

Grade 6 Reading

The grade 6 reading assessment presents a variety of grade-appropriate reading passages representing literary, informational, and everyday text. Passages may be up to 1,500 words long and some passages may be paired with other, related passages. Literary text at this grade includes realistic fiction, historical fiction, myths, drama, biography, autobiography, and poetry. Informational text includes magazine, textbook, and newspaper articles, and government documents. Everyday text includes charts, schedules, simple forms, applications, product labels, safety notices, and simple instructions. Each performance level presumes mastery at previous levels.

Advanced

Score range: 514 and above

At the beginning of the year, sixth-grade students performing at the Advanced level successfully use a variety of word-identification strategies and use an on grade-level and above grade-level reading vocabulary to construct meaning from a variety of grade-appropriate texts. When they encounter unfamiliar words or language used figuratively, they use context clues and prior knowledge to determine meaning. They use knowledge of root words and affixes to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words. They are skilled at using a dictionary or thesaurus entry and context clues to determine the meaning of a multiple-meaning word as used in a text.

Students performing at this level easily comprehend a variety of texts at literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. When reading literary texts, including poetry, students at this level can summarize the text and draw conclusions about the central message or about story elements. They can infer an implied, common or universal theme and apply it to situations beyond the text. Students also are able to identify story elements that are not described in detail, such as the setting of a portion of a literary text. They use reasoning skills to comprehend text beyond a literal level by making inferences about characters, interpreting the meaning of symbolism, and predicting what additional events would occur if the text were extended.

When reading informational texts, sixth-grade students performing at the Advanced level readily distinguish between main ideas and supporting details and can summarize information about a key point and provide appropriate, text-based details to support the summary. They use headings or subheadings to infer in which section of the text additional information would best fit. In addition, they identify and analyze the organizational pattern used. Students also are able to distinguish among statements of fact or opinion and identify a text-based example of each.

Students at this level can identify the specific genre of a literary text, such as fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, or historical fiction. When comparing texts, they are able to identify a common topic or similar ideas, experiences, themes, or authors' point of view. In addition, they provide relevant, although limited, text-based information to support comparisons across texts. Their ability to analyze an author's style is evident. They are able to identify examples of an author's intentional use of language or details to convey a given idea or to achieve a certain purpose or effect. They analyze and make inferences about an author's style or purpose for including details or for using descriptive language to create an effect, and they are able to provide some text-based details to support their analyses and inferences. In general, students at the Advanced level use a range of reading strategies effectively and exhibit in-depth comprehension of a variety of grade-level texts.

Proficient

Score range: 457–513

At the beginning of the year, sixth-grade students performing at the Proficient level appropriately use a range of word-identification strategies. They use familiar words to determine the meaning of unfamiliar or compound words and to identify which meaning of a multiple-meaning word is used. They use a dictionary or thesaurus entry and context clues to identify a synonym for a familiar or unfamiliar word. Additionally, they are able to interpret the meaning of familiar idioms, as used in a text.

When reading literary texts, students at this level are able to identify the theme or central message and characters' motives, thoughts, and actions based on stated information. When reading informational texts, they can identify a stated or implied main idea or key point and differentiate between statements of fact or opinion. They also are able to identify an implied detail or cause and effect relationship.

When reading either literary or informational texts, students at this level are able to identify whether a text is fiction or nonfiction based on its characteristics and infer the author's purpose for writing the text. They are able to identify the relative location of events in a sequence and complete a graphic organizer to represent a sequence of events or steps in a process. They summarize information and provide text-based details to support the summary, although some details may be irrelevant. Students' ability to analyze grade-level texts and make connections is adequate. They draw conclusions based on the

author's general style or approach to a topic. In addition, they can identify a word, phrase, or sentence that conveys a particular tone and the general effect of an author's use of a literary device. For example, they can identify how similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, or imagery convey a certain idea or meaning. Students at this level are able to compare ideas across two texts and draw conclusions; however, they may demonstrate an incomplete understanding of similarities and differences and provide only general text-based information to support the comparison. In general, students at this level apply a variety of comprehension strategies and sufficiently comprehend a variety of grade-level texts.

Basic

Score range: 418–456

At the beginning of the year, sixth-grade students performing at the Basic level have reading vocabulary that is below grade-level and have a limited range of word-identification strategies. They use prior knowledge, context clues, and grammar features, such as contractions and verb tense to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words. They recognize the meaning of words with familiar roots and affixes as well as simple similes, metaphors, or idioms. Additionally, they use a dictionary to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words used in a text.

When reading literary texts, students at this level have sufficient understanding of a text at a literal level but partial understanding at an inferential level. They can identify a common or familiar theme and story elements or recall stated details and events from throughout the text. They can draw simple conclusions about characters, setting, or events. Students' predictions about likely future events are based both on text and visual information, but they use limited or overly-general text-based information to support the predictions.

When reading informational texts, students at this level can identify a main idea and details that support the main idea, distinguish between fact and opinion, and make simple generalizations about the topic or a general summary of the text. They can identify an audience for whom the information in the text would be useful. Students are able to use text features such as headings, subheadings, illustrations, or diagrams to locate specific information or to make simple predictions about what information is contained in the text or portion of text.

With both literary and informational texts, students at the Basic level are able to identify the genre, the author's purpose for writing the text, and a purpose for reading the text. They can

identify stated cause and effect relationships or comparisons and contrasts. Students' ability to analyze text by understanding an author's use of language is developing; they are able to identify a clear example of an author's use of words or phrases to achieve a given purpose. In general, students at the Basic level demonstrate adequate, literal understanding of what they read and limited inferential comprehension. However, they may be able to demonstrate a wider variety of comprehension skills and strategies during classroom instruction with below grade-level texts or if given assistance.

Minimal Performance
Score range: 417 and below

At the beginning of the year, sixth-grade students performing at the Minimal Performance level have basic word-identification and comprehension strategies. They use clear context clues, illustrations, and graphics to determine the meaning of words or phrases in grade-level texts. They are able to use familiar words to determine the meaning of compound or affixed words and recognize how the meaning of a word changes when an affix is added. Students also are able to use a dictionary to locate a word and its meaning.

Students at this level demonstrate general comprehension at the literal level and limited comprehension at an inferential level. They can identify whether a text is fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. When reading literary texts, they can recall information about characters, setting, and events and draw simple conclusions. When reading informational and everyday texts, they can identify the topic and main idea, recall some stated information, and identify a fact or opinion. They use text headings, subheadings, illustrations, and captions to locate information or to make simple predictions or inferences. With both literary and informational text, they can identify the meaning of a familiar simile or metaphor as it is used in the text. Additionally, they are able to make basic, valid predictions about a text based on text features, visual clues, stated information, and prior knowledge. During classroom instruction, students at this level are likely to demonstrate a wider range of strategies or more in-depth comprehension when reading below grade-level texts. They may be able to use analytic and evaluative thinking skills with below grade-level and on grade-level texts if given assistance.