



FCAT 2.0 READING
Test Item Specifications
Grades 6–8
(Updated November 2012)



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
www.fldoe.org

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FCAT 2.0 READING TEXTS		
G-2	Grade 6	Ben’s Harmonica
G-4	Grade 6	New Kid
G-7	Grade 6	Welcome to Marksdale State Park
G-8	Grade 7	Poppa and the Spruce Tree
G-10	Grade 7	Clown Alley
G-12	Grade 7	Volunteer Day
G-14	Grade 8	Shackleton’s Epic Voyage
G-17	Grade 8	Copper Kettle Sweetheart
G-19	Grade 8	The Last Frontier of Texas
G-23	Grade 8	The Earthmovers
G-25	Grade 8	Schaus Swallowtail/Migration of the Monarch Butterfly

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, two realities focused attention on the need to reevaluate Florida's Sunshine State Standards. First, in 2005, outside consultants reviewed the 1996 Sunshine State Standards and suggested that the benchmark language offer greater specificity to indicate clearly what teachers should teach and what students should be able to do. Second, federal legislation through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) holds schools and school districts accountable for how well each child is learning, which further emphasized the need to hone expectations for all students.

In January 2006, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) committed to a six-year cycle of review and revision of the K–12 content standards. The language arts standards were rewritten, and the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for language arts were adopted by the Florida State Board of Education on January 25, 2007 (available online at:

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/FLStandardSearch.aspx>).

The NGSSS are divided into benchmarks that identify what a student should know and be able to do at each grade level. This document, *FCAT 2.0 Reading Test Item Specifications Grades 6–8 (Specifications)*, provides information about the benchmarks, the stimulus types, and the test items designed to assess the NGSSS for language arts.

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® 2.0 (FCAT 2.0) measures achievement of Florida students in writing, reading, mathematics, and science. End-of-course (EOC) assessments measure achievement of Florida students who have completed coursework in Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology, and U.S. History.

Mission Statement

Although not all benchmarks lend themselves to large-scale testing, successful schools recognize the need for students to master all of Florida's standards. The increased rigor exemplified in the NGSSS will enhance student performance in a rapidly advancing, global environment.

Origin and Purpose of the *Specifications*

The Florida Department of Education and committees of experienced Florida educators developed and approved the *Specifications*. The *Specifications* is a resource that defines the content and format of the test and test items for item writers and reviewers. Each grade-level *Specifications* document indicates the alignment of items with the NGSSS. It also serves to provide all stakeholders with information about the scope and function of the FCAT 2.0.

Scope of this Document

The *Specifications* provides general and grade-specific guidelines for the development of all test items used in the FCAT 2.0 Reading test for Grades 6–8. Two additional *Specifications* documents provide the same information for Grades 3–5 and 9–10.

The Criteria for FCAT 2.0 Reading Items section addresses the general guidelines used to develop multiple-choice items. The Cognitive Complexity of FCAT 2.0 Reading Items section addresses item difficulty and cognitive complexity. Information about reading reporting categories is provided in Appendix C. Additional information about test design is provided in Appendix F.

The Guide to the Grade-Level Specifications section provides an explanation of the reading benchmarks assessed by the test and identifies the ways in which each benchmark is assessed. This section also provides content limits and text attributes.

Overall Considerations

This section of the *Specifications* describes the guidelines that apply to all test items developed for the FCAT 2.0 Reading test.

Overall considerations are broad item-development guidelines that should be addressed during the development of multiple-choice test items. Other sections of this document relate more specifically to the particular aspects of item development (for example, content limits).

1. Each item should be written to measure primarily one benchmark; however, other benchmarks may also be reflected in the item content.
2. Items should be grade-level appropriate in terms of item difficulty, cognitive demands, and reading level.
3. At a given grade, the items should exhibit a varied range of difficulty.
4. The reading level of items should be on or below the grade level of the test, with the exception of items that require the student to use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases, which may be two grade levels above the tested grade.
5. Items should not disadvantage or exhibit disrespect to anyone in regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, occupation, or geographic region.
6. Items should require students to apply the reading skills described in the NGSSS benchmarks from lower grade levels. Skills previously taught in lower grades will continue to be tested at higher grade levels.
7. Some items may include an excerpt from the associated passage in addition to the item stem.
8. Items should provide clear, concise, and complete instructions to students.
9. Each item should be written clearly and unambiguously to elicit the desired response.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING FCAT 2.0 READING TEXTS

Reading texts form the basis for assessing the benchmarks identified in the NGSSS; therefore, it is important to select high-quality FCAT 2.0 Reading texts.

Types

The purpose of FCAT 2.0 Reading is to measure student achievement in constructing meaning from a wide variety of texts. Reading texts may be either literary or informational.

Literary texts focus on the art of language as their medium. They provide insight, entertainment, or inspiration and include fiction and some types of nonfiction (e.g., biographies, speeches, essays, poetry, drama). Literary texts should address a variety of themes appropriate for and interesting to students at the designated grade level. Excerpts from literary texts must reflect qualities of good literature.

In informational texts, language is used to solve problems, raise questions, provide information, and present new ideas about the subject matter. Another form of informational text includes functional reading materials (e.g., websites, how-to's) encountered in real-world situations. Informational texts must include a variety of grade-appropriate information sources—both primary and secondary.

The texts should also represent different points of view while including issues and problems that persist across time. The texts should have identifiable key concepts and relevant supporting details. In addition, the texts should address the NGSSS subject areas that are not directly assessed by FCAT 2.0 Reading: social studies, science, foreign language, the arts, health education, physical education, and vocational education.

As students progress beyond the early grades, they will read informational texts with increasing frequency—in and out of school; therefore, the percentage of informational texts students will encounter on FCAT 2.0 Reading increases as they move up through the grades. The table below shows the percentages of FCAT 2.0 Reading items on a test for literary and informational texts by grade.

Grade	Literary Text	Informational Text
3	60%	40%
4	50%	50%
5	50%	50%
6	50%	50%
7	40%	60%
8	40%	60%
9	30%	70%
10	30%	70%

The following table lists examples of literary and informational texts that may be represented on FCAT 2.0 Reading. Poems, fables, and plays can be expected to make up only a small portion of the texts used on FCAT 2.0 Reading.

Types of Literary Text	Types of Informational Text
<p>Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short stories • Poetry • Historical fiction • Fables • Folk tales, tall tales • Legends • Myths • Fantasy • Drama • Excerpts from longer works <p>Nonfiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographical and autobiographical sketches • Diaries, memoirs, journals, letters • Essays (e.g., personal and classical narratives) • Critiques 	<p>Primary Sources/Nonfiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical documents (e.g., Bill of Rights) • Essays (e.g., informational, persuasive, analytical, historical, scientific) • Letters, journals, diaries <p>Secondary Sources/Nonfiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magazine articles • Newspaper articles • Editorials • Encyclopedia articles <p>Functional Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer documents (e.g., warranties, manuals, contracts, applications) • Embedded in text (e.g., tables, charts, maps, graphs, illustrations, photographs, captions, text boxes) • How-to articles • Brochures, fliers • Schedules • Website pages

Sources

Texts should be noncopyrighted selections in the public domain or commissioned by the contractor expressly for Florida. These selections should represent a wide variety of contexts and NGSSS subject areas, located at <http://fcab.fldoe.org/fcab2/pdf/ReadingAppendixA.pdf>. Published selections from the public domain will be selected from a wide variety of sources that are not likely to be familiar to students. These will be utilized on tests as they were published, or as closely and reasonably as can be accomplished. Commissioned texts produced by the contractor for Florida’s assessments and related products will be the property of the DOE.

