

Theory of Action: Academic standards represent a collective commitment around what students should learn each year. The state assessment asks students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding related to these standards using a common measure. The resulting data allows us to see patterns in performance that should guide school and district improvement, helping identify areas of strength and opportunity.

Role of Performance Level Descriptors in Defining Proficiency: Performance level descriptors bridge the state assessment to classroom instruction and the systems of formative assessments that guide local instruction and choices about individual students. *Academic proficiency represents a range of observable student performance characteristics.* There are multiple pathways to proficiency, and students rely upon their strengths differently within that range of performance.

Proficiency and Difficulty: A student’s ability to demonstrate proficiency is influenced by the complexity of the texts or stimuli presented, tasks they’re asked to complete, and the contexts in which they are engaged. As student performance improves, students are typically able to handle more challenging texts/stimuli, tasks, and contexts, and are able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge more accurately and consistently.

Claim 1: Reading Literary Textⁱ *Student performance indicates the ability to:*

Above Proficient	Analyze how characters, structure, and figurative language shape deeper meaning across texts. Use evidence , like repeated images, shifts in tone, or contrast between characters, to explore the theme and author’s choices .	MOST COMPLEX ↑↑↑↑
Proficient	Explain how a character’s actions, changes, or dialogue show the theme. Describe how structure, such as flashbacks or problem/solution, affects the way the story is told .	RI.10/RL.10 – Read and comprehend appropriate texts independently.
Approaching Proficient	Describe key parts of a story, including characters, events, and setting. Identify a theme or lesson and compare how characters react to events or challenges.	↑↑↑↑
Below Proficient	Identify important characters and events in the story. Answer questions about what happened and how characters responded, using details from the text. May include a beginning, middle, and end but miss connections between events or the message of the story.	LEAST COMPLEX Text Complexity

Claim 2: Reading Informational Textⁱⁱ *Student performance indicates the ability to:*

Above Proficient	Compare and evaluate how two texts present information on the same topic using structure, evidence, and word choice. Explain how the author’s purpose or organization affects what the reader learns.	MOST COMPLEX ↑↑↑↑
Proficient	Explain the main idea and how the author’s use of facts, examples, and text features support it. Describe relationships such as cause and effect or how ideas build across a section. Compare two texts for similarities and differences in how information is presented.	RI.10/RL.10 – Read and comprehend appropriate texts independently.
Approaching Proficient	Identify the main idea and find details that support it. Recognize text features like headings or bolded words and describe basic relationships , such as why something happened or what steps happened first.	↑↑↑↑
Below Proficient	Locate facts, ideas, or visuals in short texts. Answer questions about the topic or key details using text features like headings or diagrams but may miss how the parts fit together.	LEAST COMPLEX Text Complexity

Test questions can measure a single skill or a set of knowledge and skills. The ELA test differs from other subjects in that it has fewer items overall, but each item assesses multiple skills or knowledge by asking students to demonstrate skills through performance, such as writing a prose-constructed response. Therefore, what differentiates the levels of performance are the degree to and quality with which a student performs.

Claim 3: Reading Vocabulary (In both literary & informational texts)ⁱⁱⁱ Student performance indicates the ability to:

Above Proficient	Analyze subtle word meanings in context, including figurative language, connotation , or shifts in tone. For example, explain how <i>charged</i> can mean emotional or electric depending on context. Choose vocabulary that adds precision or feeling in both reading and writing.	MOST COMPLEX ↑↑↑↑
Proficient	Use multiple strategies , like context clues and word parts such as prefixes, or base words, to figure out unfamiliar words. Explain how word choice affects meaning , and use subject-specific vocabulary like <i>fraction, government, or theme</i> to clarify ideas.	RI.10/RL.10 – Read and comprehend appropriate texts independently.
Approaching Proficient	Break words into parts (like <i>mis-</i> or <i>-tion</i>) and use context clues to figure out meaning. Begin using more exact words , like <i>solution</i> instead of <i>answer</i> , and recognize simple comparisons or relationships between words.	↑↑↑↑
Below Proficient	Recognize familiar words and use nearby clues or word parts to guess what unfamiliar words might mean. May rely on pictures or known topics to help understand basic vocabulary in a passage.	LEAST COMPLEX Text Complexity

Claim 4: Written Expression (Using both literary & informational prompts)^{iv} Student performance indicates the ability to:

Above Proficient	Develop well-structured writing with a clear purpose and well-supported ideas. Use precise language and descriptive examples , such as <i>hesitated</i> instead of <i>stopped</i> , or <i>a sky full of swirling clouds</i> , to help the reader picture what’s happening. Use varied sentence types and transitions like <i>even though, as a result, or in contrast</i> to clearly show how ideas connect.	MOST COMPLEX ↑↑↑↑ RI.10/RL.10 – Read and comprehend appropriate texts independently.
Proficient	Write with a clear focus , such as an opinion, topic, or story. Support ideas with reasons, facts, or descriptive examples, and use transitions like <i>for example</i> or <i>in the end</i> to guide the reader. Organize writing into paragraphs with a beginning, middle, and end.	↑↑↑↑
Approaching Proficient	Present a topic or story with related details. Group ideas and use simple transitions like <i>then</i> or <i>after that</i> . Include a beginning and ending that relate to the main idea, though parts may be unclear or uneven.	LEAST COMPLEX Text Complexity
Below Proficient	Write short responses with a topic or opinion and some supporting detail, like a reason or an example. May include a beginning or ending, but ideas may be out of order or missing important information.	

Claim 5: Knowledge of Written Language and Conventions^v Student performance indicates the ability to:

Above Proficient	Use grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling correctly in complex sentences, such as <i>Even though it was raining, we still played outside</i> . Edit and revise writing to improve clarity and style, such as choosing better words, fixing run-ons, or improving sentence rhythm.
Proficient	Apply rules for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in multi-paragraph writing. Use a variety of sentence types , such as <i>We waited inside.</i> or <i>Why did she leave early?</i> and make sure meaning is clear.
Approaching Proficient	Write complete sentences and use capital letters and punctuation like periods, commas, and question marks. Fix common errors in spelling or grammar when asked, though some mistakes may remain.
Below Proficient	Write basic sentences and attempt to use punctuation and capitalization. May leave out or misuse sentence parts like subjects or verbs or confuse where a sentence should end.

ⁱ Includes standards RL 5.1, RL 5.2, RL 5.3, RL 5.5, RL 5.6, RL 5.7, RL 5.9, 5.10

ⁱⁱ Includes standards RI 5.1, RI 5.2, RI 5.3, RI 5.5, RI 5.6, RI 5.7, RI 5.8, RI 5.9, RI 5.10

ⁱⁱⁱ Includes standards RL 5.4, RI 5.4, L 5.4, L 5.5, L 5.6

^{iv} Includes standards W 5.1, W 5.2, W 5.3, W 5.4, W 5.5, W 5.6, W 5.7, W 5.8, W 5.9, W 5.10

^v Includes standards L 5.1, L 5.2, L 5.3, L 5.6, W 5.1