

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 6

Basic Reading Behavioral Characteristics

- Students struggle with grade level material.
- Students spend a large amount of time decoding, and have difficulty reading fluently; students' level of comprehension is negatively impacted.
- Students require explicit directions, concrete examples, and frequent prompting for meaningful interaction with the text.
- Students often lack confidence, become frustrated, and are easily distracted.
- Students tend to respond with general surface information and rarely display evidence of deep understanding and application.
- Students rely on scaffolding and are inconsistent when applying "fix-it" strategies.
- Students minimally read for pleasure and it is seldom a self-directed activity.
- Students find informational text across all content areas very challenging.

Basic Reading Skill Characteristics

- Students struggle to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate both literary and informational text.
- Students have difficulty identifying a theme/main idea and supporting details without scaffolding.
- Students' summarizing is often a simple retelling of the story with very little distinction between significant and insignificant details.
- Students are inconsistent when making predictions and inferences, which are frequently based on prior knowledge instead of textual evidence.
- Students use context clues when attacking vocabulary; however, they generally fail to apply other strategies and have trouble with multiple meanings, synonyms, and antonyms.
- Students may have knowledge of text features, but applying the information is inconsistent.
- Students' understanding of literary elements and stylistic devices is on a very literal level.
- Students generally provide only surface comparisons and need the support of scaffolding when comparing and contrasting within and between texts.
- Students require several concrete examples to identify both cause and effect.
- Students may identify an author's purpose from a list of choices, but have difficulty when asked to provide text-based evidence.
- Students inconsistently distinguish fact from opinion.

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- Students may draw a reasonable conclusion when evaluating reasoning, but regularly use prior knowledge rather than text-based details.
- Students find making generalizations beyond the text to a broader area or concept to be a difficult task.

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Proficient Reading Level Behavioral Characteristics

- Students deliver a solid academic performance when presented with appropriate grade level materials.
- Students have moved from the act of decoding to reading fluently for greater comprehension.
- Students actively engage with the text while employing various reading strategies and are beginning to critically think about and evaluate their own learning.
- Students often automatically form “mind-movies” to aide in the visualization of the text.
- Students are able to read and follow directions with consistency and understand the common language of assessment and literacy.
- Students ask questions and make the connection between background knowledge and the text at hand.
- Students self-select appropriate materials for different purposes and read for both information and pleasure.

Proficient Reading Skill Characteristics

- Students are able to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate both literary and informational text written on a sixth grade level.
- Students identify main ideas/themes and are able to supply supporting information.
- Students consistently summarize a selection by providing details; however they may struggle with expressing the summary in their own words.
- Students are capable of making predictions, yet these are occasionally based on prior knowledge as opposed to text-based information.
- Students make basic inferences while citing textual evidence.
- Students readily use context clues to interpret vocabulary and are capable of differentiating between multiple meanings.
- Students employ text features to gain meaning, but are just beginning to analyze literary elements and stylistic devices for a deeper level of understanding.
- Students accomplish comparing and contrasting within and between texts.
- Students require minimal scaffolding to identify cause/effect and author’s purpose; however evaluating effectiveness for different audiences proves to be a challenge.
- Students accomplish evaluating reasoning and ideas/themes, but may struggle with providing a variety of text-based evidence to support their answers.

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- Students are able to extend information beyond the text to solve problems and make generalizations.

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Advanced Reading Level Behavioral Characteristics

- Students consistently deliver a superior academic performance.
- Students read fluently and are able to comprehend more complex and sophisticated material across a wide variety of genres.
- Students easily transfer new concepts and skills to other content areas.
- Students are highly motivated, inquisitive, and self-directed.
- Students automatically apply several different reading strategies when reading more challenging informational and literary text, to aide in acquiring a deeper understanding.
- Students intuitively make the connection between their personal background knowledge and the text at hand.
- Students also persevere when analyzing new material, and they readily use the common language of assessment and literacy.
- Students read for a wide variety of purposes.

Advanced Reading Skill Characteristics

- Students are able to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate both literary and informational text written above the sixth grade level.
- Students easily generate main ideas and multiple themes while citing several supporting details.
- Students provide a more fluid, higher level summarization written in their own words while discriminating between significant and insignificant details.
- Students regularly make inferences/predictions and provide text-based evidence to support their answers.
- Students interpret vocabulary with ease and are able to provide multiple meanings, synonyms, and antonyms.
- Students' analysis and thinking related to literary elements such as character, setting, plot and stylistic devices are supported across several genres.
- Students readily comprehend and apply information from both text and graphic features.
- Students accomplish comparing/contrasting and cause/effect with a higher degree of sophistication within and between texts without the use of scaffolding.
- Students identify and analyze author's purpose and evaluate effectiveness for different audiences while providing relevant text support.
- Students have a comprehensive and deep evaluation of reasoning and themes/ideas related to the text.

Reading Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 6

- Students are able to extend and apply information beyond the text and make generalizations using clear and concise details to support their thought processes.