Grade-appropriate text for use with STAAR Alternate is defined as:

“any text that general education students at a particular grade-level or course would be interested in, read, and/or be required to read by the state-mandated curriculum for that enrolled grade-level or high school course”
This does **NOT** mean that your student has to read grade-level text!

However, . . .

it is the intent of both state and federal law that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive grade-level or course curriculum instruction and assessment.
Text used for STAAR Alternate reading assessments can be modified, but *must* meet the definition of grade appropriate before the modifications.

It is *not acceptable* to use text considered appropriate for a grade level lower than the student’s enrolled grade level.
Locating Grade-Appropriate Text

Grade-appropriate text can be found in:

- general education classrooms for a student’s enrolled grade or high school course
- general education grade-level or course textbooks and ancillary materials
- required reading lists at a student’s enrolled grade or course – often prepared by campuses, districts, and publishing companies
- Internet searches for grade-specific text
- school libraries
Providing Access to Grade-Appropriate Text

Access can be provided by:

Summarizing an entire book

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**Hatchet**

By Gary Paulsen

Brian Robeson is thirteen and lives with his mother in New York City. He gets on a plane to fly to his father’s house in Canada. The pilot gets sick and the plane crashes. Brian is all alone in the woods. He has nothing to help him but the hatchet his mother gave him as a present.

Brian has many problems to get the things he needs to live. He is lucky that he has his hatchet to help him. First, he is very hungry. Brian finds berries and turtle eggs to eat. Using his hatchet, he is able to make a spear. With the spear he catches fish to eat. Brian is scared and lonely. He builds a fire by making sparks fly from his hatchet to catch twigs on fire. He hopes that the fire will help others find him. The light from the fire protects him from bears and other animals during the night. Sometimes, the weather is windy and rainy. Brian builds a shelter for himself by using the hatchet to cut down branches from the trees in the woods. Brian spends many weeks in the woods by himself.

After a storm, Brian sees the plane in the lake. He builds a raft with branches and vines he cut with his hatchet. He uses the raft to get to the plane. He finds a pack of supplies that is filled with food and a radio. Brian turns the radio on and is soon rescued by a man in another plane. Brian and his hatchet return home. Brian is proud of himself that he was able to live on his own. He tells his mother that with his hatchet he can do anything.

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Access can be provided by:

Pairing the summary with individual pictures as the text is read to the student

The text on this and the following three screens was modified based on the literary text _Hatchet_ by Gary Paulsen. This story is appropriate for a middle school student.
Providing Access to Grade-Appropriate Text

Access can be provided by:

Summarizing a chapter of a book and embedding pictures within the text to be co-read by teacher and student

Hatchet, Chapter 10

Brian sleeps in his shelter at night.

He is safe from bears and skunks because of his fire.

He cuts lots of wood to make sure he always has a fire.

The smoke from the fire keeps the mosquitoes away.

One morning he wakes up and sees animal tracks.

He follows the tracks to the lake and finds turtle eggs.

Brian uses his hatchet to help him live by himself in the woods.

Brian made a spear to catch fish to eat.

Brian made a fire to scare away animals.

Access can be provided by:

Summarizing the main idea and details of a book or chapter and pairing them with pictures
Providing Access to Grade-Appropriate Text

Access can be provided by:

- Summarizing only the main idea of a book or chapter and pairing it with pictures or objects

- Heating pad – representation for fire

- Sticks – representation for a shelter

Brian uses his hatchet to help him live by himself in the woods.
Providing Access to Grade-Appropriate Text

Access can be provided by:

Using cause and effect or problem and resolution to tell the events of a story

Brian's Problem | How his hatchet helped

| Brian got hungry. |   |
| Brian got scared. |   |
| Brian had no home. |   |
| Brian had no way to get help. |   |

He cut branches to build a shelter.
He cut lots of wood for a fire to scare away animals.
He made a spear to catch fish.
He built a raft to get to the airplane in the lake and radio for help.
To understand the TEKS curriculum for English Language Arts and reading, teachers must:

- become familiar with the genres
- be able to identify examples of texts from each of the genres in order to make appropriate selections for the skills being addressed in the assessment tasks
- understand the vocabulary or terminology used in the assessment tasks
- be familiar with local district or campus requirements for the reading approach and texts used
Understanding the (TEKS) Curriculum for English Language Arts and Reading

**Literary Text**

artistic works of fiction that may include some or all of the following elements – characters, plot, conflict, setting, and theme

**Media Literacy**

the connecting of media (words, images, graphics, or sounds) to text and understanding their impact

**Literary Nonfiction**

narratives about actual persons, places, and things that use literary style to both entertain the reader and expand the reader’s knowledge of the subject

**Informational Text**

researched, factual information written to expand a reader’s knowledge of a subject
Myths – legends written about a supernatural being or hero which attempt to explain a belief or happening

Fiction – works of prose shaped by the author’s imagination, including realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, and fantasy presented in the following:

Folk Tales – stories based on beliefs that are unfounded and passed down through generations

Drama/Plays – stories written for theatrical performance

Fables – stories that convey a message or moral which typically includes animals taking on human characteristics

Literary Text

Poetry – rhythmic writing with imagery that evokes an emotional response

Novels – Lengthy stories with multiple characters, plots, and subplots

Short stories – brief stories that are less complicated than novels

Novels – Lengthy stories with multiple characters, plots, and subplots

Short stories – brief stories that are less complicated than novels
It is important to select grade-appropriate literary texts carefully. Some popular and grade-appropriate texts may contain abstract language, fanciful ideas, or adult content that may not be the best choice for a particular student. After determining a list of grade-appropriate literary texts for a student’s enrolled grade, make selections on topics of the student’s interest or on topics that the student may relate to because of his or her past experiences.

In addition, consider a unique presentation reflecting the time period, topic, or important concept in the text to aid with comprehension.

This modified text of the prologue from *A Year Down Yonder*, by Richard Peck is a story about a girl who moves to a farm to live with her grandmother.

In this example of modified text on the story *A Year Down Yonder*, the teacher chose to support the time period of the story by pairing black and white photos from the era to the modified text.

In this example, the poem *Trees*, by Joyce Kilmer was presented on a drawing or picture of a tree. The poem could also be read outside under a tree to support the concept.

*A Year Down Yonder*, by Richard Peck is an example of historical fiction which is a literary text appropriate for a student in middle school. The poem, *Trees*, by Joyce Kilmer is appropriate for a student in elementary school.
Literary Text

Fiction

Chapters 6–7: The animals get to a river that they have to go over. The two dogs manage to do this, but Tao is swept away in a sudden flood. Luath tries unsuccessfully to rescue him, and giving him up as lost, the two dogs

The modified text on this screen includes embedded pictures and represents a summary of two chapters from *The Incredible Journey*, by Sheila Burnford. The pictures paired with text allows the text to be read by both the student and the teacher and serves as an aid for comprehension.

The literary text, *The Incredible Journey*, is an example of fiction and is appropriate for a middle school student.
Sections of an already created summary can be expanded to include information needed for a specific predetermined criterion for a variety of assessment tasks.

Using the summary of the book, *A Year Down Yonder*, the teacher developed a new text from a section of the summary to include a multi-meaning word which was the tested skill.

**Historical Fiction**

Using the summary of the book, *A Year Down Yonder*, the teacher developed a new text from a section of the summary to include a multi-meaning word which was the tested skill.

