



Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Performance Level Descriptors: English Language Arts

This document contains the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) for the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) Assessment. These PLDs represent intended interpretations of solid student achievement on the assessment for intended uses of test scores.

Principles That Guided the Development of PLDs for the VTCAP Assessment

Development of the PLDs began with the assumption that the grade-level content standards represent what students should know and be able to do at the end of a given grade level. Prior research on learning, cognition, and development in the subject areas, a variety of resources (e.g., *Living Word*, *Reading Teacher's Book of Lists*), and teaching experiences of content experts informed the development of definitions for solid achievement at each level.

For example, consider the following grade 6 content cluster and standards for Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in informational passages as an example of the process of starting from the standard and moving toward defining student achievement:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.6.7

Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.6.8

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

RI.6.9

Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

Students' understanding and skill in each of these reading standards could range from simple use of textual information to fairly sophisticated reasoning. The PLDs in the table below illustrate ranges of understanding and use of the standards of this cluster across Performance Levels 2, 3, and 4.

Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of a text.	Integrate visual and print information to develop a more complete understanding of a topic or issue.	Analyze how using both visual and print information helps a reader develop a more complete understanding of a topic or issue.
Describe how specific evidence is used to support an author's claims in an informational text.	Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the claims that are supported by reasons and evidence.	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
Compare and contrast an author's presentation of ideas, events, and characters within a text.	Compare and contrast two authors' presentations of ideas, events, and characters across texts.	Analyze specific similarities and differences between one author's presentation of events and that of another.
Compare and contrast two different treatments of the same themes and topics.	Identify similarities and differences between texts in different forms or genres that are about the same topic.	Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes or topics.

In the PLDs above, nouns, verbs, and adjectives are used to define item demands and levels of student knowledge and skill for the performance levels because the level of demand in a test item depends upon the way understanding and skills are assessed. For example, it is easier for students to identify a correct response than to produce it.

In some cases, a content standard might not be represented in all three performance levels. These instances are purposeful and represent cases where components of a standard do not lend themselves to all three levels.

A final consideration was whether the entire breadth of a content standard represents an on-grade-level expectation or whether certain components represent different levels of performance. For example, consider the following statement that presents a skill related to grade 5 literature standard 6:

RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.

For this standard, students are expected to describe how points of view influence events. A prerequisite skill for this standard is the ability to identify an author’s point of view, which is an expectation at Level 2. Being able to fully analyze the effects of point of view on how authors might describe events is more challenging and nuanced than just an analysis of points of view. Therefore, an expectation at Level 3 is to compare and contrast two points of view, while noting how these points of view influence the descriptions of the events is an expectation at Level 4, as indicated below.

Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Identify an author’s point of view on an issue.	Compare and contrast two authors’ points of view on an issue.	Compare and contrast two authors’ points of view on an issue, noting how point of view influences how events are described.

Organization of the PLDs

The VTCAP PLDs for each grade level are organized into two parts. The first part is a descriptive summary of the overall achievement of students at a given performance level. The second part lists the more specific definitions of the sub-objectives in the overall descriptions.

Due to the scaffolded nature of the performance levels, a student at Level 2 or above is presumed to also have knowledge and skills addressed in the lower levels. For example, a student at Level 3 most likely also possesses the knowledge and skills outlined in Level 2.

The Performance Level Descriptors for each grade and content area stem from these policy PLDs. Policy PLDs define the knowledge and skill level expectations for all grades and content areas for the VTCAP.

- **Level 4.** Students demonstrate evidence of **thorough** understanding and use of college and career readiness knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Level 3.** Students demonstrate evidence of **satisfactory** understanding and use of college and career readiness knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Level 2.** Students demonstrate evidence of **partial** understanding and use of college and career readiness knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Level 1.** Students demonstrate evidence of **emerging** understanding and use of college and career readiness knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Performance Level Descriptors: Reading

Grade 3 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 4** can read and comprehend themes, central ideas, and details in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 3–4 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can summarize, interpret, and draw conclusions from texts. They can use the structural features of informational texts and the literary elements of literary texts to support their interpretations. They can determine the meaning of above grade-level words and unfamiliar academic terms by using information presented in texts. They can analyze an author's point of view about an issue. They can use specific textual information to support analyses, inferences, and interpretations.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 3** can read and comprehend themes, central ideas, and details in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 3–4 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can make simple inferences and interpretations. They can describe the purpose of structural features of informational texts and the literary elements of literary texts. They can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words if the context provides explicit information about the word or phrase or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar components (e.g., compound words, familiar roots with familiar affixes). They can use text features (e.g., headings, graphics) to support their comprehension of text. They can identify an author's message.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend main ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 3 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can identify and describe information that is explicitly presented in the text. They can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides a definition. They can comprehend the meaning or purpose of text features (e.g., boldfaced terms, headings). They can identify information that supports descriptions and analyses.

Level 1

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 3

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to questions (who, what, where, when, why, and how) to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify explicit information from a text to support descriptions and analyses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use specific information from texts to support their ideas, descriptions and simple analyses, interpretations, and inferences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehend familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and describe familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the central ideas or events in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the central ideas or events in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the central ideas or events in a text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the connection between central aspects of an informational text (events, ideas, concepts, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the relationship between central aspects of an informational text (events, ideas, concepts, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain central aspects of an informational text (procedures, ideas, concepts, etc.) in some detail.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the cause or effect of an event or outcome in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the cause or effect of an event or outcome in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the cause/effect relationships in an informational text using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe key aspects of characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, feelings). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe key aspects of characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the meaning of academic terms and unfamiliar vocabulary when meaning/definition is explicitly provided within the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon information in the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify basic text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes) in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the purpose of text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze which text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) would locate specified information most efficiently.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the purpose of key structural elements in literary texts (beginning, conclusion). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify parts of literary texts (chapter, scene, stanza). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify parts of literary texts and explain how successive parts of a text build on earlier sections.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State their own point of view on an issue related to a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an author's point of view on an issue when explicitly presented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish own point of view from narrator's or character's point of view.

Reading—Grade 3**Focus****Level 2****Level 3****Level 4**

At these performance levels, students can:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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|---|--|--|
| • Comprehend visual information in texts. | • Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of text. | • Integrate visual and print information in their interpretations of text. |
| • Identify reasons that support specific points the author makes in an informational text. | • Describe straightforward connections between particular sentences, paragraphs, and an author's central message or claim in an informational text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence). | • Identify an author's claim in an informational text and describe connections between the author's claim and the supporting evidence. |
| • Identify similarities in the primary points in two informational texts on the same topic. | • Compare the primary points and key details in two informational texts. | • Compare and contrast the primary points and key details in two informational texts on the same topic. |
| • Identify similarities in the ideas from two or more versions of the same story. | • Compare the primary ideas or familiar themes, settings, or plots when presented explicitly in two texts. | • Compare and contrast the primary ideas or familiar themes, settings, or plots presented in two texts. |

Grade 4 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 4** can read and comprehend themes, central ideas, and details in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 4–5 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can interpret and draw conclusions from texts. They can use the structural features of informational texts and the literary elements of literary texts to support their interpretations.

They can determine the meaning of above grade-level words and unfamiliar academic terms by using information presented in texts as well as familiar roots and affixes. They can compare, contrast, and integrate two authors' ideas to make a claim. They can use a variety of textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 3** can read and comprehend themes, central ideas, and details in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 4–5 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can make simple inferences and interpretations. They can identify and describe the structural features of informational texts and the literary elements of literary texts. They can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides the meaning or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar or interpretable components. They can use text features (e.g., headings, graphics) to support their comprehension of text. They can analyze two authors' strategies and perspectives when presenting information about the same topic. They can identify information that supports simple inferences and interpretations.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 4 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can make simple inferences and can do analyses of text that is organized in a predictable way. They can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides the meaning or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar components. They can comprehend the meaning of text features (e.g., headings, graphics). They can identify information that supports a simple inference.

Level 1

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 4

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify explicit information from a text to support simple descriptions and analyses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use specific information from texts to support their ideas, descriptions and simple analyses, interpretations, and inferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use specific and explicitly cited details from text to support their ideas, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comprehend familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and describe familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and describe implied themes and main ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify a statement that accurately summarizes the main ideas or events in a text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summarize the central ideas in informational texts; include main events and characters in summaries of literary texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summarize central and supporting ideas in informational texts; include events, characters, and settings in summaries of literary texts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify accurate descriptions of explicitly presented text components (events, procedures, ideas) in an informational text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain central aspects of an informational text (procedures, ideas, concepts, etc.) in some detail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze how central aspects of an informational text (events, procedures, ideas, concepts) support main ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe the cause or effect of an event or outcome in an informational text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain the cause/effect relationships in an informational text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain the cause/effect relationships in an informational text using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe key aspects of characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, feelings).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe main characters, key events, and settings in a literary text using explicitly stated details in the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe main characters, key events, and settings in a literary text using implied ideas and explicit details in the text.

Reading—Grade 4

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the meaning of academic terms and unfamiliar vocabulary when meaning/definition is explicitly provided within the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above-grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon information in the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the primary structure of informational texts (sequence of events, chronology, comparison, etc.) when provided with headings and/or presented in charts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and describe the structural features of informational texts (sequence of events, chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) and literary texts (plot, dialogue, characterization, setting, literary devices, rhythm) when the features are presented in a straightforward manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe structural features of informational texts (sequence of events, chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) and literary texts (plot, dialogue, setting, literary devices, rhythm).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify features of a literary text (characters, plot, dialogue, setting, rhyme). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the plot of a literary text and how the parts build on and support each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use structural features in a literary text to support text analyses and interpretations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an author's point of view on an issue when explicitly presented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contrast two authors' points of view on a simple issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast two authors' points of view on a simple issue.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehend visual information in texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate visual and print information in their interpretations of text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an author's claim in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how evidence is used to support an author's claim(s) in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how reasons and evidence are used to support an author's claims in an informational text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify topics or ideas presented by two authors or in two informational texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare, contrast, or integrate ideas from two or more informational texts to make a claim (interpretation, inference, conclusion). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare, contrast, and integrate the ideas from two or more informational texts to make a claim.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the primary ideas or familiar themes when presented explicitly in two texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare two different treatments of the same themes and topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast different strategies for presenting the same or similar themes and topics.