The contractor is responsible for identifying a team of commissioned reading text authors. These authors should have been previously published in a critically reviewed publication, such as *Smithsonian*, *Crickets*, *Highlights*, etc., and must have their resumés approved by the DOE. Resumés should include detailed information about authors’ publications, samples of their work, and where other samples can be found. The contractor must submit examples of prospective authors’ works as the examples appear in publications with their names in the bylines (or copyright statements).

The contractor may use teachers from outside of Florida (no current public Florida teachers may write items) as writers/internal reviewers, or the contractor may use trained college-level instructors (from within or outside of Florida currently employed by a college or university) as writers/reviewers.

Characteristics

Selections must be well-written and authentic. They should be cohesive, logically arranged, and stylistically consistent. Material that requires the reader to have prior or specialized knowledge that is not contained in the main text should include the necessary information in a separate insert, such as an introduction or a text box.

Excerpts must function as intact, stand-alone pieces. They must also contain recognizable key concepts; exemplify all the elements of good writing; and meet the requirements for complete selections with a readily identifiable beginning, middle, and end.

Commissioned materials written specifically for the FCAT 2.0 should reflect the same qualities and tone of good literature and include informational materials that are grade-level appropriate. The material should present subject matter that is of high interest and pertinent to students' lives. The format (i.e., the presentation of the text and graphics) should be grade-level appropriate.

The selection of public domain works should follow the same rigorous process as do all other types of reading selections. Public domain selections will be reviewed for any bias and sensitivity issues and grade-level appropriateness. The public domain selections must reflect the characteristics of good literature.

Content

Content should be based on topics located at <http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcat2/pdf/ReadingAppendixA.pdf>. Vocabulary should be checked against accepted published word lists to ensure it is appropriate for the intended grade level. Texts must contain sufficient content, including details and idea development, to serve as a basis for at least 8 to 12 test items. During the initial development of items, 15 to 20 items should be written for a reading selection of medium or longer length. Items should also be developed for shorter selections that can be paired with selections of similar topics.

Texts should be interesting and appealing to students at the grades for which the selections are intended. Texts at a given grade level should include a range of age-appropriate selections that are representative of the material students may be expected to read and comprehend. Also, texts should be conceptually appropriate and relevant and should reflect real-world settings and events that are interesting to students and not limited to classroom or school-related situations. Texts with controversial or offensive content should not be included on the test. Confusing or emotionally charged subjects should also be avoided. References to trademarks, commercial products, and brand names should be checked by the contractor's legal department for permission to use. If there is any question about the accuracy of content, the DOE may require at least two additional sources to verify the information in the text.

Modifications

A public domain or commissioned text or excerpt that is otherwise appropriate may be modified to remove, replace, or footnote a word or phrase that is above grade level; however, if the word or phrase has sufficient context, it may be tested. (See the Reading Level section on the next page.)

Footnotes may be used at Grade 4 and above. (Footnotes are counted in the total word count of the text but are not tested in items.) At Grade 3, words will be explained using editorial brackets within the body of text. Any modifications must be reviewed carefully to ensure they do not significantly alter the meaning, clarity, reading level, tone, etc., of the text. Selections may need to be edited simply to satisfy length requirements.

Text Features

Graphics should be included with texts wherever possible. Graphics may include photographs, website features, illustrations, maps, charts, graphs, advertisements, and schedules. Maps, graphs, tables, text boxes, and other graphic stimuli must have appropriate labels, legends, keys, and/or captions. All graphics should help students understand the text and/or provide information supplemental to the text. Graphics should also reflect multicultural diversity and avoid gender stereotyping.

Item writers must not develop items where the stimulus, correct answer, or multiple-choice distractors are dependent upon recognition of color. If a reference to color is used in an item, the color must be labeled with appropriate text. All artwork must be high quality.

Diversity

Texts should bring a range of cultural diversity to the test. Characters, settings, and situations should reflect the variety of interests and backgrounds that make up Florida's student population. Texts should be written by and about people of different cultures and races; however, selections about culture- or region-specific topics should not create an advantage or disadvantage for any particular group of students with a particular characteristic, including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, or geographic region. These kinds of texts must contain sufficient information to allow a student to answer the accompanying test items.

Except as appropriate for historically accurate public domain pieces, texts should also be free from any bias or stereotyping (e.g., always having male doctors and female nurses).

Reading Level

The reading level of each selection should be appropriate to the tested grade level. Selections for a given grade should represent a range of reading levels suitable for the beginning and through the end of the tested grade.

Indices of reading levels may be used to assist in making judgments about a text's appropriateness. When reading indices are used, multiple indices should be applied to the text. Because such indices often vary widely in their results, the nature and limitations of each index will be taken into account when interpreting results.

During the text review process, Florida educators use professional judgment and experience to determine whether the reading level of each selection is suitable for the grade level of the test. Decisions about the appropriateness of vocabulary are based on professional judgment and commonly accepted published word lists. Individual words or phrases no more than two grade levels beyond the tested grade may be used to assess benchmarks that include the use of context if the context is sufficient to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar word or phrase.

Length of Texts

The length of reading selections should vary within grade levels and increase across grade levels. The table below suggests approximate average lengths of texts. Texts' lengths must not exceed the maximum number of words allowed at each grade level; however, poems may be shorter than the minimum indicated.

Grade	Range of Number of Words per Text	Average Number of Words per Text
3	100–700	500
4	100–900	500
5	200–1000	600
6	200–1100	700
7	300–1100	700
8	300–1200	700
9	300–1400	900
10	300–1500	1000

REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR FCAT 2.0 READING

Before appearing on FCAT 2.0 Reading tests, all reading selections and items must pass several levels of review as part of the FCAT 2.0 development process. Florida educators and citizens, in conjunction with the DOE and FCAT 2.0 contractors, scrutinize all material prior to accepting it for placement on the tests. After the initial selection process, all reading texts are reviewed for content characteristics, potential bias, and any issues of concern to Florida stakeholders. Concerns expressed during the reviews must be resolved satisfactorily before item development begins.

Review of Reading Selections

A committee made up of select Florida educators with experience and expertise in language arts and reading instruction at the appropriate grade levels review reading selections for potential use on the FCAT 2.0. Of extreme importance is the vital role the educators play in determining the appropriateness of selections for test use. After reviewing reading selections, the committee must reach a consensus as to whether a particular selection will be used on the FCAT 2.0. Each factor considered in this review process is identified in the previous section, Criteria for Selecting FCAT 2.0 Reading Texts.

Review for Potential Bias

Reading selections are also reviewed by groups of Florida educators representative of Florida's geographic regions and culturally diverse population. Selections are reviewed for the following kinds of bias: gender, racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic. Reviews also include consideration of issues relevant to individuals with disabilities.

Review for Community Sensitivity

Florida citizens associated with a variety of organizations and institutions review all selections for issues of potential concern to members of the community at large. The purpose for this review is to ensure that the primary purpose of assessing reading achievement is not undermined by inadvertently including in the test any material that is deemed inappropriate by the committee. Reviewers are asked to consider the variety of cultural, regional, philosophical, political, and religious backgrounds throughout Florida and to determine whether the subject matter will be acceptable to Florida students, their parents, and other members of Florida communities. Test items are written for the types of texts that meet FCAT 2.0 criteria. Issues of sensitivity are distinct from bias because sensitivity issues do not necessarily affect student success on an item, whereas bias may. Examples of sensitive topics for Florida students may include wildfires, hurricanes, or other topics that may be considered offensive or distracting to students. With the addition of public domain works, the review committee will be informed of any historical impact and necessary information that is required for them to make a fair assessment of the selection.