Mildred, the local bully, follows Mary Alice home after school one day demanding money. As Mary Alice walks across the range to Grandma’s house, Mildred does not give up. Mary Alice’s feelings range from being scared of Mildred to being angry with her. When Mary Alice gets home, Grandma Dowdel gets back at Mildred for Mary Alice by untying Mildred’s horse. Mildred has to walk home.
This summary of the text, *A Year Down Yonder*, was written specifically to include a simile which was a tested skill in the predetermined criterion of a different assessment task.
The modified text on this screen represents a brief summary of the entire book, *The Incredible Journey*. As the text was read, photographs were individually presented to enhance comprehension and support the text. Modifications to text can include shortened passages and simplified language.

**Complexity Level 2 Example**

**Predetermined criterion:** identify main character and setting

You can ask “Which of these animals are in the story?” rather than “Who are the characters in the story?”

You can ask “Where did the story take place?” rather than “What is the setting of the story?”

*The Incredible Journey* is the story of three pets: a Siamese cat, a Labrador retriever, and a bull terrier. These pets are spending the summer in the country with John Longridge because their owners are away on a trip. The pets travel 250 miles through the Canadian wilderness to get home. On the way, they face several dangers and challenges, including a forest fire, a river to cross, and an encounter with a group of wolves. Despite these obstacles, the pets manage to make it home safely.
Using graphic organizers to structure information is a good way to present a grade-appropriate text. As a text is read, color-coded pictures paired with words can be placed into corresponding color-coded areas of a graphic organizer.

**Literary Text**

**Fiction**

Using graphic organizers to structure information is a good way to present a grade-appropriate text. As a text is read, color-coded pictures paired with words can be placed into corresponding color-coded areas of a graphic organizer.

**Complexity Level 2 Example**

Predetermined criterion: identify the main character of a text; identify a connection between the main character and the setting.

- **Tao**
- **in the city**
- **in the country**
- **at the beach**

Remember, choices must be presented at complexity level 2.

This is not his home, so he leaves.
Recall Questions

What happened first in the story?
What happened last in the story?
Who lost his job?
Where did Mary Alice go?
Who lived on a farm?
What did Mildred do?
What happened on Halloween?

Captioned photographs of events in a text can be presented individually and placed on a plot line or timeline in sequential order.

In this example, the captioned photographs were used to tell the sequence of events in the story as well as to provide choices for answering questions.
Text can be paired with sensory input to allow for meaningful experiences and to encourage authentic student responses.

In this example, the teacher chose to pair the text from a modified summary of *The Incredible Journey* with tactile feedback.

A piece of dark hair, tan fur, and a white cotton ball were attached to the text to represent the three pets.

Leaves and a small fan blowing were used to represent the setting (country).

The dark hair, tan fur, and white cotton ball were attached with adhesive so that pieces could be removed as text was read.
The animals come to a river that they have to cross. The two dogs manage to do this, but Tao is swept away in the water. The dogs try to rescue Tao but can’t so they give up and continue their journey.

Statements

“Tao, the cat, fell in the river. Look, he got all wet. What a surprise!”

After splashing or placing the student’s hand in the water, say “You’re wet – just like Tao! I bet you’re surprised too.”

The Incredible Journey
Summary Ch. 6 & 7

The animals come to a river that they have to cross. The two dogs manage to do this, but Tao is swept away in the water. The dogs try to rescue Tao but can’t so they give up and continue their journey.

Representations for the animals are attached with adhesive so they can be removed from the display as the story is told.
This cow has a button on it that produces a mooing sound when pushed. The hay on the page could be smelled.

After reading the text, the student could participate in packing a suitcase for a trip.

Mary Alice's dad lost his job, so she has to go live with her grandmother.

Mary Alice's dad lost his job. He had only a few coins left in his wallet. It jingled as he walked.
**Literary Nonfiction**

- **Biographies** – written accounts of a person’s life told by someone other than the person about whom the text is written.
- **Journals** – written accounts describing a person’s experiences.
- **Essays** – literary compositions that reflect the author’s outlook or point of view.
- **Memoirs** – written accounts of how a person remembers his or her life experiences focusing on a time that was especially vivid or memorable.
- **Autobiographies** – written accounts that tell the chronological history of a person’s life from birth to fame – written by that person.
- **Speeches** – written accounts of a person’s words, typically delivered to a group in the form of an address.
The modified text on this screen represents a brief summary of the book, *October Sky*, by Homer Hickam. As the text was read, the student indicated to the teacher when to stop reading by raising a replica of a stop sign. Highlighters or adhesive notes to mark or label information in the text were provided for the student to indicate his or her likes or dislikes.