Grade 5 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 4** can read and comprehend implicit themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5–6 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can interpret and draw insightful conclusions from texts. They can compare and contrast characters, events, and settings within and between texts; describe structural elements of informational texts; and use graphic elements to support their interpretations of ideas in texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of above grade-level unfamiliar academic terms. They can compare and contrast authors' points of view on an issue and analyze how authors use evidence to support claims. They can use a variety of explicit and inferred textual information to support complex inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 3** can read and comprehend familiar themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5–6 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can interpret and draw expected conclusions from texts. They can identify and describe the structural elements of informational texts and use them to support their comprehension of ideas in texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of above grade-level vocabulary and unfamiliar academic terms. They can compare and contrast authors' points of view on an issue and identify the evidence authors use to support a claim. They can use explicit textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend familiar themes and central ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can make simple inferences and interpretations. They can identify the structural features of informational texts and describe the literary elements of literary texts. They can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides meaning or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar or interpretable components. They can use text features (e.g., headings, graphics) to support their comprehension of text. They can compare the ideas in two texts about the same topic. They can identify information that supports simple inferences, descriptions, and analyses.

Level 1

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 5**Focus****Level 2****Level 3****Level 4**

At these performance levels, students can:

Key Ideas and Details

- Identify explicit information from the text to support descriptions and simple inferences.

- Identify and describe familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.

- Summarize the central ideas or events in a text.

- Describe central aspects of an informational text (procedures, ideas, concepts, etc.) in some detail.

- Describe main characters, key events, and setting in a literary text.

- Identify accurate quotations from texts to support their ideas, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences.

- Connect details in a text to a familiar theme and/or an explicitly stated main idea of the text.

- Identify and describe important ideas in an informational text; include events, characters and settings in a summary of a literary text.

- Explain the basic relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts mainly using information that is explicitly stated in an informational text.

- Compare and contrast two or more characters, key events, or settings in a literary text.

- Cite specific and relevant evidence and accurate quotations from texts to support their ideas, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences.

- Connect details in a text to implicit themes and main ideas.

- Include important details and nuanced ideas in summaries of texts.

- Explain basic relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts using information that is implied in an informational text.

- Compare and contrast two or more characters, key events, or settings in a literary text using explicit details in the text.

Reading—Grade 5			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the meaning of academic terms and unfamiliar vocabulary when meaning/definition is explicitly provided within the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon information in the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the structure of informational texts (chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) when the structure is presented in a straightforward manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two informational texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast the structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two informational texts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the basic plot of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and describe the structural elements of a literary text (e.g., conflict, resolution, time sequence, narration). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the overall structure of a literary text and how parts of the text (e.g., chapters, scenes, stanzas) may fit together to create that structure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an author's point of view on an issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast two authors' points of view on an issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast two authors' points of view on an issue, noting how point of view influences how events are described.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehend visual and multimedia elements in texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use visual and multimedia elements to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an author's stated reasons for a straightforward claim in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how specific evidence is used to support an author's claims in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and explain how specific reasons and evidence are used to support authors' claims in an informational text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare or contrast the primary idea or familiar theme presented in two informational texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare, contrast, or integrate ideas from two or more informational texts to make a claim (interpretation, inference, conclusion). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare, contrast, and integrate the ideas from two or more informational texts to make a claim.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the same or similar themes and topics presented in two texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the same or similar themes and topics presented in two texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast different strategies for presenting the same or similar themes and topics in two texts.

Grade 6 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 4** can read and comprehend implicit themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 6–7 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the importance of and interdependencies among textual elements. They can use text features and graphic elements to support their interpretations of texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language, idiomatic phrases, and above grade-level unfamiliar academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning. They can compare and contrast presentations of themes, ideas, and details from texts in different genres. They can use specific evidence from more than one text to support complex inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 3** can read and comprehend implicit themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 6–7 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the interrelationships among textual features and literary elements. They can use text features and graphic elements to support their comprehension of texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language, above grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can analyze an author's claims, arguments, and evidence. They can compare two authors' presentations of themes and ideas based on structure, key ideas and details, and point of view. They can use a variety of explicit and inferred textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend familiar themes, explicitly stated central ideas and details, and literary elements in low and moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5–6 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can interpret and draw expected conclusions from texts. They can identify and describe the structural elements of informational texts and use these elements to support their comprehension of ideas in texts. They can use contextual information, familiar word parts, and other simple strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and academic terms. They can compare and contrast ideas within a text. They can use explicit textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 1

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 6

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify accurate quotations from texts to support their ideas, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite more than one piece of specific and relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect details in a text to a familiar theme and/or an explicitly stated main idea of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the theme(s) and/or main idea(s) of a text; identify details in a text that help convey an implicit theme or main idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the theme(s) and main idea(s) of a text; explain how details in a text help convey an implicit theme or main idea.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify important ideas in a summary of an informational text; include events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify nuanced ideas in a summary of an informational text; identify and describe important events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an objective summary of a text that includes nuanced ideas, important events, and key individuals or characters.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and describe key individuals, events, and ideas in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify important ways that key individuals, events, and ideas are explained in an informational text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze important ways that key individuals, events, and ideas are introduced and elaborated upon in an informational text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast two or more characters, key events, or settings in a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify why particular key events are important in the plot of a story or drama, as well as how the characters respond to these key events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the plot of a story or drama unfolds in a series of episodes, as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Reading—Grade 6

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of an unfamiliar word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze how a specific word choice affects the meaning or tone of a text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two informational texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how a particular sentence, paragraph, or section fits into the overall structure of an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, or section fits into the overall structure of an informational text and contributes to the development of the ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and describe the overall structure of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how a particular sentence, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how a particular sentence, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a literary text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an author's or narrator's point of view in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify details in a literary text that develop the point of view of the narrator or speaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a literary text.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate visual and print information to develop a more complete understanding of a topic or issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how using both visual and print information helps a reader develop a more complete understanding of a topic or issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how specific evidence is used to support an author's claims in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the claims that are supported by reasons and evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast an author's presentation of ideas, events, and characters within a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast two authors' presentations of ideas, events, and characters across texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze specific similarities and differences between one author's presentation of events and that of another.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast two different treatments of the same themes and topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify similarities and differences between texts in different forms or genres that are about the same topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes or topics.

Grade 7 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 4** can read and comprehend two or more implicit themes or central ideas in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 7–8 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the importance of causal relationships among elements of literary and informational texts. They can describe how literary elements, text features, graphic elements, and language choices contribute to the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative and idiomatic language and above grade-level unfamiliar academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and how the author distinguishes her/his position from others. They can compare and contrast how authors emphasize different strategies to create distinct presentations of the same theme or topic. They can use specific and strong evidence from more than one source to support complex inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 3** can read and comprehend two or more implicit themes or central ideas in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 7–8 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the importance of and interdependencies among elements of literary and informational texts. They can describe how text features and graphic elements contribute to the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language, above grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can identify an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and how the author distinguishes her/his position from others. They can analyze how authors emphasize different strategies to create distinct presentations of the same story or topic. They can use specific evidence from more than one text to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 6–7 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can identify the interrelationships among textual features and literary elements. They can use text features and graphic elements to support their comprehension of texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of above grade-level words and unfamiliar academic terms. They can determine an author's point of view and identify textual information that supports her/his point of view. They can compare two authors' presentations of themes and ideas based on structure, key ideas and details, and point of view. They can use specific textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 1

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 7

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite several pieces of detailed and relevant pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the theme(s) and/or central idea(s) of a text; identify details in a text that help convey an implicit theme or central idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify two or more themes or central ideas of a text; explain ways that a theme or central idea is conveyed in different parts of a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify two or more themes or central ideas of a text; analyze the development of the themes or central ideas over the course of a text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify nuanced ideas in a summary of an informational text; identify and describe important events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas through the inclusion of key details from the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas through the inclusion of key details and important relationships in a text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how key events and ideas are explained in an informational text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine ways that individuals, events, and ideas affect one another in an informational text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, how individuals influence ideas or events). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in an informational text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, how individuals influence ideas or events).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify why particular key events are important in the plot of a story or drama, as well as how the characters respond to these key events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine ways that elements of a story or drama affect one another (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Reading—Grade 7

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of an unfamiliar word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice or repetition of sound (e.g., rhyme, alliteration) on meaning or tone.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how a particular sentence, paragraph, or section fits into the overall structure of an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the structure of an informational text; explain how the major sections contribute to the development of ideas in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the structure an author uses to organize an informational text; analyze how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how a particular sentence, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a drama or poem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the overall form or structure of a drama or poem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how a drama's or poem's overall form or structure contributes to its meaning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways an author of an informational text distinguishes his or her position from that of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author distinguishes his or her position from that of others in an informational text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify details in a literary text that develop the point of view of the characters or narrator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how an author develops the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text.

Reading—Grade 7**Focus****Level 2****Level 3****Level 4**

At these performance levels, students can:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Identify the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the claims that are supported by reasons and evidence.

- Compare and contrast two authors' presentation of events.

- Identify similarities and differences between texts in different forms or genres that are about the same topic.

- Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, explaining why the evidence is sufficient to support particular claims.

- Identify instances when two or more authors writing about the same topic emphasize different evidence or present different interpretations of facts.

- Describe similarities and differences between a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.

- Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

- Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

- Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

Grade 8 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 4** can read and analyze the development of two or more themes or central ideas in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 8–9 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the connections among and distinctions between ideas and elements in literary and informational texts. They can describe how literary elements, text features, graphic elements, and language choices drive the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative and idiomatic language and above grade-level academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and how the author distinguishes her/his position from others. They can analyze conflicting representations of the same theme and evaluate whether differences are based on fact or interpretation. They can use specific evidence from several sources that strongly supports complex inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 3** can read and comprehend two or more implicit themes or central ideas in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 8–9 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the importance of causal relationships among elements of literary and informational texts. They can describe how literary elements, text features, graphic elements, and language choices drive the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative and idiomatic language, above grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning. They can compare and contrast how authors emphasize different information and strategies to create conflicting representations of the same theme or topic. They can use specific evidence from more than one source that strongly supports inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend themes and central ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 7–8 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the importance of cause-effect relationships among elements of literary and informational texts. They can describe how text features and graphic elements contribute to the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language and unfamiliar words. They can identify an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and evaluate whether the evidence and reasoning are sufficient. They can analyze how authors emphasize different strategies to create distinct presentations of the same story or topic. They can cite specific evidence from more than one text to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 1

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite several pieces of textual evidence that most strongly support an analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify two or more themes or central ideas of a text; explain ways that a theme or central idea is conveyed in different parts of a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; analyze the relationship of a theme or central idea of a text to the supporting details, characters, setting, and/or plot.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas through the inclusion of key details from the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas by explicitly connecting them to key details in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas by explicitly connecting them to key details and relationships in the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways that individuals, events, and ideas affect one another in an informational text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, how individuals influence ideas or events). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events in an informational text (e.g., those made through comparisons, analogies, categories). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an informational text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, categories).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways that elements of a story or drama affect one another (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and explain important lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama that propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Reading—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone, including analogies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the structure of an informational text; explain how the major sections contribute to the development of ideas in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing a key concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the overall form or structure of a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain important similarities and differences between the structures of two literary texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast the structure of two literary texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text; explain how an author develops the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe conflicting evidence or viewpoints in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints in an informational text.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe an effect of differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., dramatic irony). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., dramatic irony) affect the text.

