



# ***New York State Testing Program***

---

## **Educator Guide to the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests**

**Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards**

**Updated: November 2024**

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
**Regents of The University**

LESTER W. YOUNG, JR., <i>Chancellor</i> , B.S., M.S., Ed.D. ....	Beechhurst
JUDITH CHIN, <i>Vice Chancellor</i> , B.S., M.S. in Ed. ....	Little Neck
ROGER TILLES, B.A., J.D. ....	Manhasset
CHRISTINE D. CEA, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. ....	Staten Island
WADE S. NORWOOD, B.A. ....	Rochester
JAMES E. COTTRELL, B.S., M.D. ....	New York
CATHERINE COLLINS, R.N., N.P., B.S., M.S. in Ed., Ed.D. ....	Buffalo
LUIS O. REYES, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. ....	New York
SUSAN W. MITTLER, B.S., M.S. ....	Ithaca
FRANCES G. WILLS, B.A., M.A., M.Ed., C.A.S., Ph.D. ....	Ossining
ARAMINA VEGA FERRER, B.A., M.S. in Ed., Ph.D. ....	Bronx
SHINO TANIKAWA, B.A., M.S. ....	Manhattan
ROGER P. CATANIA, B.A., M.A., M.S., C.A.S., Ph.D. ....	Saranac Lake
ADRIAN I. HALE, A.S., B.A. ....	Rochester
HASONI L. PRATTS, B.S., M.P.A. ....	Brooklyn
PATRICK A. MANNION, B.A., M.B.A. ....	Fayetteville
SEEMA RIVERA, B.A., M.S., Ph.D. ....	Slingerlands

**Commissioner of Education and President of the University**

BETTY A. ROSA, B.A., M.S. in Ed., M.S. in Ed., M.Ed., Ed.D.

**Senior Deputy Commissioner, Office of Education Policy**

JEFFREY A. MATTESON

**Deputy Commissioner, P-12 Operational Support**

JASON HARMON

**Assistant Commissioner, Office of State Assessment**

ZACHARY WARNER

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, military, marital status, familial status, domestic violence victim status, carrier status, disability, genetic predisposition, sexual orientation and criminal record in its recruitment, educational programs, services, and activities. NYSED has adopted a web accessibility policy, and publications designed for distribution can be made available in an accessible format upon request. Inquiries regarding this policy of nondiscrimination should be directed to the Office of Human Resources Management, Room 528 EB, Education Building, Albany, New York 12234.

Copyright © 2025 by the New York State Education Department. Permission is hereby granted for school administrators and educators to reproduce these materials, located online on the [NYSED](https://p12.nysed.gov) website (<https://p12.nysed.gov>), in the quantities necessary for their schools' use, but not for sale, provided copyright notices are retained as they appear in these publications.

# Table of Contents

---

- Foreword**..... 1
- New York State Grades 3–8 Testing Program** ..... 2
  - Purpose of State Testing ..... 2
  - New York State Educators Involvement in Test Development..... 2
  - Computer-Based Testing..... 2
- The Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards** ..... 3
  - Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers..... 3
  - Reading ..... 3
  - Writing ..... 3
  - Language..... 3
  - Speaking and Listening..... 4
- Performance Level Definitions**..... 5
  - NYS Level 4 ..... 5
  - NYS Level 3 ..... 5
  - NYS Level 2 ..... 5
  - NYS Level 1 ..... 5
  - Performance Level Descriptions..... 5
- Assessing the Learning Standards for English Language Arts** ..... 6
  - Reading, Writing, and Language ..... 6
  - Speaking and Listening..... 6
  - Text Selection ..... 7
  - A Note on Texts ..... 7
  - Range of Informational Texts ..... 8

<b>The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests</b> .....	9
Testing Sessions .....	9
When Students Have Completed Their Tests.....	9
Test Design.....	10
Test Blueprint.....	12
Grades 3–5 .....	12
Grades 6–8 .....	13
Question Formats .....	13
Multiple-Choice Questions .....	13
Constructed-Response Questions.....	13
2-Credit Constructed-Response Questions .....	14
4-Credit Constructed-Response Questions .....	14
Additional Assessment Resources .....	14
English Language Arts Rubrics .....	15
2-Credit Constructed-Response Rubric .....	15
4-Credit Constructed-Response Rubric .....	16
New York State Grades 4–5 Writing Evaluation Rubric.....	17
New York State Grades 6–8 Writing Evaluation Rubric.....	18
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	19
Guidance on Constructed-Response Questions .....	19
Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 3, 2-Credit Constructed-Response Question.....	20
Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 6, 2-Credit Constructed-Response Question.....	21
Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 4, 4-Credit Constructed-Response Question.....	22
Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 6, 4-Credit Constructed-Response Question.....	24

## Foreword

---

The information contained in this Educator Guide is designed to raise educator awareness of the structure of the New York State Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests aligned to the [New York State Next Generation Learning Standards](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards) (<https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards>).

