

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM

TEST BLUEPRINT AND ITEM SPECIFICATIONS
GRADE 8 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



OKLAHOMA
Education

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OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM

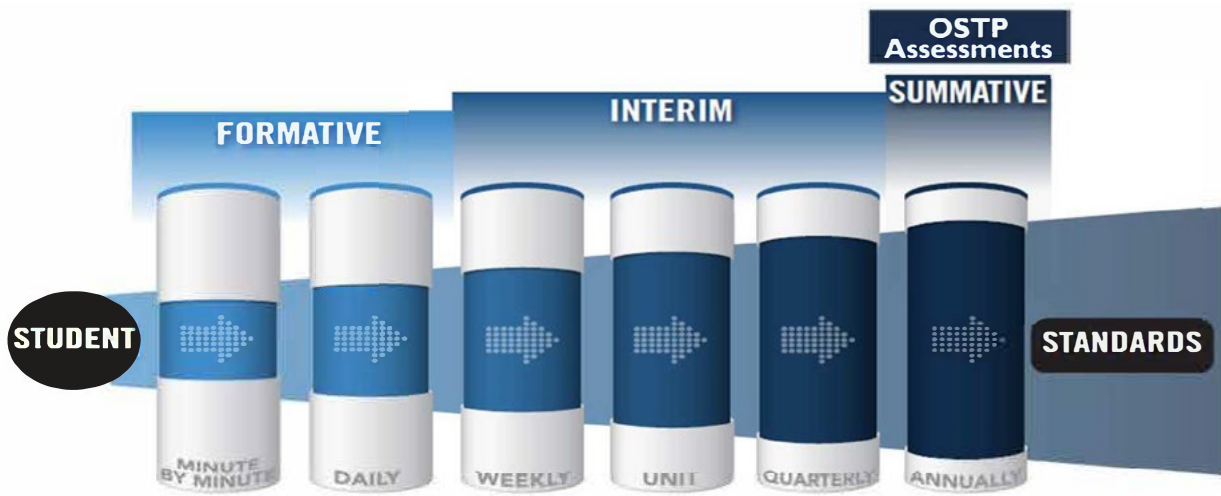
Grade 8 English Language Arts

Purpose

A robust assessment system is predicated upon the knowledge that no one assessment is able to provide answers to all questions affecting instructional decisions. An assessment system utilizes different types of assessment to gather multiple pieces of evidence to provide timely, relevant, actionable, and reliable information about what students know and can do relative to a set of standards.

Assessments According to the Oklahoma ESSA Plan

According to page 48 of the Oklahoma ESSA Consolidated State Plan, Oklahoma recognizes that a **robust assessment system** is tied closely to students' learning and teachers' instructional practices by valuing and promoting **local, classroom-based formative assessments** that help make **student learning visible**. At the same time, that system should provide a **strong summative assessment** program that fits as a component within a multifaceted state, district, and school accountability system.



The OSDE supports an assessment system by working with Oklahoma educators and stakeholders to:

- Ensure that state and federally required annual summative assessments delivered through the Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) are effective and meaningful to families, districts, educators, and members of the community;
- Develop instructional resources to support local formative and interim assessments through the curriculum frameworks projects and assessment guidance toolkit; and
- Build and deliver professional learning through face-to-face and web-based resources to support local assessment needs and interpretation of state assessment data.

Annual assessments delivered through the OSTP are aligned to the Oklahoma Academic Standards and can therefore provide point-in-time data for programmatic and curricular decisions by supporting criterion-referenced interpretations at appropriate levels and grain size (e.g., grade, student group, teacher, building/district administrator, state). Standards-based formative and interim assessments conducted at the local level can provide additional information and evidence

of learning at a smaller grain size to inform instructional decisions made at the student and classroom level.

While state summative assessments are only one measure of what students know and can demonstrate, having Oklahoma students take OSTP assessments:

- ✓ Helps students, their families, and the public know how students have grown over time and how they are performing relative to the standards, their peers in Oklahoma, and the nation;
- ✓ Enables teachers to see how their students are performing against grade-level expectations communicated through the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) to support evaluation and enhancement of curriculum and programs for the next school year;
- ✓ Provides a standardized and reliable measure for school/district leaders, the state, policymakers, and the public to determine how well a system is meeting the goals of helping every child grow along a continuum to prepare them for careers, college, and life; and
- ✓ Provides comparable information and data to inform continuous improvement of a system and appropriately support federal and state accountability decisions.

Test Structure, Format, and Scoring

The Grade 8 English Language Arts operational test is administered in two sections over the course of one or two sessions. Sections 1 and 2 are multiple-choice items and should be administered within one day with a break between sessions or over two consecutive instructional days. These sections will consist of approximately 25 operational items and 5 field-test items.

The English Language Arts Writing Test consists of one operational written response and does not have to be completed in consecutive days with sections 1 and 2. However, the Writing Test is required as part of the English Language Arts assessment and will be calculated as part of the ELA score.

The student’s test performance is converted to a scaled score using item response theory (IRT).

Test Alignment with Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS)

Criteria for Aligning the Test with the Oklahoma Academic Standards Content Standards

1. Categorical Concurrence

The test is constructed so that the items are measuring the assessable reading and writing OAS. The items are selected to provide a reasonably reliable estimate of a student’s mastery of the content measured.

2. Range-of-Knowledge Correspondence

The test is constructed so that each OAS (Standards 2–6) has at least six corresponding assessment items.

3. Source of Challenge

Each test item is constructed in such a way that the major cognitive demand comes directly from the targeted OAS standard being assessed, not from specialized knowledge or cultural background that the test-taker may bring to the testing situation.

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM TEST BLUEPRINT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 8



This blueprint describes the content and structure of an assessment and defines the ideal range of test items by standard of the **Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS)**.

PERCENTAGE
OF MULTIPLE
CHOICE ITEMS

REPORTING
CATEGORIES

24–30%	<u>2: READING AND WRITING PROCESS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Students will read and comprehend increasingly complex literary and informational texts.› Students will develop and strengthen writing by engaging in a recursive process.
24–30%	<u>3: CRITICAL READING AND WRITING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Students will comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and respond to a variety of complex texts.› Students will write for varied purposes and audiences in all modes.
14–20%	<u>4: VOCABULARY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Students will expand academic, domain-appropriate, and grade-level vocabularies.› Students will apply knowledge of vocabularies to communicate in writing.
12–18%	<u>5: LANGUAGE</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Students will apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to analyze and evaluate texts.› Students will demonstrate command of Standard English grammar, mechanics, and usage.
12–18%	<u>6: RESEARCH</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Students will comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize resources to acquire and refine knowledge.› Students will summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources.
88% of Overall Score	
12%	<u>EXTENDED CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Extended constructed-response items will be passage-based, and student responses must include information from both passages.› Extended constructed-response items have a 1500-word limit for student responses.› Extended constructed-response items will assess students over one of the following modes of writing: Narrative, Informative, Argumentative.

12% of Overall Score

The English Language Arts operational test will contain a total of 50 operational items and 10 field test items.

Depth-of-Knowledge Assessed by Test Items

The Grade 8 test will approximately reflect the following “depth-of-knowledge (DOK)” distribution of items:

Depth-of-Knowledge	Percent of Items
Level 1—Recall	5–10%
Level 2—Skill/Concept	60–75%
Level 3—Strategic Thinking	20–30%
Level 4—Extended Thinking*	12% of overall score

DOK Ranges are based on the DOK of the OAS. The standards increase grade-level expectations and rigor, and set the expectation for students to be college- and career-ready.

DOK 1	DOK 2	DOK 3	DOK 4
Recall a fact or information; only requires one cognitive step to arrive at the answer	Basic application of skills and concepts; requires two or more cognitive steps to arrive at the answer	Strategic thinking; requires reasoning and multiple cognitive steps to arrive at the answer	Extended thinking; requires complex reasoning and multiple cognitive steps to arrive at the answer
What is the knowledge? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? • What? • Where? • When? 	How can the knowledge be used? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it happen? • How did it work? • How was it used? 	Why can the knowledge be used? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did it happen? • What is the cause? • What is the effect? • What is the result? 	What and how can the knowledge be used? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the connection? • How do you feel? • What would happen? • What kind of argument can be made?