Review of Test Items

The DOE and test contractors review all test items during the item development process. Content specialists and copy editors review and edit items, judging them for overall quality and suitability for the tested grade level.

Groups of Florida educators and citizens are convened to review the items for content characteristics and item specifications. This review focuses on validity and determines if an item is a valid measure of the designated NGSSS benchmark, as defined by the grade-level specifications for test items. Separate reviews for bias and sensitivity issues are also conducted.

FCAT 2.0 items are field tested in Florida to ensure clarity of items before they count toward a student's score. In the event an item does not test well, it is either deleted or revised. Revised items will again require field testing prior to being scored.

CRITERIA FOR FCAT 2.0 READING ITEMS

FCAT 2.0 Reading includes one type of test item: multiple-choice (MC).

Item Style and Format

This section presents stylistic guidelines and formatting directions that should be followed while developing multiple-choice test items. Items should be written to measure the knowledge and skills in the designated benchmarks with the underlying expectation that students demonstrate critical thinking. For more information about test design, see Appendix F.

General Guidelines

1. Items should be clear and concise, using vocabulary and sentence structure appropriate for the assessed grade level.
2. Item stems should be expressed either as a question or in an open-ended format.
3. On the rare occasion a multiple-choice item asks a question involving the word NOT, EXCEPT, or LEAST, the word should be emphasized by uppercase type.
4. As deemed grade-level appropriate, uppercase type may be used to emphasize key words in items (e.g., FIRST, MOST, MAIN, OPPOSITE, BEST).
5. In Grades 3 and 4, items calling for comparison or contrast should use all uppercase letters for the words ALIKE and DIFFERENT. In Grade 5, items should use all uppercase letters for the words OPPOSITE, NOT, EXCEPT, and LEAST.
6. Masculine pronouns should **not** be used to refer to both sexes. Plural forms should be used whenever possible to avoid gender-specific pronouns (e.g., instead of *The student will make changes so that he . . .*, use *The students will make changes so that they . . .*).
7. Graphics referenced in a test item will not be presented within the item itself.
8. Items should avoid clueing, also referred to as a *clang* (i.e., duplicating words from excerpted text used in a MC item), in answer choices (options).
9. Answer choices should not include: *No change needed*, *Correct as is*, *None of the above*, *All of the above*, etc.
10. Answer choices such as *Not enough information* or *Cannot be determined* should **not** be used.
11. Incorrect answer choices (distractors) should be on or below grade level.
12. Because directions are given to students both before each reading selection and before the items, it is generally not necessary to begin an item with “According to the passage . . .” Occasionally, there will be a need to use the phrase “as used in the passage . . .” in the stimulus. This should be done sparingly.
13. Distractors should be text based or plausible according to the text.
14. Item stems can be written to direct students to a specific portion of the text instead of using an excerpt or quotation in the stem.
15. As needed, item stems may be constructed using more than one sentence.

Multiple-Choice (MC) Items

1. MC items should take approximately one minute per item to answer.
2. MC items are worth one point each.
3. MC items should have four answer choices (A, B, C, D; or F, G, H, I for alternating items).
4. MC items should be clearly identified and have only one correct answer.
5. In most cases, answer choices should be parallel in concept and format and should be arranged vertically beneath the item stem.
6. In Grade 3, *story*, *article*, *play*, or *poem* should be used when referring to a reading selection. Grades 4–10 should use the terms *passage*, *article*, *play*, or *poem*. For all grades, functional material should be referred to by its specific format (e.g., *schedule*, *brochure*, *flier*, *webpage*).
7. In Grades 6–10, if more than one sentence is quoted from the passage or article, the term *excerpt* should be used. When just one sentence is quoted, the term *sentence* should be used. When ellipses are used to indicate an omission within a quoted sentence, the quoted text should be referred to as an *excerpt*. In poetry, the term *line* or *lines* should be used when referring to a quotation from a poem.
8. One-word answer choices should be arranged alphabetically and be balanced in the use of words beginning with a vowel or a consonant. Answer choices should be parallel in reference to parts of speech (i.e., options may all be the same part of speech, may all be different parts of speech, or may represent two parts of speech twice). Answer choices of more than one word should be arranged by length: short to long or long to short, depending on the position of the correct answer.
9. Distractors should relate to the context of the selection. Distractors should be incorrect and plausible based on the passage but not necessarily based on explicit details.
10. Outliers should be avoided because they are answer choices that clue or draw the student’s attention away from the other answer choices. Outliers may contain grammatical clues and may involve answer choices that are longer or more specific than other answer choices. A common type of outlier occurs when a date or proper noun appears in only one of the four options, or in three of four options, in which case the fourth option is the outlier.
11. Answer choices that are opposite of correct answer choices should not be used as distractors, except in items assessing synonyms or antonyms.

Scope of Items

The scope of FCAT 2.0 Reading for Grades 3–10 is presented in Appendix B, which gives the NGSSS benchmarks for these grades. The benchmarks serve as the objectives to which the test items are written. There may be additional specifications or restrictions by grade level (e.g., specific word relationships used to determine the meaning of vocabulary); these are given under the content limits in the benchmark pages.

Some of the NGSSS benchmarks are assessed across Grades 3–10, as shown in Appendix B. These benchmarks are introduced at one grade with the understanding that they will be assessed at higher levels of difficulty in each succeeding grade.

COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY OF FCAT 2.0 READING ITEMS

The degree of challenge of FCAT 2.0 items is currently categorized in two ways: **item difficulty** and **cognitive complexity**.

Item Difficulty

The difficulty of FCAT 2.0 items is initially estimated by committees of educators participating in Item Content Review meetings each year. As each test item is reviewed, committee members make a prediction of difficulty based upon their knowledge of student performance at the given grade level. The classification scheme used for this prediction of item difficulty is based on the following:

Easy	More than 70 percent of the students are likely to respond correctly.
Average	Between 40 percent and 70 percent of the students are likely to respond correctly.
Challenging	Less than 40 percent of the students are likely to respond correctly.

After an item appears on a test, item difficulty refers to the actual percentage of students who chose the correct answer.

Cognitive Complexity

Cognitive complexity refers to the cognitive demand associated with an item. In the early years of the FCAT program, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) used Bloom's Taxonomy¹ to classify test items; however, Bloom's Taxonomy is difficult to use because it requires an inference about the skill, knowledge, and background of the students responding to the item. Beginning in 2004, the DOE implemented a new cognitive classification system based upon Dr. Norman L. Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels.² The rationale for classifying an item by its DOK level of complexity focuses on the *expectations made of the item*, not on the *ability of the student*. When classifying an item's demands on thinking (i.e., what the item requires the student to recall, understand, analyze, and do), it is assumed that the student is familiar with the basic concepts of the task. Test items are chosen for the FCAT 2.0 based on the NGSSS and their grade-level appropriateness, but the complexity of the items remains independent of the particular curriculum a student has experienced. On any given assessment, the cognitive complexity of a multiple-choice item may be affected by the distractors. The cognitive complexity of an item depends on the grade level of the assessment; an item that has a high level of cognitive complexity at one grade may not be as complex at a higher grade.

The categories—low complexity, moderate complexity, and high complexity—form an ordered description of the demands an item may make on a student. For example, low-complexity items may require a student to solve a one-step problem. Moderate-complexity items may require multiple steps. High-complexity items may require a student to analyze and synthesize information. The distinctions made in item complexity ensure that items will assess the depth of student knowledge at each benchmark. The intent of the item writer weighs heavily in determining the complexity of an item.

