

**Theory of Action:** Academic standards represent a collective commitment around what students should learn each year. The state assessment asks students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding related to these standards using a common measure. The resulting data allows us to see patterns in performance that should guide school and district improvement, helping identify areas of strength and opportunity.

**Role of Performance Level Descriptors in Defining Proficiency:** Performance level descriptors bridge the state assessment to classroom instruction and the systems of formative assessments that guide local instruction and choices about individual students. *Academic proficiency represents a range of observable student performance characteristics.* There are multiple pathways to proficiency, and students rely upon their strengths differently within that range of performance.

**Proficiency and Difficulty:** A student’s ability to demonstrate proficiency is influenced by the complexity of the texts or stimuli presented, tasks they’re asked to complete, and the contexts in which they are engaged. As student performance improves, students are typically able to handle more challenging texts/stimuli, tasks, and contexts, and are able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge more accurately and consistently.

\***Thorough** - Complete, detailed, and covering all aspects of something with great attention to detail.

\***Accurate** - Free from errors, correct, and precise in details or measurements.

\***Inconsistent** - Lacking uniformity, contradictory, or not staying the same over time.

\***Inaccurate** - Containing errors, incorrect, or not precise.

**Claim 1: Reading Literary Text<sup>i</sup>**

<p><b>Level 4: Above Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>thoroughly</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite several pieces of relevant evidence to analyze explicit and implicit meanings in the text.</li> <li>• Identify a theme and analyze its development, providing an objective summary.</li> <li>• Analyze how story or drama elements interact (e.g., how setting shapes characters or plot).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 3: Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>accurately</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze how a drama or poem’s form or structure adds meaning (e.g., soliloquy or sonnet).</li> <li>• Analyze how an author contrasts characters’ or narrators’ perspectives, and how effects shape understanding (e.g., word choice, structure).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 2: Approaching Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inconsistently</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare written and multimedia versions of a story, drama, or poem, analyzing the effects of medium-specific techniques (e.g., lighting, sound, camera focus).</li> <li>• Compare fictional and historical portrayals of the same period, using details to explore how fiction shapes or alters history.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 1: Below Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inaccurately</u>:</p>	

**Claim 2: Reading Informational Text<sup>ii</sup>**

<p><b>Level 4: Above Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>thoroughly</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite several pieces of evidence to analyze both explicit and implicit meanings in the text.</li> <li>• Summarize and analyze how two or more central ideas interact, using relevant evidence to support claims.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 3: Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>accurately</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze how individuals, events, and ideas influence each other in a text.</li> <li>• Analyze the text’s structure, explaining how major sections contribute to the development of ideas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 2: Approaching Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inconsistently</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the author’s point of view or purpose and explain how it differs from others.</li> <li>• Compare a text to its audio, video, or multimedia version, analyzing how each medium portrays the subject.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 1: Below Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inaccurately</u>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trace and evaluate arguments in a text, assessing the soundness of reasoning and sufficiency of evidence.</li> <li>• Analyze how different authors on the same topic shape key information by emphasizing different evidence or interpretations.</li> </ul>

Test questions can measure a single skill or a set of knowledge and skills. The ELA test differs from other subjects in that it has fewer items overall, but each item assesses multiple skills or knowledge by asking students to demonstrate skills through performance, such as writing a prose-constructed response. Therefore, what differentiates the levels of performance are the degree to and quality with which a student performs.

### Claim 3: Reading Vocabulary (In both literary and informational texts)<sup>iii</sup>

<b>Level 4: Above Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>thoroughly</u> :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interpret the contextual meaning of words and phrases using context clues and provide evidence to support meaning (e.g., roots and affixes, figurative language, synonyms, and antonyms).</li></ul>
<b>Level 3: Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>accurately</u> :	
<b>Level 2: Approaching Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inconsistently</u> :	
<b>Level 1: Below Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inaccurately</u> :	

### Claim 4: Written Expression (Using both literary and informational prompts)<sup>iv</sup>

<b>Level 4: Above Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>thoroughly</u> :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Address a prompt and provide development of a claim, topic, and/or narrative elements (e.g., establishing a situation; organizing a logical event sequence; describing scenes, objects, or people; developing characters' personalities; and using dialogue) by using logical reasoning supported by text-based evidence, details, and/or description. The development is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.</li><li>Demonstrate coherence, clarity, and cohesion with ideas that are logically connected and easy to follow. Include an introduction and conclusion.</li><li>Demonstrate command of language explaining, describing, and/or comparing and/or analyzing ideas using concrete words and phrases, sensory details, linking and transitional words, and domain-specific vocabulary.</li><li>Establish and maintain style.</li></ul>
<b>Level 3: Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>accurately</u> :	
<b>Level 2: Approaching Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inconsistently</u> :	
<b>Level 1: Below Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inaccurately</u> :	

### Claim 5: Knowledge of Written Language and Conventions<sup>v</sup>

<b>Level 4: Above Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>thoroughly</u> :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. This includes mechanics (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, and spelling), grammar, and usage, and the extent to which the conventions impact whether the meaning is clear.</li></ul>
<b>Level 3: Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>accurately</u> :	
<b>Level 2: Approaching Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inconsistently</u> :	
<b>Level 1: Below Proficient</b> Student performance indicates the ability to <u>inaccurately</u> :	

<sup>i</sup> Includes standards RL 7.1, RL 7.2, RL 7.3, RL 7.5, RL 7.6, RL 7.7, RL 7.9

<sup>ii</sup> Includes standards RI 7.1, RI 7.2, RI 7.3, RI 7.5, RI 7.6, RI 7.7, RI 7.8, RI 7.9

<sup>iii</sup> Includes standards RL 7.4, RI 7.4, L 7.4, L 7.5, L 7.6

<sup>iv</sup> Includes standards W 7.1, W 7.2, W 7.3, W 7.4, W 7.5, W 7.6, W 7.7, W 7.8, W 7.9, W 7.10

<sup>v</sup> Includes standards L 7.1, L 7.2, L 7.3, L 7.6, W 7.1