

## Front Matter for Performance Level Descriptors for English/Language Arts NCSC Alternate Assessment

### General Description

Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) describe how well a student has learned the content and skills measured by the NCSC Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS). For Indiana, three performance categories describe the Indiana/NCSC assessment results. The assessments measure what a student knows and is able to do in the tested subjects of English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3 – 8 and grade 10. The PLDs indicate whether a student's performance is on target to meet academic expectations or if there are gaps in learning. The test results are one way teachers find out what a student has learned and in what areas a student needs more help; the test results help teachers, schools, parents and guardians build a path to student learning.

NCSC developed the AA-AAS items in reading, writing, and mathematics to present a range of complexity and difficulty. Most of the assessment items ask the student to select the correct response (e.g., selected-response). Some items ask the student to construct a response using materials provided through the assessment. Each item addresses grade-specific academic content targets and provides students with the opportunity to respond independently and show what they know and can do.

### Reading Text Complexity

The PLDs for reading include references to text complexity. All literary and informational reading items are passage-based for which all topics are grade- and age-appropriate. All reading passages are to be read aloud to a student or signed if the student is deaf.

The table below describes some of the general characteristics included in the low to high text complexity used in the NCSC AA-AAS. For example, the length of the passages increases from low to high complexity text.

Low Text Complexity	Moderate Text Complexity	High Text Complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships</li><li>• Short, simple sentences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships</li><li>• Simple and compound sentences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships</li><li>• A variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words</li></ul>

### Low Text Complexity

These texts present grade- and age-appropriate narratives or information. The text is presented in a clearly sequenced and organized manner and includes text features such as illustrations, headings, and diagrams to support comprehension. Vocabulary used in these texts and items includes commonly used words. Low complexity texts support those students gaining meaning from text. These students require teacher support, during instruction, to comprehend text at a moderate complexity level.

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### **Moderate Text Complexity**

These texts present narratives or information in a straightforward text structure. However, texts include more information and more complex ideas and relationships than the low complexity texts. Narrative texts include both literal and interpretive meanings. Informational texts use clear formats, illustrations, and graphics to convey information. Vocabulary used in these texts and items includes varied and descriptive language. Moderately complex texts support those students that require teacher support, during instruction, to comprehend text at a high complexity level.

### **High Text Complexity**

These texts present narratives or information in a text structure that requires students to comprehend what is stated or implied and make connections between ideas. These texts require students to make judgments about what they read and demonstrate an understanding of the content. The texts are of greater length than the low and moderate complexity texts and include abstract language and challenging vocabulary.

## Grade 3 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass +
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b>  <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>Low/Medium text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Low</b> - Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.  <b>Medium</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b>  <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the topic of a literary text</li> <li>• identify a detail from a literary text</li> <li>• identify a character or setting in a literary text</li> <li>• identify the topic of an informational text</li> <li>• identify a title, caption, or heading in an informational text</li> <li>• identify an illustration related to a given topic</li> <li>• identify a topic presented by an illustration</li> <li>• identify the meaning of words (i.e., nouns)</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the main idea and supporting details in literary text</li> <li>• determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text</li> <li>• determine the main idea of visually presented information</li> <li>• identify the purpose of text features in informational text</li> <li>• use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Medium</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.  <b>High</b> - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details from a literary text to answer specific questions</li> <li>• describe the relationship between characters, and character and setting in literary text</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with accuracy, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify simple words (i.e., words with a consonant at the beginning, a consonant at the end, and a short vowel in the middle)</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the main idea and supporting details in literary text</li> <li>• determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text</li> <li>• determine the main idea of visually presented information</li> <li>• identify the purpose of text features in informational text</li> <li>• use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> </ul>
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a statement related to an everyday topic</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of a narrative text to include beginning, middle, and end</li> <li>• identify the category related to a set of facts</li> <li>• identify a text feature (e.g., captions, graphs or diagrams) to present information in explanatory text</li> </ul>	