Reading—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify the effect(s) of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe the effect(s) of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, explaining why the evidence is sufficient to support particular claims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Delineate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify instances when two or more authors writing about the same topic emphasize different evidence or advance different interpretations of facts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe instances when two or more informational texts provide conflicting information on the same topic; identify where two texts disagree on matters of fact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze a case in which two or more informational texts provide conflicting information on the same topic; identify where two texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify familiar themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain ways that a modern work of fiction draws on familiar themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional texts, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Grade 9 Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 4** can read and analyze the development of two or more implicit themes or central ideas and characters or events in highly complex literary and informational texts in the grade 9–10 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can analyze the development of and connections among ideas and elements in literary and informational texts. They can describe how structure and language choices drive the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative and idiomatic language and above grade-level academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and how the author uses rhetoric to advance a certain point of view. They can analyze the related themes and concepts in historical documents and how source material is transformed in later works. They can use specific evidence from several sources that strongly supports complex inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 3

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 3** can read and analyze the development of two or more implicit themes or central ideas and characters or events in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 9–10 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can trace the development of ideas and elements in literary and informational texts. They can describe how structure and language choices drive the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative and idiomatic language, above grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning. They can describe shared themes and concepts in historical documents. They can use specific evidence from more than one source that strongly supports inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 2

Text Complexity:

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 2** can read and comprehend themes or central ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 8–9 text complexity band.

Demonstrated Skills:

They can identify the order of ideas and elements in literary and informational texts. They can describe how a paragraph or word choice contributes to the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language and unfamiliar words. They can identify an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and explain why the evidence is sufficient to support particular claims. They can identify shared themes in historical documents. They can cite specific evidence from more than one source to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Level 1

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding and use of key ideas and details and elements of craft and structure. They demonstrate evidence of emerging ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in informational texts and to compare or contrast treatment of similar topics or themes in literary texts.

Reading—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as simple inferences drawn from sentences in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite textual evidence to support analysis of complex inferences drawn from a section or paragraphs in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite multiple pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of complex inferences drawn from the entirety of a text (e.g., infer overarching ideas about the theme or central idea).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a theme or central idea of a text and explain how it is conveyed in different parts of a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a theme or central idea of one or more texts and analyze its development over the course of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a theme or central idea of one or more texts and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key details that should be included in an objective summary of a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas through the inclusion of key details in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze which objective summary of a text conveys complex themes or central ideas by making connections among key details in the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the steps in an analysis or the sequence of ideas or events in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe an analysis or series of ideas or events in an informational text, including the order in which the points are made and how they are introduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events in an informational text, including how they are developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify character traits conveyed by the thoughts and actions of the narrator or characters in a literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how characters, including complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations), develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Reading—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Craft and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, and connotative meaning of below and on-grade-level words and phrases as they are used in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infer the literal, figurative, and connotative meaning of unfamiliar and above-grade-level words and phrases as they are used in a text; describe the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how specific words emphasize a certain emotion or feeling). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices and phrases on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place or the relationship between characters; how the language reveals the author's attitude toward the subject; or how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify portions of an informational text (e.g., sentences, paragraph(s), or a section) that contribute to the development of specific ideas or claims in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how an author's ideas or claims are developed in an informational text by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined in an informational text by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the overall form or specific elements within the structure of a literary text (e.g., narrative—exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution; chronological—time sequence; comparison and contrast; cause and effect). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how an author's choices concerning how to structure a literary text (e.g., introduce ideas) and order events within it (e.g., chronology, comparison and contrast, cause and effect) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a literary text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, foreshadowing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how an author uses rhetoric to advance a point of view or purpose in an informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and evaluate an author's use of rhetoric to advance a point of view or purpose in an informational text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a point of view expressed in a work of literature from outside the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how a particular point of view or cultural experience is reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, making connections to express new ideas.

Reading—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a similarity or difference between accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words), determining which details are emphasized in each account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words), analyzing the purpose for the emphasis of certain details in each account or making connections between each treatment to express new ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a similarity or difference between the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s Landscape with the Fall of Icarus). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s Landscape with the Fall of Icarus). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, analyzing the purpose for the emphasis of certain aspects in each treatment or making connections between each treatment to express new ideas (e.g., the representation of indifference in Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the evidence that supports the argument or claim. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delineate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the connections between seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including the identification of shared themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including how they address related themes and concepts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including making connections between them to express new ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the specific element(s), (e.g., character, setting, theme) in source material that an author draws on in a specific literary work (e.g., the elements Shakespeare draws on from Ovid or the Bible or when a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how an author draws on source material in a specific literary work to express certain ideas (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific literary work for specific purposes or effects (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Performance Level Descriptors: Writing & Language

Grade 3 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 4** can write a complex composition to present a supported opinion, provide a detailed explanation, and use information from texts to support their writing. Students can give reasons, draw connections between opinions and reasons, and develop topics using facts and details. Students at Level 4 can write narratives of real or imagined experiences using complex descriptions of events and settings and with more than one character.

They use dialogue to show characters' experiences and reactions. Their conclusions draw events or ideas to a close and may state conclusions or opinions in a new way. Students use correct grammar (including abstract nouns, irregular nouns, regular and irregular past, present, and future tenses) and domain-related vocabulary to express their ideas.

Level 3

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 3** can write two or more paragraphs to present a supported opinion, provide a detailed explanation, and use information from texts to support their writing. Students can also write a narrative with real or imagined experiences using descriptive details.

Students can give reasons, make simple connections between opinions and reasons, develop topics using facts and details, use dialogue to show characters' reactions, and provide a conclusion or sense of closure that is relevant. They use simple transition words to connect ideas and events. Students use language that is descriptive, signals order or sequence, and fosters understanding of topics and characters. Students use correct basic grammar (including all basic pronouns, subject-verb agreement, and regular past, present, and future tenses) and grade-level vocabulary in expressing their ideas.

Level 2

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 2** can write a paragraph to share an opinion, provide an explanation, or share a simple narrative with a main character. Students may include a reason for an opinion.

Connections between the reasons and opinions may not be explicit. Students provide facts about a topic. Students can provide a concluding statement or sense of closure. They write simple subject-verb-object sentences with correct capitalization and ending punctuation.

They use concrete words and simple phrases to explain their opinions and ideas and to describe experiences. Students at this level use basic grammar (past and present tenses), punctuation, and vocabulary to express their ideas.

Level 1

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 3

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a simple composition (e.g., paragraph). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a basic organizational structure for writing (beginning, middle, end) with minimal awareness of audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introductory and a concluding statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introduction and a conclusion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide at least one reason to support an opinion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide two or more reasons for a stated opinion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide reasons for opinions using language that connects opinion and reasons (e.g., for the reason that, if, since, even though).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present details or facts about a topic in list form. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple linking words to connect ideas and information (e.g., and, but). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons (e.g., because). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons (e.g., an example).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group information by topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group information by idea.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information (e.g., another, one more). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information (e.g., except, when).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple descriptive words (e.g., blue, nice, smart, hot). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive details to illustrate people and places (e.g., friendly, warm, soft, round, windy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive details to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., lucky, touchy, grouchy, dark, cloudy).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a clear sequence of events. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal characters at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal narrator and characters at the opening of the narrative.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include actions and simple dialogue to show a character's reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, and simple dialogue (external) to show a character's reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, feelings, and dialogue to show a character's reactions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., then, next). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., first, last). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., at last, meanwhile, after a while).

Writing & Language—Grade 3

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce simple (SVO) sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce compound sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce compound and complex sentences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple pronouns (he, she, it, you) correctly in sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of pronouns (they, them, him, her, me, my) correctly in sentences. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use regular singular and plural nouns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use concrete nouns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use on grade-level abstract nouns (e.g., problem). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use on or above grade-level abstract nouns (e.g., childhood) correctly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use familiar verbs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular and irregular verbs. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use regular present and past tense verbs in sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular present, past, and future verb tenses in sentences (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use present, past, and future regular and irregular verb tenses (e.g., I come; I came; I will come).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple and complex subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent combinations correctly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use descriptive, comparative, and superlative adjectives and common adverbs in sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose between comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs depending on what is to be modified.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify simple coordinating conjunctions (and, or, so). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use familiar coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (e.g., but, nor, because). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (e.g., except, even if, unless).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize name-based nouns in titles correctly (e.g., The adventures [sic] of Peter Rabbit). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize appropriate words in titles (e.g., The Adventures of Peter Rabbit). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize proper place names (e.g., Eiffel Tower; Empire State Building).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas in simple introductions correctly (e.g., Dear Sally,). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas in simple and complex introductions and closings correctly (e.g., Dear Mr. James, and Sincerely, Sally Waters). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas in simple and complex introductions and closings correctly (e.g., Dear Mr. James, and Sincerely, Sally Waters).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use ending punctuation in dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use ending punctuation and beginning and ending quotation marks in dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas and beginning and ending quotation marks in dialogue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and form simple possessives (e.g., his, her, my). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use possessives (e.g., ours, yours). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use commonly misspelled possessives (e.g., its, theirs).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell below grade-level words; add suffixes that don't change base words (e.g., bad, badly; quiet, quietly). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell grade-level words; add suffixes to common words that may change base words (e.g., cry, cries; sit, sitting). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell above grade-level words that follow familiar patterns (e.g., litter, bitter); add suffixes that change base words (e.g., happy, happily, happiness).

Writing & Language—Grade 3

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose simple words for effect (e.g., The new kid is nice.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose simple and complex words for effect (e.g., The new kid at school is friendly.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose words and phrases for effect (e.g., The new boy at school is friendly and helpful.).
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine meaning of words using sentence meaning and/or images. Determine the meaning of words based on the meaning of known words and simple affixes (e.g., agree, agreeable). Use the meaning of a root word to determine the literal meaning of a simple form of a word (e.g., builder, building). Determine the literal meaning of words in texts using context (e.g., take steps [physical act of walking]). Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are pretty or tall). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use clues from text and images to determine meaning of words. Determine the meaning of antonyms based on the meaning of known words and known affixes (e.g., form, deform; agree, disagree). Use the meaning of a familiar abstract root word to determine the literal meaning of a more complex form of a word (e.g., worthy and worthless). Identify literal or nonliteral meaning of words in texts using context (e.g., take steps [physical act of walking] and take steps [begin a course of action]). Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use clues from text to infer meaning of above grade-level words. Determine the meaning of new words based on the meaning of known words and affixes (e.g., used, misused). Use the meaning of a more abstract root word to determine the literal meaning of a more complex form of a word (e.g., company and companion). Distinguish between the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps). Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are strong or cheerful). Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered).

