Standardized Assessment Tasks for STAAR Alternate

Grade 8 Reading
Definitions/Examples for STAAR Reporting Category 1 (8.2)
Essence Statement A

The following definitions clarify terms used in the grade 8 reading assessment tasks to ensure that the content of the tasks is understood. When appropriate, examples and nonexamples have been provided for further clarification. These are just examples and do not represent all the appropriate ways to test the skills in the STAAR Alternate assessment tasks.

Level 3: page 4

An **unfamiliar word** is a word a student may or may not have been exposed to, but has not received instruction and does not have an understanding for the meaning of the word.

A familiar word is a word the student knows and whose meaning is immediately understood and is NOT appropriate for the Level 3 task.

The Level 3 task requires the student to predict the meaning of an unfamiliar word using context. **Context** is the words that surround an unfamiliar word and help the reader figure out the meaning. The student must make a reasonable prediction based on the surrounding words and/or sentences in order to receive credit.

Level 2: page 5

**Homophones** are words that are pronounced the same but have two different meanings and spellings. For this task the students will be presented with sentences that include a pair of homophones. Examples of sentences with a pair of homophones are:
- *ate, eight*—I was so hungry that I ate eight sandwiches.
- *blew, blue*—The policeman blew his whistle at the driver in the blue car.
- *knight, night*—The knight rode his horse into the forest last night.
- *hair, hare*—The hair on the hare was as white as snow.
- *hoarse, horse*—The girl was hoarse from calling to her horse.
- *made, maid*—The maid came to the house and made the beds.

**Context** is the words that surround an unfamiliar word and help the reader figure out the meaning.

Level 1: page 5

A **compound word** is made when two words are joined together to make one word. In this task, the student is presented with two words that each has a concrete representation. Both words should retain their original meaning when they are joined to create the compound word. Examples of compound words appropriate for the task are:
- lunchbox
- raincoat
- sandpaper
• birdhouse
• toothbrush
• flowerpot

The following examples are compound words that do NOT retain their meaning when the two words are combined and therefore NOT appropriate for the task:
• cowboy
• butterfly
• ladybug
• hairdresser
**STAAR Reporting Category 1 – Understanding and Analysis Across Genres:** The student will demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze a variety of written texts across reading genres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(8.2) Reading/Vocabulary Development.</strong> Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. The student is expected to**</td>
<td><strong>Essence Statement A:</strong> Identifies new vocabulary words in text using a variety of strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes; Readiness Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>(B) use context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or ambiguous words or words with novel meanings; Readiness Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words. Readiness Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level 3**

**Prerequisite skill:** use the context of the sentence (e.g., in-sentence example or definition) to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or multiple meaning words

A paragraph about a topic of interest to the student will be presented and read. The paragraph will include an unfamiliar vocabulary word that is not defined in the paragraph or represented by pictures. The student will locate the unfamiliar word in the paragraph. The student will predict the meaning of the word based on context. Using a reference material, the student will compare the meaning of the word in the reference material to his or her prediction.

**Predetermined Criteria**
1. The student will locate the unfamiliar word in the paragraph.
2. The student will predict the meaning of the word based on context.
3. The student will compare the meaning of the word in the reference material to his or her prediction.

Reading Grade 8; Reporting Category 1 (8.2); Essence Statement: A
**Level 2**

**Prerequisite skill:** use context to determine the relevant meaning of unfamiliar words or distinguish among multiple meaning words and homographs

The student will be presented three sentences. Each sentence will include a pair of homophones. As the sentences are read, the student will identify the two homophones in each sentence. The student will be presented six cards each representing the meaning of one homophone. Using the context of the three sentences, the student will match the cards to the homophones. The student will be presented a fourth sentence with two blanks that can be completed with two of the six existing homophones. The student will complete this sentence using any two of the six homophones.

**Predetermined Criteria**
1. The student will identify the homophones.
2. The student will match the cards to the homophones.
3. The student will complete this sentence using any two of the six homophones.

**Level 1**

**Prerequisite skill:** recognize that compound words are made up of shorter words

The student will be presented two words that are meaningful for the student and retain their original meanings as a compound word. Each word will be presented and paired with a representation for the word. The student will explore the representation for each word when it is read. The student will participate in combining the words and representations to create a compound word. The student will be presented a new representation for the compound word. The student will participate in pairing the representation for the compound word with the word when it is read.