The guide provides educators with pertinent information about the test development process, the learning standards that the tests are designed to measure, and the format of the testing sessions, which includes what types of questions will be asked and the suggested length of the testing sessions. Links to additional resources are provided to further enhance educators' understanding of the structure of the English Language Arts tests. Educators are encouraged to review the guides prior to the test administration to gain familiarity with the test format. The information presented can also be used as a platform for educator discussion on how to best utilize student assessment results to guide future instruction.

The Elementary and Intermediate testing schedule for the spring administration can be found on the Department's website (<https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/grades-3-8-test-schedules>). Questions regarding the New York State Testing Program and test design may be addressed to the Office of State Assessment at [emscassessinfo@nysed.gov](mailto:emscassessinfo@nysed.gov). Questions regarding the New York State Learning Standards may be addressed to the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at [emscurric@nysed.gov](mailto:emscurric@nysed.gov).

# **New York State Grades 3–8 Testing Program**

---

## **Purpose of State Testing**

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) requires that states annually administer tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in Grades 3–8. The Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics NYS Testing Program has been designed to measure student knowledge and skills as defined by the grade-level New York Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS) in ELA and Mathematics. The tests are designed to report student proficiency in one of four performance levels. Refer to page 5 of this guide for further information regarding the Performance Level Descriptions.

## **New York State Educators Involvement in Test Development**

While teachers have always been included in the Grades 3–8 Test Development Process, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) continues to expand the number of opportunities for New York State educators to become involved. This includes writing all of the test questions. New York State educators provide the critical input necessary to ensure that the tests are fair, valid, and appropriate for students through their participation in many test development activities.

The test development process includes the development, review, and approval of test questions, construction of field and operational test forms, final approval of test forms prior to administration, and the development of scoring materials. NYSED remains committed to improving the quality of the State’s assessments and the experiences that students have taking these tests. For more information on opportunities to participate in the test development process, please visit the Test Development Participation Opportunities website (<https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/test-development-participation-opportunities>).

## **Computer-Based Testing**

In Spring 2024, NYSED began the statewide implementation plan of computer-based testing (CBT) for the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests, as well as the Elementary-level (Grade 5) and Intermediate-level (Grade 8) Science Tests. To view the full implementation plan memo, go to <https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/elementary-and-intermediate-level-tests>.

# **The Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards**

---

The New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards define the knowledge, skills, and understandings that individuals can and do habitually demonstrate over time when exposed to high-quality instructional environments and learning experiences. The standards are organized into four overlapping strands which together support the development of advanced literacy skills: Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening.

The information below is meant to provide the context and expectations to enable student success and inform teacher practice.

## **Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers**

The Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers reflect the changing expectations for what it means to be literate today. Coursework and instruction based on the ELA learning standards should develop within the context of the Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers. These practices are a context for the New York State ELA Learning Standards which, in turn, support these practices by specifying grade level expectations for readers and writers.

## **Reading**

Students in Grades 3–8 should experience a balance of literature and informational texts in the context of instruction designed to create opportunities for children to engage with a variety of topics and texts, and have discussions about texts that support language development and knowledge building. Creating this learning environment can take a variety of formats, including read-alouds, shared readings, paired readings, independent readings (beginning in Grade 4), and other learning activities that incorporate literacy materials, talking, and writing.

## **Writing**

As students develop their writing skills, they will use a variety of strategies to plan, revise, and strengthen their writing as they work independently and collaboratively with adults and peers to produce texts and to learn about and develop oral language—written language and reading—writing connections. Students will write for multiple purposes (to entertain, to explain, to persuade) and learn about various tools (print and digital) to produce, share, and publish writing. In all writing tasks, students will learn to use and adjust language to best communicate ideas, content, and message. From Grade 3 through Grade 8, students will develop an understanding of the distinction between—and appropriate application of—conversational and academic language.

## **Language**

To develop academic language and background knowledge, and to enrich personal language and expression, standards-based language instruction will enable students to increasingly demonstrate control of the conventions of academic language, develop their knowledge of language (understanding how language functions in different contexts, making effective choices for meaning and style, and comprehending more fully when reading or listening), and build skills relating to vocabulary acquisition and use (learning general academic and content specific words and phrases, clarifying the meaning of unknown or multiple meaning words and phrases, and demonstrating understanding of figurative language and nuances in meaning).

## **Speaking and Listening**

Language develops in the classroom if there is an extended back-and-forth process of interactions among students, organized around rich content and topics. Students will build their speaking and listening skills and knowledge by participating effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners; expressing ideas clearly and persuasively; integrating and evaluating information presented in diverse media and formats; evaluating points of view and reasoning; reasonably and clearly presenting information with supporting evidence; ensuring that organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; making strategic use of media; adapting speech to context; and demonstrating command of academic English.

**For more information about the Next Generation Learning Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy, please refer to the NYSED website (<https://www.nysed.gov/next-generation-learning-standards>).**



## Performance Level Definitions

---

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. 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. Due to the need to identify student proficiency, the state tests must provide students at each performance level opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the NGLS. For this reason, the Performance Level Descriptions play a central role in the test development process, specifically question writing.

