



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

Performance Level Descriptors

When writing essays in response to progressively demanding writing tasks and reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Level III: Advanced Academic Performance can

- Write analytical essays that demonstrate a thorough understanding of both the text and the analytical writing task by establishing a cogent thesis statement, providing an insightful interpretation of text, and smoothly integrating well-chosen textual evidence
- Choose sentences that are purposeful and well controlled
- Evaluate how an author's use of language advances purpose, creates tone, evokes emotion, and shapes meaning
- Make perceptive inferences about literary and informational texts, supporting those inferences with specific and well-chosen textual evidence

When writing essays in response to progressively demanding writing tasks and reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance can

- Write analytical essays that contain a clear thesis statement, provide a reasonable interpretation of a text through the use of appropriate language, sufficiently support this interpretation with relevant textual evidence, and demonstrate an adequate command of written conventions
- Use a variety of sentence structures
- Revise drafts to clarify the thesis, strengthen supporting ideas, use appropriate transitions within and between paragraphs, improve the effectiveness of sentences, and recognize that word choice clarifies meaning and creates an appropriate tone
- Edit drafts to correct grammar, sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling
- Determine the meaning of technical or nuanced words using context, structural analyses, and reference materials
- Analyze how the author's use of language, including common rhetorical techniques and literary elements and devices, supports meaning
- Analyze literary texts by examining universal themes and the ways in which literary elements and devices support meaning
- Demonstrate an understanding of informational texts by determining the implicit main idea or argument, summarizing accurately, recognizing organizational patterns, and making inferences about the author's purpose and viewpoint
- Analyze the underlying connections and thematic links between texts representing similar or different genres
- Make complex inferences about literary and informational texts, supporting those inferences with accurate, relevant textual evidence

STAAR English III—Continued

Performance Level Descriptors

When writing essays in response to progressively demanding writing tasks and reading texts of increasing complexity,* students achieving Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance can

- Write basic or limited analytical essays that are based on a literal or obvious interpretation of the text and a minimal understanding of the analytical writing task
- Demonstrate a minimal control of sentence structures
- Demonstrate basic skills in revision and editing
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context, structural analyses, and reference materials
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of literary and informational texts and identify common rhetorical techniques, literary elements and devices, and universal themes
- Make plausible inferences about literary and informational texts

* The rigor of the writing task increases from English II to English III in that the prompt is more demanding in English III, specifically with regard to the cognitive complexity of the stimulus and the sophistication needed to write an analysis. The analytical task increases the rigor of English III writing because students must be able to interpret one aspect of a literary or informational text approximately 350–450 words in length, support this interpretation with relevant textual evidence, and write a rhetorically effective expository essay. In addition, the text complexity of the reading selections increases from English II to English III. 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 structures 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.