Reading

- **Level 1** requires students to recall, observe, question, or represent facts or simple skills or abilities. It requires only surface understanding of text, often verbatim recall. Level 1 activities include supporting ideas by reference to details in the text, using a dictionary to find meaning, identifying figurative language in a passage, and identifying the correct spelling or meaning of words.
- **Level 2** requires processing beyond recall and observation; requires both comprehension and subsequent processing of text; and involves ordering and classifying text, as well as identifying patterns, relationships, and main points. Level 2 activities include using context to identify unfamiliar words, predicting logical outcomes, identifying and summarizing main points, applying knowledge of conventions of Standard American English, composing accurate summaries, and making general inferences and predictions for a portion of a text.
- **Level 3** requires students to go beyond the text; requires students to explain, generalize, and connect ideas; involves inferencing, prediction, elaboration, and summary; and requires students to support positions using prior knowledge and to manipulate themes across passages. Level 3 activities include determining the effect of the author’s purpose on text

*One extended written response requiring synthesis, analysis, and evaluation

elements; summarizing information from multiple sources; critically analyzing literature; composing focused, organized, coherent, purposeful prose; and making explanatory and descriptive inferences and interpretations across an entire passage.

- **Level 4** may require extended higher order processing, may involve taking information from one text/passage and applying this information to a new task, and may require generating hypotheses and performing complex analyses and connections among texts. Level 4 activities may include analyzing and synthesizing information from multiple sources; examining and explaining alternative perspectives across sources; creating compositions that synthesize, analyze, and evaluate; and describing and illustrating common themes across a variety of texts.

Writing/Grammar/Usage and Mechanics

- **Level 1** requires students to write and speak using Standard English conventions, including appropriate grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- **Level 2** requires students to be able to connect ideas in writing, construct compound sentences, and use organizational strategies in written work.
- **Level 3** requires that students develop compositions that include multiple paragraphs and may include complex sentence structure and demonstrate some synthesis and analysis.
- **Level 4** requires that students write multi-paragraph compositions that demonstrate synthesis and analysis of complex ideas or themes.

A more detailed framework for categorizing Depth-of-Knowledge is shown in the [appendix](#).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Considerations

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), as applied to assessments, is a framework that provides flexibility in the way information is presented and in the ways students demonstrate knowledge and skills. This reduces barriers while maintaining high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. In the Oklahoma Grade 8 tests, items and instructions have been designed to provide maximum readability, comprehensibility, and legibility for all students. This includes design aspects such as reducing the language load in content areas other than Language Arts, increasing the font size, displaying fewer items per page, and boxing the items to assist visual focus.

Test Administration Details

Online Administration

Test questions will be presented one at a time.

The stimulus and question will appear on the screen at the same time. In ELA, passages are presented on the left with the accompanying item on the right. In cases where more than one passage is present, each passage will have its own tab on the left. Students will be able to move back and forth between the tabs as needed.

Answers may be selected by using the mouse to click on the radio button to the left of the answer choice.

Navigation buttons appear at the bottom of the page for each question. For longer items, a scroll bar will appear on the right-hand side of the window to allow scrolling through the answer choices.

Students will be able to use scratch paper for all online assessments. This paper must be collected and destroyed by the test administrator immediately following the test. The test administrator must not look at what the student has written on the scratch paper.

Paper Administration

Paper/pencil testing is used only as a testing accommodation. Due to the nature of a paper test booklet, students may have to flip pages to read passages and to read the associated test items.

Students will be able to use scratch paper and/or unmarked grid paper for the paper Grade 8 English Language Arts Assessment. The scratch paper must be collected and destroyed by the test administrator immediately following the test. The test administrator must not look at what the student has written on the scratch paper.

Estimated Testing Time

This section appears in all of the test specification documents and is provided to give the reader a general sense of the overall testing program at this particular grade level.

Each Grade 8 test is meant to be administered in two sessions within one day or on consecutive instructional days with the exception of Grade 8 English Language Arts, which will be administered in three sessions over two or three days. Estimated time for scheduling is given in the table below.

Grade 8 English Language Arts Test Time Schedule	
Distributing login information	Approximately 5 minutes
Test instructions/tutorial and reviewing sample items	Approximately 15 minutes
Total:	Approximately 20 minutes
Administering Section 1 of the Grade 8 English Language Arts Online Test	Approximately 40 minutes
Administering Section 2 of the Grade 8 English Language Arts Online Test	Approximately 40 minutes
Total testing time (Suggested Maximum Time: 200 minutes)	Approximately 100 minutes

Grade 8 English Language Arts Writing Test Time Schedule	
Distributing login information	Approximately 20 minutes
Administering Section 3 Writing	Approximately 55 minutes
Total Section 3 testing time (Suggested Maximum Time: 150 minutes)	Approximately 75 minutes

ITEM SPECIFICATIONS

Introduction

- All items must clearly indicate what is expected in a response and direct students how to focus their responses and will be written at a reading level appropriate for a Grade 8 English Language Arts audience.
- All stems will be positively worded—avoiding the use of the word not. If a negative is required, the format will be “All of the following . . . except.”

Multiple-Choice Item Specifications

- Each multiple-choice item will have a stem (question or incomplete statement that is completed by the correct answer choice) and four answer (or completion) options—the correct answer and three distractors. Distractors will be developed based on the types of errors students are most likely to make. Items may contain graphical elements and/or text extracts.
- Each multiple-choice item stem asks a question or poses a clear problem so that students will know what to do before looking at the answer choices. Students should not need to read all answer choices before knowing what is expected.

Technology-Enhanced Item Specifications

- Technology-Enhanced Items (TEIs) should be used to more authentically address some aspects of the OAS performance expectations and/or provide more opportunity for students to construct rather than select their response.
- Each technology-enhanced item contains only one interaction type per item.
- For each TEI, the interaction type used is that which is the most appropriate and enhancing to the construct to be measured.
- Each TEI is structured to contain the question (content) first followed by directions for how to complete the interaction in that item. Consistent style and language are used in these directions (e.g., “Drag the pictures,” “Click the object,” etc.).

Extended Constructed-Response Item Specifications

- Extended constructed-response items will be passage-based, and student responses must include information from both passages.
- Extended constructed-response items have a 1500-word limit for student responses.

Stimulus Materials

Stimulus materials are the tables, charts, graphs, passages, and illustrations students must use in order to respond to items. The following characteristics are necessary for stimulus materials:

1. A stimulus that gives information must precede a question or a set of questions.
2. When students are given information to evaluate, they should know the research question and the purpose of the research.
3. Passages, graphics, tables, etc., will provide sufficient information for assessment of multiple standards.
4. Stimulus materials for a set of items may be a combination of multiple stimuli.

5. Information in stimulus materials will be real examples of what students would encounter in or beyond school.
6. For conceptual items, stimulus materials will be necessary but not conceptually sufficient for student response.

Readability

The selected reading passages will be at the appropriate grade level. The readability level of all passages is evaluated using three recognized readability formulas. The formulas chosen for each grade vary according to the purpose for which the formula was developed. Appropriate readability formulas for Grade 8 English Language Arts include the Flesch-Kincaid Rating, the Dale-Chall Readability Rating, or any other formulas considered reliable.

In addition, sentence structure, length, vocabulary, content, visuals, and organization are reviewed when selecting appropriate grade level passages. The Oklahoma educator committee that reviews passages provides the final decisions in regards to the readability of a passage.

General Considerations—Oklahoma School Testing Program

1. Items deal with issues and details that are of consequence in the stimulus and central to students' understanding and interpretation of the stimulus.
2. Test items are varied and address all OAS standards listed in the Test Blueprint.
3. To the greatest extent possible, no item or response choice clues the answer to any other item.
4. All items reviewed and approved by the Oklahoma Item Review Committee are assigned an OAS standard. The Test Blueprints and score reports reflect the degree to which each OAS standard is represented on the test.
5. Test items are tied closely and particularly to the stimuli from which they derive, so that the impact of outside (prior) knowledge, while never wholly avoidable, is minimized.
6. Each multiple-choice item contains a question and four answer options, only one of which is correct. Correct answers will be approximately equally distributed among A, B, C, and D responses.
7. Distractors adopt the language and sense of the material in the stimuli so that students must think their way to the correct answer rather than simply identify incorrect responses by virtue of a distractor's obviously inappropriate nature.
8. Distractors should always be plausible (but, of course, incorrect) in the context of the stimulus. Students should not be able to rule out a wrong answer or identify a correct response solely because it looks different from the other answer choices.
9. Order of presentation of item types is dictated by logic (chronological, spatial, etc.).
10. Items are worded precisely and clearly. The better focused an item, the more reliable and fair it is certain to be, and the more likely all students will understand it in the same way.
11. The range of items measuring an OAS standard consisting of more than one skill will provide a balanced representation of those skills.
12. Items should be focused on what all students should know and be able to do as they complete their Grade 8 coursework.
13. The responses "Both of the above," "All of the above," "None of the above," and "Neither of the above" will not be used.
14. The material presented is balanced, culturally diverse, well-written, and of interest to Grade 8 test level students. The stimuli and items are fairly presented in order to gain a true picture of students' skills.

