

Grade 8 Reading

The grade 8 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 short stories, novel excerpts, drama, biography, autobiography, and poetry. Informational text includes magazine, textbook, and newspaper articles, government documents, historical papers, reports, manuals, reviews, editorial cartoons. Everyday text includes charts, schedules, forms, timelines, applications, product use or warning labels, safety notices, and technical instructions. Each performance level presumes mastery at previous levels.

Advanced

Score range: 539 and above

At the beginning of the year, eighth-grade students performing at the Advanced level consistently use a variety of sophisticated word-identification strategies and use an on grade-level and above grade-level reading vocabulary to understand a variety of grade-level texts. They use context clues determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and idioms. They also use information about root words, affixes, and word usage to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Additionally, they use a dictionary entry and context clues to determine which meaning of a multiple-meaning word is used in a text, including if the meaning used is uncommon or unfamiliar.

Students at this level easily comprehend a variety of texts and demonstrate comprehension at literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. When reading literary texts, students at this level make inferences and predictions about story elements, such as characters' traits, feelings, attitudes, and actions based on information in a portion of or throughout a text and provide relevant details from the text to support the inference or prediction. Students at this level easily recognize important ideas and can draw conclusions about a central message in a literary text, including poetry, and infer a similar theme in two texts. When reading informational texts, students readily identify stated and implied main ideas, summarize key points or ideas, and distinguish among details that are more or less important to the main idea. They infer the organizational pattern used in a portion of the text or throughout. They also can evaluate the accuracy or credibility of information in a text.

When reading either literary or informational text, students are able to distinguish among specific genres of literary text and identify why a text is fiction or nonfiction based on its characteristics. They can identify the relative sequence of events in a text and sequence stated information to complete a graphic organizer. They infer a point of view expressed in a text,

including poetry, and evaluate diverse view points presented. Students are able to analyze an author's style and tone and infer the intended effect on the reader. More specifically, they can analyze an author's use of descriptive language or rhetorical devices, such as repetition in poetry, and evaluate an author's effectiveness in achieving a given purpose or intended effect. When comparing two texts, they compare the authors' styles and identify similarities and/or differences in how an idea is supported by information in the two texts. Additionally, students make connections between the texts or between the texts and real-world situations or common experiences. In general, students at the Advanced level consistently apply a range of reading strategies and critical thinking skills to comprehend a variety of grade-level texts.

Proficient

Score range: 480–538

At the beginning of the year, eighth-grade students performing at the Proficient level appropriately use a range of word-identification strategies and on grade-level reading vocabulary to understand text. They use context clues and prior knowledge to interpret what is implied by a familiar word or phrase as used in a text, the meaning of unfamiliar words, or which meaning of a multiple-meaning word is used. They interpret the meaning of figurative language in a text. Additionally, students use affixes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and use a dictionary or thesaurus entry and context clues to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar or multiple-meaning word.

When reading literary texts, students at this level can identify an implied theme or central message and identify details that support or reveal the theme. They identify stated details and relationships among ideas and story elements. They also make inferences about story events and predictions if a text were continued. When reading informational texts, students easily identify stated or implied main ideas and identify supporting details; in addition, they can distinguish between statements of fact or opinion and between important and unimportant details. They also use text features such as tables, charts, or diagrams to locate and identify a main idea or supporting details.

When reading either literary or informational texts, students at this level are able to infer the author's purpose for writing the text and identify phrases or sentences that reveal an author's purpose or create a given effect. In addition, they can identify a clearly expressed point of view and infer an author's overall style or tone. They distinguish among types of language in texts, such as formal, informal, technical, or literary. Students draw

conclusions and summarize important ideas and events and provide some relevant, text-based information to support the summary. They are able to identify stated or implied cause and effect relationships or comparisons and summarize information and provide some relevant, text-based information to support the summary. They can complete a graphic organizer to represent the sequence of events or steps in a process. When comparing and analyzing two texts, they are able to identify how an idea is supported by information in both texts; however, they may demonstrate an incomplete understanding and provide limited or vague text-based support. Students are able to connect or extend concepts in an informational text to a new situation or common experiences. In general, students at the Proficient level sufficiently comprehend a variety of grade-level texts and often recognize important ideas and make connections among ideas to demonstrate comprehension.

Basic

Score range: 445–479

At the beginning of the year, eighth-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 context clues to determine the meaning of figurative language as used in a text. They can identify how word meaning changes when frequently-used affixes are added. Additionally, they use a dictionary to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words used in a text.

When reading literary texts, students at this level are able to identify a common or familiar theme, identify story elements, and explain how characters change or how their actions could be different. When reading informational texts, students can identify a stated or implied main idea and details that support the main idea. They can make simple inferences and generalizations about the topic. Students 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.

When reading either literary or informational text, students at the Basic level can recall and sequence some events and identify a clearly expressed point of view. They can interpret the meaning of simple figurative language, such as a simile, and make simple inferences about an author's use of specific words or phrases. Students at this level demonstrate their overall understanding of text by making simple inferences or basic connections between a text and real-world or common experiences. In general, students at the Basic level demonstrate a

general understanding of text at the literal level and partial but incomplete comprehension at an inferential or evaluative level. Students may be able to demonstrate a wider variety of comprehension skills and strategies during classroom instruction with below grade-level texts or with grade-level texts if given assistance.

Minimal Performance
Score range: 444 and below

At the beginning of the year, eighth-grade students performing at the Minimal Performance level have a limited variety of word-identification and comprehension strategies that they can apply effectively. They use clear context clues, illustrations, and graphics to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases and familiar similes in a variety of grade-level texts. They determine the meaning of words with familiar roots and affixes and identify how the meaning of a word changes when an affix is added. Students also use a dictionary to locate a word and its meaning.

When reading literary texts, they are able to identify stated information about story elements, use stated details to sequence events, and make simple inferences. When reading informational and everyday texts, they can identify the topic and stated main idea, recall stated information, and summarize a key point or message in the text. They use text headings, subheadings, illustrations, and captions to locate information or to make simple predictions or inferences based on the text features.

When reading either literary or informational texts, students at this level are able to identify an author's purpose for writing a text and a purpose for reading and identify a word or phrase that reflects an author's specific purpose or style. They sequence events and complete a graphic organizer to represent the sequence of major events or steps in a process. They can locate first and last events in an explicitly stated sequence and identify important points or details. Students also are able to identify the meaning of a familiar simile or metaphor as it is used in the text. Students at this level demonstrated their general comprehension of text by making limited connections between a text and common experiences and draw limited or basic conclusions based on stated information.

In general, students at the Minimal Performance level demonstrate general comprehension of text at a literal level and partial comprehension at an inferential level. 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 texts and with on grade-level texts if given assistance.