Grade 4 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 4** can write a full composition to present a supported opinion and to provide a detailed explanation. They clearly introduce explanations or opinions or use opening statements to set the stage for a narrative, organize logically and/or sequentially, and provide conclusions that tie their ideas together. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to link examples, facts, and details to reasons and topics. They use information from a range of resources to generate ideas and to support their writing. Where appropriate, they use academic language effectively to develop their ideas. Students can write narratives with more than one primary character, a setting, a problem to be solved, and a resolution. They use dialogue to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations. They can use a wide array of words and phrases to describe characters, settings, and events. They use varied sentence structures with correct basic punctuation and correct grammar (including all relative pronouns, irregular progressive tenses, and complex prepositional phrases) to express their ideas. They use correct capitalization in names, titles, place names, and sentences.

Level 3

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 3** can write a simple but complete composition to present a supported opinion and provide a detailed explanation. They draw on information from resources and use domain-specific language to support explanations and opinions. They use introductory language, organize logically, and provide concluding statements. They can write narratives of real or imagined experiences using descriptions of events and settings, with more than one character, and with a problem to be solved. They use dialogue to show characters' reactions. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and events. They can use an array of grade-level words and phrases to describe experiences or convey information. They use varied vocabulary to describe people, places, and things.

They can use compound and complex sentences with correct punctuation. They use correct capitalization in sentences, names, and titles. Students use correct basic punctuation and grade-level grammar (including basic relative pronouns, progressive tenses, and prepositional phrases) in developing their ideas.

Level 2

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 2** can write two to three paragraphs to share an opinion, provide an explanation, or share a simple narrative with a main character. Their writing has a basic structure (beginning, middle, and end). Students can give reasons and make simple connections between opinions and reasons. They can develop topics using facts and details. They use dialogue to show characters' reactions and provide a conclusion or sense of closure. They use simple transition words to connect ideas and events. Students provide some description to enhance understanding of characters and settings. Students correctly use quotation marks, basic grammar (regular and irregular past, present, and future tenses; subject-verb agreement), and a variety of descriptive vocabulary words to express their ideas.

Level 1

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 4

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a simple composition (two to three paragraphs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use basic organizational structure and language for writing (beginning, middle, end) with minimal awareness of audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use acceptable organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introduction, sequential organization by events or logical organization by topics/reasons, and a concluding statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introduction, sequential organization by events or logical organization by topics/reasons, and a conclusion drawing the writing to a close.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide at least one reason to support an opinion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, examples, and details to support topics and reasons for an opinion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples to support topics and reasons.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide factual information about a topic or opinion. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple linking words to connect ideas and information (e.g., and, but, so, because). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons; ideas and categories (e.g., since, because, another example, also). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons; main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., for example, one example, if, since, even though, besides).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group ideas by reason or topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group information by idea.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to identify topics.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use domain-specific vocabulary related to topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use specific academic vocabulary related to topics and examples.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal characters at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal narrator and characters at the opening of the narrative.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present events in a meaningful sequence. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple descriptive words (e.g., pretty, afraid, round, friendly, mean, soft, windy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive details to illustrate people and places (e.g., achy, cool, unfriendly, bare, bubbly, deep). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive details to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., lucky, fearful, free, warm, touchy, grim, dark, sandy, cloudy, breezy, dirty, gentle).

Writing & Language—Grade 4

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include actions and dialogue to show a character's reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, and simple dialogue (external) to show a character's reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, feelings, and dialogue to show a character's experiences and reactions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., then, next, after, before). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., first, last). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., so then, meanwhile, after a while).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate their writing to ideas in texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize information from sources to avoid plagiarism. 	
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce complete simple and compound sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce complete compound and complex sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand compound and complex sentences to elaborate ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use familiar relative pronouns (e.g., this, that) correctly in sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relative pronouns (e.g., which, who) and relative adverbs (e.g., when) correctly in sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of relative pronouns (e.g., whose, whom) and relative adverbs (where, why) correctly in sentences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use regular and irregular present, past, and future tense verbs in sentences (e.g., I go, I went, I will go). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular progressive verbs (e.g., I was walking, I am walking, I will be walking). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use irregular progressive verb tenses (e.g., I was coming, I am coming, I will be coming).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adjectives to describe objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adjectives to describe objects in an appropriate order (e.g., the small red bag). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adjectives to describe objects in an appropriate order involving commas or conjunctions (e.g., the small and deflated red ball).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple prepositional phrases (e.g., to the store). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use prepositional phrases involving adjectives and noun phrases (e.g., to the grocery store; in the bright green car.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use compound prepositional phrases involving adjectives and noun phrases (e.g., to the grocery store in the shopping mall.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the correct use of a homonym (e.g., to, two, too). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use familiar homonyms correctly (e.g., there, their, they're). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of grade-level homonyms correctly (e.g., its, it's; all ready, already; aloud, allowed; bail, bale).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize titles and proper names correctly (e.g., The Adventures of Peter Rabbit). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly capitalize place names (e.g., Empire State Building). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine when to capitalize a familiar term (e.g., Mother, my mother).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use quotation marks in dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use ending punctuation and beginning and ending quotation marks in dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas, ending punctuation, and beginning and ending quotation marks in dialogue.

Writing & Language—Grade 4

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence (e.g., The teacher expected her students to get good grades, yet she gave her students no support.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas correctly for beginning adverbs (e.g., However, we found the missing ring. Therefore, he won the contest.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose simple and complex words for effect (e.g., The new kid at school is friendly.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose appropriate words and phrases (e.g., Frank, the new boy at school, is friendly and helpful.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose words and phrases to communicate precisely (e.g., They went to the store. Marisa and her mother went to the grocery store.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate language for the writing purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the appropriate tone and language for the writing purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose punctuation for effect.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell common grade-level words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell grade-level words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell a variety of grade-level words correctly.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine meaning of words using sentence meaning and/or images. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use clues from text to determine meaning of above grade-level words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use clues from text to determine meaning of academic terms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the meaning of words based on the meaning of familiar known words and simple affixes (e.g., agree, agreeable). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., telephone, telegraph, television). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., autograph, photograph, telegraph).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the meaning of a familiar root word to determine the literal meaning of a simple form of a word (e.g., builder, building). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the meaning of a root word to determine the literal meaning of a more complex form of a word (e.g., worthy and worthless). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the meaning of new words based on the meaning of known words and affixes (e.g., used, misused).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the meaning of simple similes and idioms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and explain the meaning of simple similes (e.g., as pretty as a picture) and idioms in context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the meaning of simple metaphors, adages, and proverbs (e.g., She carried the weight of the world on her shoulders).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the antonym of a familiar word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the meaning of a word by using its antonym (e.g., understand, misunderstand). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word by relating a synonym.

Grade 5 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 4** can write a complex composition to present opinions supported by reasons and evidence. They can explain phenomena using detailed explanations anchored in facts, details, quotes, and examples. They clearly introduce explanations and opinions. They use information from a range of resources to generate facts, details, and quotes to support their writing, and provide conclusions that tie their ideas together. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to link examples, facts, and details to reasons and topics. They use well-chosen academic language to communicate information about a topic or opinion. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one developed character, a problem to be solved, and a resolution. They use descriptive and sensory language, metaphors, and similes to create settings, illustrate characters, and describe events. The openings for their narratives introduce the characters and create the setting.

They use sequential organization, words and phrases that move the narrative smoothly between events, and language that draws the narrative to a close. They use dialogue and actions to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations. They use a wide array of descriptive words and phrases to illustrate characters, settings, and events. They can use varied sentence structures with correct grammar (including irregular perfect tenses and tenses that communicate sequence). They correctly use commas for less common introductory words, series, and clauses.

Level 3

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 3** can write a complete composition to present well-supported opinions and to provide detailed explanations. They clearly introduce explanations or opinions. They use information from provided resources to generate facts, details, and quotes to support their writing and provide conclusions that tie their ideas together. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to link examples, facts, and details to reasons and topics. They use appropriate domain-related language to communicate information about a topic or opinion. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one primary character, a setting, a problem to be solved, and a resolution. Their narratives include opening statements to set the stage for a narrative, sequential organization, transitions between events, and language that draws the narrative to a close. They use dialogue and actions to show characters' reactions to situations. They use similes and descriptive phrases to describe characters and settings. They use a variety of sentence structures with correct grammar (including regular perfect tenses and tenses that communicate condition). They use commas appropriately for introductory elements and clauses.

Level 2

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 2** can write a simple composition to present an opinion supported by at least one detail and provide an explanation supported by at least one opinion. They organize their writing logically by topic. They draw on information from resources to support explanations and opinions. They use introductory language, organize logically, and provide concluding statements. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to link facts and details to opinions and topics. They use domain-specific language as appropriate for the topic. They can write narratives of real or imagined experiences that include more than one character and a problem that needs to be solved by using descriptions of events. They use dialogue to show characters' reactions to situations. They use descriptive vocabulary to illustrate people, places, and things. Students correctly use correct basic punctuation and grade-level grammar (including basic relative pronouns, progressive tenses, tenses that communicate time, and prepositional phrases) in developing their ideas. They use correct capitalization in sentences, names, and titles.

Level 1

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 5

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a full but simple composition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use acceptable organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introduction, sequential organization by events or logical organization by topics/reasons, and a concluding statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introduction, sequential organization by events or logical organization by topics/reasons, and a conclusion drawing the writing to a close. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use well-crafted organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, opinion, informative) and audience, including an introductory paragraph or opening that sets the stage for the composition, sequential organization by events or logical organization by topics/reasons, and a conclusion drawing ideas together or drawing the writing to a close.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to show organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide well-chosen facts, details, and examples to support topics and reasons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide well-chosen facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples to support topics and reasons.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide examples and details to support topics and reasons for an opinion. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons; ideas and categories (e.g., because, another example, also). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons; main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., for example, one example, if, since, even though, besides). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons; main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., as a specific example, especially).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to identify topics and illustrations related to the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings and subheadings to identify topics and illustrations that add support to the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level domain-specific vocabulary related to topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level academic vocabulary related to topics and examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use well-chosen academic vocabulary related to topics and examples.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal characters at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal narrator and characters at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal character's/narrator's point of view at the opening of the narrative.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present events in a meaningful sequence. 		