15. Across all forms, a balance of gender and active/passive roles by gender is maintained.
16. Forms attempt to represent the ethnic heritage of Oklahoma students.
17. No resource materials or calculators may be used by students during the test. Use of scratch paper is allowed on the test but should be collected and destroyed at the end of the test.
18. Accommodations, designated features embedded in the online testing platform, and paper-based test formats are available for students with an indicated need per their IEP or 504 Plan.
19. The stimuli avoid subject matter that might prompt emotional distress on the part of the students.
20. Permission to use stimuli from copyrighted material is obtained as necessary by testing vendor.

In summary, Grade 8 English Language Arts test items ask questions that address issues of importance in a text; require students to demonstrate comprehension of and knowledge about literary genres; require students to demonstrate knowledge of grammar, usage, and mechanics; and are consequential, concise, focused, and fair.

Written responses receive a holistic score that reflects how well the student can integrate writing techniques to produce a good essay. A sample extended constructed-response item with a rubric and response examples is available at sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Gr%208%20Informative_Final%20Document%20with%20Typed%20Essays.pdf.

Responses that do not meet certain criteria cannot be scored. A zero overall score is given to responses that fall into the following categories:

- No response or just a restatement of the task
- Response in a language other than English
- Response that is illegible or incomprehensible
- Response that is off the topic of the writing task

Considerations Specific to the Grade 8 English Language Arts Test

Each 8th-grade-level reading passage will contain identifiable key concepts with relevant supporting details. Passages will be appropriate for determining the purpose for reading, analyzing character traits, compare/contrast, problem/solution, interpretation, analysis, drawing conclusions, making an inference, being conducive for vocabulary analogies, and relevant reading tasks as defined by the Oklahoma Academic Standards for 8th grade.

The passages will be well-written and include a variety of sentence types and lengths. They may include dialogue, will reflect Oklahoma's cultural heritage, and will possess sufficient structural integrity to allow them to be self-contained. Literary passages will reflect genres studied at the 8th-grade level, including essay, short story, novel, drama, narrative, and lyric poetry.

A test form will contain at least two reading selections that will allow students to make comparisons and connections between texts.

The majority of the selections used for the Grade 8 test will include authentic literature; a portion may be selected from commissioned works. Selections should not exceed 900 words. Each reading passage will generate approximately five to seven multiple-choice questions from the Oklahoma Academic Standards, including vocabulary, comprehension, literature, and research and information. Each grammar passage will generate approximately seven multiple-choice

questions from the OAS standards, including Standard English grammar, mechanics, and usage. Each writing prompt will allow students the opportunity to demonstrate writing skills.

All items developed using these specifications are reviewed by Oklahoma educators and approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. The distribution of newly developed or modified items is based on content and process alignment, difficulty, cognitive ability, percentage of art/graphics, and grade level appropriateness as determined by an annual Item Development Plan approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Grade	Word Count*	Authentic Literary Selections	Expository Selections
3	200-600	3-6	3-5
4	200-600	4-6	3-5
5	300-700	4-6	4-6
6	300-700	4-6	4-6
7	500-900	4-6	4-6
8	500-900	4-6	4-6

*Paired passages can have a total word count 1.5 times the highest word count for that grade.

It is necessary to create test items that are reliable, fair, and targeted to the OAS standards listed on the following pages. There are some considerations and procedures for effective item development. These considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Each test form contains items assessing all standards and skills.
2. Test items that assess each standard will not be limited to one particular type of response format.
3. Test questions focus on authentic content that Grade 8 test-level students can relate to and understand.
4. All items are reviewed to eliminate language that shows bias or that would otherwise likely disadvantage a particular group of students. Items do not display unfair representations of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, culture, or religion, nor do items contain elements that are offensive to any such groups.
5. With paired passages, all items will follow the final passage.

Overview of Item Specifications

For each OAS standard, item specifications are organized under the following headings:

- OAS Standard
- OAS Objective
- Item Specifications
 - a. Emphasis
 - b. Format
 - c. Content Limits
 - d. Distractor Domain
 - e. Sample Test Items

The headings “OAS Standard” and “OAS Objective” state the standard and objective being measured as found in the English Language Arts section of the Oklahoma Academic Standards document.

For each standard, the information under the heading “Item Specifications” highlights important points about a test item’s emphasis, format, content limits, and distractor domain. Sample test items are provided with each standard to illustrate these specifications. Although it is sometimes possible to score single items for more than one concept, all items in these tests are written to address a single standard as the primary concept.

Note: With the exception of content limits, the Item Specifications offer suggestions of what might be included and do not provide an exhaustive list of what can be included. For this reason, Item Specifications are only meant to be a supplemental resource for classroom instruction.

In addition, the sample test items are not intended to be definitive in nature or construction—the stimuli and the test items that follow them may differ from test form to test form, as may their presentations. Sample test items are not intended to predict a student’s performance on the actual test, but rather to allow students to familiarize themselves with the item types and formats that they may see on the test.

STANDARD 2—READING AND WRITING PROCESS

OAS STANDARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will use a variety of recursive reading and writing processes.• Reading—Students will read and comprehend inclusive, diverse, and increasingly complex literary and informational texts.• Writing—Students will engage in a recursive process that may include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.																
OAS OBJECTIVES	<table><tr><td>8.2.R.1</td><td>Students will summarize alphabetic and/or multimodal texts about similar topics to demonstrate comprehension within and between texts.</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.R.2</td><td>Students will analyze details in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction texts to identify characteristics of genres.</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.R.3</td><td>Students will paraphrase a passage in their own words to demonstrate comprehension.</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.W.1</td><td>Students will routinely and recursively prewrite (e.g., develop ideas and plan).</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.W.2</td><td>Students will routinely and recursively organize and develop ideas to compose a first draft.</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.W.3</td><td>Students will routinely and recursively revise drafts for intended purpose, audience, organization, coherence, and style (e.g., word choice and sentence variety).</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.W.4</td><td>Students will routinely and recursively edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics, using various resources.</td></tr><tr><td>8.2.W.5</td><td>Students will routinely and recursively publish final drafts for an authentic audience (e.g., publishing digitally, performing, entering contests).</td></tr></table>	8.2.R.1	Students will summarize alphabetic and/or multimodal texts about similar topics to demonstrate comprehension within and between texts.	8.2.R.2	Students will analyze details in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction texts to identify characteristics of genres.	8.2.R.3	Students will paraphrase a passage in their own words to demonstrate comprehension.	8.2.W.1	Students will routinely and recursively prewrite (e.g., develop ideas and plan).	8.2.W.2	Students will routinely and recursively organize and develop ideas to compose a first draft.	8.2.W.3	Students will routinely and recursively revise drafts for intended purpose, audience, organization, coherence, and style (e.g., word choice and sentence variety).	8.2.W.4	Students will routinely and recursively edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics, using various resources.	8.2.W.5	Students will routinely and recursively publish final drafts for an authentic audience (e.g., publishing digitally, performing, entering contests).
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8.2.W.5	Students will routinely and recursively publish final drafts for an authentic audience (e.g., publishing digitally, performing, entering contests).																
ITEM SPECIFICATIONS	<p>Emphasis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Items will require students to attain meaning and comprehend core ideas from increasingly complex texts and to apply the recursive writing process to their own independent writing. <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be asked to demonstrate this ability based on a reading selection followed by an appropriate item type. <p>Content Limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The reading selections will be on grade level and may be any one of the following types: informational/expository, narrative, or poetry.• Words being tested will be at grade level. <p>Distractor Domain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorrect answer choices will be plausible, yet incorrect, and may include incorrect meanings of words.																

STANDARD 3—CRITICAL READING AND WRITING

OAS STANDARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing. Reading—Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate increasingly complex literary and informational texts that include a wide range of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives from a variety of genres. Writing—Students will thoughtfully and intentionally write, addressing a range of modes, purposes, and audiences.
OAS OBJECTIVES	<p>8.3.R.1 Students will analyze works written on the same topic from a variety of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives and analyze the methods the authors use to achieve their purposes.</p> <p>8.3.R.2 Students will evaluate perspectives (e.g., historical, cultural, ethnic, and global) and describe how they affect various literary and informational texts.</p> <p>8.3.R.3 Students will analyze literary elements to support interpretations of a literary text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> setting plot characters (i.e., protagonist, antagonist) characterization conflict (i.e., internal, external) point of view (i.e., third person limited and omniscient, second person, and unreliable narrator) <p>8.3.R.4 Students will analyze literary devices to support interpretations of a text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism, idiom) sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration) verbal and situational irony <p>8.3.R.5 Students will identify literary elements and devices that impact a text’s theme, mood, and tone.</p> <p>8.3.R.6 Students will evaluate textual evidence to determine whether a claim is substantiated or unsubstantiated.</p> <p>8.3.R.7 Students will analyze how informational text structures support the author’s purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare/contrast cause/effect problem/solution description sequential <p>8.3.R.8 Students will compare or contrast two or more texts, providing textual evidence to support their inferences.</p>

STANDARD 3—CRITICAL READING AND WRITING

OAS OBJECTIVES

- 8.3.W.1** Students will compose narratives reflecting real or imagined experiences that:
- include plots involving complex characters resolving conflicts
 - unfold in chronological or surprising sequence (e.g., flashback and foreshadowing)
 - include a narrator, precise language, sensory details, and dialogue to enhance the narrative
 - use sentence variety to create clarity
 - emulate literary elements and/or literary devices from mentor texts
- 8.3.W.2** Students will compose informative essays or reports that:
- objectively introduce and develop topics
 - incorporate evidence (e.g., specific facts, details, charts and graphs, data)
 - maintain an organized structure
 - use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity
 - establish and maintain a formal style
 - emulate literary devices from mentor texts
- 8.3.W.3** Students will compose argumentative essays that:
- introduce precise claims
 - acknowledge counterclaims
 - organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
 - provide relevant evidence to develop arguments, using credible sources
 - use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity
 - establish and maintain a formal style

ITEM SPECIFICATIONS

Emphasis:

- Items will require students to apply critical thinking skills when reading diverse and complex texts and to write in all modes (narrative, informative, and argument) for various audiences and purposes using refined composition skills.