**Predetermined Criteria**
1. The student will explore the representation for each word when it is read.
2. The student will participate in combining the words and representations to create a compound word.
3. The student will participate in pairing the representation for the compound word with the word when it is read.
Definitions/Examples for STAAR Reporting Category 2 (8.19)
Essence Statement B

The following definitions clarify terms used in the grade 8 reading assessment tasks to ensure that the content of the tasks is understood. When appropriate, examples and nonexamples have been provided for further clarification. These are just examples and do not represent all the appropriate ways to test the skills in the STAAR Alternate assessment tasks.

Levels 3 and 2: page 9

A **biography** is a non-fiction literary text that presents a person’s life story. It is more than the basic facts and often includes details of the person’s life experiences and an insight into the subject’s personality.

An **autobiography** is the story about a life of a person written by that person. Examples of grade-appropriate biographies include:
- *Anne Frank: Her life in words and pictures from the archives of The Anne Frank House* by Menno Metselaar, Ruud vander Rol & Arnold J. Pomerans
- *Boy: Tales of Childhood* by Roald Dahl (autobiography)
- *A Dangerous Engine: Benjamin Franklin, from Scientist to Diplomat* by Joan Dash and Dusan Petricic
- *Something Out of Nothing: Madam Curie and Radium* by Carla Killough McClafferty
- *Jacques Cousteau* by B Sumangal
- *It’s Not About the Bike* by Lance Armstrong
- *First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong* by James R. Hansen
- *Amelia Earhart* by Brishti Bandyopadhyay

The Internet is a great source for locating biographies on current individuals and for locating supplemental texts such as magazine articles. Search for “Grade 8 biographies” for numerous ideas. Since the Level 3 task requires the student to compare the text used for assessment with a previously read text about the same person, you will need more than one text on the same individual.

Level 2: page 9

**Details** are the smaller ideas that work together to support the topic. The topic for the Level 2 task will be the persons the student has read about in the biography or autobiography. Details generally tell who, what, when, where, why and how.

The **common link** between the two persons the student is to read about could include an interest they both share such as music or sports, or a career, belief, issue, or idea they share. Since the student is required to complete a **graphic organizer** highlighting the details about each person and then identify the link between the two persons, a Venn diagram may be an appropriate graphic organizer for the Level 2 task.

Cited texts are provided only as examples and do not imply TEA endorsement.
The Level 1 task requires a **teacher-generated book** to be created about a person familiar to the student. The requirement for the teacher to generate the book is to insure that the familiar person is very specific to the student being assessed. The text must be in the format of a book which can most simply be accomplished by stapling the cover and pages all the way down the left side to simulate a bound text. The text requires a title, which can be the familiar person’s name, and the cover must include a representation for that person.
STAAR Reporting Category 2 – Understanding and Analysis of Literary Texts:
The student will demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze literary texts.

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<tr>
<td><strong>(8.19) Reading/Comprehension Skills.</strong> Students use a flexible range of metacognitive reading skills in both assigned and independent reading to understand an author’s message. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts as they become self-directed, critical readers. The student is expected to**</td>
<td><strong>Essence Statement B: Uses a range of reading skills to make inferences within and across literary texts.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) make complex inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding; Readiness Standard (Fiction)/Supporting Standard (Literary Nonfiction, Poetry, Drama)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E) summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order within a text and across texts. Readiness Standard (Fiction)/Supporting Standard (Literary Nonfiction, Poetry, Drama)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Grade 8; Reporting Category 2 (8.19); Essence Statement: B
**Level 3**

**Prerequisite skill:** establish purposes for reading selected texts based upon own or others’ desired outcome to enhance comprehension

The student will select a grade-appropriate biography or autobiography from a collection of biographies and autobiographies. The student will generate a reason for selecting to read about that person's life. The text will be read. The student will generate reasons why the person was notable. The student will compare the text to another previously read text about the same person.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will generate a reason for selecting to read about that person’s life.
2. The student will generate reasons why the person was notable.
3. The student will compare the text to another previously read text about the same person.

