ISAT Reading Performance Definitions
Grades 3-8

Grade 3 Reading

Exceeds Standards
Students who exceed standards demonstrate a strong comprehension of text beyond their grade level. They identify word meanings and shades of meaning using contextual support. They consistently apply their knowledge of synonyms and antonyms to make meaning.

Students at this level identify explicit and implicit main ideas and key details and consistently make connections between information found in several points in a passage. They draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They recognize important plot details and can place these events in proper sequence even when they are not given in chronological order.

Students make predictions about outcomes based on information in a passage and understand when an author uses opinion. They can draw conclusions about characters' motivations and about an author's intended purpose. They are able to distinguish literary genres including story, poem, fairy tale, fable, and tall tale and literary elements including plot, character, and setting. They are able to apply information in illustrations, charts, and graphs to determine meaning and can follow a list of instructions.

Meets Standards
Students who meet standards demonstrate a comprehension of grade-level text. They use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, applying their knowledge of common synonyms and antonyms.

Students at this level identify main ideas and important details and can identify problems and solutions in literary text. They can draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They can place important plot events in proper sequence.

Students make simple predictions about outcomes based on information in a passage and can distinguish between fact and opinion. They can reach conclusions about characters' motivations and about an author's intended purpose. They recognize literary genres including story, poem, fairy tale, fable, and tall tale and literary elements including plot, character, and setting. They understand information in illustrations, charts, and graphs to determine meaning and can follow a simple list of instructions.

Below Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an incomplete understanding of grade-level text. Their ability to use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary is inconsistent.

Students can generally identify main ideas but may be unable to distinguish between main ideas and supporting details. They can identify plot events but may be unable to place them in proper sequence.

Students may be able to make obvious predictions and may struggle to distinguish between fact and opinion. They can identify facts about characters but are less proficient at identifying characters' motivations and author's purpose. They have difficulty identifying literary genres and literary elements. They can find information directly stated in illustrations, charts, and graphs but
are less successful at applying this information. They have difficulty following multi-step instructions.

**Academic Warning**
Students at the academic warning level have a limited understanding of grade-level text. They have a weak understanding of grade-level vocabulary and are unable to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Students often confuse the main idea with supporting details. Their lack of comprehension prevents them from following the sequence of plot events.

Students rarely make predictions and can seldom distinguish fact from opinion. They are unfamiliar with literary genres and literary elements and have difficulty understanding character motivations. They struggle to use information in bold print and headings or to follow simple directions.
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Grade 4 Reading

Exceeds Standards
Students who exceed standards demonstrate a strong comprehension of text beyond their grade level. They use structural and context clues from across a passage to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. They apply their knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms to make meaning and can determine the word that best fits a given context.

Students demonstrate an understanding of text by identifying explicit and implicit main ideas and key details and consistently make connections between information found in several points in a passage. They draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They recognize important plot details and can place these events in proper sequence even when they are not given in chronological order.

Students make predictions about outcomes based on information in a passage and understand when an author uses opinion. They can identify cause and effect relationships and can draw conclusions about characters' motivations and about an author's intended purpose or theme. They can distinguish points of view. They can interpret poetic devices and distinguish among expository, narrative, and persuasive writing. They can interpret figurative language.

Students can use information found in multiple locations to interpret illustrations, charts, and graphs and effectively use structural features of informational text to support their comprehension and can follow multi-step directions, as well as determine how illustrators express ideas.

Meets Standards
Students who meet standards demonstrate a comprehension of grade-level text. They use context clues within sentences to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. They recognize words used as synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms and can determine the word that best fits in a given context.

Students at this level identify main ideas and important details and can identify problems and solutions in literary text. They can draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They can place important plot events in proper sequence.

Students make simple predictions about outcomes based on information in a passage and can distinguish fact from opinion and understand cause and effect. They can infer an author's unstated meaning based on information directly stated in the text. They use clues to determine characters' motivations and to reach conclusions about an author's message and about themes. They can distinguish points of view. They can interpret some poetic devices and distinguish among expository, narrative, and persuasive writing. They can interpret some figurative language. They use clues in instructional materials and can interpret charts, graphs, and diagrams. They can follow a set of simple instructions and understand how illustrators express ideas.
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Below Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an incomplete understanding of grade-level text. Their ability to use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary is inconsistent. They can identify synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms.

They may be unable to distinguish main ideas from developmental ideas. They can identify plot events but are often unable to place them in proper sequence. They struggle to draw inferences and conclusions using textual support or prior knowledge. They focus more on literal ideas.