Format:

- Students will be asked to demonstrate this ability based on a reading selection followed by an appropriate item type.
- Students will be asked to demonstrate the ability to write by producing multi-paragraph essays in response to mode-specific writing prompts.

Content Limits:

- The reading selections will be on grade level and may be any one of the following types: informational/expository, narrative, or poetry.
- Words being tested will be at grade level.
- Passage-based constructed response writing should be based on the writing modes in the standard: Narrative, Informative, and Argument.

Distractor Domain:

- Incorrect answer choices will be plausible, yet incorrect, and may include incorrect meanings of words.

STANDARD 4—VOCABULARY

OAS STANDARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will expand and apply their spoken and reading vocabularies to speak, read, and write effectively. Reading—Students will expand their grade-level vocabularies through reading, word study, and class discussion. Writing—Students will apply knowledge of vocabulary to speak and write effectively.
OAS OBJECTIVES	<p>8.4.R.1 Students will analyze the relationships among synonyms, antonyms, and analogies.</p> <p>8.4.R.2 Students will use context clues, connotation, and denotation to determine or clarify the meaning of words or distinguish among multiple-meaning words.</p> <p>8.4.R.3 Students will use word parts (e.g., affixes, Greek roots, stems) to define and determine the meaning of increasingly complex words.</p> <p>8.4.R.4 Students will use a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus to determine or clarify the meanings, syllabication, pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms, and parts of speech of words.</p> <p>8.4.W.1 Students will use precise, grade-level vocabulary in writing to clearly communicate ideas.</p> <p>8.4.W.2 Students will select language in writing to create a specific effect according to purpose.</p>
ITEM SPECIFICATIONS	<p>Emphasis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items will require students to demonstrate their understanding of domain-appropriate and grade-level vocabulary in complex texts and to apply their vocabulary skills in their independent writing. <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be asked to demonstrate this ability based on a reading selection followed by an appropriate item type. <p>Content Limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reading selections will be on grade level and may be any one of the following types: informational/expository, narrative, or poetry. Words being tested will be at grade level. Context clue vocabulary items will be 1–2 grades above a grade 8 audience. Vocabulary items will include inferential questions. <p>Distractor Domain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrect answer choices will be plausible, yet incorrect, and may include incorrect meanings of words.

STANDARD 5—LANGUAGE

OAS STANDARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to comprehend texts and communicate effectively. Reading—Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to comprehend, analyze, and/or evaluate a variety of texts. Writing—Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to speak and write effectively, demonstrating standard usage when appropriate.
OAS OBJECTIVES	<p>8.5.R.1 Students will recognize active and passive voice and misplaced and dangling modifiers in sentences.</p> <p>8.5.R.2 Students will recognize and explain the impact on meaning of parts of speech in sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nouns verbals (i.e., gerunds, participles, infinitives) cumulative and coordinate adjectives vague pronouns singular <i>they/them/their</i> coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions adverbs interjections <p>8.5.W.1 Students will compose simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to add clarity and variety in their writing.</p> <p>8.5.W.2 Students will create clarity and/or add variety to their writing with nouns, verbs, verbals, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs, pronouns, and conjunctions.</p> <p>8.5.W.3 Students will recognize and correct the following: misplaced and dangling modifiers, vague pronouns, and second person point of view in formal writing.</p> <p>8.5.W.4 Students will write using correct capitalization mechanics. <i>Grade of Mastery: 4</i></p> <p>8.5.W.5 Students will write using correct end mark mechanics. <i>Grade of Mastery: 4</i></p> <p>8.5.W.6 Students will write using correct apostrophe mechanics. <i>Grade of Mastery: 5</i></p> <p>8.5.W.7 Students will use commas to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., a fascinating, enjoyable movie).</p> <p>8.5.W.8 Students will use a colon to introduce a quotation from a source.</p> <p>8.5.W.9 Students will write using correct quotation marks mechanics. <i>Grade of Mastery: 8</i></p> <p>8.5.W.10 Students will use underlining or italics to indicate titles of works, thoughts in narratives, and words in a foreign language.</p> <p>8.5.W.11 Students will use a semicolon to punctuate compound and compound-complex sentences.</p>

STANDARD 5—LANGUAGE

ITEM SPECIFICATIONS

Emphasis:

- Items will require students to recognize and apply appropriate grammar and rhetorical style in texts and to apply correct usage of Standard English in their independent writing.

Format:

- Students may be asked to demonstrate this ability based on an informative/expository selection with embedded errors followed by multiple-choice items.
- Students may also be asked to demonstrate this ability based on a reading selection followed by an appropriate item type.

Content Limits:

- The reading selections will be on grade-level informative/expository selections.
- Test items requiring students to correct the mechanics of sentences and paragraphs should be at or below grade level so that the focus is on the language use rather than reading comprehension.

Distractor Domain:

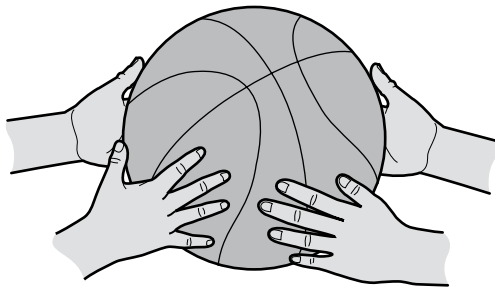
- Incorrect answer choices will be plausible, yet incorrect, and will be typical of the types of errors students are most likely to make.
-

STANDARD 6—RESEARCH

OAS STANDARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will engage in inquiry to acquire, refine, and communicate accurate information. Reading—Students will gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize researched information to acquire and refine knowledge. Writing—Students will synthesize information ethically through speaking and writing.
OAS OBJECTIVES	<p>8.6.R.1 Students will find and comprehend information (e.g., claims, evidence) about a topic, using their own viable research questions.</p> <p>8.6.R.2 Students will find, record, and organize information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, following ethical and legal guidelines.</p> <p>8.6.R.3 Students will determine the relevance, reliability, and validity of the information gathered.</p> <p>8.6.W.1 Students will formulate and refine a viable research question.</p> <p>8.6.W.2 Students will develop a clear, concise, defensible thesis statement.</p> <p>8.6.W.3 Students will quote, paraphrase, and summarize findings following a consistent citation style (e.g., MLA, APA) to avoid plagiarism.</p> <p>8.6.W.4 Students will create research papers and/or projects independently for shorter timeframes (e.g., two or three days) and over extended periods of time (e.g., one week).</p>
ITEM SPECIFICATIONS	<p>Emphasis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items will require students to analyze and evaluate information from a variety of sources and to synthesize and integrate information and cite sources in their independent reports and projects. <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be asked to demonstrate this ability based on a reading selection followed by an appropriate item type. <p>Content Limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reading selections will be on grade level and may be any one of the following types: informational/expository, narrative, or poetry. Some selections will be informative/expository selections with embedded errors and citation guides. Selected-response items will include only pertinent information about the citation rules for students to use in order to answer the questions. Extended writing tasks will not show preference to a specific citation format. <p>Distractor Domain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrect answer choices will be plausible, yet incorrect, and may include incorrect meanings of words.

