



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®)
Performance Level Descriptors
English I

Performance Level Descriptors

When reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Masters Grade Level Performance can

- Synthesize information across multiple texts from a variety of genres to create new understanding and develop thoughtful interpretations of the text
- Make complex inferences about texts based on explicit and implicit text evidence
- Use critical inquiry to analyze the authors' choices and how they influence and communicate meaning within a variety of texts
- Write skillfully developed essays that demonstrate grade-level mastery of writer's craft with advanced command of language conventions

When reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Meets Grade Level Performance can

- Analyze how the author's use of language informs and shapes the perception of readers
- Analyze literary texts by examining themes and the ways in which literary devices contribute to the development of complex yet believable characters and linear and/or nonlinear plots
- Demonstrate an understanding of informational and argumentative texts by analyzing the thesis or claim and evaluating structural elements and characteristics such as organizational patterns, pertinent examples, and counterarguments
- Synthesize information across multiple texts to create new understanding
- Make logical inferences and predictions based on explicit and implicit text evidence
- Write well-developed essays that are suited to the writing task, with consistent command of grade-level appropriate conventions
- Demonstrate proficient skills in revising and editing

When reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Approaches Grade Level Performance can

- Distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words using context and reference materials
- Recognize how literal and figurative language conveys meaning in texts
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of literary texts by recognizing elements such as theme and plot development
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of informational and argumentative texts by recognizing characteristics and structural elements such as key ideas, supporting evidence, and print and graphic features
- Recognize the use of literary devices and their meaning in a text
- Make logical connections and comparisons between texts representing similar or different genres
- Make simple inferences and predictions based on explicit and implicit text evidence
- Write basic essays that are generally suited to the writing task, with a partial command of grade-level appropriate conventions
- Demonstrate developing skills in revising and editing

When reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Did Not Meet Grade Level Performance can

- Determine the denotative meaning of words using context and reference materials
- Demonstrate limited understanding of the fundamental elements of literary texts such as character, setting, and themes and the characteristics of informational and argumentative texts such as thesis, claim, and organizational patterns
- Make simple inferences about texts based on explicit text evidence
- Write limited essays that are minimally developed and only marginally suited to the writing task, with little to no command of grade-level appropriate conventions
- Demonstrate limited skills in revising and editing

*Text complexity increases from grade to grade. Texts can become increasingly complex for a variety of reasons: (1) vocabulary/use of language may be more varied and challenging because it is nonliteral/figurative, abstract, or academic/technical; (2) sentence structure may be more varied, dense, and sophisticated; (3) the author's use of literary elements/devices, rhetorical strategies, organizational patterns, and text features may be more nuanced or sophisticated; (4) the topic/content may be less familiar or more cognitively demanding; and (5) relationships among ideas may be less explicit and require more interpretation, reasoning, and inferential thinking to understand the subtlety, nuances, and depth of ideas. The rigor of the writing task also increases from grade to grade due to the text complexity of the source text(s) students use in developing the essay and the sophistication of the topic.