New York State Testing Program
Next Generation Learning Standards
English Language Arts Test

Performance Level Descriptions

Grade 5

October 2020

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Performance Level Descriptions

GRADE 5

Performance level descriptions (PLDs) help communicate to students, families, educators, and the public the specific knowledge and skills expected of students when they demonstrate proficiency of a learning standard. The PLDs serve several purposes in classroom instruction and assessment. They are the foundation of rich discussion around what students need to do to perform at higher levels and to explain the progression of learning within a subject area. PLDs are also crucial in explaining student performance on the NYS assessments since they make a connection between the scale score, the performance level, and specific knowledge and skills typically demonstrated at that level.

Policy Definitions of Performance Levels

For each subject area, students perform along a continuum of the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of the Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. There are students who excel in standards, students who are proficient, students who are partially proficient, and students who are below proficient. New York State assessments are designed to classify student performance into one of four levels based on the knowledge and skills the student has demonstrated. These performance levels are defined as:

NYS Level 4

Students performing at this level **excel** in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Learning Standards that are considered **more than sufficient** for the expectations at this grade.

NYS Level 3

Students performing at this level are **proficient** in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Learning Standards that are considered **sufficient** for the expectations at this grade.

NYS Level 2

Students performing at this level are **partially proficient** in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Learning Standards that are considered partial but insufficient for the expectations at this grade. Students performing at Level 2 are considered on track to meet current New York high school graduation requirements but are **not yet proficient** in Learning Standards at this grade.

NYS Level 1

Students performing at this level are **below proficient** in standards for their grade. They may demonstrate **limited** knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Learning Standards that are considered **insufficient** for the expectations at this grade.

How were the PLDs developed?

Following best practice for the development of PLDs, the number of performance levels and their definitions were specified prior to the articulation of the full descriptions. New York State educators certified in the appropriate grade-levels and subject areas convened in separate meetings to develop the initial draft PLDs for Grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics, respectively. In developing PLDs, participants considered policy definitions of the performance level and the knowledge and skill expectations for each grade level in the Learning Standards. Once they established the appropriate knowledge and skills from a particular standard for NYS Level 3 (i.e., proficient in standards), panelists worked together to parse the knowledge and skills across the other performance levels in such a way that the progression of the knowledge and skills was clearly seen moving from Level 1 to Level 4. This process was repeated for all of the standards for each grade and subject area.

The draft PLDs were reviewed by the New York State Education Department's (NYSED's) Content Advisory Panels which consist of classroom teachers from elementary, middle and high school, school and district administrators, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD) specialists, and higher education faculty members from across the state. The drafts then went through additional rounds of review and edits from a number of NYS-certified educators, content specialists, and assessment experts under NYSED supervision.

How can the PLDs be used by Educators and in Instruction?

The PLDs should be used as a guidance document to show the overall continuum of learning of the knowledge and skills from the Learning Standards. NYSED encourages the use of the PLDs for a variety of purposes, including differentiating instruction to maximize individual student outcomes, creating formative classroom assessments and rubrics to help identify target performance levels for individual or groups of students, and tracking student growth along the proficiency continuum as described by the PLDs. The knowledge and skills shown in the PLDs describe *typical* performance and progression, however the order in which students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills within and between performance levels may be staggered (i.e. a student who predominantly demonstrates Level 2 knowledge and skills may simultaneously demonstrate certain knowledge and skills indicative of Level 3.).

How are the PLDs used in Assessment?

PLDs are essential in setting performance standards (i.e., "cut scores") for New York State assessments. Standard setting panelists use PLDs to determine the expectations for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to *just barely* attain a Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4 on the assessment. These knowledge and skills drive discussions that influence the panelists as they recommend the cut scores on the assessment.

PLDs are also used in question development. Question writers are assigned to write questions that draw on the specific knowledge and skills from a PLD. This ensures that each test has questions that distinguish performance all along the continuum. Teachers can use the PLDs in the same manner when developing both formative and summative classroom assessments. Tasks that require students to demonstrate knowledge and skills from the PLDs can be tied back to the performance level with which the PLD is associated, providing the teacher with feedback about the students' progress as well as a wealth of other skills that the student is likely able to demonstrate (or can aspire to in the case of the next-highest PLD)

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Anchor Standard	Grade Level Standard	Performance Level 4	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 1
Students read closely to determine what the text says explicitly/ implicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. (R1)	5R1: Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences. (RI&RL)	Make insightful inferences that are supported by sufficient, relevant details and evidence in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly/implicitly.	Make logical inferences that are supported by sufficient, relevant details and evidence in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly/implicitly.	Make inferences that are supported by insufficient or irrelevant details and evidence in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly/implicitly.	Make illogical or inaccurate inferences that lack relevant details and evidence when explaining what the text says explicitly/implicitly.
Students determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. (R2)	5R2: Determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize a text. (RI&RL)	Determine a theme or central idea and explain subtle connections between key supporting details; provide an accurate and elaborate summary of a text.	Determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; provide an accurate summary of a text.	Determine a theme or central idea and offer a limited explanation of how the details support it; provide an insufficient summary which may include minor or irrelevant details.	Determine a theme or central idea which may be inaccurate or lack an explanation of how the details support it; provide a summary which may be inaccurate or provides little or no detail.