Read this passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Lifelong Friends



- 1 Megan's family moved in down the street the summer of our third-grade year. I can still remember the feeling of excitement when Mr. Jackson, our next-door neighbor, mentioned to my dad that the new family had a girl my age. I was thrilled. I was looking forward to having a best friend!
- 2 We became inseparable almost immediately, spending every waking moment together. All of my expectations for the potential friendship turned out just as I had anticipated. The first day of school that August was a bit of a disappointment for us when we were not in the same class, but we both eventually came to the realization that it was actually in our best interest, for we would most certainly have too much fun if we were in the same class together. It is unbelievable that five years have passed since then.
- 3 Megan has a basketball net on her garage, and throughout the years, we have spent countless hours shooting baskets. We both actually became pretty good, and in sixth grade decided to try out for our school's basketball team. We both made the team and became starters, thriving on the support we gave one another. When one of us had a disappointing game, the other provided an encouraging pep talk.
- 4 We started eighth grade last August, and at the onset of the season, Coach called all of the starters into his office to discuss the added pressure that would be thrust upon us this year. With high school quickly approaching and coaches scrutinizing our every move on the court, there would be a lot of added pressure. He asked Megan and me to wait around after everyone else left. After the locker room had cleared, he told us that a number of high school coaches were talking about the two of us, and how we both seemed to be really strong candidates for the middle school all-city team. We left his office feeling self-assured, reveling at the possibility of both of us being selected for the honor.
- 5 "One thing for sure, though," Megan said in a suddenly sobering tone, "let's not let this opportunity come between us."

- 6 "What do you mean?" I questioned.
- 7 "Well, I know that we're both pretty confident about being selected," Megan said, "but what if one of us makes it, and the other doesn't?"
- 8 "No way," I said. "That's not going to happen," I insisted, squashing the idea before it could grow.
- 9 Well, the season marched on at a swift pace, and we alternated being the standout of each game. But then, things changed. Megan had three outstanding games in a row. Coach called me aside and told me to relax because he thought I was putting too much pressure on myself and was forcing too many of my shots. But the more I tried to relax, the worse I played.
- 10 It was my worst fear, but unexpectedly, things started to change between Megan and me. The friendly competition we once enjoyed transformed into a rivalry. By the end of the season, Megan and I were barely acknowledging each other.
- 11 The announcement of the middle school all-city team came about a week after the conclusion of the season, and as I anticipated, Megan made the team, and I did not. I struggled to utter a sincere "Congratulations."
- 12 The end of the school year brought the beginning of an unsettling summer. Our faltering friendship found me with plenty of time on my hands. By the beginning of July, I had recurring thoughts about how foolish I had been to let pettiness and jealousy seep into our friendship. I struggled with the thought of apologizing to Megan, but pride and embarrassment hindered me from doing the admirable thing.
- 13 Megan must possess psychic powers because, not a week later, the doorbell rang and Mom called out, "It's Megan." I struggled with the thought of facing the inevitable.
- 14 "Hey," Megan struggled to say, but continued, "how's it going?"
- 15 "I'm hanging in there," I replied.
- 16 There was an awkward moment of silence when I finally uttered, "Listen, Megan, I was wrong to let jealousy interfere with our friendship. I know it's a lot to ask for you to accept my apology, but I'm really sorry."
- 17 "No problem," Megan responded. "I was getting pretty conceited with all of the attention I was getting."
- 18 "I sure learned a valuable lesson from all of this," I said. "Nothing is worth jeopardizing a friendship like ours."
- 19 "You're right about that," she said. "Let's go shoot some baskets."

"Lifelong Friends." Copyright © 2022 Cognia, Inc.

1 Which sentence is the best summary of paragraphs 3 and 4?

- A** Megan and the narrator are warned by the coach about pressures that may be directed toward them as starters on their school team.
- B** Megan and the narrator are confident in their individual basketball abilities and provide support to each other as they play on school teams.
- C** Because Megan and the narrator have skills in basketball and spend a great deal of time practicing and supporting each other, they have been encouraged by their coach to try out for a special city team.
- D** Since they first began playing basketball in sixth grade, Megan and the narrator have been starters on their school teams, and they continue to demonstrate their talents as members of the eighth-grade team.

Standard 2: Students will read and comprehend inclusive, diverse, and increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

8.2.R.1: Students will summarize alphabetic and/or multimodal texts about similar topics to demonstrate comprehension within and between texts.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student must have a strong understanding of paragraphs 3 and 4. Then the student must identify the key points in these paragraphs to develop a summary.

Distractor Rationale

- A. This is a detail presented only in paragraph 4.
- B. This is a detail presented in both paragraphs, but the information about the all-city team is important to include in the summary.
- C. Correct. This sentence provides a summary of details for both paragraphs 3 and 4.**
- D. This does include details from both paragraphs but does not provide a summary of the paragraphs.

2 How can the reader tell that the selection is fiction?

- A** It describes different times and places.
- B** It features a plot and fictional characters.
- C** It includes relatable thoughts and feelings.
- D** It has an interesting and original main idea.

Standard 2: Students will read and comprehend inclusive, diverse, and increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

8.2.R.2: Students will analyze details in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction texts to identify characteristics of genres.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the item requires that the student know the features of fiction and apply that knowledge to make a determination about the passage.

Distractor Rationale

- A. A nonfiction/informational selection could also include different times and places.
- B. Correct. Plots and characters are important components of fictional selections like short stories.**
- C. A nonfiction/informational selection could also include thoughts and feelings.
- D. A nonfiction/informational selection could also include an interesting and original main idea.

3 Read the sentence.

The friendly competition we once enjoyed transformed into a rivalry.

This sentence contributes to the meaning of the passage by

- A** identifying the conflict.
- B** introducing the theme.
- C** describing the characters.
- D** developing the point of view.

Standard 3: Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate increasingly complex literary and informational texts that include a wide range of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives from a variety of genres.

8.3.R.3: Students will analyze literary elements to support interpretations of a literary text:

- setting
- plot
- characters (i.e., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- point of view (i.e., third person limited and omniscient and second person)

Depth-of-Knowledge: 3

This item is a DOK 3 because it requires the student to analyze a portion of the text and make an inference as to how it contributes to the passage as a whole.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Correct.** This sentence introduces the conflict that the narrator and Megan experience.
- B.** The theme of the passage is stated in paragraph 18. This sentence does not support the theme of the passage.
- C.** This sentence is not describing Megan or the narrator but the conflict they are experiencing.
- D.** This sentence is not stating or developing a point of view.

4 Read the sentence from the passage.

We became inseparable almost immediately, spending every waking moment together.

What does the hyperbole suggest about the girls' relationship?

- A** The girls had no other friends.
- B** The girls played no other sports.
- C** The girls had the same teachers.
- D** The girls spent a great deal of time together.

Standard 3: Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate increasingly complex literary and informational texts that include a wide range of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives from a variety of genres.

8.3.R.4: Students will analyze literary devices to support an interpretation of a text:

- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism, idiom)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration)
- verbal and situational irony

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student applies knowledge about hyperbole to determine what it tells about a particular relationship.

Distractor Rationale

- A. That is not what is suggested by the hyperbole.
- B. That is not what is suggested by the hyperbole.
- C. That is not what is suggested by the hyperbole.
- D. Correct.** The hyperbole “spending every waking moment together” suggests that the girls were never out of each other's sight, which would be impossible since they did not even live in the same house.

5 In paragraph 4, the word scrutinizing means

- A** unfairly judging.
- B** closely watching.
- C** loudly criticizing.
- D** passionately cheering.

Standard 4: Students will expand their grade-level vocabularies through reading, word study, and class discussion.

8.4.R.2: Students will use context clues, connotation, and denotation to determine or clarify the meaning of words or distinguish among multiple-meaning words.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student must draw meaning from the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Distractor Rationale

- A. As used in paragraph 4, the high school coaches are looking closely at every move the players make on the court, not unfairly judging them.
- B. Correct. The coaches are looking closely at every move the players make on the court as a consideration for future placement on a high school team.**
- C. As used in paragraph 4, the high school coaches are looking closely at every move the players make on the court, not loudly criticizing them.
- D. As used in paragraph 4, the high school coaches are looking closely at every move the players make on the court, not passionately cheering them.

6 Which research question would best help a student find information about the importance of friendly competition?

- A** Which sports activities are the most competitive?
- B** Is competition important for people to be successful?
- C** What are some strategies that promote healthy competition?
- D** Which professional athlete has the best reputation for being a positive competitor?

Standard 6: Students will gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize researched information to acquire and refine knowledge.

8.6.R.1: Students will find and comprehend information (e.g., claims, evidence) about a topic, using their own viable research questions.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student must comprehend the passage and apply the skill of developing research questions to respond to the question.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Knowing what sports are the most competitive would not provide the best information about the importance of friendly competition.
- B. Knowing if competition is important for people to be successful would not provide the best information about the importance of friendly competition.
- C. Correct. Knowing how to promote healthy competition would provide the best information about the importance of friendly competition.**
- D. Knowing which professional athlete is known for having a good reputation as a positive competitor would not provide the best information about the importance of friendly competition.

