

Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program

Performance Level Descriptors

Performance Level Descriptors give teachers, parents/guardians and students more information about a student's strengths and areas for improvement after taking our state assessments. Performance Level Descriptors are broken down by grade and by the score levels students can earn: Basic (Level 2), Proficient (Level 3) and Advanced (Level 4). There are no descriptors for Below Basic (Level 1).



Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 4

Basic Reading Behavioral Characteristics

- Students are challenged readers.
- Students struggle with decoding, fluency, and comprehension, and often times they spend so much mental energy trying to decode that they are unable to complete the process of reading a text.
- Students frequently require prompting and need explicit instruction to “penetrate” text beyond the surface level.
- Students are sometimes distracted or discouraged and will substitute background knowledge about a subject rather than continuing to persevere with a text itself.
- Students do have the ability to use some or all of standard skills inconsistently, but the basic reader has very few metacognitive strategies to assist the reading process.

Basic Reading Skill Characteristics

- Students struggle to comprehend, analyze, and/or evaluate.
- Students read below grade level and have difficulty achieving appropriate fluency, accuracy, and rate with grade-level appropriate materials.
- Students demonstrate a limited understanding of themes, main ideas, and details and are typically unable to use documented evidence from text.
- Students have few strategies for understanding unknown words.
- Students struggle to read informational text and charts, graphs, and captions are particularly difficult.
- Students can re-tell a story explaining characters and plot, but they are typically unable to emphasize the most important parts.
- Students can give opinions about a story but are unable to support it with details.
- Students know that a book is organized by the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, and pictures.
- Students have a limited ability to use information from their reading to explain what they have learned or what new thing they would do.

Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 4

Proficient Reading Behavioral Characteristics

- Students are confident, proficient readers.
- Students apply strategies like graphic organizers to help them understand more than one text at a time.
- Students use a variety of metacognitive strategies to be aware of their thinking and make connections.
- Students visually pinpoint or verbally explain where comprehension breaks down in reading a text.
- Students are able to read and follow directions.
- Students can use a variety of strategies such as highlighting to discern the necessary information from unimportant information to perform a task.
- Students understand the common language of assessment and literacy.

Proficient Reading Skill Characteristics

- Students appropriately read for comprehension, analysis, and evaluation.
- Students read fluently, with accuracy, expression, and appropriate rate.
- Students demonstrate understanding of themes, main ideas, and details by using documented evidence from text.
- Students have multiple strategies for understanding unknown words.
- Students can read a variety of materials including charts, graphs, and captions to deepen or confirm their knowledge.
- Students are able to use text features such as headings to quickly find the answer to a question or a specific spot in the text.
- Students can re-tell a story explaining characters and plot, emphasizing the most important parts without getting lost in the details.
- Students can give opinions about the story and support those opinions with details.
- Students can identify and understand important facts and organize them into meaning. Students know and use the way a book is organized by using the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, captions, and additional text features.
- Students can use information from their reading to explain what they have learned or what new thing they would do.
- Students refer to text as a resource to help them find answers, analyze, make inferences, and use their own knowledge to construct their own meaning.
- Students can summarize appropriately to a given text by using text-based examples to support an answer or opinion.

Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 4

Advanced Reading Behavioral Characteristics

- Students are confident readers with a superior grasp of reading skills and strategies.
- Students intuitively apply strategies like graphic organizers to help them understand more than one text at a time.
- Students use a variety of metacognitive strategies to be aware of their thinking and make connections.
- Students can use a variety of strategies such as highlighting to discern the necessary information from unimportant information to perform a task.
- Students understand the common language of assessment and literacy.
- Students quickly understand directions and reorganize the text during their reading process.
- Students use their deep understanding of context and vocabulary to make connections to a new text.
- Students are highly motivated and strongly self-directed and “read to learn”.
- Students have a wide range of metacognitive strategies to aid in comprehension and analysis, and always persevere with difficult text.

Advanced Reading Skill Characteristics

- Students read deeply for comprehension, analysis, and evaluation.
- Students read fluently, with accuracy, expression, and appropriate rate on a wide range of texts and genres.
- Students have the ability to skim and scan text for a specific purpose.
- Students demonstrate a strong understanding of themes, main ideas and details by using well-documented evidence from text.
- Students have multiple strategies for understanding unknown words.
- Students can read a variety of materials including charts, graphs, and captions to deepen or confirm their knowledge.
- Students are able to use text features to quickly find the answer to a question or a specific spot in the text.
- Students can re-tell a story explaining characters and plot, emphasizing the most important parts without getting lost in the details.
- Students can provide an abstract synthesis of the text.
- Students can give opinions about a narrative or informational passage and support those opinions with details.

Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 4

- Students can identify and understand important facts and organize them into meaning.
- Students know how a book is organized by using the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, captions, and additional text features.
- Students refer to text as a resource to help them find answers, analyze, make inferences, and use their own knowledge to construct their own meaning.
- Students know when and how to elaborate on ideas and issues from text.