¹ Bloom, B.S., et al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. New York: McKay, 1956.

² Webb, Norman L. and others. "Webb Alignment Tool" 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center of Educational Research. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAT/index.aspx>.

The pages that follow illustrate some of the varying demands that items might make at each complexity level for FCAT 2.0 Reading. Note that items may fit one or more descriptions. In most instances, these items are classified at the highest level of complexity demanded by the item. Caution must be used in referring to the table (page 15) that describes activities at each cognitive complexity level. This table is provided for ease of reference, but the ultimate determination of item complexity should be made considering the overall cognitive demand placed on a student. Another table (page 16) provides the breakdown of the percentage of points by cognitive complexity level.

Item writers are expected to evaluate their items in terms of cognitive complexity and include this on the item template. Items should generally be targeted to the highest level of complexity as appropriate to the assessed benchmark, though some benchmarks call for items at varying levels. When this is the case, writers should take care to cover the range of levels that are appropriate and not create items only at the lower ranges.

Low Complexity

FCAT 2.0 Reading low-complexity items require students to recall, observe, question, or represent basic facts. For a low-complexity item, the student would be expected to demonstrate simple skills or abilities. A low-complexity item requires only a basic understanding of text—often verbatim recall from text or simple understanding of a single word or phrase.

Below is an example of a low-complexity item that is based on “Clown Alley” on page G–10. For more information about this item type, see Benchmark LA.7.1.7.3, which begins on page 68.

A poodle would most likely be part of an act performed by a

- A. riding clown.
- B. juggling clown.
- C. acrobatic clown.
- ★ D. walk-around clown.

Moderate Complexity

FCAT 2.0 Reading moderate-complexity items require two steps: comprehension and subsequent processing of text. Students are expected to make inferences within the text and may encounter items that include words such as *summarize*, *infer*, *classify*, *gather*, *organize*, *compare*, and *display*. Depending on the objective of a particular moderate-level item, students may also be required to explain, describe, or interpret.

Below is an example of a moderate-complexity item that is based on “Clown Alley” on page G–10. For more information about this item type, see Benchmark LA.7.1.7.3, which begins on page 68.

According to the article, a professional clown in full makeup would NOT be seen

- A. showing children how to juggle.
- B. posing for an artist painting eggs.
- C. walking among audience members.
- ★ D. eating lunch at a fast-food restaurant.

High Complexity

FCAT 2.0 Reading high-complexity items make heavy demands on student thinking. Students may be asked to explain, generalize, or make multiple connections. High-complexity items require several steps involving abstract reasoning and planning. Students must be able to support their thinking. Items may involve identifying the theme and the implicit main idea and making complex inferences within or across texts. Students may also be asked to take information from at least one portion of the text and apply the information to a new task. They may be asked to perform complex analyses of the connections among texts.

Below is an example of a high-complexity item that is based on “Clown Alley” on page G–10. For more information about this item type, see Benchmark LA.7.6.2.2, which begins on page 87.

According to the article, if you worked in the dressing room of a circus and you specialized in baggy clothing, which set of clowns would report to you?

- A. the stupidus and the tramp
- ★ B. the auguste and the whiteface
- C. the carpet clown and the scarecrow
- D. the court jester and the riding clown

Items developed for each selection should be written to reflect a range of low, moderate, and high complexities. The table on the following page is provided for ease of reference; however, caution must be used in referring to this table describing activities at each cognitive complexity level. The ultimate determination of an item’s cognitive complexity should be made considering the intent of the overall cognitive demand placed on a student.

Examples of FCAT 2.0 Reading Activities Across Cognitive Complexity Levels		
Low Complexity	Moderate Complexity	High Complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the correct meanings of grade-level appropriate words. • Locate details in a text. • Locate details on a graph, chart, or diagram. • Recognize the correct order of events in a text. • Identify figurative language in a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context clues to identify the meanings of unfamiliar words. • Analyze word structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. • Determine how details support the main idea. • Interpret the information found in text features (e.g., graphs, charts, diagrams, subheadings). • Identify cause-and-effect relationships. • Determine an author’s main purpose or perspective. • Identify similarities and differences. • Demonstrate an understanding of plot development. • Recognize elements of plot. • Recognize text structures/patterns of organization in a text. • Recognize summary statements pertaining to a text. • Compare word meanings. • Identify the main idea. • Draw conclusions; make inferences. • Determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the use of figurative language in a text. • Determine how text features (e.g., graphs, charts, diagrams, subheadings) contribute to a text. • Determine an author’s purpose, perspective, and/or bias and describe how it affects the text. • Evaluate strong vs. weak arguments in a text. • Analyze similarities and differences. • Describe and analyze the characteristics of various types of literature. • Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts. • Analyze cause-and-effect relationships. • Determine the validity and reliability of information within/across texts. • Identify and analyze the meaning of affixes and words and phrases with Greek/Latin derivations.

Items are classified on the cognitive demand inherent in the test item, not on assumptions about the student’s approach to the item. The table below presents the range for the percentage of points by cognitive complexity level on each FCAT 2.0 Reading test.

FCAT 2.0 Reading			
Percentage of Points by Cognitive Complexity Level			
Grade(s)	Low Complexity	Moderate Complexity	High Complexity
3	25–35%	50–70%	5–15%
4	20–30%	50–70%	10–20%
5–7	15–25%	50–70%	15–25%
8	10–20%	50–70%	20–30%
9	10–20%	50–70%	20–30%
10	10–20%	45–65%	25–35%

Universal Design

The application of universal design principles helps develop assessments that are usable by the greatest number of test takers, including those with disabilities and nonnative speakers of English. To support the goal of providing access to all students, the test maximizes readability, legibility, and compatibility with accommodations, and test development includes a review for potential bias and sensitivity issues.

The DOE trains both internal and external reviewers to revise items, allowing for the widest possible range of student participation. Item writers must attend to the best practices suggested by universal design, including, but not limited to

- reduction of wordiness;
- avoidance of ambiguity;
- selection of reader-friendly construction and terminology; and
- consistently applied concept names and graphic conventions.

Universal design principles also inform decisions about test layout and design, including, but not limited to, type size, line length, spacing, and graphics.

Throughout the development process for FCAT 2.0 Reading, these elements are carefully monitored. The review processes and field testing are used to ensure appropriateness, clarity, and fairness.

Guidelines for Item Writers

FCAT 2.0 Reading item writers must have a comprehensive knowledge of the assessed reading curriculum and a strong understanding of the cognitive abilities of the students taking the test. Item writers should know and respect the guidelines established in the *Specifications* as well as appreciate the spirit of developing test content that allows students to perform at their best. Item writers are also expected to use their best judgment in writing items that measure the reading benchmarks of the NGSSS without introducing extraneous elements that may interfere with the test's validity.

Item writers for FCAT 2.0 Reading must submit items in a particular format and must include the following information about each item. Because items are rated by committees of Florida educators following submission to the DOE, familiarity with the directions for rating items (found in Appendix E) would prove useful to all item writers.