The literary nonfiction text, *October Sky*, is an example of a memoir and is appropriate for a high school student.
After reading to the student what he or she marked in the text, the student can dictate sentences to be recorded individually on paper. Using the teacher-recorded sentences, the student can arrange the sentences into a chart.
The text on this screen represents key points of the text, *October Sky*. These key points can be used as a summary with a student who has difficulty understanding lengthy text.

After reading a brief summary of *October Sky*, text with pictures can be used as choices to answer questions.

**What was the story about?**

**Which of these sentences tells more about the story?**

**Which of these sentences is an important part of the story?**
Literary Nonfiction

Memoirs

While reading a modified version of *October Sky*, text with pictures can be used to support comprehension.

Predetermined criterion: identify a character and the character’s traits

After the text was read, the student can be presented color-coded pictures of character traits from which he or she can choose appropriately and place into a graphic organizer.
The text on this screen describes characteristics of the main character, Homer, in *October Sky*. The text was specifically written to include appropriate characteristics for Homer since this was a requirement in the predetermined criterion of an assessment task.

Statements such as the ones shown in the modified text on this screen can be expanded by the teacher to inform the student about the text.

Remember, questions are not appropriate at Level 1. Do not ask: “Who is the main character?” or “Was Homer hardworking, lazy, or silly?”
Literary Nonfiction

Memoirs

While reading the main idea of a text, objects can be presented for the student to feel or manipulate.

A boy and his friends build a rocket and win a prize.

Complexity Level 1
Example

Predetermined criterion: explore a representation of a character; respond to a text while it is being read
Literary Nonfiction

Journals

Create journals or compositions about memorable activities or events, such as community-based instruction field trips. Involve the student in the process as much as possible.

Develop a class library of shared-experience journals or compositions.

Language-experience texts are appropriate for students of all ages and grade levels.
Informational Text

Expository Text – a type of informational text that clarifies or explains something typically found in the following:

- Newspaper articles
- Magazine articles
- Encyclopedia articles
- Webpages
- Textbooks at a student’s enrolled grade

Persuasive Text – a type of informational text written to persuade or convince the reader of something typically found in the following:

- Advertisements
- Position papers
- Critiques

Procedural Text – a type of informational text that is written to explain the steps in a process or procedure typically found in the following:

- Schedules
- Recipes
- Step-by-step directions
The text on this and the following screen was created so that a student could access it independently from a computer. It is an example of text that was modified using information originally presented in a high school biology textbook. In the completed version of this text, each page is read aloud by a software program.
People eat the roots, leaves, stems, flowers, fruits and seeds of plants.

People depend on plants for many reasons. When eaten, plants provide nutrients that the body needs to grow and be healthy.
Informational Text

Expository (Textbooks)

Start with a textbook from the student’s enrolled grade or course. Then, identify key points from the textbook and create text to match the student’s understanding level.

Complexity Level 2 Example

Predetermined criterion: identify the topic of a text

In this example, information in the text was taken from a middle school health textbook.

*Staying Healthy*

It is important to be healthy and take care of yourself.

When you are healthy, you feel GOOD!

There are 3 ways to stay healthy.