You will now read two related passages and answer the questions that follow. Some of these questions may ask you to compare the two passages.

Oklahoma's Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge

- 1 When people think about Oklahoma, they may imagine a vast plain filled with prairies, farms, and ranches. But millions of years ago, parts of Oklahoma were covered by an ancient sea named the Western Interior Seaway. Today, we see evidence of that ancient sea in the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge (SPNWR).
- 2 This magical place is known for more than its unusual landscape. Endangered and threatened wildlife can be seen here. Rock hounds¹ seeking hourglass selenite crystals, Oklahoma's state crystal, can only dig for them at the salt flats.

Salt Flats

- 3 Due to shifts in the Earth's crust, the Western Interior Seaway became cut off from its water source and evaporated, leaving a thick crust of salt coating parts of the land. Even though the sea is gone, shallow pools and streams remain. The ground here is unable to absorb a lot of water, so rain frequently adds to shallow pools and streams. Rivers in this region contribute to some of the bodies of water in the refuge, and salty groundwater continues to flow just beneath the earth's surface. So, when the ground becomes saturated, the salty water seeps up from below the surface, adding to the pools and streams. As the water evaporates, the salt is left behind, adding to the unique landscape.



The Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge is a very unique ecosystem.

Going to the Birds

- 4 At first glance, it may not seem like many animals could survive in the SPNWR. However, there is an abundance of wildlife here. The refuge contains grasslands and wooded areas, which are home to animals like white-tailed deer, squirrels, American badgers, and many others. In addition, the SPNWR is an important stop for migrating birds.

¹**rock hound:** a person who has a special interest in and collects rocks and minerals

- 5 Over 300 different types of birds can be found at the SPNWR. During the spring and fall, the bird population is at its highest as birds travel from one region to another. Like the birds, birdwatchers flock to the Great Salt Plains Lake, which is located primarily in the SPNWR. The lake is not very deep; in fact, the deepest part of the lake measures less than 8 feet.
- 6 The shallow waters are great for feeding hungry birds. Invertebrates, such as worms, snails, and insects, are important food sources for nesting snowy plovers and other shorebirds. The least terns, a type of bird, feed along the rivers that flow through the salt flats. A popular food for many birds is the salt brine fly, which hatches when water is available.

A Special Crystal

- 7 The SPNWR is the only place to find hourglass selenite crystals. In fact, one of the main reasons people visit this refuge is to dig for these unusual crystals.
- 8 Beth Ullenberg of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service explains the process: The crystals form when gypsum (a mineral) in the soil mixes with salty groundwater. As they grow, the crystals trap sand and clay and sometimes sticks, rocks, and bones. These materials help create the hourglass-shaped inclusions inside the crystal as it grows outward from the center.
- 9 This hourglass shape is not found in selenite crystals anywhere else in the world—it is only found on the salt plains of northwest Oklahoma. Because it is so unique, the hourglass-shaped selenite crystal was designated as the state crystal of Oklahoma in 2005.



Hourglass selenite crystals were designated the Oklahoma state crystal in 2005. The crystals themselves are a form of gypsum. Iron oxide in the soil gives the hourglass inside the crystals its chocolatey brown color.

- 10 Visitors may only dig for these rare crystals from April 1 through October 15 because the area is a critical habitat for whooping cranes. It is also a nesting place for many birds. In fact, birds will often look for food in the holes left by those digging for crystals. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service offers these tips for crystal digging:

Digging for Crystals at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge

1. Use a shovel to dig a hole about two feet deep and two feet across until you reach wet sand. You may feel the shovel break through the crystals as it goes down. This cannot be helped as there is no way of predicting exactly where a bed of crystals is located.
2. Allow two or three inches of water to seep in from the bottom.
3. Use your hand or a container to splash water gently against the sides of the hole. The agitated water will wash the soil away from the crystals.
4. When you find a crystal formation, continue splashing to wash it free of the supporting sand and clay.
5. At this stage of the process, the newly exposed crystals are wet and fragile so use great care removing them.
6. After removing crystals from sand, place them where the sun and wind will dry them. Egg cartons or other containers are recommended for transporting the crystals.

- 11 Regardless of what draws visitors to this refuge, they are sure to be impressed. The remnants of that ancient sea have left behind an ecosystem that is essential to several endangered and threatened birds as well as other animals. It has also left behind a unique geology that fascinates those who spend time there.

"Oklahoma's Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge." Copyright© 2022 Cogna, Inc.

Read this passage, which goes with the previous passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

“A Special Place”: Birds and Crystals Make the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge Unique

by Ed Godfrey

- 1 In April, the spring migration of birds slows down at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, and the crystal digging begins.
- 2 Birdwatching and crystal digging are the two most popular pastimes at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, one of the most distinctive areas in the world. It is recognized internationally by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network for providing critically important shorebird habitat. Only about a dozen other wildlife refuges have that honor.
- 3 During the summer, the refuge is typically home for egrets, herons, American avocets, and other shorebirds. A few resident pelicans stick around for the summer but most fly north, says Colby Wyatt. Wyatt is an administrative officer at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge. If visitors at the refuge are not there with their binoculars to watch birds during the summer, then they are most likely there with a shovel and a bucket to dig for crystals.
- 4 Selenite crystal digging on the salt flats opens April 1 and runs through October 15. On October 16, the digging areas close for the birds to use in the fall and winter. The entire refuge is designated as a critical whooping crane habitat.



Digging for hourglass crystals requires simple tools: a bucket and a shovel. It can get pretty hot, so bringing water and an umbrella or tent for shade is a good idea.

- 5 Crystal digging was never more popular than in 2020 when more than 130,000 people visited the refuge to hunt for the stones in the sand. "There were record weekends," Wyatt said. "There were several weekends it hit way over a couple of thousand. We had license plates from New Jersey, New York, Washington, Florida. It was all over. Typically, especially in the summertime, we do get more of an international presence," he said. "A lot of people from Japan and Germany, and the Norwegian states, like to come through here."
- 6 The Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge is the only known site in the world where selenite crystals with brown hourglass inclusions are found. This makes them a collector's item for rock hound¹ enthusiasts. Because the crystals form in wet soil, sand, and clay, particles are included within the crystal giving them their unique "hourglass" shape inside. "That (hourglass shape) is very unique throughout the world, so we have a lot of collectors that come in that want to get a crystal from here," Wyatt said.
- 7 The Salt Plains is one of the few places within the national wildlife refuge system where something is allowed to be removed. Collectors can keep up to 10 pounds of crystals per day. Wyatt said it is rare anyone leaves with that much, although almost all diggers leave with at least some amounts of the crystallized form of gypsum.
- 8 It takes seven years for the crystals to form, so the refuge has eight separate digging areas that are rotated annually for the public to use. "By the time it's time to dig again (in an area), the crystals have formed," Wyatt said.
- 9 The crystal digging also benefits some of the shorebirds that nest in the area. Mounds left from dig seasons are used by birds as elevated nesting platforms. The mounds give the shorebirds a place to nest above the floodplain during the rainy seasons and increase their nest success.
- 10 "We found that (crystal digging) was an activity that benefited the refuge," Wyatt said.

¹**rock hound:** a person who has a special interest in and collects rocks and minerals

"'A Special Place': Birds and Crystals Make the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge Unique" by Ed Godfrey, from *The Oklahoman*, April 24, 2021. Copyright © 2021 by The Oklahoman. Republished by permission.

7 Which feature from the passage “A Special Place” shows that the genre is nonfiction?

- A** an expert providing factual information
- B** quotation marks to indicate spoken words
- C** descriptive language to communicate ideas
- D** an opening paragraph establishing the setting

Standard 2: Students will read and comprehend inclusive, diverse, and increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

8.2.R.2: Students will analyze details in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction texts to identify characteristics of genres.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to know the features of different genres and apply that knowledge to the passage to determine how it should be classified.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Correct.** The author quotes an expert who is an employee of the refuge and provides factual information; this shows that the genre of the passage is nonfiction.
- B.** The use of quotation marks is not limited to nonfiction.
- C.** Other genres use descriptive language so its use in the passage does not show that the genre is nonfiction.
- D.** This technique is used by other genres and does not show that the genre of this passage is nonfiction.

- 8** After reading both passages, a student has an assignment to write a paper about the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge. They want to narrow the focus of their paper by choosing a more specific topic.

Which pre-writing strategy will **best** help the student accomplish their goal?

- A** Create a map of the refuge to include in the paper.
- B** Brainstorm ideas by listing facts about the refuge.
- C** Write a draft of an introduction for the paper.
- D** Find resources about other wildlife refuges.

Standard 2: Students will engage in a recursive process that may include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

8.2.W.1: Students will routinely and recursively prewrite (e.g., develop ideas and plan).