Anchor Standard	Grade Level Standard	Performance Level 4	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 1
Students analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. (R3)	5R3: In literary texts, compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, and events, drawing on specific details in the text. (RL)	In literary texts, compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, and events, drawing on specific, relevant details in the text and integrating the subtle similarities and differences.	In literary texts, compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, and events, drawing on specific, relevant details in the text.	In literary texts, partially compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, and events, drawing insufficiently on specific, relevant details in the text.	In literary texts, incompletely or inaccurately compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events; may not include specific details from the text.
	In informational texts, explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts based on specific evidence from the text. (RI)	In informational texts, explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts based on specific relevant information in the text, integrating the subtleties inherent in these relationships or interactions.	In informational texts, explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts based on specific relevant information in the text.	In informational texts, explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts drawing insufficiently on specific information in the text.	In informational texts, incompletely or inaccurately explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts drawing insufficiently on information in the text.
Students interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. (R4)	5R4: Determine the meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, and academic and content specific words and analyze their effect on meaning, tone, or mood. (RI&RL)	Determine the precise meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, and academic and content specific words; provide an insightful analysis of their effect on meaning, tone, or mood.	Determine the meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, and academic and content specific words; provide an accurate analysis of their effect on meaning, tone, or mood.	Determine the literal meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, and academic and content specific words; provide a basic or inaccurate analysis of their effect on meaning, tone, or mood.	Determine the meaning of simple words, phrases, figurative language, and basic academic and content specific words; provide minimal or no analysis of their effect on meaning, tone, or mood.

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Anchor Standard	Grade Level Standard	Performance Level 4	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 1
Students analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. (R5)	5R5: In literary texts, explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to determine the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem (RL)

In informational texts, compare and contrast the overall structure in two or more texts using terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution. (RI) | In literary texts, precisely explain and analyze how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to determine the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem.

In informational texts, compare and contrast with analysis, the overall structure in two or more texts; terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution are used with accuracy. | In literary texts, explain with accuracy how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to determine the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem.

In informational texts, compare and contrast with accuracy the overall structure in two or more texts; terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution are used with accuracy. | In literary texts, explain with partial accuracy how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to determine the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem.

In informational texts, compare and contrast with partial accuracy the overall structure in two or more texts; terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution may be used with some inaccuracies. | In literary texts, explain with little or no accuracy how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to determine the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem.

In informational texts, compare and contrast with little or no accuracy the overall structure in two or more texts; terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution may be used inaccurately or not at all. |
| Students assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text, drawing on a wide range of global and diverse texts. (R6) | 5R6: In literary texts, explain how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described. (RL)

In informational texts, analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent. (RI) | In literary texts, explain with accuracy and analysis how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

In informational texts, offer a precise analysis of multiple accounts of the same event or topic; accurately note important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent. | In literary texts, explain with accuracy how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

In informational texts, analyze accurately multiple accounts of the same event or topic; accurately note important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent. | In literary texts, explain with partial accuracy how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

In informational texts, analyze, with partial accuracy, multiple accounts of the same event or topic; with partial accuracy, note important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent. | In literary texts, explain with little or no accuracy how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

In informational texts, analyze, with little or no accuracy, multiple accounts of the same event or topic without noting similarities and differences in the point of view they represent. |