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.

## Performance Level Descriptions

For information about the Next Generation English Language Arts Performance Grade-Level Descriptions for Grades 3–8, please see the [website \(https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/next-generation-grades-3-8-learning-standards-performance-level-descriptions\)](https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/next-generation-grades-3-8-learning-standards-performance-level-descriptions).

# Assessing the Learning Standards for English Language Arts

---

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will focus entirely on the ELA learning standards for each grade.

## Reading, Writing, and Language

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will assess Reading, Writing, and Language standards using multiple-choice, 2-credit constructed-response, and 4-credit constructed-response questions. All questions will be based on close reading of informational and literary texts, including paired texts in Grades 4–8. All texts will be drawn from authentic, grade-level works. The length of the texts on the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will typically be:

Length of Texts*	
Grade 3	525–625 words
Grade 4	625–725 words
Grade 5	725–825 words
Grade 6	775–875 words
Grade 7	825–925 words
Grade 8	925–1025 words

\*In some instances, ranges may vary slightly for a particular passage in order to create a more complete excerpt that will aid student comprehension.

Please see pages 7–8 for further information about authentic texts and text selection.

Reading and Language Standards will be assessed using multiple-choice questions. 2-credit constructed-response questions will primarily assess reading, but will also require writing and command of language. 4-credit constructed-response questions will primarily assess Writing from Sources, whereby student responses will be rated on the degree to which they can communicate a clear and coherent analysis of one or two texts.

## Speaking and Listening

While Speaking and Listening Standards will **NOT** be assessed on the State test, they remain two very important components of critical building blocks in students’ ability to read and write at grade level. Speaking and Listening Standards provide the dialogic building blocks that directly support students in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge.

Only through rigorous, structured classroom discourse will students gain valuable experiences examining texts they need in order to meet the rigors of what is required in writing. It is imperative that teachers continue to instruct and assess the Speaking and Listening Standards in the classroom. Instructional resources and examples of formative assessments for the Speaking and Listening Standards can be found in the Grades 3–8 [curriculum materials](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/teaching-learning-assessment-learning) (<https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/teaching-learning-assessment-learning>).

For more information about [Curriculum Materials](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction), please refer to the NYSED website (<https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction>).

## Text Selection

During the test development process, NYS educators approve all passages for use on the NYS Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests. Selecting high-quality, grade-appropriate texts requires both objective text complexity metrics and educator judgment. For the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests, both qualitative and quantitative measures are used to determine the complexity of the texts. Based on research and the guidance of nationally-recognized literacy experts,<sup>1</sup> the following ranges for quantitative measures were used to guide text selections.

### Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures

NYELA Grade Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	Fleisch-Kincaid	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	Text Evaluator
2nd–3rd	2.75–5.14	42–54	1.98–5.34	420–820	3.53–6.13	100–590
4th–5th	4.97–7.03	52–60	4.51–7.73	740–1010	5.42–7.92	405–720
6th–8th	7.00–9.98	57–67	6.51–10.34	925–1185	7.04–9.57	550–940
9th–10th	9.67–12.01	62–72	8.32–12.12	1050–1335	8.41–10.81	750–1125
11th–CCR	11.20–14.10	67–74	10.34–14.20	1185–1385	9.57–12.00	890–1360

### A Note on Texts

Many of the *Reading* Standards require students to recognize how authors support their opinions, to understand the author’s point of view and purpose, and to be able to discern well-supported arguments from those that are not. To assess these standards on the test, text passages are included that express opinions and theories with which not all readers may agree. Students must demonstrate their ability to determine point of view, purpose, and success of argumentation with supporting evidence in subjects that they will encounter both in other academic classes and in their daily lives.

For more information about passage selection, please refer to the [NYSED website \(https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/grades-3-8-ela-and-mathematics-tests\)](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/grades-3-8-ela-and-mathematics-tests).

---

<sup>1</sup>Nelson, Jessica; Perfetti, Charles; Liben, David; and Liben, Meredith, “Measures of Text Difficulty: Testing Their Predictive Value for Grade Levels and Student Performance,” 2012.

## Range of Informational Texts

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will have questions on a variety of informational texts. The array of passages selected for the tests will assess whether students can comprehend and analyze a wide range of text types. The chart below categorizes common informational texts according to their structure. Please note that the chart below is not specific to any grade, rather it is meant to help teachers understand the range of informational texts that students may encounter by the end of Grade 8.