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student must recall pre-writing strategies and then apply that knowledge to select the most appropriate method.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Creating a map is not an effective pre-writing strategy for this purpose.
- B. Correct. Listing facts in a brainstorming activity is an effective pre-writing strategy for determining a focus because it will generate ideas for possible topics.**
- C. Writing an introduction is not an effective pre-writing strategy for determining a focus.
- D. Finding resources about other wildlife refuges will likely not help the student narrow the focus of a paper about a specific refuge.

- 9** Which statement describes how **both** passages present information about the wildlife refuge?
- A** "Oklahoma's Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge" is written in a humorous tone, while "A Special Place" is written as a serious analysis of the purpose of the wildlife refuge.
 - B** The author of "Oklahoma's Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge" provides a broad view of the refuge, while the author of "A Special Place" focuses on how the refuge is currently used.
 - C** The author of "Oklahoma's Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge" describes a sequence of events at the refuge, while the author of "A Special Place" uses a compare and contrast structure.
 - D** "Oklahoma's Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge" is written as an argumentative essay about the importance of wildlife refuges, while "A Special Place" is written to inform about a wildlife refuge.

Standard 3: Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate increasingly complex literary and informational texts that include a wide range of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives from a variety of genres.

8.3.R.1: Students will analyze works written on the same topic from a variety of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives and analyze the methods the authors use to achieve their purposes.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 3

This item is a DOK 3 because the student must perform a cross-text evaluation to make a decision about how the authors of both texts presented information on the topic.

Distractor Rationale

- A. This is not accurate, as the tone of the first passage is not humorous.
- B. Correct. The author of the first passage provides historical context and takes a broad view of the purpose of the refuge, while the author of the second passage limits the focus to the current use.**
- C. The first passage is organized by topic, and the second passage does not use a compare and contrast structure.
- D. The first passage is informative rather than argumentative.

10 In paragraph 11 of “Oklahoma’s Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge,” which 2 phrases best help the reader understand the meaning of the word **remnants**?

- A** ancient sea / left behind
- B** sure to be impressed / that is essential
- C** endangered and threatened birds / unique geology
- D** sure to be impressed / endangered and threatened birds

Standard 4: Students will expand their grade-level vocabularies through reading, word study, and class discussion.

8.4.R.2: Students will use context clues, connotation, and denotation to determine or clarify the meaning of words or distinguish among multiple-meaning words.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word using textual clues in a given paragraph.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Correct.** “Ancient sea” indicates that something very old is being discussed and “left behind” shows that even though it is not there anymore, evidence of the object remains.
- B.** The word remnant means “a small part or trace remaining,” which is not supported by the phrases “sure to be impressed / that is essential.”
- C.** The word remnant means “a small part or trace remaining,” which is not supported by the phrases “endangered and threatened birds / unique geology.”
- D.** The word remnant means “a small part or trace remaining,” which is not supported by the phrases “sure to be impressed / endangered and threatened birds.”

Reread paragraph 11 from “Oklahoma’s Most Unusual Wildlife Refuge.” Drag two phrases from the paragraph that **best** help the reader understand the meaning of the word **remnants** into the appropriate boxes.

To drag a phrase, click and hold the sentence, and then drag it to the desired space. To change a sentence, click and hold it, and then drag it back to the original location.

sure to be impressed

ancient sea

left behind

endangered and threatened

Phrases

Standard 4: Students will expand their grade-level vocabularies through reading, word study, and class discussion.

8.4.R.2: Students will use context clues, connotation, and denotation to determine or clarify the meaning of words or distinguish among multiple-meaning words.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word using textual clues in a given paragraph.

Sample Distractor Rationales:

Correct

Phrases
ancient sea
left behind

Incorrect

Phrases
sure to be impressed
endangered and threatened

12 Read the sentence from the passage “A Special Place.”

It is recognized internationally by the Western **Hemisphere** Shorebird Reserve Network for providing critically important shorebird habitat.

Based on the meaning of the prefix **hemi-** and the word **sphere**, what does the word **hemisphere** mean?

- A** part of a group
- B** related to nature
- C** half of the globe
- D** equal in distance

Standard 4: Students will expand their grade-level vocabularies through reading, word study, and class discussion.

8.4.R.3: Students will use word parts (e.g., affixes, Greek roots, stems) to define and determine the meaning of increasingly complex words.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to recall the meaning of an affix and base word and apply that knowledge to determine the meaning of the word created when they are put together.

Distractor Rationale

- A. “Part of a group” is relevant to the context of the sentence, as the network is a group, but it is not the meaning of the word “hemisphere.”
- B. “Related to nature” might be an appealing option, as the group is involved in overseeing shorebird habitats, but the word “hemisphere” means half of a sphere.
- C. **Correct.** The prefix “hemi-” means half, and “sphere” means globe. The group represents the Western Hemisphere.
- D. “Equal in distance” may suggest equal halves (hemi-) but this is not the meaning of the word hemisphere, which means half of the globe.

13 In the following sentence, which word should replace **way** to be more precise?

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service offers advice on the best **way** for successfully digging for crystals.

- A** application
- B** procedure
- C** situation
- D** structure

Standard 4: Students will apply knowledge of vocabulary to speak and write effectively.

8.4.W.1: Students will use precise, grade-level vocabulary in writing to clearly communicate ideas.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to identify synonyms for a particular word and determine which of those synonyms is most precise for use in the sentence.

Distractor Rationale

- A. “Application” is not what “way” means in the sentence, as “application” means an action. While the word might fit into the sentence logically, it is not the most precise word to replace “way.” The advice from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a very specific procedure—conducted in a specific order.
- B. Correct. “Procedure” is what the word “way” refers to in the sentence, and more precisely communicates the advice. “Procedure” is an accurate description of the step-by-step instructions for how to dig for crystals.**
- C. “Situation” might appear to fit in the sentence, but it does not accurately capture the intended meaning of “way.” “Situation” means a set of circumstances rather than a specific way of doing something (procedure).
- D. “Structure” is not what “way” means in this sentence, as it suggests a completed organization of parts rather than a procedure for accomplishing a task, or perhaps that there is a type of structure needed for the task. The precise choice is “procedure,” as that is the content of the advice.

A student is writing a paper about the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge as a habitat for whooping cranes. The student wants to organize the notes to indicate primary and secondary sources. Complete the chart by dragging one primary and one secondary source into the appropriate boxes.

To drag a phrase, click and hold the phrase, and then drag it to the desired space. To change a phrase, click and hold it, and then drag it back to the original location.

a website listing locations and times to view whooping cranes

a published journal of a birdwatcher who observes whooping cranes regularly

a narrative essay about watching whooping cranes arrive at the refuge

a documentary about refuges for whooping cranes and other endangered birds

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
an interview with a scientist who travels to the refuge each year to study whooping cranes	a chapter in a science textbook about the migration patterns of whooping cranes

Standard 6: Students will gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize researched information to acquire and refine knowledge.

8.6.R.2: Students will find, record, and organize information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, following ethical and legal guidelines.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student must recall the features of primary and secondary sources and apply that knowledge to a set of options.

Correct

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
an interview with a scientist who travels to the refuge each year to study whooping cranes	a chapter in a science textbook about the migration patterns of whooping cranes
a narrative essay about watching whooping cranes arrive at the refuge	a website listing locations and times to view whooping cranes

Incorrect

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
an interview with a scientist who travels to the refuge each year to study whooping cranes	a chapter in a science textbook about the migration patterns of whooping cranes
a documentary about refuges for whooping cranes and other endangered birds	a published journal of a birdwatcher who observes whooping cranes regularly

Distractor Rationale

The student is unclear about the differences between primary and secondary sources.

- 15** A student is writing a paper about the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge as a habitat for whooping cranes. They need to add notes from a primary source.

Which source is a primary source?

- A** a website listing locations and times to view whooping cranes
- B** a published journal of a birdwatcher who follows whooping cranes
- C** a documentary about refuges for whooping cranes and other endangered birds
- D** a chapter in a science textbook about the migration patterns of whooping cranes

Standard 6: Students will gather, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize researched information to acquire and refine knowledge.

8.6.R.2: Students will find, record, and organize information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, following ethical and legal guidelines.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student must recall the features of primary and secondary sources and apply that knowledge to a set of options.

Distractor Rationale

- A. The website is a secondary source, as it contains an informational list of locations and times rather than a firsthand account.
- B. Correct. A journal contains a firsthand account in the writer's own words, so it is a primary source.**
- C. A documentary about refuges for whooping cranes and other endangered birds is a secondary source, as it provides information but is not a firsthand account.
- D. A science textbook contains information in the form of expository text and is not an example of a primary source.