Anchor Standard	Grade Level Standard	Performance Level 4	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 1
Students integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats. (R7)	5R7: Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to meaning of literary and informational texts. (RI&RL)	Analyze precisely how visual and multimedia elements contribute to meaning of literary and informational texts.	Analyze accurately how visual and multimedia elements contribute to meaning of literary and informational texts.	Analyze, with partial accuracy, how visual and multimedia elements contribute to meaning of literary and informational texts.	Analyze, with little or no accuracy, how visual and multimedia elements contribute to meaning of literary and informational texts.
Students delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. (R8)	5R8: Explain how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence, identifying which reasons and evidence support which claims. (RI&RL)	Explain with analysis how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence; accurately identify which reasons and evidence support which claims.	Explain with accuracy how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence; accurately identify which reasons and evidence support which claims.	Explain, with partial accuracy, how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence; with partial accuracy, identify which reasons and evidence support which claims.	Explain, with little or no accuracy, how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence; may not identify which reasons and evidence support which claims.
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L1)	Language Standards 1 and 2 are organized within grade bands. For the Core Conventions Skills and Core Punctuation and Spelling Skills for Grades 3–5, the student is expected to know and be able to use the skills by the end of 5th grade.	Write and/or speak with few errors in standard English grammar and usage and take risks that enhance comprehension.	Write and/or speak with occasional errors in standard English grammar and usage that do not hinder comprehension.	Write and/or speak with errors in standard English grammar and usage that somewhat hinder comprehension.	Write and/or speak with errors in standard English grammar and usage that hinder comprehension.
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (L2)		Produce writing that enhances comprehension and contains few or no errors in standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.	Produce writing with occasional errors in standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling that do not hinder comprehension.	Produce writing with errors in standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling that somewhat hinder comprehension.	Produce writing with errors in standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling that hinder comprehension.

Anchor Standard	Grade Level Standard	Performance Level 4	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 1
Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. (L3)	5L3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.	Communicate accurately using sophisticated language, conventions, and tone appropriate to the situation or task.	Communicate accurately using precise language appropriate to the situation or task.	Communicate using language that is not consistently precise or appropriate to the situation or task.	Communicate using inaccurate or inappropriate language for the situation or task.
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. (L4)	5L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.	Determine or clarify, with precision and detail, the meanings of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a broad range of strategies.	Determine or clarify the meanings of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.	Determine or clarify the meanings of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, demonstrating a limited range of strategies.	Demonstrate an inability to clarify the meanings of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L5)	5L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings	Identify and insightfully explain the meaning of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings by choosing words precisely and purposefully.	Identify and explain the meaning of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings by choosing words that suit the purpose.	Identify figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings with partial connection to the purpose.	Identify figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings inaccurately by choosing words that show little or no connection to the purpose.

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Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression. (L6)	5L6: Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition).	Apply, in a precise and skillful way, general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships.	Apply, with accuracy, general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships.	Apply, with partial accuracy, general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships.	Apply, with little or no accuracy, general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships.
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (W1)	5W1: Write an argument to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.	Write a compelling argument that precisely and insightfully supports claims with clearly and logically ordered reasons and relevant evidence from various sources; uses precise and content-specific vocabulary, and purposeful and varied transitions to connect ideas while maintaining appropriate style and tone; concluding statement or section related to the argument is presented.	Write an argument that supports claims with clearly and logically ordered reasons and relevant evidence from multiple sources; uses content-specific vocabulary and appropriate and varied transitions to connect ideas while maintaining appropriate style/tone; concluding statement or section is presented.	Write an argument to support claims with reasons and evidence. Makes partial use of content-specific vocabulary, transitions to connect ideas, a conclusion, and appropriate style/tone.	Write an argument to support claims with reasons and evidence with little or no use of content-specific vocabulary, transitions, conclusion, or appropriate style/tone.

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Anchor Standard	Grade Level Standard	Performance Level 4	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 1
Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (W2)	5W2: Write informative/ explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.	Write informative/ explanatory texts that precisely and insightfully introduce and address a topic with logically organized information, sophisticated and content-specific vocabulary, purposeful and varied transitions to connect ideas, and a concluding statement or section that relate to the argument, while maintaining sophisticated style and tone.	Write, with accuracy, informative/ explanatory texts that introduce and explore a topic with organized information, precise and content-specific vocabulary, appropriate transitions to connect ideas, and a concluding statement related to the argument, while maintaining appropriate style and tone.	Write an argument to support claims with reasons and evidence, making partial use of content-specific vocabulary, transitions to connect ideas, and a conclusion, while partially maintaining an appropriate style and tone.	Write an argument to support claims with reasons and evidence with little or no use of content-specific vocabulary, transitions, or a conclusion.
Develop personal, cultural, textual, and thematic connections within and across genres through written responses to texts and personal experiences. (W4)	5W4: Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.	Create an elaborate poem, story, play, artwork, or other response with an insightful connection to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.	Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response with a connection to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.	Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response with a partial connection to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.	Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response with little or no connection to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W5)	5W5: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to respond and support analysis, reflection, and research by applying the Grade 5 Reading Standards.	Write using precise evidence from literary or informational texts with accuracy to respond to and support insightful analysis, reflection, and research.	Write using evidence from literary or informational texts with accuracy to respond to and support analysis, reflection, and research by applying the Grade 5 Reading Standards.	Write using evidence from literary or informational texts with partial accuracy and/or relevance to respond to and support analysis, reflection, and research.	Write using evidence from literary or informational texts with little or no accuracy and/or relevance to respond to and support analysis, reflection, and research.