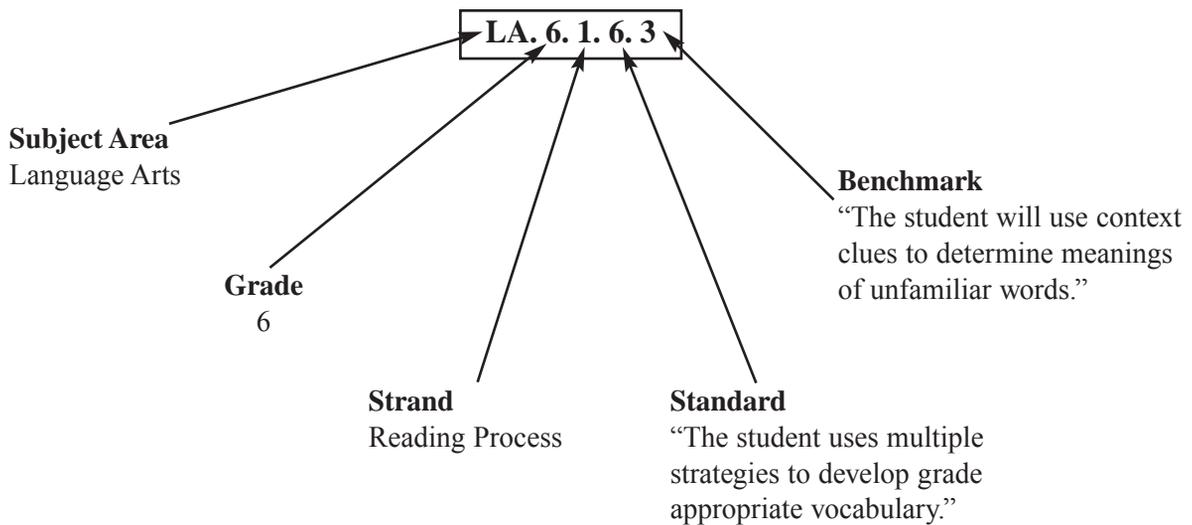
Format	Item writers must submit items in the agreed-upon template. All appropriate sections of the template should be completed before the items are submitted.
Sources	Item writers are expected to provide sources for all verifiable information included in the item. Acceptable sources include up-to-date textbooks, magazines, and journals respected by the reading community, as well as Internet sites operated by reputable organizations, such as universities. It may be necessary to provide sources verifying why a correct answer is correct as well as why other answer choices are incorrect.
Correct Response	Item writers must indicate which option is the correct answer.
Item Difficulty	Item writers are expected to evaluate their items in terms of item difficulty and include this information on the item template.
Cognitive Complexity	Item writers are expected to evaluate their items in terms of cognitive complexity and include this on the item template. Items should generally be targeted to the highest level of complexity as appropriate to the assessed benchmark, though some benchmarks call for items at varying levels. When this is the case, writers should take care to cover the range of levels that are appropriate and to not create items only at the lower ranges.
Submission of Items	When submitting items, item writers must balance several factors. Item submissions should <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include items of varying difficulty;• include items of each cognitive complexity (approximately 25% low, 50% moderate, and 25% high);• have an approximate balance of the correct response between the four answer choices for multiple-choice items; and• have an equal balance of male and female names and include names representing different ethnic groups in Florida.

GUIDE TO THE GRADE-LEVEL SPECIFICATIONS

Benchmark Classification System

Each benchmark in the NGSSS is coded with a system of numbers and letters.

- The two letters in the *first position* of the code identify the **Subject Area** (e.g., LA for Language Arts).
- The number in the *second position* (first number) represents the **Grade Level**.
- The number in the *third position* (second number) represents the **Strand**, or category of knowledge, to which the benchmark belongs. In Language Arts, the FCAT 2.0 assesses six strands: (1) Reading Process; (2) Literary Analysis; (3) Writing Process; (4) Writing Applications; (5) Communication; and (6) Information and Media Literacy. FCAT 2.0 Reading assesses Reading Process (Strand 1), Literary Analysis (Strand 2), and Information and Media Literacy (Strand 6).
- The number in the *fourth position* of the code represents the **Standard** for the benchmark.
- The number in the *fifth position* shows the specific **Benchmark** that falls under the specified strand and within the standard.



GRADE 6	
Strand 1	Reading Process
Standard 6	The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
LA.6.1.6.3	The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.

Definitions of Benchmark Specifications

The *Specifications* documents identify how Florida’s NGSSS benchmarks are assessed on the FCAT 2.0 at Grades 3–10. The four reading **reporting categories** used for FCAT 2.0 design, scoring, and reporting are Vocabulary, Reading Application, Literary Analysis—Fiction/Nonfiction, and Informational Text/Research Process. For each benchmark assessed in reading, the following information is provided in each grade-level *Specifications* section.

Strand	A strand is a broad category of knowledge within a content area in the NGSSS. The strands are the same for all grade levels.
Standard	Each standard is a general statement of expected student achievement within a strand at each grade level in the NGSSS.
Benchmark	Benchmarks are grade-level specific statements of expected student achievement under each reading standard. In some cases, two or more related benchmarks are grouped together because the assessment of one benchmark necessarily addresses another benchmark. Such groupings are indicated in the benchmark statement.
Clarification	The clarification statement explains how the achievement of the benchmark will be demonstrated by students for each specific item type. Clarification statements explain what the student will do when responding to items of each type.
Content Focus	The content focus defines the specific content measured by each FCAT 2.0 item.
Content Limits	The content limits define the scope of content knowledge that will be assessed (e.g., specific elements that can be compared or contrasted) and, in some cases, indicate areas of the benchmark that will not be assessed. For some benchmarks, additional information is provided to clarify specific directions in developing test items.
Text Attributes	Text attributes define the types of texts that will be used in the development of items, including appropriate context or content suitable for assessing the particular benchmark. The texts may also contain certain stimuli that contribute to the development of items (e.g., illustrations with captions, charts, graphs).
Distractor Attributes	The distractor attributes give specific descriptions of the distractors for items at each grade level.
Sample Items	Sample multiple-choice items that assess each benchmark are provided at each grade level. The sample items are presented in a format similar to the test, and the correct answer for each sample item is indicated.

**SPECIFICATIONS
FOR
GRADE 6**

GRADE 6			
Reporting Category 1: Vocabulary			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.3	The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context Clues
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.3		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.3		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.7	<p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.6.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Greek and Latin mythology (e.g., mercurial, Achilles' heel) and identify frequently used words from other languages (e.g., laissez faire, croissant).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.7		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.7		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.8	The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Words/Phrases Word Relationships
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.8		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.8		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.9	The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Meanings
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.9		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.9		

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.6.3

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.
Clarification	The student, using context clues, will identify the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
Content Focus	Context Clues
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess words unfamiliar to most students. Excerpted text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word. If an item stem directs the student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word. The assessed word should be no more than two grade levels above the tested grade.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain a word unfamiliar to most students, and clear and sufficient context must be present for students to determine the meaning of the word.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect meanings of the assessed word;• meanings of the assessed word that are correct but are not appropriate for the context surrounding the word;• contextual meanings drawn from the text but unrelated to the assessed word or test item; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 1 Context Clues

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

Read this excerpt from the article.

Delighted by the dulcet tones, Franklin began thinking of a better way to produce music on glass . . . He built the first model of the armonica in 1761 and gradually perfected the instrument.

What does the word *perfected* mean in the excerpt above?

- A. displayed
- B. enlarged
- ★ C. improved
- D. repaired

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.6.7

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. <i>Also assesses LA.6.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Greek and Latin mythology (e.g., mercurial, Achilles' heel) and identify frequently used words from other languages (e.g., laissez faire, croissant).</i>
Clarification	The student will analyze affixes, or root words, or words/phrases derived from other languages, including Greek and Latin, to determine meaning in a text. Appropriate word strategies, simple analysis, and/or inference may be required.
Content Focus	Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should contain vocabulary for assessing the analysis of word structure and for assessing words and phrases derived from other languages, including Greek and Latin. Assessed words should be no more than two grade levels above the tested grade. If a stem directs the student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or when assessing foreign words and phrases, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word or phrase.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain appropriate words to assess affixes, root words, and foreign words and phrases.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect meanings of words, based on structural analysis, that do not fit the context;• incorrect meanings of foreign words/phrases that do not fit the context;• words with construct similar to the correct response (e.g., same prefix); and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 2 Analyze Word Structure

The sample item below is based on the following excerpt.