Writing & Language—Grade 5

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive details to illustrate people and places (e.g., achy, cool, unfriendly, bare, bubbly, deep). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive and sensory details to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., lucky, fearful, free, warm, touchy, grim, dark, sandy, cloudy, breezy, dirty, gentle). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use more sophisticated descriptive and sensory details to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., anxious, mumbling, muttering, chatter, chirp, crackle, scratchy, crisp, tender, moldy, moist).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use concrete words to create setting. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, and simple dialogue (external) to show a character's reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, feelings, and dialogue to show a character's experiences and reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include thoughts, actions, feelings, and dialogue to show a character's experiences and reactions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., first, last). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., so then, meanwhile, after a while). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., suddenly, shortly after, yesterday, earlier).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize information from sources to avoid plagiarism. 		
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce complete compound and complex sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand compound and complex sentences to elaborate meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract sentences to enhance meaning and minimize run-on sentences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular perfect verbs (e.g., I was walking, I am walking, I will be walking). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular perfect verb tenses (e.g., I was walking, I am walking, I will be walking.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use irregular perfect verb tenses (e.g., I was coming, I am coming, I will be coming).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use verb tense to communicate time (e.g., I went to the store yesterday. I will be eating dinner later today. John had been waiting for the bus for 20 minutes.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use verb tense to communicate condition (e.g., Marta was in a lot of pain.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use verb tense to communicate sequence (e.g., I will be so happy when they fix my car.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the correct verb tense for the context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the best verb tense for the context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the correct verb tense for the context.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine when to capitalize a familiar term (e.g., Mother, my mother). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., either/or; neither/nor).

Writing & Language—Grade 5

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas to separate independent clauses and before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence (e.g., The teacher expected her students to get good grades, yet she gave her students no support.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas in series and to set off introductory words (e.g., Then, Theresa ran down the street toward her house.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas to set off the words, “Yes,” “No,” and to indicate a direct address (e.g., “Is that you, Steve?”).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use capital letters to identify titles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use underlining to identify titles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use italics to identify titles.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell common grade-level words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell a variety of grade-level words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell complex grade-level words correctly.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use clues from text to determine meaning of unfamiliar terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use text structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., compare or contrast). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use text structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., cause and effect).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., telephone, telegraph, television). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use familiar Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., autograph, photograph, telegraph). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to identify the meaning of common idioms and similes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of metaphors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to interpret proverbs, metaphors, and other figurative language.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of antonyms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use explicitly defined synonyms and antonyms to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use synonyms, antonyms, and homographs to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Grade 6 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 4** can write a complex composition to present arguments with compelling reasons and well-chosen supporting evidence. They can explain phenomena using detailed explanations anchored in facts, details, quotes, and examples. For arguments, they clearly introduce the argument and reasons for the argument. For explanations, they clearly introduce the focus of the explanation and related topics. They use a range of credible resources to generate facts, details, and quotes that provide strong support for their writing. They provide conclusions that tie their ideas together and provide closure. They use a variety of organizational structures including definition, problem/solution, and compare/contrast. They use a variety of phrases to transition between topics and to show the relationship between quotations, examples, facts, and details and reasons or explanations. They use a variety of academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one developed character, a setting, a problem to be solved, a solution, and a resolution. The openings for their narratives introduce the characters, the characters' point of view, and the main setting. They use sequential organization, including retrospectives and foreshadowing, words and phrases that move the narrative smoothly between events, and an ending that wraps up the narrative and provides closure. They use descriptive and sensory language to create settings. They use dialogue, description, action, and figurative language to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations and to elaborate on events. They can use varied sentence structures with correct grammar and effective use of parentheses and dashes to set off restrictive elements.

Level 3

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 3** can write a complete composition to present arguments with strong reasons and supporting evidence. They can explain phenomena using detailed explanations. They clearly introduce explanations and arguments. They use a range of credible resources to generate facts, quotes, and examples that support their writing. They provide concluding statements or paragraphs summarizing ideas. They use a variety of organizational structures including classification, cause-effect, and comparison. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to show relationships between examples or facts and explanations or reasons. They use grade-level academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one main character, a problem to be solved, and a resolution. The openings for their narratives introduce the characters and create the setting. They use sequential organization, transition words and phrases that move the narrative between events, and a clear ending. They use dialogue and actions to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations. They use a wide array of descriptive and sensory language to illustrate characters and settings. They can use varied sentence structures with correct grammar (including tenses that communicate sequence; appropriate use of relative, possessive, and objective pronouns; and clear connections between pronouns and nouns). They use parentheses to set off parenthetical statements.

Level 2

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 2** can write a simple but complete composition to present supported arguments and to provide detailed explanations. They introduce explanations or arguments. They use information from provided resources to generate facts and details to support their arguments and explanations. They provide concluding statements. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to link examples, facts, and details to arguments and explanations. They use appropriate domain-specific language to communicate information about a topic or argument. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one primary character, a setting, and a problem to be solved.

Their narratives include opening statements to set the stage for a narrative, sequential organization, transition words to show events, and an ending. They use dialogue and actions to show characters' reactions to situations. They use a variety of descriptive words and phrases to illustrate characters and settings. They use a variety of sentence structures with correct grammar (including regular perfect tenses and tenses that communicate condition). They use commas appropriately for introductory elements, series, and clauses.

Level 1

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 6

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete but simple composition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use acceptable organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use well-crafted organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience, including a well-crafted introduction and a conclusion that draws the argument, explanation, or narrative to a close.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a formal style for arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a formal style for arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an introduction to arguments that states the author's position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a stated position and supporting reasons for the position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a position and supporting reasons for the position and at least one counter-argument.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an introduction to explanations that states the topic of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction of an explanation to set the stage for the organizational structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to set the stage for the organizational structure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide details and examples to support topics and reasons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cause and effect, comparison, and classification as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. Provide well-chosen facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples to support explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use problem/solution, compare/contrast, or definition as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. Provide facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples from a range of credible sources to support explanations and arguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons and to link main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., for example, one example, if, since, even though, besides). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., as a specific example, especially). Use transition sentences to introduce new ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use more sophisticated linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., in particular, specifically, principally). Use transition sentences to transition between one idea and the next.

Writing & Language—Grade 6

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to identify topics and add graphics (e.g., timelines, graphs) related to the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to identify topics and use graphics and illustrations to support textual explanations or arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings and subheadings to identify topics and sub-topics and use graphics and illustrations to enhance explanations and arguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use domain-related vocabulary in arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a specific and precise academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal characters at the opening of a narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main character's/narrator's point of view at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main characters' or narrator's point of view and the reasons for the point of view at the opening of the narrative.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sequential organization to present the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sequential organization with foreshadowing or flashbacks to present the narrative.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive and sensory details to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., lucky, fearful, free, warm, touchy, grim, dark, sandy, cloudy, breezy, dirty, gentle). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use more sophisticated descriptive and sensory language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., anxious, mumbling, muttering, chatter, chirp, crackle, scratchy, crisp, tender, moldy, moist). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sensory and figurative language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., "Her thoughts were like mercury; she had a hard time keeping them focused on just one idea at a time.").
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include dialogue that fits the character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use thoughts, feelings, actions, and dialogue to show a character's experiences and reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use thoughts, pacing of actions, feelings, and dialogue to show characters' experiences, inter-relationships, and reactions to other characters and to events.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use actions and feelings to show a character's experiences and reactions. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of mostly simple and some more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., so then, meanwhile, after a while). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., suddenly, shortly after, yesterday, earlier). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., unexpectedly, presently, yesterday, just before).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a concluding statement that draws the argument, explanation, or narrative to a close. 		

Writing & Language—Grade 6

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use compound and complex sentences to elaborate on meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of compound and complex sentences to elaborate meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively use a variety of compound and complex sentences to maintain reader interest and elaborate meaning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use subjective and objective pronouns appropriately for the purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns appropriately for the purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns highly effectively.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use correct subjective pronoun-verb relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use correct number pronoun to noun relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the referent for pronouns is clear in complex sentences and prepositional phrases.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use regular perfect verbs (e.g., I was walking, I am walking, I will be walking). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use regular and irregular present, past, future, perfect, and progressive verbs correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use regular and irregular present, past, future, perfect, and progressive verbs correctly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common present, past, future, perfect, and progressive verbs correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of verb tense within paragraphs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the best verb tense for the context.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas to separate independent clauses and before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence (e.g., The teacher expected her students to get good grades, yet she gave her students no support.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use parentheses to set off parenthetical elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use parentheses to set off parenthetical elements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style within sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style within paragraphs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style throughout a document.

Writing & Language—Grade 6

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use text structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., compare or contrast: Marta decided she liked the glasslike quality of the lake better than the turbulence of the rushing river.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence or sentences to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a paragraph or document to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., autograph, photograph, telegraph). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of more sophisticated unfamiliar words (e.g., append, depend, impend, pendant, pendulum).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to understand the meaning of idioms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of adages and proverbs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., object: category: The persimmon tree dropped fruit on the roof, inviting raccoons and opossums to a feast. compound word: firearms, anchorperson, brainstorm). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., part-whole relationship: I thought I knew what happened during the race; but, then I had an afterthought that changed my mind.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., cause-effect: the bridge was closed, so we had to take a detour.).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of a familiar multi-meaning word (e.g., I woke up to find a dusting of snow on the ground. Maria had reservations about whether she wanted to go on the field trip). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the different connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., Mark thought he was being <i>economical</i> when he made a gift for his brother, but his brother thought he was being <i>stingy</i>.).

Grade 7 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 4** can write a complex composition to present arguments and counter-arguments, with clearly stated reasons and supporting evidence for both. They introduce arguments with a clear position, well-chosen reasons, and a realistic counter-argument or alternate explanation. They can write well-supported explanations including introductions that explain the focus and main topics of the work and communicate the importance of the information being presented. Their explanations and arguments are anchored in well-chosen facts, details, quotes, and examples from credible sources. They provide conclusions that tie together their ideas and provide reasons for further action or research on the topic. They select the organizational structure that best fits the purpose of their explanation or argument. They use a variety of phrases to transition between topics, show the relationship between parts, and strengthen the cohesion of the work. They use a variety of academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write compelling narratives about real or imagined events with more than one developed character, strong connections between characters, more than one well-developed setting, a problem to be solved, and a resolution. The openings for their narratives introduce the narrator and/or main character, the narrator's/main character's perspective, and the initial setting.

They use sequential organization, including foreshadowing and reflection; words and phrases that move the narrative smoothly between events and show time shifts; and an ending that draws the narrative to a close and may suggest that there is more to the story. They use sensory and figurative language to create settings. They use dialogue and actions to develop characters; thoughts and feelings to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations; and description and action to elaborate on events.