1. Exercise.
2. Eat healthy foods.
3. Get plenty of sleep.
There are 3 ways to stay healthy.

1. Exercise.
2. Eat healthy foods.
3. Get plenty of sleep.
Here are some ways that newspapers can be used.

- Summarize articles of high interest or concern to the student and pair with photos when possible
- Highlight key points in articles using markers
- Match photographs with appropriate captions
- Compare articles on the same topic from different newspapers
- Categorize articles or photographs into the different sections of the newspaper

Newspapers or newsletters can be used with students of all ages and grades and are not required to be grade-appropriate. Such texts exist as a part of our daily lives and are not grade specific.
Informational Text

Expository (Newspapers)

Use information presented in newspapers or newsletters to create texts that highlight key points in articles or that address skills identified in the predetermined criterion of an assessment task.

Meet the Student Council Candidates

In this example, the teacher created individual cards for each of the student council candidates so that the student could make an informed decision during a school wide vote.
Information from newspapers or newsletters can be created and presented in a way that is more meaningful to the student.

In this example, individual cards paired with pictures can be created about school events described in an article in the weekly newsletter. A schedule can be used as the graphic organizer with cards becoming the answer choices for main idea and details.
Information in newspapers or newsletters can be expanded to include information needed for a specific predetermined criterion of an assessment task.

Dear Parents,

On Monday, September 7, Photo Magic will be at Hill Country High School. Your child can have his or her photo taken during lunch on this day. Please return the envelope with your payment if you would like your child's photo to be taken.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Owens

In this example, the parent letter was read and paired with the text in both the newsletter and schedule. A camera was used to represent the main idea and was given to the student to manipulate as the text was read.
Here are some ways that recipes can be used.

- Create recipes pairing text with pictures
- Label recipes with categories so that recipes can be sorted
- Introduce new vocabulary in context of the recipe
- Cut recipes into steps that can be arranged in order

Recipes such as “Bread Pudding” above, can be used with students of all ages and grades.
Create a cookbook with step-by-step directions for recipes in both words and pictures. Use recipes to introduce new sight words or vocabulary.

Include tabs in the cookbook and corresponding labels on each recipe for the different categories in the cookbook. This is one way to begin introducing the concept of text organization.
When creating texts to supplement other texts, review all of a student’s assessment tasks and predetermined criterion. It may be possible to create appropriate text for a variety of purposes.

In this example, a newsletter was created to address the skills in several predetermined criteria. It contains an informational article (on Armistice Day), a persuasive article (Letter to the Editor), and an advertisement (media literacy) to supplement the story, A Year Down Yonder.
Media Literacy

Media – words, images, graphics, or sounds that work together to impact meaning

Media literacy – connecting those words, images, graphics, or sounds to a text and understanding their impact

Flyers

- Come to the Turkey Shoot
  
  When: Armistice Day
  Where: Abernathy's Farm
  Given by: The American Legion
  Why: To remember the moment when the armistice of the Great War was signed in 1918

Pamphlets/Posters

- Armistice Day is almost here. November 11, 1918 was the day the agreement was signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany to end the war. The signing took place in France at eleven o'clock in the morning.
  
  Joins us at 11:00 a.m. on Nov. 11 to remember our fallen soldiers.

Advertisements

- Let us help you move!
  Call 312-555-5355

Captioned photographs

Captioned illustrations

Signs

Video or video clips
Media Literacy

Create media to supplement or extend a text; discuss how the presentations, colors, or music affect you and your understanding of the text.

These examples were created to supplement the text *A Year Down Yonder* by Richard Peck.
Captioned Illustrations
This text was created to supplement the text *Charlotte’s Web* by E. B. White. This literary text is fiction and is appropriate for an elementary school student.

Flyers
This text was created to supplement the literary text *The Incredible Journey*. 
References

- The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981-2009 DynaVox Mayer-Johnson are used under contractual agreement. All rights reserved worldwide.

- Pics4Learning/Free photos for education located at http:// pics.tech4learning.com/

- PowerPoint Social Scripts Guide (MS Word) located at http:// www.mcesa.k12.mi.us/SocialScripts/SocialScripts.htm

- Newsletter, menu, and flyer templates located in Microsoft Office Publisher 2007

- Pictures located at http:// www.edupic.net/index.html

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