Students may be able to make obvious predictions. They are generally unable to distinguish fact from opinion or to understand cause and effect relationships. They struggle to grasp implicit ideas. They may be able to identify facts about characters. They identify only directly stated messages or themes. They rarely recognize points of view or the types of writing and do not readily interpret figurative language.

They can find information directly stated in text but have less success using several parts of a diagram, chart, or table or using information from an illustration.

Academic Warning
Students at this level have only a limited comprehension of grade-level text. They cannot determine the meaning of unfamiliar words since they have a weak understanding of grade-level vocabulary.

Students at this level often confuse the main idea with supporting details. Their lack of comprehension prevents them from following sequence or drawing inferences or conclusions.

Students rarely make predictions and can seldom distinguish fact from opinion or comprehend cause and effect. They do not understand character motivations or author’s message or theme. They struggle to use information in bold print and headings and to follow simple directions.
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**Grade 5**

**Exceeds Standards**
Students who exceed standards demonstrate a strong comprehension of text beyond their grade level. They use structural and context clues from across an entire passage to determine vocabulary meaning and accurately apply knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms and to interpret idioms and analogies.

Students demonstrate an understanding of text by identifying explicit and implicit main ideas and key details, and they consistently make connections between information found in several points in a passage. They use evidence implicit in the text and prior knowledge to accurately draw inferences and conclusions and to extract concepts. They reach conclusions about character traits and how they influence events, and they understand complex or subtle themes or messages. They examine content and structure to determine author’s purpose.

Students make accurate predictions about outcomes based on information in a passage. They distinguish fact and opinion, understand cause and effect, and analyze elements of text that indicate persuasion. They analyze the function and impact of literary devices and figurative language. They can differentiate genres through analysis of text.

Students use information from multiple locations in the text to interpret charts, diagrams, and graphs. They efficiently locate information and follow multi-step directions.

**Meets Standards**
Students who meet standards demonstrate an overall comprehension of grade-level text. They use context clues within sentences to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. They recognize words used as synonyms and antonyms and use context to determine the meaning of idioms and analogies.

Students recognize explicit main ideas and details and can identify supporting statements. They draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They use clues to determine primary character traits and how these traits motivate actions. They infer the author’s purpose based on information directly stated in the text. They can identify the correct sequence of events and recognize events that affect later actions. They understand important themes.

Students at this level make predictions about outcomes. They understand fact and opinion, cause and effect, and elements of persuasion. They examine the purpose of literary devices and figurative language and differentiate literary genres.

Students use text features to interpret charts, diagrams, and graphs to reach logical conclusions. They locate information and follow directions.

**Below Standards**
Students at this level demonstrate an incomplete understanding of grade-level text. They inconsistently use context clues to understand unfamiliar vocabulary, struggling when the context involves subtlety.

Students are generally unable to differentiate main ideas from developmental details. They struggle to draw inferences and conclusions. They can identify facts about characters but are
seldom able to analyze character traits. While they can identify plot elements in text, they may be unable to connect events to future actions. They do not generally understand themes.

Students may make obvious predictions but struggle with subtle clues. They focus more on literal statements, failing to grasp implicit ideas. They can identify obvious facts and opinions and cause/effect relationships, but they only occasionally recognize elements of persuasion. They recognize the use of literary devices but lack the skills to realize their impact. They seldom differentiate literary genres.

Students find information when it is directly stated but are unable to use parts of a chart, diagram, or graph to form a conclusion. They struggle to follow directions.

**Academic Warning**
Students at this level have a limited comprehension of grade-level text. Due to a weak understanding of grade-level vocabulary, they cannot determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Students often confuse main ideas with supporting details. They are generally unable to draw inferences and conclusions. They have few insights into aspects of characterization, and a lack of comprehension prevents them from following a sequence of events and from understanding general themes.

Students are unable to make predictions accurately. They may be able to identify an author’s broad purpose, but there is little or no recognition of the use of opinions, of cause/effect, or the presence of persuasion. There is little familiarity with literary devices or genres.

Students misuse or ignore headings, bold print, and numbering to decipher text. They are generally unable to follow simple directions.
Grade 6

Exceeds Standards
Students who exceed standards demonstrate a strong comprehension of text beyond their grade level. They use word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine vocabulary meaning and context clues to interpret the meaning of sophisticated figurative expressions.

Students accurately identify explicit and implicit main ideas and specific details, making connections between several points in a passage. They use evidence implicit in the passage and prior knowledge to accurately draw inferences and conclusions and to extract concepts. They draw conclusions about character traits by examining dialogue and narration and can trace the development of complex themes. They can explain how setting contributes to meaning.