They vary sentence structures to maintain interest and to best support the writing purpose. They use correct grammar and correct punctuation for a wide range of sentence structures (e.g., to set apart subordinate clauses, restrictive clauses, coordinate adjectives, and multiple prepositional phrases).

Level 3

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 3** can write a full composition to present arguments and counter-arguments, with clearly stated reasons for both, and supporting evidence. They introduce arguments with a clear position, their reasons, and a realistic counter-argument. They can write well-supported informative pieces. They clearly introduce informative pieces with a focus and the main topics of the work. Their explanations and arguments are anchored in facts, details, quotes, and examples from credible sources. They provide conclusions that tie together their ideas, related arguments, or explanations. They use a variety of organizational structures including definition, problem/solution, and compare/contrast. They use a variety of phrases to transition between topics and to show the relationship between quotations, examples, facts, and their reasons or explanations. They use a variety of grade-level academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one developed character, a setting, a problem to be solved, and a solution.

The openings for their narratives introduce the narrator and/or main character, the narrator's/main character's perspective, and the setting. They use sequential organization, including retrospectives; words and phrases that move the narrative smoothly between events; and an ending that wraps up the narrative and provides closure.

They use descriptive and sensory language to create settings. They use dialogue, description, action, and figurative language to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations and to elaborate on events. They use appropriate sentence structures for the writing purpose (e.g., shorter sentences to create a sense of urgency; detailed, complex sentences to create imagery) with correct grammar and effective use of noun and adverbial phrases. They use correct punctuation for coordinate adjectives, independent clauses, and introductory words and phrases.

Level 2

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 2** can write a simple but complete composition to present arguments with reasons and examples. They can explain phenomena and use examples to support their explanations. They introduce explanations and arguments with an opening statement. They use at least two resources to locate facts and examples that support their writing. They provide concluding statements or paragraphs summarizing ideas. They use a variety of organizational structures including classification, cause/effect, and comparison. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to show relationships between examples and explanations or reasons. They use domain-related vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one main character, a problem, a sequence of events, and a clear ending. The openings for their narratives introduce the characters and create the setting.

They use sequential organization, transition words and phrases that move the narrative between events, and a clear ending. They use dialogue and actions to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations. They use descriptive and sensory language to illustrate characters and settings. They use varied sentence structures with correct basic grammar (including tenses that communicate sequence; appropriate use of relative, possessive, and objective pronouns).

Level 1

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 7

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete but simple composition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adequate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience, including an introduction, and a conclusion that draws the argument, explanation, or narrative to a close. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a well-crafted, effective organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience, including a highly effective introduction and an impactful conclusion that draws the argument, explanation, or narrative to a close.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a formal style for arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a formal style for arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a stated position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a position, supporting reasons for the position, and at least one counter-argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a position, supporting reasons for the position, at least one counterargument, and reasons for the counter-argument.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction of an explanation to introduce the topic and possibly the subtopics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to present the focus and a summary of the main ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to set the stage for the organizational structure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use comparison and classification as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use problem/solution, compare/contrast, or definition as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cause-effect, compare-contrast, and problem-solution as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, quotes, and examples from sources to support explanations and arguments. Use linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., for example, another example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples from credible sources to support explanations and arguments Use linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., in particular, specifically, a primary example) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a range of different types of evidence from a range of credible sources to support explanations and arguments. Use a variety of words and phrases, to connect facts, examples, quotes, and details to arguments and explanations (e.g., a prime cause, a primary effect, a crucial variable).

Writing & Language—Grade 7

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition words, phrases, or sentences to introduce new ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition sentences to connect one paragraph to the next. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition sentences to connect the ideas in one paragraph to the ideas in the next or to contrast the ideas in two paragraphs (e.g., Research shows that most charter schools are no better than regular public schools in supporting student achievement; however, many policy-makers claim that charter schools provide better educational opportunities for students.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to identify topics and use graphics or illustrations present additional information for explanations or arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings and subheadings to identify topics and subtopics and use graphics (e.g., timelines and graphs) and illustrations to support explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain connections between ideas in text and information provided in graphics and illustrations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a specific, grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use specific and precise academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the main character or narrator at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main characters' or narrator's point of view at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main characters' or narrator's point of view and the reasons for the point of view at the opening of the narrative.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sequential organization to present the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a narrative using naturally flowing, sequential organization with foreshadowing or reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a narrative using naturally flowing, sequential organization with foreshadowing or reflection.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive and sensory language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., anxious, mumbling, muttering, chatter, chirp, crackle, scratchy, crisp, tender, moldy, moist). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sensory and figurative language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., "Her thoughts were like mercury; she had a hard time keeping them focused on just one idea at a time."). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sensory and figurative language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., "Her thoughts were like mercury; she had a hard time keeping them focused on just one idea at a time.").
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use feelings, actions, and description to develop characters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use thoughts, feelings, actions, and dialogue to develop the main character and her/his experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use thoughts, feelings, actions, and dialogue to develop characters and their experiences.

Writing & Language—Grade 7

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., suddenly, shortly after, yesterday, earlier). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use description and actions to develop events. Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., unexpectedly, presently, yesterday, just before). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use description, dialogue, actions, and pacing to develop events. Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., without warning, all of a sudden, out of the blue, all at once).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of compound and complex sentences to elaborate meaning. Use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns appropriately for the purpose. Ensure the referent for pronouns is clear in complex sentences and prepositional phrases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the appropriate simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Use phrases and clauses to minimize run-on sentences. Choose the best verb tense for the context. Use commas to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie.). Maintain consistency of grammatical style throughout a document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively use a variety of compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to maintain reader interest and elaborate on ideas. Use phrasing and clauses to create more concise presentation of ideas. Use appropriate punctuation to create effect (e.g., I have always known what I want to be—a teacher.). Choose language that expresses ideas precisely avoiding wordiness and redundancy.
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of verb tense within paragraphs. Use parentheses to set off parenthetical elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use phrases and clauses to minimize run-on sentences. Choose the best verb tense for the context. Use commas to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie.). Maintain consistency of grammatical style throughout a document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use phrasing and clauses to create more concise presentation of ideas. Use appropriate punctuation to create effect (e.g., I have always known what I want to be—a teacher.). Choose language that expresses ideas precisely avoiding wordiness and redundancy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of adverbs and adjectives to express ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose language that expresses ideas precisely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose language that expresses ideas precisely avoiding wordiness and redundancy.

Writing & Language—Grade 7

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a paragraph or document to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and academic terms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., append, depend, impend, pendant, pendulum). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., judge, judicial, prejudice).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret literary figures of speech in context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret figures of speech (e.g., biblical and mythological allusions) in context.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., part-whole relationship: I thought I knew what happened during the race; but then I had an afterthought that changed my mind.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand unfamiliar words and phrases (e.g., synonym/antonym: <i>inflation/deflation</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand unfamiliar words and phrases (e.g., analogy: His breathing was as <i>congested</i> as a traffic jam in New York City.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of a familiar multi-meaning word (e.g., I woke up to find a dusting of snow on the ground. Maria had reservations about whether she wanted to go on the field trip.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the different connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., Mark thought he was being <i>economical</i> when he made a gift for his brother, but his brother thought he was being <i>stingy</i>.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the different connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., Marta thought she was being <i>respectful</i> when she made the suggestion. But, to Jean, who is an expert, Marta appeared to be <i>condescending</i>.).

Grade 8 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 4** can write a complex composition to present clearly stated arguments and counter-arguments, logical reasoning, and well-chosen supporting evidence. They introduce arguments with a clear position, well-chosen reasons, and a relevant counter-argument or alternate explanation. They use language designed to urge the reader to take action. They write well-supported explanations including introductions that explain the focus and main topics of the work and communicate the importance of the information being presented. Their explanations and arguments are anchored in well-chosen facts, details, quotes, and examples from credible sources.

They provide conclusions that tie together their ideas and provide reasons for further action or research on the topic. They select the organizational structure that best fits the purpose of their explanation or argument. They use a variety of strategies to transition between topics, show the relationship between parts, and strengthen the cohesion of the work. They use a variety of academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write compelling narratives about real or imagined events with more than one developed character, clear connections between characters, more than one developed setting, a problem to be solved, and a resolution. The openings for their narratives introduce the narrator and/or main characters, the narrator's/main characters' perspectives, and the initial setting.

They use sequential organization, including foreshadowing and reflection; words and phrases that move the narrative smoothly between events and show time shifts; and an ending that draws the narrative to a close and may suggest that there is more to the story. They use sensory and figurative language to create settings. They use description, dialogue, and actions to develop characters; thoughts and feelings to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations; and description and action to elaborate on events.

They vary sentence structures to maintain interest and to best support the writing purpose. They use correct grammar and correct punctuation for a wide range of sentence structures (e.g., using commas to set apart subordinate clauses, restrictive clauses, coordinate adjectives, and multiple prepositional phrases).

Level 3

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 3** can write a complete composition to present arguments and counter-arguments with clearly stated reasons and supporting evidence for their arguments. They introduce arguments with a clear position, well-chosen reasons, and a relevant counter-argument. Their explanations and arguments are supported by facts, details, quotes, and examples from credible sources. They can write well-supported explanations including introductions that explain the focus and main topics of the work and conclusions that tie the work together in a coherent and interesting way. They select the organizational structure that best fits the purpose of their explanation or argument (e.g., definition, problem-solution, cause/effect, and argument/counter-argument). They use a variety of phrases to transition between topics and to show the relationship between parts. They use a variety of grade-level academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write compelling narratives about real or imagined events with more than one developed character, clear connections between characters, more than one setting, a problem to be solved, and resolution. The openings for their narratives introduce the narrator and/or main character, the narrator's/main character's perspective, and the initial setting. They use sequential organization, including foreshadowing and reflection; words and phrases that move the narrative smoothly between events and show time shifts; and an ending that draws the narrative to a close.

They use sensory and figurative language to create settings. They use description, dialogue, and actions to develop characters and to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations. They use description and action to elaborate on events. They vary sentence structures to maintain interest and to best support the writing purpose. They use correct grammar and correct punctuation for a wide range of sentence structures (e.g., using commas to set apart subordinate clauses, restrictive clauses, coordinate adjectives, and multiple prepositional phrases).

Level 2

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 2** can write a simple but complete composition to present arguments with reasons and examples. They can explain phenomena and use examples to support their explanations. They introduce explanations and arguments with an opening statement. They use at least two resources to locate facts and examples that support their writing. They provide concluding statements or paragraphs summarizing ideas. They use a variety of organizational structures including classification, cause/effect, and comparison. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to show relationships between examples and explanations or reasons. They use domain-related vocabulary to communicate their ideas. Students can write narratives about real or imagined events with more than one main character, a problem, a sequence of events, and a clear ending. The openings for their narratives introduce the characters and create the setting.