## Grade 4 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass+
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b> Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</p>	<p><b>Low/Moderate text complexity -</b> <i>Low</i> -Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences. <i>Moderate</i> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b> Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</p>
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a topic of a literary text</li> <li>• identify a detail from a literary text</li> <li>• identify a character in a literary text</li> <li>• identify charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in an informational text</li> <li>• identify a topic of an informational text</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> <li>• identify general academic words</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the theme of literary text and identify supportive details</li> <li>• describe character traits using text-based details in literary text</li> <li>• determine the main idea of informational text</li> <li>• locate information in charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines</li> <li>• use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions</li> <li>• use general academic words</li> <li>• explain how the information provided in charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines contributes to an understanding of informational text</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b> <i>Moderate</i> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences. <i>High</i> - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details from a literary text to answer specific questions</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> <li>• describe character traits using text-based details in literary text</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with accuracy, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify simple words (i.e., words with a consonant at the beginning, a consonant at the end, and a short vowel in the middle)</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the theme of literary text and identify supportive details</li> <li>• determine the main idea of informational text</li> <li>• explain how the information provided in charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines contributes to an understanding of informational text</li> <li>• use information from charts, graphs, diagrams, or timelines in informational text to answer questions</li> <li>• use general academic words</li> </ul>
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the concluding sentence in a short explanatory text</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of a narrative text to include beginning, middle, and end</li> <li>• identify a concluding sentence related to information in explanatory text</li> <li>• identify a text feature (e.g., headings, charts, or diagrams) to present information in explanatory text</li> </ul>	

## Grade 5 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass+
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b>  <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>Low/Moderate text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Low</b> - Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>  <i><b>Medium</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b>  <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify an event from the beginning of a literary text</li> <li>• identify a detail from a literary text</li> <li>• identify a character, setting and event in a literary text</li> <li>• identify the topic of an informational text</li> <li>• identify the main idea of an informational text</li> <li>• identify the difference in how information is presented in two sentences</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compare characters, settings, and events in literary text</li> <li>• determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text</li> <li>• use details from the text to support an author’s point in informational text</li> <li>• compare and contrast how information and events are presented in two informational texts</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Moderate</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences</i>  <i><b>High</b> - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summarize a literary text from beginning to end</li> <li>• use details from a literary text to answer specific questions</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compare characters, settings, and events in literary text</li> <li>• determine the main idea and identify supporting details in informational text</li> <li>• use details from the text to support an author’s point in informational text</li> <li>• compare and contrast how information and events are presented in two informational texts</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> </ul>
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the category related to a set of common nouns</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of a narrative text to include beginning, middle, and end</li> <li>• identify a sentence that is organized for a text structure such as comparison/contrast</li> <li>• support an explanatory text topic with relevant information</li> </ul>	

## Grade 6 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass +
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b>  <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>Low/Moderate text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Low</b> - Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>  <i><b>Moderate</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b>  <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify an event from the beginning or end of a literary text</li> <li>• identify a detail from a literary text</li> <li>• identify a character in a literary text</li> <li>• identify the topic of an informational text</li> <li>• identify the main idea of an informational text</li> <li>• identify a fact from an informational text</li> <li>• identify a description of an individual or event in an informational text</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> <li>• identify the meaning of general academic words</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summarize a literary text from beginning to end without including personal opinions</li> <li>• support inferences about characters using details in literary text</li> <li>• use details from the text to elaborate a key idea in informational text</li> <li>• summarize an informational text without including personal opinions</li> <li>• use evidence from the text to support an author’s claim in informational text</li> <li>• summarize information presented in two informational texts</li> <li>• use domain specific words accurately</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Moderate</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>  <i><b>High</b> - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details from a literary text to answer specific questions</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summarize a literary text from beginning to end without including personal opinions</li> <li>• use details from a literary text to answer specific questions</li> <li>• support inferences about characters using details in literary text</li> <li>• use details from the text to elaborate a key idea in an informational text</li> <li>• use evidence from the text to support an author’s claim in informational text</li> <li>• use domain specific words accurately</li> </ul>
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify an everyday order of events</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of an explanatory text to include introduction, body, and conclusion</li> <li>• identify the next event in a brief narrative</li> <li>• identify transition words and phrases to convey a sequence of events in narrative text</li> </ul>	