Richard insisted that he had been the one who first suggested that the science class take a field trip to the park, but his claim remained unverified. During the field trip, another student tried to take credit for the idea. Richard was a little annoyed, but he did not let it keep him from enjoying the day outdoors.

Read this sentence from the excerpt.

Richard insisted that he had been the one who first suggested that the science class take a field trip to the park, but his claim remained unverified.

The word *verify* comes from the Latin word *verus*, meaning “true.” Based on this meaning, what does *unverified* mean in the sentence above?

- ★ A. without proof
- B. without honor
- C. lacking accuracy
- D. lacking reliability

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.6.8

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.
Clarification	The student will analyze the meanings of words, phrases, and word relationships by using strategies, including, but not limited to, context clues and word structure.
Content Focus	Analyze Words/Phrases Word Relationships
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess the analysis of words and phrases and the identification of word relationships (e.g., synonyms, antonyms). Analogies should not be assessed. When assessing Analyze Words/Phrases <ul style="list-style-type: none">• excerpted text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the phrase being assessed; and• if an item stem directs a student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar phrase, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed phrase. When assessing Word Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the terms <i>synonym</i> and <i>antonym</i> should not be used in stem construction. Wording should be <i>most similar in meaning</i> or <i>most opposite in meaning</i>;• excerpted text should not be used when students are required to analyze word relationships within answer choices;• only grade-level appropriate words found within the text should be assessed; and• the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed words.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain appropriate words, phrases, and word relationships to assess knowledge of vocabulary at grade level.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect meanings of assessed words or phrases found within excerpted text;
- word relationships constructed similarly to the correct response;
- meanings of the assessed words or phrases that are correct but are not appropriate for the context;
- details drawn from the text but unrelated to the assessed phrases or test item; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: When constructing answer choices using word pairs, the words within the pair should be the same part of speech.

Sample Item 3 Analyze Words/Phrases

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

Read this sentence from the article.

Although the delicate tones of the glass harmonica were perfect for drawing-room musicales and garden party concerts, the instrument gradually faded from fashion as concert halls grew larger . . .

What does the author mean by the phrase *faded from fashion* as used in the sentence above?

- A. became less visible
- ★ B. became less popular
- C. was no longer available
- D. was no longer operational

Sample Item 4 Word Relationships

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

As used in the article, which pair of words are most similar in meaning?

- A. delicate, perfect
- ★ B. assorted, varying
- C. arranged, ranging
- D. perform, transport

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.6.9

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.
Clarification	The student will analyze words that have multiple meanings and determine the correct meaning of the word as used in the text.
Content Focus	Multiple Meanings
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess words with multiple meanings. Words with multiple meanings should be assessed using words on grade level or not more than two grades above or below grade level. Excerpted text must contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain words with multiple meanings and must provide clear and sufficient context for the student to determine the correct meaning.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• correct meanings of the assessed word but inappropriate to the text;• meanings drawn from the text but unrelated to the meaning of the assessed word or test item;• words constructed similarly to the correct response (e.g., same affix, same tense); and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 5 **Multiple Meanings**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Read this sentence from the passage.

“Maybe you and I should play a match sometime,” she said.

Which sentence below uses *match* in the same way as in the sentence above?

- A. I could not find the match to my red sock.
- B. She is no match for him in the spelling bee.
- ★ C. He lost the match to someone more experienced.
- D. My grandfather used a match to light the candle.

GRADE 6			
Reporting Category 2: Reading Application			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, or explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author's Purpose (within/across texts) • Author's Perspective (within/across texts) • Author's Bias (within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Idea (stated or implied) • Summary Statement • Relevant Details • Conclusions/Inferences • Predictions
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.4	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause and Effect
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.4		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.4		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.5	The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.5		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.5		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare (similarities within/across texts) • Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.7.2

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, or explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.
Clarification	The student will identify the author’s purpose or perspective. The student will analyze the impact of the author’s purpose or perspective within or across texts.
Content Focus	Author’s Purpose (within/across texts) Author’s Perspective (within/across texts) Author’s Bias (within/across texts)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts used in assessing author’s purpose should contain an identifiable author’s purpose for writing, including, but not limited to, persuading, entertaining, conveying a particular tone or mood, informing, or expressing an opinion. The author’s purpose, perspective, and bias should be recognizable within or across texts.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts may include, but are not limited to, persuasive articles, essays, editorials, and informational articles.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• facts and details that do not support the author’s purpose or represent the author’s perspective or bias;• incorrect interpretations of the author’s purpose, perspective, or bias;• incorrect analysis or evaluation of the impact of the author’s purpose, perspective, or bias; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. Note: Distractors should not be a list of general categories (e.g., to inform, to persuade) but should include specific examples related to the text.

Sample Item 6 **Author’s Purpose**

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

What was the author’s most likely purpose for writing this article?

- A. to explain the musical talents of Ben Franklin
- ★ B. to describe the glass harmonica that Ben Franklin built
- C. to tell about Ben Franklin’s life as an inventor and a statesman
- D. to compare Ben Franklin’s harmonica with modern harmonicas

Sample Item 7 **Author’s Purpose**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Read this excerpt from the passage.

Michael’s main problem was not knowing when to go for the kill shot. He also got confused when Kayla gave him a loop shot.

In the excerpt above, the author lists specific shots in order to

- ★ A. show Kayla’s level of skill.
- B. make table tennis seem difficult.
- C. explain how to win at table tennis.
- D. describe how Kayla’s strategy fails.

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.7.3

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.
Clarification	The student will determine the main idea (stated or implied), identify a correct summary statement, locate relevant details and facts, draw logical conclusions, make appropriate inferences, and use details to make predictions beyond a text within or across grade-level appropriate texts.
Content Focus	Main Idea (stated or implied) Summary Statement Relevant Details Conclusions/Inferences Predictions
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should include an identifiable main idea (stated or implied) and relevant details from which students may draw logical conclusions or make inferences within or across texts. Paraphrasing should not be assessed. Items may assess a student’s ability to identify a correct summary statement.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. The text should include a main idea (stated or implied) with relevant details, which will enable students to draw logical conclusions and make appropriate inferences.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• details that do not support the main idea;• incorrect interpretations of the main idea that are too broad, too narrow, or are a specific fact;• incorrect inferences, conclusions, or predictions based on details found in the text;• incorrect summary statements; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** assess a student’s ability to identify details of least importance when assessing a summary or main idea statement.

Note: A main idea should be stated in a complete sentence.

Note: A summary statement should be expressed in a complete sentence.

Note: When the main idea is assessed in a literary text, it should be assessed as a summary statement (e.g., “Which statement best summarizes the events in the passage?”). When the main idea is assessed in an informational text, it should be assessed as a main idea statement (e.g., “Which sentence best expresses the main idea of the article?”).

Sample Item 8 Summary Statement

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Which sentence best summarizes the table tennis match between Kayla and Michael?

- A. Michael surprises Kayla with his skill and wins the match.
- B. Both Kayla and Michael win a game and consider the match a tie.
- C. Kayla manages to beat Michael even though he is an excellent player.
- ★ D. Kayla easily beats Michael even though they seem evenly skilled at first.