They use sequential organization, transition words and phrases that move the narrative between events, and a clear ending. They use dialogue and actions to show characters' experiences and reactions to situations. They use descriptive and sensory language to illustrate characters and settings. They use varied sentence structures with correct basic grammar (including tenses that communicate sequence; appropriate use of relative, possessive, and objective pronouns).

Level 1

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a simple but complete composition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adequate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience, including an introduction, and a conclusion that draws the argument, explanation, or narrative to a close. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use well-crafted, effective organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (narrative, argument, informative) and audience, including a well-crafted introduction and a conclusion that draws the argument, explanation, or narrative to a close.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a formal style for arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a formal style for arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a stated position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a position, supporting reasons for the position, and at least one counter-argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a position, supporting reasons for the position, at least one counter argument, and reasons for the counter-argument.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction of an explanation to introduce the topic and possibly the subtopics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to present the focus and a summary of the main ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to set the stage for the organizational structure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use comparison and classification as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use definition, problem/solution, cause/effect, argument/counter-argument, or dialogue as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use definition, cause/effect, compare/contrast, argument/counter-argument, dialogue, and problem/solution as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, quotes, and examples from sources to support explanations and arguments. Use simple linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., for example, another example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples from credible sources to support explanations and arguments. Use linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., in particular, specifically, a primary example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use logical reasoning, facts, quotations, and examples from a range of credible sources to support explanations and arguments. Use a variety of words and phrases to connect facts, examples, quotes, and details to arguments and explanations (e.g., a prime cause, a primary effect, a crucial variable).

Writing & Language—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition words, phrases, or sentences to introduce new ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition sentences to connect one paragraph to the next. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition sentences to connect the ideas in one paragraph to the ideas in the next or to contrast the ideas in two paragraphs (e.g., Research shows that most charter schools are no better than regular public schools in supporting student achievement; however, many policy-makers claim that charter schools provide better educational opportunities for students.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings to identify topics and use graphics or illustrations to present additional information for explanations or arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headings and subheadings to identify topics and subtopics and use graphics (e.g., timelines and graphs) and illustrations to support explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain connections between ideas in text and information provided in graphics and illustrations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a specific, grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use specific, precise academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main characters or narrator and their perspectives at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main characters' or narrator's point of view at the opening of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reveal the main characters' or narrator's point of view and the reasons for the point of view at the opening of the narrative.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sequential organization to present the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a narrative using naturally flowing, sequential organization with foreshadowing or reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a narrative using naturally flowing, sequential organization with foreshadowing or reflection or flashbacks.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use descriptive and sensory language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., anxious, mumbling, muttering, chatter, chirp, crackle, scratchy, crisp, tender, moldy, moist). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use description, actions, and dialogue to develop the main characters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sensory and figurative language to illustrate people, places, and events (e.g., "Her thoughts were like mercury; she had a hard time keeping them focused on just one idea at a time.").
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use feelings, actions, and description to develop characters. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use thoughts and feelings to reveal the characters' experiences and reactions.

Writing & Language—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., suddenly, shortly after, yesterday, earlier). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use description and actions to develop events. Use a combination of mostly simple and some more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., unexpectedly, presently, yesterday, just before,). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use description, dialogue, actions, and pacing to develop events. Use a combination of simple and more complex temporal words/phrases to signify time/order (e.g., without warning, all of a sudden, out of the blue, all at once).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of compound and complex sentences to elaborate meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose appropriate simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively use a variety of compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to maintain reader interest and elaborate on ideas.
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use phrases and clauses to minimize run-on sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use phrasing and clauses for more concise presentation of ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns appropriately. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the referent for pronouns is clear in complex sentences and prepositional phrases. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of verb tense within paragraphs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use verbs in the indicative (I was going to the party when...), imperative (Go get a towel and do it quickly), and subjunctive (If Molly had been president of the book club, we wouldn't have had to read that dumb book) moods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use verbs in the indicative (I was going to the party when...), imperative (Go), interrogative (Is he having fun?), conditional (If I were in charge, I wouldn't be so harsh), and subjunctive (If Molly had been president of the book club, we wouldn't have had to read that dumb book) moods.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use active and passive voice effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use active voice for action and passive voice for uncertainty. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use parentheses to set off parenthetical elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas to indicate a pause. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use ellipses and dashes to indicate a pause.

Writing & Language—Grade 8

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style within paragraphs. Use verbs in the active and passive voice (The girl knitted a scarf for her friend. the scarf was knitted by the girl.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style throughout a document. Choose verbs in the active and passive voice as appropriate for the writing purpose (e.g., Sam completed data collection at the end of the class. The data were collected to answer a research question.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use ellipses to indicate omission. Effectively use grammatical style throughout a document. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects as appropriate for the writing purpose (e.g., The research results suggest that sunlight negatively affected plant growth.).
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a paragraph or document to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence and/or paragraph to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and academic terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and academic terms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., append, depend, impend, pendant, pendulum). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., judge, judicial, prejudice).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, verbal irony) in context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., part-whole relationship: I thought I knew what happened during the race; but then I had an afterthought that changed my mind.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand unfamiliar words and phrases (e.g., synonym/antonym: <i>inflation/deflation</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use relationships between words to better understand unfamiliar words and phrases (e.g., analogy: His breathing was as <i>congested</i> as a traffic jam in New York City.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of a familiar multi-meaning word (e.g., I woke up to find a dusting of snow on the ground. Maria had reservations about whether she wanted to go on the field trip.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the different connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., Mark thought he was being <i>economical</i> when he made a gift for his brother, but his brother thought he was being <i>stingy</i>.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the different connotations of words with opposite denotations (e.g., Marta thought she was being <i>respectful</i> when she made the suggestion. But, to Jean, who is an expert, Marta appeared to be <i>condescending</i>.).

Grade 9 Writing & Language Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 4** level can write a complex composition to present clearly stated arguments and counterarguments, logical reasoning, and well-chosen supporting evidence for their claims and counterclaims. They introduce arguments with a clear position, well-chosen reasons, and relevant counterarguments. They develop their claim and counterclaims in a balanced manner, providing evidence for each and discussing the strengths and limitations of each. They write well-supported explanations including introductions that explain the focus and main topics of the work and communicate the importance of the information being presented. They demonstrate awareness and attention to audience by addressing the knowledge level and concerns of readers. Their explanations and arguments are anchored in well-chosen facts, details, quotes, and examples from credible sources.

They provide conclusions that tie together their ideas and support the argument in an interesting way, possibly providing reasons for further action or research on the topic. They select the organizational structure that best fits the purpose of their explanation or argument. They use a variety of strategies to transition between topics, show the relationship between parts, and strengthen the cohesion of the work. They use a variety of academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas.

They vary sentence structures to maintain interest and to best support the writing purpose. They use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation for a wide range of sentence structures (e.g., using a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb to link two or more closely related independent clauses).

Level 3

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 3** level can write a complete composition to present arguments and counterarguments with clearly stated reasons and supporting evidence for their arguments. They introduce arguments with a clear position, well-chosen reasons, and a relevant counterargument. Their explanations and arguments are supported by facts, details, quotes, and examples from credible sources. They can write well-supported explanations including introductions that explain the focus and main topics of the work and conclusions that tie the work together in a coherent way. They select the organizational structure that best fits the purpose of their explanation or argument (e.g., definition, problem-solution, cause/effect, and argument/counterargument). They use a variety of phrases to transition between topics and to show the relationship between parts. They use a variety of grade-level academic vocabulary to communicate their ideas.

They vary sentence structures to maintain interest and to best support the writing purpose. They use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation for a wide range of sentence structures (e.g., using a semicolon to link two or more closely related independent clauses).

Level 2

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 2** level can write a simple but complete composition to present arguments with reasons and examples. They can explain phenomena and use examples to support their explanations. They introduce explanations and arguments with an opening statement. They use at least two resources to locate facts and examples that support their writing. They provide concluding statements or paragraphs summarizing ideas. They use simple organizational structures including classification, cause/effect, and comparison. They use words and phrases to transition between topics and to show relationships between examples and explanations or reasons. They use domain-related vocabulary to communicate their ideas.

They use basic sentence structures to maintain interest and to best support the writing purpose. They use basic grammar, spelling, and punctuation for most sentence structures (e.g., using a comma and a conjunction to link two or more closely related independent clauses).

Level 1

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of language and its conventions as well as writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

Writing & Language—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a simple but complete composition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complete composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a complex composition that includes aspects, as appropriate, of the descriptors below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adequate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (argument, explanatory) and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (argument, explanatory) and audience, including an introduction, and a conclusion that draws the argument or explanation to a close. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use well-crafted, effective organizational structure and language for the writing purpose (argument, explanatory) and audience, including a well-crafted introduction and a conclusion that draws the argument or explanation to a close.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a formal style and/or objective tone for arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a formal style and objective tone for arguments and explanations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a stated position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a position, supporting reasons for the position, and at least one counterargument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open arguments with a precisely-stated position, supporting reasons for the position, more than one counterargument, and reasons for the counterarguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to introduce the topic and possibly the subtopics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to present the focus and a summary of the main ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the introduction for explanations to make important connections and distinctions among complex ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use comparison and classification as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use definition, problem/solution, cause/effect, argument/counterargument, or dialogue as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use definition, cause/effect, compare/contrast, argument/counterargument, dialogue, and problem/solution as strategies for organizing explanations and arguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, quotes, and examples from sources to support explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facts, details, definitions, quotes, and examples from credible sources to support explanations and arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use logical reasoning, facts, quotations, and examples from a range of credible sources to support explanations and arguments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., for example, another example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use linking words and phrases to connect arguments, reasons, and evidence and to connect main idea, topics, and examples (e.g., in particular, specifically, a primary example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of words and phrases to connect facts, examples, quotes, and details to arguments and explanations (e.g., a prime cause, a primary effect, a crucial variable).