<b>EXPOSITORY</b>	<b>ARGUMENTATIVE</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL</b>	<b>NARRATIVE</b>
Textbooks (science)	Opinion/Editorial Pieces	Training Manuals	(Auto) Biographies
Textbooks (humanities)	Speeches (including those from seated politicians)	Contracts	Histories
Reports	Advertisements	User Guides/Manuals	Correspondence
Tourism Guides	Political Propaganda	Legal Documents	Curriculum Vitae
Product Specifications	Journal Articles	Recipes	Memoirs
Product/Service Descriptions	Government Documents	Product/Service Descriptions	News Articles
Magazine Articles	Legal Documents		Essays
Company Profiles	Tourism Guides		Interviews
Legal Documents	Correspondence		Agendas
Agendas	Essays		
Correspondence	Reviews		
Essays	Memoirs		
Interviews			
Government Documents			
News Articles			

# The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests

---

## Testing Sessions

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests consist of two sessions that are administered over two days. Students will be provided as much time as necessary within the confines of the regular school day to complete each test session. School personnel should use their best professional judgment and knowledge about individual students to determine how long a student should be engaged in taking a particular assessment and when it is in the student’s best interest to end the test session.

Although test duration will vary among students, the table below estimates the average time it will take students to complete each session of the exam and is intended for test preparation and planning. It is strongly encouraged for educators to share this information with students and parents prior to the test administration. Additionally, educators preparing students for this exam are encouraged to emphasize the rubric criteria for constructed-response questions and remind students that the length of their response does not necessarily improve the quality of their response. For examples of concise full credit responses, see Appendix A.

	Average Time to Complete Session 1	Average Time to Complete Session 2
<b>Grade 3</b>	60–70 Minutes	70–80 Minutes
<b>Grade 4</b>	60–70 Minutes	70–80 Minutes
<b>Grade 5</b>	80–90 Minutes	70–80 Minutes
<b>Grade 6</b>	80–90 Minutes	90–100 Minutes
<b>Grade 7</b>	80–90 Minutes	90–100 Minutes
<b>Grade 8</b>	80–90 Minutes	90–100 Minutes

The tests must be administered under standard conditions and the directions must be followed carefully. The same test administration procedures must be used with all students so that valid inferences can be drawn from the test results.

NYSED devotes great attention to the security and integrity of the New York State Testing Program. School administrators and teachers involved in the administration of State assessments are responsible for understanding and adhering to the instructions set forth in the *School Administrator’s Manual* (<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/state-assessment/sam-g3-8-2024.pdf>) and the *Teacher’s Directions* (<https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/grades-3-8-ela-and-math-test-manuals>).

## When Students Have Completed Their Tests

Students who finish their assessment should be encouraged to go back and check their work. Once the student checks their work, or chooses not to, examination materials should be collected by the proctor. After a student’s assessment materials are collected, or the student has submitted the test if testing on computer, that student may be permitted to read silently. This privilege is granted at the discretion of each school. No talking and no other schoolwork is permitted.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>For more detailed information about test administration, including proper procedures for proctoring, please refer to the *School Administrator’s Manual* and the *Teacher’s Directions*.

Given that the spring tests have no time limits, schools and districts have the discretion to create their own approach to ensure that all students who are productively working are given the time they need **within the confines of the regular school day** to continue to take the tests. If the test is administered in a large-group setting, school administrators may prefer to allow students to hand in their test materials, or submit the test if testing on computer, as they finish and then leave the room. If so, take care that students leave the room as quietly as possible so as not to disturb the students who are still working on the test.

**Test Design**

The charts below illustrate the test designs for the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests. These charts detail the number of passages and the type(s) of questions in each session. The first three passages in Session 1 consist of passages with only multiple-choice questions. However, the final passage in Session 1 will include both multiple-choice and 2-credit constructed-response questions. Session 2, Grade 3, consists of passages with multiple-choice or 2-credit constructed-response questions. Session 2, Grades 4–8, consists of passages with multiple-choice or 2-credit and 4-credit constructed-response questions.

Also noted is the approximate number of informational and literary passages present on the tests. Please note that embedded field test questions and passages are included in the design. It will not be apparent to students whether a question is an embedded field test question that does not count toward their score or an operational test question that does count toward their score.

**Grade 3 English Language Arts Test Design**

	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Passages</b>	4	2	6
<b>Multiple-Choice Questions</b>	23	6	29
<b>2-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	2	3	5
<b>4-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	0	0	0
	Total Number of Literary Passages		3–4
	Total Number of Informational Passages		2–3

### Grade 4 English Language Arts Test Design

	Session 1	Session 2	Total
<b>Passages</b>	4	3	7
<b>Multiple-Choice Questions</b>	23	6	29
<b>2-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	2	3	5
<b>4-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	0	1	1
	Total Number of Literary Passages		3–4
	Total Number of Informational Passages		3–4

### Grades 5–6 English Language Arts Test Design

	Session 1	Session 2	Total
<b>Passages</b>	4	3	7
<b>Multiple-Choice Questions</b>	26	7	33
<b>2-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	2	3	5
<b>4-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	0	1	1
	Total Number of Literary Passages		2–5
	Total Number of Informational Passages		2–5

### Grades 7–8 English Language Arts Test Design

	Session 1	Session 2	Total
<b>Passages</b>	4	4	8
<b>Multiple-Choice Questions</b>	26	14	40
<b>2-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	2	3	5
<b>4-Credit Constructed-Response Questions</b>	0	1	1
	Total Number of Literary Passages		3–5
	Total Number of Informational Passages		3–5

### Test Blueprint

The charts below show the percentage of credits that relate to Reading, Language, and Writing Standards. When reading these charts, it is essential to remember that most questions assess many standards simultaneously. Additionally, Reading Standards are divided by focus (Key Ideas, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge) to help guide instruction.

