

Grade 8 English Language Arts Performance Level Descriptors

Advanced: Students demonstrate superior performance on challenging subject matter. In addition to demonstrating a broad and in-depth understanding and application of all skills at the Proficient level, students scoring at the **Advanced** level typically thoroughly comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and respond to literary and informational texts, applying critical thinking skills. Students skillfully evaluate literary devices, points of view, and perspectives, and they skillfully analyze how authors use key literary elements to contribute to the meaning of the text. Students explicitly analyze and evaluate textual evidence to support inferences and conclusions between and across multiple texts.

Students effectively engage in a recursive writing process to compose narrative, informative, and argumentative responses for varied purposes and audiences. In argumentative writing, students introduce a claim, counterclaim, and support with logical reasons and evidence. Students synthesize fully developed ideas, strong organization, well-chosen words, fluent sentences, and appropriate voice.

Students skillfully use context clues, word parts, and reference tools to determine or clarify the meaning of words. Students infer complex relationships among words with multiple meanings. Students select precise vocabulary to communicate ideas in writing and to create a specific effect according to a purpose.

Students intentionally apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to analyze and evaluate a variety of texts in reading and writing. Students demonstrate a strong command of Standard English grammar, mechanics, and usage.

Students recognize viable research questions and well-developed thesis statements to find information on a specific topic. Students thoroughly comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize resources. Students skillfully summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written works for multiple purposes.

Proficient: Students demonstrate mastery over appropriate grade-level subject matter and readiness for the next grade level. Students scoring at the **Proficient** level typically read, comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and respond to literary and informational texts, applying critical thinking skills. Students evaluate literary devices, points of view, and perspectives, and they analyze how authors use key literary elements to contribute to the meaning of the text. Students analyze and evaluate textual evidence to support inferences and conclusions between and across multiple texts.

Students engage in a recursive writing process to compose narrative, informative, and argumentative responses for varied purposes and audiences. In argumentative writing, students introduce a claim, recognize a claim from an opposing viewpoint, and organize reasons and evidence. Students use fully developed ideas, strong organization, well-chosen words, fluent sentences, and appropriate voice.

Students use context clues, word parts, and reference tools to determine or clarify the meaning of words. Students infer the relationships among words with multiple meanings. Students select vocabulary to communicate ideas in writing and to create a specific effect according to a purpose.

Students apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to analyze and evaluate a variety of texts in reading and writing. Students demonstrate a command of Standard English grammar, mechanics, and usage.

Students recognize viable research questions and well-developed thesis statements to find information on a specific topic. Students comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize resources. Students summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written works for multiple purposes.

Basic: Students demonstrate partial mastery of the essential knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade level. Students scoring at the **Basic** level partially comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and respond to literary and informational texts, applying limited critical thinking skills. Students inconsistently evaluate literary devices, points of view, and perspectives, and they inconsistently analyze how authors use key literary elements to contribute to the meaning of the text. Students inconsistently analyze and evaluate textual evidence to support inferences and conclusions between or across multiple texts.

Students inconsistently engage in a writing process to compose narrative, informative, and argumentative responses for varied purposes and audiences. In argumentative writing, students introduce a claim and provide reasons and evidence. Students use partially developed ideas, weak organization, ineffective word choice, basic sentences, or inconsistent voice.

Students ineffectively use context clues, word parts, and reference tools to determine the meaning of words. Students may or may not infer the relationships among words with multiple meanings. Students use a limited vocabulary to communicate ideas in writing and to create an effect according to a purpose.

Students inconsistently apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to analyze and evaluate a variety of texts in reading and writing. Students demonstrate a limited command of Standard English grammar, mechanics, and usage.

Students may not recognize viable research questions and well-developed thesis statements to find information on a specific topic. Students partially comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize resources. Students ineffectively summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written works for multiple purposes.

Below Basic: Students have not performed at least at the Basic level. Students scoring at the **Below Basic** level should be given comprehensive reading instruction.