**Level 2**

**Prerequisite skill:** make connections (e.g., thematic links, author analysis) between literary and informational texts with similar ideas and provide textual evidence

The student will be presented two grade-appropriate biographies to preview. The biographies will be about two people with a common link. The student will identify whom the two texts are about. The texts will be read. The student will complete a graphic organizer highlighting details about each person. The student will identify how the two people are linked.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will identify whom the two texts are about.
2. The student will complete a graphic organizer highlighting details about each person.
3. The student will identify how the two people are linked.
Level 1

Prerequisite skill: make inferences based on the cover, title, illustrations, and plot

The student will be presented a teacher-generated book about a person familiar to the student. The title of the book will be read and paired with a representation for the person. The student will explore the cover of the book and the representation. The student will anticipate having the book read. The student will respond to the book as it is read.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will explore the cover of the book and the representation.
2. The student will anticipate having the book read.
3. The student will respond to the book as it is read.
Definitions/Examples for STAAR Reporting Category 3 (8.10)

Essence Statement C

The following definitions clarify terms used in the grade 8 reading assessment tasks to ensure that the content of the tasks is understood. When appropriate, examples and nonexamples have been provided for further clarification. These are just examples and do not represent all the appropriate ways to test the skills in the STAAR Alternate assessment tasks.

Levels 3, 2, and 1: pages 13 and 14

Informational text includes expository, persuasive, and procedural text. The text selection for Levels 3, 2, and 1 must be an expository text that clarifies or explains something to the reader. Examples of grade-appropriate expository texts include:

- *Friday Night Lights* by H. G. Bissinger
- *The Perfect Storm* by Sebastian Junger
- *Endurance* by Alfred Lansing

Novels and short stories are literary texts and NOT appropriate for this task.

Text features are titles, headings, and subheadings that identify the main idea and supporting details presented in the text. Resources for text features include:

- Textbooks
- Encyclopedias
- Newspaper articles
- Magazine articles

Level 3: page 13

The topic is the subject or the single big idea that names what the text is about.

The expository text selected for the Level 3 task must be one that is organized such that could meaningfully include subheadings by the student. This could be accomplished by starting with a text that already has subheadings which will be removed by the teacher prior to presenting the text to the student. The student would then generate their own subheadings. The teacher could also summarize a text in such a way that subheadings could be easily and meaningfully incorporated.

Level 2: page 13

The main idea answers the question “What is the text mostly about?”

The expository text selected for the Level 2 task must include bold print and captions for the text features.

Cited texts are provided only as examples and do not imply TEA endorsement.
STAAR Reporting Category 3 – Understanding and Analysis of Informational Texts: The student will demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze informational texts.

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<td><strong>(8.10) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Expository Text.</strong> Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. The student is expected to</td>
<td><strong>Essence Statement C:</strong> Recognizes how organizational patterns impact main idea and details in informational texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) summarize the main ideas, supporting details, and relationships among ideas in text succinctly in ways that maintain meaning and logical order; Readiness Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) distinguish factual claims from commonplace assertions and opinions and evaluate inferences from their logic in text; Supporting Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) make subtle inferences and draw complex conclusions about the ideas in text and their organizational patterns; Readiness Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres and support those findings with textual evidence. Readiness Standard</td>
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**Level 3**

**Prerequisite skill:** use multiple text features (e.g., guide words, topic and concluding sentences) to gain an overview of the contents of text and to locate information

The student will be presented three paragraphs about a topic from a grade-appropriate text. The text will be read. The student will generate a subheading for each paragraph. The student will generate a title for the text. The student will be presented new information that could be found under one of the subheadings. Using the subheadings, the student will determine the paragraph that should include the new information.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will generate a subheading for each paragraph.
2. The student will generate a title for the text.
3. The student will determine the paragraph that should include the new information.