#### Grades 3–5

Area of Focus		Approximate Percentages
Reading Standards		100% requires close reading
Language and Writing Standards		Up to 50% requires writing and command of language
Approximate Percentages		
Key Ideas and Details	Craft and Structure	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Up to 65%	Up to 35%	Up to 30%



## Grades 6–8

Area of Focus		Approximate Percentages
Reading Standards		100% requires close reading
Language and Writing Standards		Up to 40% requires writing and command of language
Approximate Percentages		
Key Ideas and Details	Craft and Structure	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Up to 60%	Up to 40%	Up to 40%

It should be noted that Standards R3.1, R3.1, R4.1, R4.1, etc., provide a foundation for all questions on the tests, as all will require text-based responses. Likewise, Standards R3.10, R3.10, R4.10, etc., form the heart of all text-based instruction. While not assessed directly in questions, R3.10, R3.10, R4.10, etc., are present on the test in the form of rigorous, worthwhile texts.

### Question Formats

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests contain multiple-choice (1-credit), 2-credit and 4-credit constructed-response questions. For multiple-choice questions, students select the correct response from four answer choices. For 2-credit and 4-credit constructed-response questions, students write an answer to an open-ended question.

#### Multiple-Choice Questions

Multiple-choice questions are designed to assess Reading and Language Standards. They will ask students to analyze different aspects of a given text, including central idea, style elements, character and plot development, and vocabulary. Almost all questions, including vocabulary questions, will only be answered correctly if the student comprehends and makes use of the whole passage.

Multiple-choice questions will assess Reading and Language Standards in a range of ways. Some will ask students to analyze aspects of text or vocabulary. Many questions will require students to combine skills. For example, questions may ask students to identify a segment of text that best supports the central idea. To answer correctly, a student must first comprehend the central idea and then show understanding of how that idea is supported. Questions will require more than rote recall or identification. Students will also be required to negotiate plausible, text-based distractors.<sup>3</sup> Each distractor will require students to comprehend the whole passage.

#### Constructed-Response Questions

As writers, students develop and apply a variety of distinct skills for a variety of purposes and in a variety of formats. The written communication of ideas necessitates executive functioning and planning, language knowledge and dexterity, creativity, and expression. Students write formally and informally, extensive pieces and abbreviated vignettes, for reflection as well as expression, for academic purposes, and for personal enjoyment. The expansive scope of the knowledge, skills, and understandings inherent in writing instruction far exceeds what can be assessed on a single test or through a single assignment. The constructed-response questions on these tests assess only a limited slice of these, as described in the question descriptions below

---

<sup>3</sup>A distractor is an incorrect response that may appear to be a plausible correct response to a student who has not mastered the skill or concept being assessed.

and detailed in the corresponding rubrics which provide a straightforward and detailed explanation of how student responses are assessed. For example, the rubric calls for the use of *relevant evidence and well-chosen facts*, criteria which are no more or less weighted than the ability to *skillfully link ideas*, having a *clear and purposeful organization*, or demonstrating *insightful comprehension and analysis*. The rubrics **do not** prioritize the length of the response or reward the accumulation of evidence beyond what is asked for by the question. Educators preparing students for this exam are encouraged to emphasize the quality of the constructed responses consistent with the rubric criteria and remind students that the length of their response does not necessarily improve the **quality** of their response.

## **2-Credit Constructed-Response Questions**

2-credit constructed-response questions are designed to assess Reading and Language Standards. These are single questions for which students use textual evidence to support their own answers to an inferential question. These questions ask the student to make an inference (a claim, position, or conclusion) based on their analysis of the passage, state it in their own words, and then provide two pieces of text-based evidence to support their answer.

The purpose of the 2-credit constructed-response questions is to assess a student’s ability to comprehend and analyze text. In responding to these questions, students will be expected to write in complete sentences. Responses with a valid inference and two supporting details from the associated text receive full credit. Responses should typically require no more than approximately two or three complete sentences. The rubric used to evaluate these types of responses is provided on page 15. It is important to note that students who answer the question only using details from the text will **NOT** receive full credit. A full-credit response is characterized by both a valid inference and sufficient textual support.

## **4-Credit Constructed-Response Questions**

4-credit constructed-response questions are designed to assess *Writing from Sources*. In Grades 4–8, 4-credit constructed-response questions will require students to read and analyze paired texts. Paired texts are related by theme, genre, tone, time period, or other characteristics. Many 4-credit constructed-response questions will ask students to express a position and support it with text-based details. 4-credit constructed-response questions allow students to demonstrate their ability to write a coherent essay using textual evidence to support their ideas. Whether in response to an individual text or paired texts, a student needs to synthesize, evaluate, and provide their thinking in a coherent and concise manner. As with 2-credit constructed-response questions, students are encouraged to answer in an efficient manner.