Writing & Language—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Text Types and Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition words, phrases, or sentences to introduce new ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition sentences to connect one paragraph to the next. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use transition sentences to connect the ideas in one paragraph to the ideas in the next or to contrast the ideas in two paragraphs (e.g., Research shows that most charter schools are no better than regular public schools in supporting student achievement; however, many policy-makers claim that charter schools provide better educational opportunities for students.).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use graphics or illustrations to present additional information for arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use graphics (e.g., timelines and graphs) and illustrations to support arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain connections between ideas in text and information provided in graphics and illustrations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a specific, grade-level academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use specific, precise academic vocabulary related to arguments and explanations.
Production and Distribution of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use development and organization that are clear and logical. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use development and organization that are appropriate to task and purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use development, organization, and style that are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen writing by identifying the best way to revise a part of a sentence for clarity and meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen writing by determining the best way to revise a sentence or paragraph to maintain or improve clarity and focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting to better address a specific purpose and audience.
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select the best source in answering a particular research question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the usefulness of each source in answering a particular research question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the usefulness of each source in responding to a complex research task.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between instances of plagiarism and paraphrasing of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate additional information, avoiding plagiarism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate new information to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Writing & Language—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of below-grade-level conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (Reference CCSS for below-grade-level skills.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of on-grade-level conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (See sub-standards below.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of sophisticated on-grade-level conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (See sub-standards below.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use parallel structure with words and lists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use parallel structure with words and phrases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use parallel structure with words, phrases, and clauses.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly use phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, prepositional) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly use some variety of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correctly use various types of phrases: noun (e.g., The teacher collected all the essays on Tuesday.); verb (e.g., The teacher has been anticipating the final draft of the student essays.); adjectival (e.g., The teacher is expecting high quality writing from the students.); adverbial (e.g., The teacher sat amidst the stack of essays and sighed.); participial (e.g., Grabbing her fine point marker, the teacher began reading.); prepositional (e.g., The teacher cruised through the papers with ease.); absolute (e.g., Generally speaking, the teacher was quite impressed.), and clauses: independent (e.g., The teacher grinned with satisfaction.), dependent (e.g., The teacher grinned with satisfaction while she continued to read.), noun (e.g., The teacher surmised that her lessons had been effective.), relative (e.g., The teacher was almost done, which meant she would not run out of ink.), and adverbial (e.g., The teacher put down the pen despite her desire to read more.) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

Writing & Language—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of below-grade-level conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (Reference CCSS for below-grade level skills.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of on-grade-level conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (See sub-standards below.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate command of sophisticated on-grade-level conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (See sub-standards below.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a comma and a conjunction to link two or more closely related independent clauses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a semicolon to link two or more closely related independent clauses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb (e.g., accordingly, similarly, also, however, therefore) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use commas within a list and quotation marks around dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a dash to indicate a list and quotation marks within a sentence to set off a quotation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell most words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell grade-level terms correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell grade-level and academic terms correctly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style within paragraphs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain consistency of grammatical style throughout a document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively use grammatical style throughout a document.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a paragraph or document to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence and/or paragraph to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and academic terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use overall meaning of a sentence to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and academic terms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to change the meaning of a root word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Greek and Latin affixes and roots to change the meaning of a root word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to interpret common figures of speech (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, verbal irony). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine the meaning of multiple-meaning words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to determine variations in meaning of words with similar denotations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Performance Level Descriptors: Speaking & Listening

Grade 3 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and express their own ideas, paraphrase details or portions of a text read aloud or a presentation, and answer questions about the information presented. They explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion. They also elaborate on the information presented, citing significant details.

Level 3

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and express their own ideas, determine the main ideas and supporting details presented, and answer questions about information implied or suggested by a speaker. They explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion. They also elaborate on the information presented, offering appropriate details.

Level 2

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 2** identify an idea presented in a discussion, recall the main ideas and supporting details presented, and answer questions about information explicitly stated by a speaker.

Level 1

By the end of the year, third graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening–Grade 3			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an idea presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall the main ideas and supporting details presented in a text read aloud or a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the main ideas and supporting details presented in a text read aloud or a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase details or portions of a text read aloud or a presentation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer questions about information stated explicitly by a speaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer questions about information inferred or suggested by a speaker. Elaborate on information presented by a speaker, offering appropriate details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaborate on information presented by a speaker, citing significant details.

Grade 4 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and review the key ideas presented, paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or a presentation, and summarize reasons and evidence provided to support particular points. They make connections between their own ideas and key ideas presented in a discussion. They also make connections between portions of a text read aloud or a presentation.

Level 3

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and review the key ideas presented, paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or a presentation, and identify reasons and evidence provided to support particular points. They explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion.

Level 2

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 2** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify a key idea presented, paraphrase a detail in a text read aloud or a presentation, and identify a speaker's particular points. They explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion.

Level 1

By the end of the year, fourth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening–Grade 4			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a key idea presented in a discussion or explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the key ideas presented in a discussion and explain their own ideas and understanding in relation to ideas presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the key ideas presented in a discussion and make connections between their own ideas and key ideas presented in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase a detail in a text read aloud or a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase and make connections between portions of a text read aloud or a presentation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a speaker’s particular points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

Grade 5 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify another perspective, make connections among information presented, and explain how points and claims are supported. They identify another perspective on the key ideas presented. They summarize the information presented. They also explain how a speaker uses reasons and evidence to support points and claims.

Level 3

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and review the key ideas expressed, summarize the information presented, and summarize the points and claims presented. They draw conclusions about key ideas. They also make connections between points and claims and reasons and evidence.

Level 2

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 2** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify a key idea presented, paraphrase the information presented, and identify the points and claims presented.

Level 1

By the end of the year, fifth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening–Grade 5			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a key idea presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions about ideas presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify another perspective on the key ideas presented in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase information in a written text read aloud or a presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize information in a written text read aloud or a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize and connect information in a written text read aloud or a presentation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a speaker’s points and claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize a speaker’s points and claims, making connections to reasons and evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how a speaker uses reasons and evidence to support points and claims.

Grade 6 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and acknowledge new information expressed by others, analyze the information presented, and evaluate the claims presented. They reflect on multiple perspectives presented in a discussion. They explain how information contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. They also distinguish a speaker's claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Level 3

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and paraphrase the key ideas presented, interpret the information presented, and describe the argument and claims presented. They demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives. They interpret information that is explicitly stated, implied, or suggested. They also explain why a speaker chooses to include certain information in an argument.

Level 2

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 2** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and review the key ideas presented, paraphrase the information presented, and identify the arguments and claims presented.

Level 1

By the end of the year, sixth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening–Grade 6			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the key ideas presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase the key ideas presented in a discussion to demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on multiple perspectives or acknowledge new ideas presented in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase information in a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret information that is explicitly stated, implied, or suggested in a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze or explain how information contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a speaker’s argument and claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a speaker’s argument and claims, explaining why a speaker chooses to include certain information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish a speaker’s claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Grade 7 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and integrate new information expressed by others, explain the effects of the main ideas and supporting details presented, and evaluate the reasoning and evidence presented. They explain their own ideas and viewpoints in relation to new information presented in a discussion. They explain how the main ideas and supporting details of a presentation clarify a topic, text, or issue under study. They also evaluate the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence presented in a speaker's argument.

Level 3

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and acknowledge new information expressed by others, analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented, and analyze the reasoning and evidence presented. They paraphrase new information presented in a discussion. They also explain why a speaker chooses to include certain information in an argument.

Level 2

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 2** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify new information expressed by others, determine the main ideas and supporting details presented, and describe the argument presented.

Level 1

By the end of the year, seventh graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening–Grade 7			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify new information presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraphrase new information presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain their own ideas and viewpoints in relation to new information presented in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the main ideas and supporting details of a presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how the main ideas and supporting details of a presentation connect to or clarify a topic, text, or issue under study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the main ideas and supporting details of a presentation clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a speaker’s argument and claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain why a speaker chooses to include certain information in an argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence presented in a speaker’s argument.

Grade 8 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and integrate new information expressed by others, evaluate the purpose of information presented, and evaluate the reasoning and evidence presented. They summarize points of agreement and disagreement in a discussion. They evaluate a speaker's main purpose and determine a speaker's motives for including particular information. They also evaluate the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence presented in a speaker's argument.

Level 3

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and acknowledge new information expressed by others, analyze the purpose of information presented, and analyze the reasoning and evidence presented. They reflect on how new information impacts their own ideas and viewpoints, qualifying or justifying their ideas and viewpoints as warranted. They analyze a speaker's main purpose for including particular information. They also identify when irrelevant information is introduced as part of a speaker's argument.

Level 2

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 2** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify new information expressed by others, determine the purpose of information presented, and describe the argument presented. They explain their own ideas and viewpoints in relation to new information presented in a discussion. They determine a speaker's main purpose. They also describe a speaker's argument and specific claims.

Level 1

By the end of the year, eighth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening–Grade 8			
Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain their own ideas and viewpoints in relation to new information presented in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on how new information impacts their own ideas and viewpoints, qualifying or justifying their ideas and viewpoints as warranted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize points of agreement and disagreement in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine a speaker’s main purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze a speaker’s main purpose for including particular information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate a speaker’s main purpose, determining the speaker’s motives for including particular information.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a speaker’s argument and specific claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify when irrelevant evidence is introduced as part of a speaker’s argument and specific claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence presented in a speaker’s argument and specific claims.

Grade 9 Speaking & Listening Performance Level Descriptors

Level 4

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 4** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and apply those ideas to related ideas or situations, integrate diverse perspectives, and evaluate sources of information. They evaluate a speaker's explanation or argument, including the reliability and credibility of the sources. They evaluate a speaker's point of view, carefully analyzing and evaluating the speaker's use of evidence and rhetoric.

Level 3

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 3** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify examples of the same or related ideas, analyze similar or different perspectives, and analyze sources of information. They delineate a speaker's explanation or argument and evaluate the reliability of the sources. They analyze a speaker's point of view and the effectiveness of the speaker's use of evidence and rhetoric.

Level 2

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 2** listen attentively to ideas being discussed and identify examples of the same ideas and identify different perspectives. They trace a speaker's explanation or argument and identify a reliable source of information. They identify a speaker's point of view and identify examples of the speaker's use of evidence.

Level 1

By the end of the year, ninth graders at **Level 1** demonstrate evidence of emerging understanding of the communication of ideas through the medium of speech.

Speaking & Listening—Grade 9

Focus	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
At these performance levels, students can:			
Comprehension and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify a main point or a point of disagreement in a discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summarize points of agreement and disagreement in a discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze points of agreement and disagreement in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine how an idea presented in a discussion is linked to another idea in the presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze the ideas presented in a discussion to make connections among the ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze the ideas presented in a discussion to make new connections that relate to a broader context.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify a reliable source of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate the reliability of information sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate the reliability and credibility of information sources.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify a speaker's point of view in a discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze a speaker's point of view, determining where it differs from another point of view in a discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate a speaker's point of view as well as opposing points of view in a discussion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Trace a speaker's line of reasoning and identify examples of the speaker's use of evidence to support a particular point of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze a speaker's line of reasoning, including the speaker's use of evidence and rhetoric, noting any instances of particularly effective language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate a speaker's line of reasoning, including the effectiveness of the speaker's use of evidence and rhetoric, noting any instances of fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