Sample Item 9 Summary Statement

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Which sentence best summarizes the passage?

- ★ A. Kayla, the new kid at school, proves to Michael that table tennis is a challenging sport.
- B. Kayla is foolish enough to challenge Michael, who plays many sports, to a table tennis match.
- C. Kayla, a new student at school, is introduced as the girl who is going to beat Michael at table tennis.
- D. Kayla, an excellent table tennis player, challenges Michael to demonstrate his best tricks during the warmup.

Sample Item 10 Relevant Details

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Which detail from the passage shows Michael is wrong when he says “table tennis just isn’t as physical as basketball”?

- A. Kayla knows how to use a loop shot and when to hit a kill shot.
- B. Kayla beats Michael at table tennis then challenges him at pool.
- ★ C. Michael’s wet hair is stuck to his forehead, and he has to wipe away sweat.
- D. Michael’s friends are cheering for him, while the girls are rooting for Kayla.

Sample Item 11 Predictions

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Based on the passage, what will most likely happen in the future?

- A. Kayla will avoid overestimating her abilities.
- B. Michael will challenge Kayla in other sports.
- ★ C. Michael will avoid judging people too quickly.
- D. Kayla will encourage Michael to join a table tennis club.

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.7.4

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.
Clarification	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships within texts. Additionally, the student may need to discern a causal relationship implied in the text through the assimilation of facts and details provided.
Content Focus	Cause and Effect
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts used in assessing cause-and-effect relationships should contain identifiable causal relationships embedded in the text and/or contain sufficient facts and details to assist students in discerning implied causal relationships.
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Texts should include an identifiable cause-and-effect relationship that may be stated and/or implied.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect causal relationships based on the text;• incorrect rationales and/or interpretations of implied causal relationships; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. <p>Note: When constructing cause-and-effect items using literary texts, it is preferred that interactions and situations between characters be attributed to Benchmark LA.6.2.1.2 and the content focus of character development and/or character point of view.</p>

Sample Item 12 **Cause and Effect**

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

Why did the glass harmonica become less popular over time?

- A. It was hard to transport.
- B. It was a difficult instrument to play.
- ★ C. It was difficult to hear in large concert halls.
- D. It was very loud when played in drawing rooms.

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.7.5

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.
Clarification	The student will identify and analyze text structures/organizational patterns and determine how they impact meaning in texts.
Content Focus	Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Content Limits	<p>Text structures found within grade-level appropriate texts should be identifiable and may include, but are not limited to, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, and argument/support.</p> <p>Text features should not be assessed in this benchmark but will be assessed in LA.6.2.2.1 for literary text and in LA.6.6.1.1 for informational text.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Informational texts are more suited than literary texts toward item development for this benchmark; however, a literary text may occasionally be appropriate (e.g., one that utilizes chronological order, comparison/contrast, or cause/effect).</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Text structures must be clearly evident as indicated by signal words and phrases.</p> <p>Texts must contain an identifiable organizational pattern.</p> <p>Texts may include identifiable viewpoints, positions, or persuasive arguments. Support should be objective and substantial. Paired texts or different sections within a text should include similar or opposing viewpoints, positions, or arguments.</p>

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect interpretations of text structures/organizational patterns;
- incorrect relationships (e.g., cause/effect, comparison/contrast) within the organizational pattern;
- incorrect chronological order;
- incorrect details drawn from the text;
- incorrect rationale as support for or against an argument; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Distractors should include a brief elaboration on how the organizational pattern impacts meaning in the text and should **not** be a list of general categories (e.g., chronological order, comparison/contrast, cause/effect).

Sample Item 13 **Text Structures**

The sample item below is based on “Welcome to Marksdale State Park” on page G–7.

The section *Special note about trash in our park* is different from the other sections of the website because it

- ★ **A.** uses humor in the message.
- B.** addresses adults rather than teenagers.
- C.** offers volunteer opportunities for teenagers.
- D.** uses exclamation marks for specific directions.

Sample Item 14 **Organizational Patterns**

The sample item below is based on “Welcome to Marksdale State Park” on page G–7.

How does the creator of this website organize the information?

- ★ **A.** by listing events and activities for the visitors
- B.** by answering questions created by the visitors
- C.** by explaining the meaning of the map to the visitors
- D.** by comparing the tasks of park rangers to those of visitors

BENCHMARK LA.6.1.7.7

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.6.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.
Clarification	The student will identify similarities between elements within or across texts or will identify differences between elements within or across texts.
Content Focus	Compare (similarities within/across texts) Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should include elements that can be compared or contrasted and may include, but are not limited to, character, setting, descriptive language, subject, author’s purpose, author’s perspective, main idea, and themes and topics.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts should provide sufficient information that establishes a clear relationship between the similarities or a clear relationship between the differences. Texts should include elements that compare and/or contrast. To assess this benchmark across texts, items should be based on two related texts that contain elements that can be compared or contrasted. To assess this benchmark within a text, items should be based on elements that can be compared or contrasted.

Distractor Attributes Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect comparisons;
- incorrect contrasts;
- similarities or differences that are drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;
- facts and details that are drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: When constructing a comparison item, distractors should **not** contrast elements. When constructing a contrast item, distractors should **not** compare elements.

Note: For differentiating between Benchmark LA.6.1.7.7 and Benchmark LA.6.6.2.2, items that require students to compare or contrast specific details within the text should be aligned with Benchmark LA.6.1.7.7. Items that require students to synthesize similarities or differences and to draw conclusions from those similarities or differences within or across text(s) should be aligned with Benchmark LA.6.6.2.2.

Sample Item 15 Compare

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

How are Forrage and Davies similar?

- A. Both performed with Franklin.
- B. Both played the glass harmonica for Franklin.
- C. Both were asked to write a musical composition.
- ★ D. Both presented the glass harmonica to new audiences.

Sample Item 16 Contrast

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

When the passage begins, how is Michael’s view of table tennis different from Kayla’s?

- ★ A. He thinks that table tennis is only played for fun, but Kayla thinks it is a serious sport.
- B. He believes that table tennis is harder to play than pool, but Kayla believes pool is the harder game.
- C. He thinks that table tennis is a game only for girls, but Kayla thinks that boys can also enjoy the game.
- D. He believes that table tennis is as challenging as basketball, but Kayla believes that table tennis is more difficult.

GRADE 6		
Reporting Category 3: Literary Analysis—Fiction/Nonfiction		
Benchmark		Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, conflict/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze elements of
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.2	characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice sets the author’s tone and advances the work’s theme.
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author’s
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.7	use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.

- Plot Development
- Setting
- Character Development
- Character Point of View
- Theme
- Conflict (e.g., internal or external)
- Resolution

- Descriptive Language (e.g., mood, imagery)
- Figurative Language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification)

BENCHMARK LA.6.2.1.2

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
Benchmark	LA.6.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, conflict/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and interpret elements of plot development (foreshadowing, flashback, theme, and setting) within or across texts. The student will also identify, analyze, and interpret other literary elements, such as character development, character point of view, and conflict and resolution within or across texts. In addition, the student will identify, analyze, and interpret how plot events in the text contribute to conflict and resolution within or across texts.
Content Focus	Plot Development Setting Character Development Character Point of View Theme Conflict (e.g., internal or external) Resolution
Content Limits	Texts should be grade-level appropriate and contain identifiable literary elements (e.g., theme, character development, character point of view, setting, plot development, conflict, resolution).
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary and may include, but are not limited to, fiction, nonfiction (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, personal and historical essays, diary entries, memoirs), poetry, and drama. When assessing theme, the text must have a strongly implied theme. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. To assess this benchmark within or across texts, items should be based on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one text that contains a variety of literary elements; or• two texts with related literary elements (e.g., theme, character development, character point of view, setting, plot development, conflict, resolution).