## **Additional Assessment Resources**

[The New York State Question Sampler](https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/question-sampler) (<https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/question-sampler>) provides a preview of the question types in the computer-based testing platform designed to help students prepare for testing day using the online testing tools. Passages and questions from previous Grades 3–8 assessments can be found on the [NYSED website](https://www.nysedregents.org/ei/ei-ela.html) (<https://www.nysedregents.org/ei/ei-ela.html>).

## English Language Arts Rubrics

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will be scored using the rubrics below. Both the English Language Arts 2-Credit and 4-Credit Rubrics reflect the demands called for by the Next Generation Learning Standards.

### 2-Credit Constructed-Response Rubric

2-credit constructed-response questions will ask students to make a claim, take a position, or draw a conclusion, and then support it with details. As such, the 2-credit Constructed-Response Rubric focuses on both the inference and evidence a student provides. This structure allows students to have wide latitude in responding to each prompt so long as their response is supported by the text.

Additionally, the expectation for all 2-credit responses will be complete, coherent sentences. By weaving these elements together, the questions, responses, and scores remain firmly focused on student reading ability.

#### 2-Credit Constructed-Response Rubric

Score	Response Features
<b>2 Credits</b>	<p>The features of a 2-credit response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valid inferences and/or claims from the text where required by the prompt</li> <li>• Evidence of analysis of the text where required by the prompt</li> <li>• Relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt</li> <li>• Sufficient number of facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text as required by the prompt</li> <li>• Complete sentences where errors do not impact readability</li> </ul>
<b>1 Credit</b>	<p>The features of a 1-credit response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mostly literal recounting of events or details from the text as required by the prompt</li> <li>• Some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt</li> <li>• Incomplete sentences or bullets</li> </ul>
<b>0 Credits*</b>	<p>The features of a 0-credit response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A response that does not address any of the requirements of the prompt or is totally inaccurate</li> <li>• A response that is not written in English</li> <li>• A response that is unintelligible or indecipherable</li> </ul>

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 1.

\* Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).

#### 4-Credit Constructed-Response Rubric

One must be able to write for a purpose using information from textual sources. 4-credit constructed-response questions on the English Language Arts Tests will ask students to analyze texts and address meaningful questions using strategic, textual details. Scores for 4-credit constructed-response questions will be based on four overarching criteria:

- **Content and Analysis**—the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics or texts
- **Command of Evidence**—the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support analysis and reflection
- **Coherence, Organization, and Style**—the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language
- **Control of Conventions**—the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

These four characteristics combined make up the focus of the 4-credit constructed-response tasks, *Writing from Sources*. Whether in response to an individual text or a paired selection, a student will be asked to synthesize, evaluate, and provide evidence for their thinking in a coherent and legible manner. Please note the 4-Credit Writing Evaluation Rubric in Grades 4–5 on page 17 and Grades 6–8 on page 18.

## New York State Grades 4–5 Writing Evaluation Rubric

CRITERIA	NGLS	SCORE				
		4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level:	0* Essays at this level:
<b>CONTENT AND ANALYSIS:</b> the extent to which the essay conveys ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support analysis of topics or text(s)	W.2 R.1–9	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows logically from the task and purpose  —demonstrate insightful comprehension and analysis of the text(s)	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose  —demonstrate grade-appropriate comprehension and analysis of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose  —demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose  —demonstrate little understanding of the text(s)	—demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
<b>COMMAND OF EVIDENCE:</b> the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided text(s) to support analysis and reflection	W.2 R.1–8	—develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s)  —sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence	—develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s)  —sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety	—partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant  —use relevant evidence with inconsistency	—demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant	—provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant
<b>COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE:</b> the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language	W.2 L.3 L.6	—exhibit clear, purposeful organization  —skillfully link ideas using grade-appropriate words and phrases  —use grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary  —provide a concluding statement that follows clearly from the topic and information presented	—exhibit clear organization  —link ideas using grade-appropriate words and phrases  —use grade-appropriate precise language and domain-specific vocabulary  —provide a concluding statement that follows from the topic and information presented	—exhibit some attempt at organization  —inconsistently link ideas using words and phrases  —inconsistently use appropriate language and domain-specific vocabulary  —provide a concluding statement that follows generally from the topic and information presented	—exhibit little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task  —lack the use of linking words and phrases  —use language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task  —provide a concluding statement that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented	—exhibit no evidence of organization  —exhibit no use of linking words and phrases  —use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s)  —do not provide a concluding statement
<b>CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS:</b> the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling	W.2 L.1 L.2	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	—demonstrate emerging command of conventions, with some errors that may hinder comprehension	—demonstrate a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension	—are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 2.
- If the student writes only a personal response and makes no reference to the text(s), the response can be scored no higher than a 1.
- Responses totally unrelated to the topic, illegible, or incoherent should be given a 0.
- A response totally copied from the text(s) with no original student writing should be scored a 0.

\* Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).

## New York State Grades 6–8 Writing Evaluation Rubric

CRITERIA	NGLS	SCORE				
		4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level:	0* Essays at this level:
<b>CONTENT AND ANALYSIS:</b> the extent to which the essay conveys ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support analysis of topics or text(s)	W.2 R.1–9	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose —demonstrate insightful analysis of the text(s)	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose —demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose —demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose —demonstrate little understanding of the text(s)	—demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
<b>COMMAND OF EVIDENCE:</b> the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided text(s) to support analysis and reflection	W.2 R.1–8	—develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence	—develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety	—partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant —use relevant evidence with inconsistency	—demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant	—provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant
<b>COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE:</b> the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language	W.2 L.3 L.6	—exhibit clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning —establish and maintain a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice —provide a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the topic and information presented	—exhibit clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole —establish and maintain a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the topic and information presented	—exhibit some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions —establish but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement or section that follows generally from the topic and information presented	—exhibit little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task —lack a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task —provide a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented	—exhibit no evidence of organization —use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s) —do not provide a concluding statement or section
<b>CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS:</b> the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling	W.2 L.1 L.2	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	—demonstrate emerging command of conventions, with some errors that may hinder comprehension	—demonstrate a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension	—are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 2.
- If the student writes only a personal response and makes no reference to the text(s), the response can be scored no higher than a 1.
- Responses totally unrelated to the topic, illegible, or incoherent should be given a 0.
- A response totally copied from the text(s) with no original student writing should be scored a 0.

\* Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).

## Appendix A

---

### **Guidance on Constructed-Response Questions**

This section provides examples of student responses to previously administered English Language Arts (ELA) operational test questions that received full credit. Using clear and concise writing helps a student communicate their message effectively. Additional examples can be referenced in the previously released editions of the English Language Arts Test Materials, which can be found on the [NYSED](https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html) website (<https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html>).

While the following questions and sample responses have been taken from the released sections of the 2018 ELA 3–8 tests, items included within the tests are subject to the same scoring criteria and the guidance herein applies to the constructed response questions on the tests.

**Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 3, 2-Credit Constructed-Response Question**

Note below, the four-sentence response to a question assessing Reading Standard 5 from the 2018 Grade 3 released scoring materials provided on the [NYSED](https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html) website (<https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html>) received full credit.

25	<p>How does paragraph 3 connect to paragraph 4 of “How We Use Glass”? Use <b>two</b> details from the passage to support your response.</p> <p>It says how they make glass. One detail is they use sand. Another detail is they have to make it hot. This how they are alike.</p>
----	---

**Score Credit 2 (out of 2 credits)**

This response provides a valid inference from the text to explain how paragraph 3 connects to paragraph 4 of “How We Use Glass” (*It says how they make glass*). The response provides a sufficient number of facts from the text for support as required by the prompt (*they use sand* and *they have to make it hot*). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.



### Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 6, 2-Credit Constructed-Response Question

Note that the three-sentence response below from the 2018 Grade 6 released scoring materials provided on the [NYSED](https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html) website (<https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html>) received full credit.

37

How does paragraph 15 help develop Urashima's point of view? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Paragraph 15 helps develop Urashima's point of view by showing that he was in awe of the palace and the princess. I know this because, in the text it states "Urashima, being only a poor fisher lad, did not know how to behave in a palace". Also, "Urashima was lost in wonder as he looked upon her, and he could not speak."

### Score Credit 2 (out of 2 credits)

This response provides a valid inference from the text to explain how paragraph 15 helps to develop Urashima's point of view (*by showing that he was in awe of the palace and the princess*). The response provides a sufficient number of concrete details from the text for support as required by the prompt ("*Urashima, being only a poor fisher lad, did not know how to behave in a palace*" and "*Urashima was lost in wonder as he looked upon her, and he could not speak.*"). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.

### Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 4, 4-Credit Constructed-Response Question

Note that the 2018 Grade 4 response below from the released scoring materials on the [NYSED](https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html) website (<https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html>) received full credit as a coherent essay which uses textual evidence.

31

In "How Birds Beat the Odds" and "Meerkat Chat," what is one problem that birds and meerkats share? How do birds and meerkats try to solve this problem? Use details from **both** articles to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- identify a problem that birds and meerkats share
- explain how birds and meerkats try to solve this problem
- use details from **both** articles to support your response

In "How Birds Beat the Odds" and "Meerkat Chat" they both deal with enemies who try to eat them and their young. In "How Birds Beat the Odds" it says "Parent birds have to keep their eggs safe from predators, shelter the chicks from weather, and find enough food for all those hungry mouths." In "Meerkat Chat" it says "As Meerkats know, danger lurks everywhere in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa." This shows they both are hunted and their young are too. Birds and Meerkats solve the problem by doing different things. In How Birds Beat the Odds they increase their egg giving them a better chance of surviving. In Meerkat Chat they call family to help and protect them. This shows they can solve their problems in different ways.