**Level 2**

**Prerequisite skill:** use text features (e.g., bold print, captions, key words, italics) to locate information and make and verify predictions about contents of text

The student will be presented a grade-appropriate informational text that includes bold print and captions. The student will identify the text features. The text will be read. The student will identify three interesting facts from the text. The student will identify the main idea of the text.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will identify the text features.
2. The student will identify three interesting facts from the text.
3. The student will identify the main idea of the text.
Level 1

Prerequisite skill: use titles and illustrations to make predictions about text

The student will be presented an informational grade-appropriate book with an emphasized title. The student will explore the title. The student will be presented two representations for two details that could occur in the book. The student will explore the two representations. The student will participate in pairing the representations with the title. As the book is read, the student will participate in pairing the representations to the details confirming their inclusion in the book.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will explore the two representations.
2. The student will participate in pairing the representations with the title.
3. The student will participate in pairing the representations to the details confirming their inclusion in the book.
Definitions/Examples for STAAR Reporting Category 3 (8.13)

Essence Statement D

The following definitions clarify terms used in the grade 8 reading assessment tasks to ensure that the content of the tasks is understood. When appropriate, examples and nonexamples have been provided for further clarification. These are just examples and do not represent all the appropriate ways to test the skills in the STAAR Alternate assessment tasks.

Levels 3 and 2: pages 16 and 17

Media presentation refers to the variety of modes available as a means for communicating to an audience. Media is not limited to the use of technology or mass media such as PowerPoints, newspapers or magazines, but also includes posters, paintings, works of art, and film. Examples of techniques used in media presentations:

- sound effects
- live action
- music
- close-ups
- animation
- slow-motion
- narration
- dialogue
- illustrations
- photos
- captions
- enlarged font
- bold print
- use of color

Level 3: page 16

Techniques specific to print media include:
- Illustrations
- Photographs
- Captions
- Bold print

Techniques used in a video news clip include:
- Sound
- Live action
- Close-ups
- Narration

Level 2: page 17

Design techniques are used to attract the viewer's attention to an advertisement. Examples of design techniques used in advertising include:
- Color
- Contrast
- Letter spacing
- Upper and lowercase letters
- Blurring of images
- Alignment of images
- Trimming excess from around images
- Whitespace around images
### STAAR Reporting Category 3 – Understanding and Analysis of Informational Texts: The student will demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze informational texts.

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<td><strong>(8.13) Reading/Media Literacy.</strong> Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. The student is expected to:</td>
<td><strong>Essence Statement D:</strong> Recognizes the various techniques used in media that impact the meaning in informational texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) evaluate the role of media in focusing attention on events and informing opinion on issues; Supporting Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) evaluate various techniques used to create a point of view in media and the impact on audience. Supporting Standard</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**Level 3**

**Prerequisite skill:** explain how messages conveyed in various forms of media are presented differently (e.g., documentaries, online information, televised news)

The student will be presented a print version of a current news item. The text will be read. The student will generate a brief summary of the information in the print version. The student will be presented a video clip of the identical news item. The student will generate a brief summary of the information in the video clip. The student will determine the techniques used in each presentation. The student will compare the techniques used to present the information.

**Predetermined Criteria**
1. The student will generate a brief summary for each media presentation.
2. The student will determine the techniques used in each presentation.
3. The student will compare the techniques used to present the information.

Reading Grade 8; Reporting Category 3 (8.13); Essence Statement: D
**Level 2**

**Prerequisite skill:** explain how various design techniques used in media influence the message (e.g., pacing, close-ups, sound effects)

The student will be presented and read two advertisements for similar products that clearly communicate a benefit of each product. The advertisements will use different design techniques. The student will identify the benefit promoted by each advertisement. The student will be presented a three-columned table. The columns of the table will be labeled with the product names. The rows of the table will be labeled with three design techniques. The student will complete the table, indicating which design technique was used for each product. The student will identify the design technique from the table that he or she found most appealing.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will identify the benefit promoted by each advertisement.
2. The student will complete the table, indicating which design technique was used for each product.
3. The student will identify the design technique from the table that he or she found most appealing.

**Level 1**

**Prerequisite skill:** identify different forms of media (e.g., advertisements, newspapers, radio programs)

An advertisement for a product will be presented. The student will acknowledge the advertisement. The student will be presented the product being advertised. The student will participate in pairing the product with the advertisement. The student will experience using the product.

Predetermined Criteria
1. The student will acknowledge the advertisement.
2. The student will participate in pairing the product with the advertisement.
3. The student will experience using the product.