Students make and verify predictions about forthcoming information or events. They distinguish among facts, inferences, and opinions and analyze text to determine causes for actions. They analyze author’s purpose and understand how the author’s words create mood, imagery, and tone. They can explain verbal irony.

Students analyze structural features of text, synthesizing information to interpret diagrams, charts, and graphs. They follow complex multi-step directions.

Meets Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an overall comprehension of grade level text. They use word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and use context clues to interpret figurative language.

Students recognize main ideas and distinguish them from supporting details. They draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They can determine character traits and the influence of setting on conflict as well as identify primary themes.

Students can make accurate predictions about forthcoming events. They can distinguish among facts, opinions, and inferences to analyze text. They recognize author’s purpose as well as the use of literary elements and devices to influence the reader’s attitudes and feelings. They identify mood and tone. They understand verbal irony.

Students analyze features of text to interpret diagrams, charts, and graphs. They follow multi-step directions.

Below Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an incomplete understanding of grade-level text. They use only immediate context to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. They tend to make literal interpretations of figurative language.

Students may be unable to separate main ideas from supporting details. They struggle to draw inferences and conclusions. They may identify plot events but are generally unable to trace the development of themes. They can identify facts about characters but not character traits. They have little understanding of the effect of setting on plot.
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Students may be able to make obvious predictions. They sometimes identify obvious opinions and recognize the use of literary devices but lack the skills to analyze their impact. They seldom recognize mood or tone, and have little understanding of verbal irony.

Students can find directly stated information but cannot synthesize parts of a diagram, chart, or graph to form a conclusion. They follow only simple instructions.

**Academic Warning**
Students at this level have a limited understanding of grade-level text. Due to a weak understanding of grade-level vocabulary, they cannot determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary or figurative language.

Students cannot identify main ideas or distinguish supporting details. They comprehend only literal statements and have few insights into aspects of characterization or a story’s theme. A lack of comprehension prevents them from following a sequence of events.

Students cannot make accurate predictions. They may be able to identify an author’s broad purpose but do not recognize the use of opinions or reasons behind actions. They lack a familiarity with literary devices and genres and do not recognize mood, tone, or irony.

Students misuse or ignore aspects of practical text such as bold print and headings to understand text and struggle to follow simple directions.
ISAT Reading Performance Definitions
Grades 3-8

Grade 7

Exceeds Standards
Students who exceed standards demonstrate a strong comprehension of text beyond their grade level. They use contextual and structural clues to determine vocabulary meaning. They accurately interpret idioms, analogies, figurative expressions, and etymologies to clarify word meanings.

Students accurately identify explicit and implicit main ideas as well as key supporting details. They use evidence implicit in the passage and prior knowledge to draw inferences and conclusions and to extract concepts. They can identify and explain the correct sequence of events in a story and can draw conclusions about character traits and motivations as revealed through a combination of devices. They can trace the development of complex or subtle themes. They analyze text to determine author's purpose and understand elements of plot and setting.

Students make accurate predictions about outcomes. They understand facts and opinions and analyze text to determine its organizational pattern. They examine the content and structure of text to analyze and evaluate the effect of literary elements and devices, and they can analyze general themes that appear across texts. They can explain situational irony.

Students locate and synthesize information in diagrams, charts, and graphs to draw conclusions. They are proficient at following complex multi-step instructions.

Meets Standards
Students who meet standards demonstrate an overall comprehension of grade-level text. They use structural and contextual clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary as well as a variety of strategies to clarify word meanings.

Students identify explicit and implicit main ideas as well as supporting details. They draw inferences and conclusions using textual support and prior knowledge. They can identify the correct sequence of events in a story and recall important supporting details. They can make inferences about character traits and motivations and identify implicit themes. They recognize an author's unstated purpose and elements of plot and setting.

Students make predictions based on clues in the passage. They distinguish between facts and opinions and can recognize organizational patterns. They examine the content and structure of text to recognize the author's use of literary elements and devices and their impact on a passage's effectiveness. They can identify general themes across texts. They understand situational irony.

Students synthesize information in diagrams, charts, and graphs to reach conclusions. They can follow multi-step directions.
Below Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an incomplete understanding of grade-level text. They use immediate context to determine the meaning of vocabulary. They tend to make literal interpretations of figurative language and have difficulty deciphering etymologies. Students may have trouble distinguishing main ideas from developmental details. They struggle to make inferences and conclusions. They may identify facts about characters but are not proficient at understanding motivations. They may be able to identify plot events but have difficulty understanding themes. They can sometimes determine author’s purpose when it is explicitly stated.