See scoring information for this response on the following page.

### Score Credit 4 (out of 4 credits)

This response clearly introduces the topic in a manner that follows logically from the task and purpose (*In "How Birds Beat the Odds" and "Meercat Chat" they both deal with enemies who try to eat them and their young*). The response demonstrates grade-appropriate comprehension and analysis of the texts (*This shows they both are hunted and their young are too; Birds and Meercats solve the problem by doing different things; This shows they can solve their problems in different ways*). The response develops the topic with relevant well-chosen details from the texts and sustains the use of varied, relevant evidence (*Parent birds have to keep their eggs safe from predators, shelter the chicks from weather, and find enough food for all those hungry mouths; As Meercats know, danger lurks everywhere in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa; they increase their egg giving them a better chance of surviving; they call family to help and protect them*). The response exhibits clear organization, linking ideas using grade-appropriate words and phrases (*In "How Birds Beat the Odds", both, In "Meercat Chat" it says, This shows*). The response uses grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary (*deal with enemies, both are hunted and their young are too, better chance of surviving, to help and protect them, solve their problems*). The response does not provide a concluding statement. The response demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors (*enimies, capitalization, punctuation*).

## Sample Response to a 2018 Grade 6, 4-Credit Constructed-Response Question

Note that the 2018 Grade 6 response below from the released scoring materials on the [NYSED](https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html) website (<https://www.nysedregents.org/elementary-intermediate.html>) received full credit as a coherent essay which uses textual evidence.

42

The authors of “The Thirst for First Is the Worst” and “Excerpt from *The Importance of Winning*” have different opinions about whether athletes should be committed to winning. What are the authors’ different points of view about this topic? How is this point of view revealed in each article? Use details from **both** articles to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- describe the authors’ different opinions about whether athletes should be committed to winning
- explain how this point of view is revealed in each article
- use details from **both** articles to support your response

There are a lot of things that come from sports. There are many different perspectives on the games. Two stories with different authors see things differently.

In “The Thirst for First Is the Worst” the author believes winning is not important. That your side goals in the game are what you should achieve, and first place isn’t everything. For example, the text states “For someone focused on winning, losing can be hard to stomach. In my experience, it is far more fulfilling to enjoy the work, game or swim meet than to constantly compare myself to others.” In “Excerpt from The Importance of Winning” Winning is important. Sports are a competition. For example, the text says “Once an athlete reaches the high school level, winning should be a priority. It should be assumed that high school athletes have developed that passion that draws them to spend so much time playing their sport.” In the first article, Reilly Blum believes that it’s not all about winning. In the second article, by Andy Jobanek and Billy Low believe that winning should be emphasized. two different perspectives.

This point is revealed in each article in different ways. In The first article, “The Thirst for First is the Worst” the author takes from her experience and branches off of it to show why she believes sports are not just about getting that first place ribbon. In the second article, “Excerpt from The Importance of Winning” The authors reveal their opinion by stating facts, and using both perspectives on people’s views of sports in their article. They show that as you go up by age, your goals and mindset should change.

There are a lot of things that come from sports. Is winning everything? or is it not important? there are many different perspectives. It’s up to you how you decide to play the game, with your own goals or the first place ribbon, right there in your hands.

See scoring information for this response on the following page.

### Score Credit 4 (out of 4 credits)

This response clearly introduces the topic in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose (*There are a lot of things that come from sports. There are many different perspectives on the games. Two stories with different authors see things differently*). The response demonstrates insightful analysis of the texts (*your side goals in the game are what you should achieve, and first place isn't everything; Winning is important. Sports are a competition; the author takes from her experience and branches of it to show why she believes sports are not just about getting that first place ribbon; The authors reveal their opinion by stating facts, and using both perspectives on people's views of sports; They show that as you go up by age, your goals and mindset should change*). The response develops the topic with relevant details from the texts (*"For someone focused on winning, losing can be hard to stomach. In my experience, it is far more fulfilling to enjoy the work, game or swim meet than to constantly compare myself to others."*; *"Once an athlete reaches the high school level, winning should be a priority. It should be assumed that high school athletes have developed that passion that draws them to spend so much time playing their sport."*). The response exhibits clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning (*For example, the text says, In the first article, In the second article, they show*). The response establishes and maintains a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice (*perspectives, see things differently, side goals, it's not all about winning, emphasized, takes from her experience, branches of, mindset, It's up to you how you decide to play the game*). The response provides a concluding statement that is compelling and follows clearly from the topic and information presented (*There are a lot of things that come from sports. Is winning everything? or is it not important? there are many different perspectives. It's up to you how you decide to play the game, with your own goals or the first place ribbon, right there in your hands*). The response demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension (*perspectives, differently, believes, achieve, isn't, competition, emphasized, experience, branches of, ribbon, capitalization*).

