explicitly stated or implied text evidence to provide sufficiently supported:

- conclusions and inferences
- generalizations and predictions
- cause/effect relationships
- identification of symbolism
- distinction of fact from opinion

Sequence plot events, real events and steps in a process in chronological order

Understand literary terms (e.g., climax, resolution) and elements (e.g., foreshadowing, suspense, imagery)

Identify connections between literary elements within a text or multiple interpretations of text (main idea, supporting details, plot, conflict, subject, setting, theme)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)

Use reasoning and evidence to understand word meanings

Recognize how word relationships, context and structure lead to intended or precise word meanings

Categorize technical terminology across content-area texts

Use word structure and multiple meanings of a word or phrase to construct meaning

Use word relationships, key words and phrases to understand various types of transitions
Understand figures of speech
Identify connotative meanings of words and phrases
Analyze the features, format and function of basic text structures and their impact on meaning
Interpret author's main purpose within text(s)
Understand the use of mood (emotional atmosphere) and style (author's technique and approach to meaning, e.g., word choice and sentence structure) within text
Recognize the use of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)
Make judgments about texts and author's credibility based on:
- methods of argumentation (e.g., details, examples)
- relevancy and sufficiency of evidence
- analysis of how the author presents fact and opinion

Identify persuasive argumentation (e.g., "painting a picture," empathy)
Understand how credible information is presented in text (e.g., interviews, research)

Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards

When interacting with literature and informational text, students at this achievement level demonstrate the following skills with a high degree of consistency and efficiency.

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)
Summarize or paraphrase main idea/central message, plot, subject, theme, topic, setting, conflict and supporting details from a section of a passage or from a whole passage
Paraphrase text
Evaluate relevant and key details that support conclusions from the text
Evaluate methods of characterization (e.g., appearance, behavior, motivation) and their impact on other literary elements
Compare and contrast ideas or characters in multiple text types
Use explicitly stated or implied text evidence to provide:
- conclusions and inferences
- generalizations and predictions
- analysis of fact and opinion
- explanations of cause/effect relationships
- interpretation of symbolism

Sequence plot events, real events and steps in a process in chronological order
Understand literary terms (e.g., antagonist, protagonist, etc.)
Interpret the meaning of literary terms (e.g., climax, resolution) and elements (e.g., foreshadowing, suspense, imagery)
Analyze relationships among literary elements within a text (main idea, supporting details, plot, conflict, subject, setting, theme, topic)

Craft and Structure (Standards 4, 5, 6)
Use evidence to understand author's choices
Evaluate the application of technical terminology across content-area texts
Analyze word structure and multiple meanings of a word or phrase to construct meaning
Analyze word relationships, key words and phrases to understand various types of transitions
Interpret figures of speech
Distinguish among connotative and figurative meanings of words and phrases
Evaluate the features, format and function of text and their impact on meaning
Analyze author's purpose within text

Analyze interactions between mood and style

Analyze the use of literary devices (e.g., suspense, imagery, foreshadowing)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 8, Informational Text sub-strand only)

Make complex judgments about texts and author's credibility based on:

- methods of argumentation (e.g., details, examples)
- relevancy and sufficiency of evidence
- evaluation of how the author presents fact and opinion

Evaluate the effectiveness of persuasive argumentation

Understand how and why evidence and arguments are presented in text