They may be able to make obvious predictions and identify obvious opinions but struggle to identify organizational patterns. They sometimes recognize the use of literary devices and figurative language but lack the skills to analyze their impact on a passage’s effectiveness. They struggle to identify themes common across passages or to identify irony.

Students can find but cannot synthesize information in diagrams, charts, and graphs. They struggle with directions.

Academic Warning
Students at this level have a limited comprehension of grade-level text. They cannot determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary due to a weak understanding of grade-level vocabulary.

Students cannot identify main ideas, or they confuse main ideas with supporting details. An inability to comprehend literal statements prevents comprehension of inferences and conclusions. They have few insights into characterization, plot events, or themes. They may be able to identify author’s purpose but have little or no recognition of the use of opinions or organizational features.

They rarely make accurate predictions. A lack of familiarity with literary devices and figurative language prevents any analysis of their use. They are generally unable to recognize common themes. They are rarely able to identify irony.

Students ignore or misuse features of text, such as bold print and headings. They are seldom able to follow directions.
ISAT Reading Performance Definitions
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Grade 8

Exceeds Standards
Students who exceed standards demonstrate a strong comprehension of text beyond their grade level. They use contextual and structural clues to determine vocabulary meaning, analyzing idioms, analogies, figurative expressions, and etymologies. They verify word meanings using a variety of strategies.

Students accurately identify explicit and implicit main ideas and key, specific details. They use evidence implicit in the passage and prior knowledge to draw inferences and conclusions and to extract concepts. They can identify and explain the correct sequence of events in a story’s plot and recall important supporting details. They analyze evidence of the author’s beliefs about a subject and draw conclusions about character motivations and their impact on plot and/or theme. They reach insightful conclusions about the development of subtle or complex themes. They are able to determine author’s purpose as represented by choice of genre.

Students make and verify predictions based on prior knowledge and understanding of genres. They evaluate evidence used for support. They compare and contrast organizational patterns and examine the content and structure of text to analyze the effect of literary elements and devices, including point of view, setting, mood and tone, and the use of dialogue. They can explain dramatic irony.

They synthesize information found in a variety of formats to reach conclusions, including making connections between text and corresponding graphics.

Meets Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an overall comprehension of grade-level text. They use contextual and structural clues to determine meaning of vocabulary. They can interpret idioms, analogies, figurative expressions, and etymologies. They use a variety of strategies to verify word meanings.

Students determine main ideas and supporting details. They use prior knowledge and textual support to draw inference and conclusions. They can identify the correct sequence of events and can recall supporting details. They identify actions and motives of characters that affect plot and/or theme and use evidence to determine themes. They examine content to determine author’s purpose, and they can identify the evidence used to support assertions.

Students make predictions about outcomes. They can contrast common themes. They examine content to identify the author’s use of literary elements and devices, including point of view and dialogue, and their impact on a passage’s effectiveness and tone or mood. They can identify dramatic irony.

Students synthesize information found in different formats to reach conclusions. They are proficient at following multi-step instructions.

Below Standards
Students at this level demonstrate an incomplete understanding of grade-level text. They use immediate context to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and tend to make literal interpretations of figurative language. They struggle with etymologies.
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Students may be able to differentiate main ideas from supporting details. They focus primarily on literal statements, struggling to draw inferences and conclusions. They may be able to properly sequence plot events. They can identify facts about characters but are not proficient at analyzing actions or motivations or how a character is used to introduce a theme. They can sometimes identify a main purpose but struggle to recognize an article’s support.

Students may make obvious predictions but struggle with predictions when clues are subtle. They sometimes recognize the use of literary devices and figurative language but lack the skills to determine their impact on a story’s effectiveness, particularly in the areas of point of view and the use of dialogue. They cannot identify dramatic irony.

They may find information in practical text but are generally unable to synthesize information in diagrams, charts, and graphs. They struggle with directions.

Academic Warning
Students at this level have a limited comprehension of grade-level text. They cannot determine the meaning of unfamiliar word due to a weak understanding of grade-level vocabulary.

Students cannot identify main idea and often confuse main idea and supporting details. They can seldom make inferences or draw conclusions. A lack of comprehension prevents them from following the sequence of events. They have few insights into character motivation or a story’s theme. They may identify an author’s broad purpose but there is little recognition of opinions or organizational features.

Students rarely make accurate predictions. An inability to comprehend literal statements prevents comprehension of inferred ideas. A lack of familiarity with literary devices and figurative language prevents any analysis of their use.

Students at this level misuse or ignore aspects of practical text such as headings and bold print.