- 16** Which sentence is the **best** thesis statement for a report about the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge?
- A** People come from all over the world every year to birdwatch and dig for crystals at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge.
 - B** People who are interested in seeing the endangered whooping crane will travel to view them in their habitat at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge.
 - C** The Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge is unique because of its value as a bird habitat and as a site where a rare type of selenite crystal can be found.
 - D** The Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge is unusual because it is the only site where rock collectors can find selenite crystals with brown hourglass inclusions.

Standard 6: Students will synthesize information ethically through speaking and writing.

8.6.W.2: Students will develop a clear, concise, defensible thesis statement.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 3

This item is a DOK 3 because the student needs to synthesize information from each passage and then decide which choice best states a formal thesis statement that fully encompasses the ideas in the passages.

Distractor Rationale

- A. This statement is more of a general summary and lacks the scope of a thesis statement.
- B. This statement is incomplete, as it only includes one aspect of the topic (whooping cranes).
- C. Correct. This statement is a concise and complete thesis statement about the focus of the topic.**
- D. This statement is incomplete, as it only includes one aspect of the topic (selenite crystals).

A student wrote a report on a historic home. Read the first part of the report, think about what suggestions you would make, and then answer the questions.

The Mount Laurel Home and Estate—Part 1

1 The Mount Laurel Home and Estate was built in 1780 and was the primary
2 residence for the Robert Clayton family for several generations. In 1927, the
3 home and grounds were placed on the historical register and donated to the
4 public.

5 Last year, conservationists restored the home and opened it for tours.

About Robert Clayton

6 Robert Clayton (1742–1793) was an American colonist in Massachusetts.
7 Although he was only marginally involved in early American politics. Robert
8 Clayton was a contemporary of the Founding Fathers. And reportedly once dined
9 with George and Martha Washington. Excused from serving in the Revolutionary
10 War because of health problems, he earned his wealth through trading. He
11 married Mary Culpepper in 1770, and together they raised five sons and three
12 daughters. He died of pneumonia at the age of 51.

"The Mount Laurel Home and Estate—Part 1." Copyright © 2022 Cognia, Inc.

17 What change, if any, should be made to the sentence in line 5 to make it the active voice?

- A** Last year, tours were opened for the home after it was restored by conservationists.
- B** Last year after being restored by conservationists, tours were opened for the home.
- C** Last year, the home was restored by conservationists, and tours were being opened for the home.
- D** no change

Standard 5: Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to comprehend, analyze, and/or evaluate a variety of texts.

8.5.R.1: Students will recognize active and passive voice and misplaced and dangling modifiers in sentences

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to apply knowledge about active and passive voice to correct the sentence.

Distractor Rationale

- A. This sentence is passive voice because the home was restored and opened by the conservationists.
- B. This sentence is passive voice because the home was restored and opened by the conservationists.
- C. This sentence is passive voice because the home was restored and opened by the conservationists.
- D. **Correct.** The sentence is in active voice because the conservationists restored and opened the home.

18 What change, if any, should be made to the sentences in lines 7–9?

- A** Although he was only marginally involved in early American politics, and he was a contemporary of the Founding Farmers. And reportedly once dined with George and Martha Washington.
- B** Although only marginally involved in early American politics. Clayton was a contemporary of the Founding Fathers, and he reportedly once dined with George and Martha Washington.
- C** Although only marginally involved in early American politics, Clayton was a contemporary of the Founding Fathers, and he reportedly once dined with George and Martha Washington.
- D** no change

Standard 5: Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to speak and write effectively, demonstrating standard usage when appropriate.

8.5.W.1: Students will compose simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to add clarity and variety in their writing.

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student needs to apply knowledge about sentence structure to correct the sentence.

Distractor Rationale

- A. This format incorrectly contains sentence fragments.
- B. This format incorrectly has a sentence fragment.
- C. Correct. This format contains a complete sentence, with no fragments or run-ons.**
- D. This format incorrectly has two sentence fragments.

19 Which type of verbal is used in lines 9 and 10?

- A** gerund
- B** infinitive
- C** participial phrase
- D** prepositional phrase

Standard 5: Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to comprehend, analyze, and/or evaluate a variety of texts.

8.5.R.2: Students will recognize and explain the impact on meaning of parts of speech in sentences:

- nouns
- verbals (i.e., gerunds, participles, infinitives)
- cumulative and coordinate adjectives
- vague pronouns
- singular *they/them/their*
- coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions
- adverbs
- interjections

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student is doing more than recalling what a verbal is. The student must also make a determination as to how the verbal is being used.

Distractor Rationale

- A. The verbal is not a gerund because it is not being used as a noun but as an adjective describing Clayton.
- B. The verbal is not an infinitive because it does not have a verb preceded by “to.”
- C. Correct. This verbal is a participial phrase being used as an adjective to describe Clayton.**
- D. The verbal is not a prepositional phrase because prepositional phrases cannot be verbals.

20 How is the gerund trading being used in line 10?

- A** as a verb
- B** as a noun
- C** as an adverb
- D** as an adjective

Standard 5: Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to comprehend, analyze, and/or evaluate a variety of texts.

8.5.R.2: Students will recognize and explain the impact on meaning of parts of speech in sentences:

- nouns
- verbals (i.e., gerunds, participles, infinitives)
- cumulative and coordinate adjectives
- vague pronouns
- singular *they/them/their*
- coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions
- adverbs
- interjections

Depth-of-Knowledge: 2

This item is a DOK 2 because the student is doing more than recalling what a gerund is. The student must also make a determination as to how the gerund is being used.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Gerunds can only be used as nouns.
- B. Correct. The word “trading” is a noun being used as the object of the preposition “through.”**
- C. Gerunds can only be used as nouns.
- D. Gerunds can only be used as nouns.

Read the next part of the report, think about what suggestions you would make, and then answer the question.

The Mount Laurel Home and Estate—Part 2

13 The Mount Laurel Home and Estate includes five structures: the main house,
14 the kitchen, the icehouse, the barn, and the blacksmith shed. The division of the
15 kitchen from the main house was common at the time because of the risk of fire.

16 The grounds of the estate cover approximately 250 acres. The gardens, the barn,
17 and the blacksmith's shed are maintained as they were during Clayton's lifetime.

18 Visitors can talk with a blacksmith as he works, and see live animals in the barn.

"The Mount Laurel Home and Estate—Part 2." Copyright © 2022 Cogna, Inc.

21

Visitors can talk with a blacksmith as he works, and see live animals in the barn.

What change, if any, should be made to the underlined words as he works, and see live animals in line 18?

- A** as he works and see live animals
- B** as he works and, see live animals
- C** as he works and see live animals,
- D** no change

Standard 5: Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to speak and write effectively, demonstrating standard usage when appropriate.

8.5.W.7: Students will use commas to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., a fascinating, enjoyable movie).

Depth-of-Knowledge: 1

This is a DOK 1 because the student is recalling the rules around comma usage.

Distractor Rationale

- A. Correct.** This sentence has a compound verb and does not need a comma before the conjunction "and."
- B.** This is a sentence with compound verbs "talk" and "see," and the sentence does not need the comma after the conjunction "and."
- C.** This is a sentence with compound verbs "talk" and "see," and the sentence does not need the comma after the word "animals."
- D.** This is a sentence with compound verbs "talk" and "see," and the sentence does not need the comma before the conjunction "and."

SUBJECT	SUMMARY DEFINITIONS OF DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE (DOK)			
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
English Language Arts	<p>Requires students to recall, observe, question, or represent facts, simple skills, or abilities. Requires only surface understanding of text, often verbatim recall.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ideas by reference to verbatim (or only slightly paraphrased) details in text • Use a dictionary to find meanings of words • Recognize figurative language in a passage • Identify correct spelling or meaning of words 	<p>Requires processing beyond recall and observation. Requires both comprehension and subsequent processing of text or portions of text. Involves ordering, classifying text as well as identifying patterns, relationships, and main points.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context to identify unfamiliar words • Predict a logical outcome • Identify and summarize main points • Apply knowledge of conventions of standard American English • Compose accurate summaries of the major events in a narrative 	<p>Requires students to go beyond text. Requires students to explain, generalize, and connect ideas. Involves deep inferencing, prediction, elaboration, and summary. Requires students to support positions using prior knowledge and evidence and to manipulate themes across passages.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine effect of author's purpose on text elements • Summarize information from multiple sources • Critically analyze literature • Compose focused, organized, coherent, purposeful prose • Evaluate the internal logic or credibility of a message 	<p>Requires complexity at least at the level of DOK 3 but also an extended time to complete the task, such as conducting a research project over many weeks. A project that requires extended time but repetitive or lower-DOK tasks is not at Level 4. May require generating hypotheses and performing complex analyses and connections among texts.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources • Examine and explain alternative perspectives across sources • Describe and illustrate common themes across a variety of texts • Create compositions that synthesize, analyze, and evaluate



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