## Grade 7 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass+	
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b>  <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>Low/Moderate text complexity -</b>  <i>Low - Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>  <i>Moderate - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b>  <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>	
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a theme from a literary text</li> <li>• identify an inference from a literary text</li> <li>• identify a conclusion from an informational text</li> <li>• identify a claim the author makes in an informational text</li> <li>• compare and contrast two statements related to the same topic</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of words</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the relationship between individuals or events in an informational text</li> <li>• use evidence from the text to support an author’s claim in informational text</li> <li>• use details to explain how the interactions between individuals, events or ideas in informational texts are influenced by each other</li> <li>• compare and contrast how two authors write about the same topic in informational texts</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of words and phrases</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details to support a conclusion from informational text</li> <li>• use details to explain how the interactions between individuals, events or ideas in informational texts are influenced by each other</li> <li>• use evidence from the text to support an author’s claim in informational text</li> <li>• compare and contrast how two authors write about the same topic in informational texts</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of words and phrases</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b>  <i>Moderate - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>  <i>High - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details to support themes from literary text</li> <li>• use details to support inferences from literary text</li> </ul>		
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a graphic that includes an event as described in a text</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of an explanatory text to include introduction, body, and conclusion</li> <li>• identify the next event in a brief narrative</li> <li>• identify a sentence that provides a conclusion in narrative text</li> </ul>		

## Grade 8 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass+
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b>  <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>Low/Moderate text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Low</b> - Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>  <i><b>Moderate</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b>  <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a theme from a literary text</li> <li>• identify an inference from a literary text</li> <li>• identify a fact related to a presented argument in informational text</li> <li>• identify a similar topic in two informational texts</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> <li>• identify the meaning of general academic words</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details to support a conclusion from literary text</li> <li>• identify an inference drawn from an informational text</li> <li>• identify the portion of text which contains specific information</li> <li>• identify an argument the author makes in informational text</li> <li>• examine parts of two informational texts to identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation</li> <li>• use domain specific words or phrases accurately</li> <li>• use details to support an inference from informational text</li> <li>• identify the information (e.g., facts or quotes) in a section of text that contributes to the development of an idea</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b>  <i><b>Moderate</b> - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>  <i><b>High</b> - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyze the development of a theme including the relationship between a character and an event in literary text</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of words and phrases</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details to support a conclusion from literary text</li> <li>• use details to support an inference from informational text</li> <li>• identify the information (e.g., facts or quotes) in a section of text that contributes to the development of an idea</li> <li>• identify an argument the author makes in informational text</li> <li>• examine parts of two informational texts to identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation</li> <li>• use domain specific words and phrases accurately</li> </ul>
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a writer's opinion</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of an explanatory text to include introduction, body, and conclusion</li> <li>• identify an idea relevant to a claim</li> <li>• identify relevant information to support a claim</li> </ul>	

## Grade 10 ELA Performance Level Descriptors

Did Not Pass	Pass	Pass+
<p><b>Low text complexity -</b>  <i>Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>Low/Moderate text complexity -</b>  <i>Low - Brief text with straightforward ideas and relationships; short, simple sentences.</i>  <i>Moderate - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i></p>	<p><b>High text complexity -</b>  <i>Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p>
<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a summary of a literary text</li> <li>• identify an event from a literary text</li> <li>• identify the central idea of an informational text</li> <li>• identify facts from an informational text</li> <li>• identify what an author tells about a topic in informational text</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of multiple meaning words</li> <li>• identify a word used to describe a person, place, thing, action or event</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details to support a summary of literary text</li> <li>• identify a conclusion from an informational text</li> <li>• identify key details that support the development of a central idea of an informational text</li> <li>• use details presented in two informational texts to answer a question</li> <li>• explain why an author uses specific word choices within text</li> <li>• use details to support a conclusion presented in informational text</li> </ul> <p><b>AND with Moderate/High text complexity -</b>  <i>Moderate - Text with clear, complex ideas and relationships and simple; compound sentences.</i>  <i>High - Text with detailed and implied complex ideas and relationships; a variety of sentence types including phrases and transition words.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate how the author's use of specific details in literary text contributes to the text</li> <li>• determine an author's point of view about a topic in informational text</li> <li>• use context to identify the meaning of words and phrases</li> </ul>	<p><b>In reading, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use details to support a summary of literary text</li> <li>• use details to support a conclusion presented in informational text</li> <li>• identify key details that support the development of a central idea of an informational text</li> <li>• use details presented in two informational texts to answer a question</li> <li>• explain why an author uses specific word choices within texts</li> </ul>
<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify information which is unrelated to a given topic</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND in writing, he/she is able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify elements of an argument to include introduction, claim, evidence, and conclusion</li> <li>• identify how to group information for a specific text structure</li> <li>• identify relevant information to address a given topic and support the purpose of a text</li> </ul>	