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- details that may contribute to but do not significantly support the conflict, plot, theme, etc.;
- facts, details, or ideas drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;
- inaccurate interpretations of character development, character point of view, plot development, setting, conflict, theme, etc.;
- a summary statement that is unrelated to the overall theme; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Theme is neither the plot nor the story’s topic expressed in a word or phrase (e.g., the strength of love, the importance of nature, childhood, friendship). A theme should be stated in a complete sentence. For example, rather than a phrase such as *the rewards of old age*, this phrase should be in the form of a sentence: *Old age can be a time of great satisfaction.*

Sample Item 17**Setting**

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

Why is the setting at the beginning of the article important?

- ★ **A.** The glass harmonica could be easily heard in small spaces.
- B.** The glass harmonica was only played in one part of the world.
- C.** Ben Franklin was the only person who could play the glass harmonica.
- D.** Ben Franklin needed an audience in order to play the glass harmonica well.

Sample Item 18**Character Development**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

How does Kayla change Michael’s opinion about table tennis?

- A.** She lets him win when they practice table tennis.
- ★ **B.** She shows him how much effort table tennis requires.
- C.** She offers to give him table tennis lessons after school.
- D.** She convinces him to help unpack the table tennis equipment.

Sample Item 19 **Character Point of View**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

If the passage were written from Michael’s point of view, the reader would know

- ★ **A.** what Michael thinks when Kayla challenges him.
- B.** why Michael is popular with his friends at school.
- C.** how the group feels as they watch Michael compete.
- D.** why Kayla enjoys playing against Michael in front of others.

Sample Item 20 **Character Point of View**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Why does Michael think that table tennis is less challenging than basketball?

- A.** He believes table tennis has less rules than basketball.
- B.** He believes table tennis uses less space than basketball.
- C.** He believes table tennis does not require a lot of warming up.
- ★ **D.** He believes table tennis does not require a lot of body movement.

Sample Item 21 **Resolution**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Why does Kayla offer to play pool with Michael?

- A.** to play a game that the others can join
- B.** to give Michael a chance to win a game
- C.** to show the others her different game skills
- ★ **D.** to make a point with Michael about a nonphysical game

BENCHMARK LA.6.2.1.7

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
Benchmark	LA.6.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice sets the author’s tone and advances the work’s theme.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the author’s use of descriptive and/or figurative language and will determine how the author’s use of language impacts meaning in a variety of grade-level appropriate texts.
Content Focus	Descriptive Language (e.g., tone, mood, irony, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia) Figurative Language (e.g., hyperbole, symbolism, simile, metaphor, personification)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should contain clear examples of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia) and figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole). Idioms and allusions should not be assessed.
Text Attributes	Texts may be literary or informational and may include, but are not limited to, fiction, nonfiction (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, personal and historical essays, diary entries, speeches, editorials, memoirs), poetry, and drama. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examples of descriptive language or figurative language drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item; • inaccurate interpretations of descriptive language or figurative language; and • plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: If two descriptive language distractors are used, they must be balanced with two figurative language distractors. The correct answer determines the content focus for the item.

Note: Distractors may also include all descriptive language examples or all figurative language examples.

Note: When assessing author's tone (e.g., melancholic, nostalgic, forlorn) and mood (e.g., sorrowful, gloomy, optimistic) in a text, distractors should **not** be a list of words but should include specific examples related to the text.

Sample Item 22 Descriptive Language

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4.

Read the sentence from the passage.

The only sound in the room was the *plink plunk* of the ball as it bounced from court to court.

Which type of literary device is used in the italicized words of the sentence above?

- A. personification, giving human qualities to the ball
- B. hyperbole, exaggerating the distance the ball travels
- C. imagery, using words to portray vivid images of the ball
- ★ D. onomatopoeia, using words that imitate the sounds of the ball

GRADE 6			
Reporting Category 4: Informational Text/Research Process			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.2.2.1 LA.7.2.2.1 LA.8.2.2.1	The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.6.1.1 LA.7.6.1.1 LA.9.6.1.1	The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.6.2.2 LA.7.6.2.2 LA.8.6.2.2	<p>The student will collect, evaluate and summarize information using a variety of techniques from multiple sources (e.g., encyclopedias, websites, experts) that includes paraphrasing to convey ideas and details from the source, main idea(s) and relevant details.</p> <p><i>Assessed with LA.5.6.2.2 The student will read and record information systematically, evaluating the validity and reliability of information in text by examining several sources of information.</i></p> <p>The student will assess, organize, and check the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize Information (within/across texts) Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/across texts) Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)

BENCHMARK LA.6.2.2.1

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	2 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of nonfiction, informational, and expository texts to demonstrate an understanding of the information presented.
Benchmark	LA.6.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and determine meaning from a variety of text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes) found within a text.
Content Focus	Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Content Limits	Text features should be assessed within grade-level appropriate literary nonfiction texts (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, diary entries, memoirs) or literary fictional texts when appropriate. Texts should include a single, identifiable text feature or should contain a variety of text features. Tables of contents, glossaries, indices, bold text, and key/guide words should not be assessed.
Text Attributes	Literary nonfiction texts are more suited than literary fictional texts toward item development for this benchmark; however, a literary text may occasionally be appropriate. Stimuli found in text may include headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, and text boxes.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- facts, details, or other information drawn from the text features but unrelated to the test item;
- incorrect analysis and interpretation of the text features;
- incorrect or irrelevant information drawn from text features; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** ask the student for literal references, such as

- *On what page would you find...?;*
- *In which chapter would you find...?;* or
- *In what kind of reference book would you find information about...?*

Note: When assessing a text feature (e.g., subheadings/captions), answer choices may be developed from other areas of the text but should be parallel and balanced.

Note: When assessing a text feature in a fiction or literary nonfiction passage, Benchmark LA.6.2.2.1 should be used. When assessing a text feature in an informational/expository nonfiction article or in a functional selection (how-to documents, webpages, etc.), Benchmark LA.6.6.1.1 should be used.

Sample Item 23**Text Features**

The sample item below is based on “New Kid” on page G–4 and references the illustration on page G–6.

Which sentence would best serve as a caption for the illustration on the third page of the passage?

- A. “You’re challenging *me*?” he asked.
- B. “Give me a few days to practice up first,” he said.
- ★ C. “Still think table tennis isn’t a physical game?” she asked.
- D. “Maybe you and I should play a match sometime,” she said.

BENCHMARK LA.6.6.1.1

Strand	6 Information and Media Literacy
Standard	1 The student comprehends the wide array of informational text that is part of our day to day experiences.
Benchmark	LA.6.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and determine meaning from a variety of text features found within a text.
Content Focus	Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Content Limits	<p>Text features should be assessed using grade-level appropriate texts that may include, but are not limited to, informational articles and functional reading materials (e.g., websites, consumer documents, how-to articles, brochures, fliers, other real-world documents).</p> <p>Texts should include a single, identifiable text feature or should contain a variety of text features.</p> <p>Making a report, conducting interviews, preparing to take a test, and performing a task should not be assessed.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be informational.</p> <p>Texts may include, but are not limited to, grade-level appropriate informational articles and functional reading materials (e.g., websites, consumer documents, how-to articles, brochures, fliers, other real-world documents).</p> <p>Stimuli found in text may include headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, and text boxes.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorrect analysis and interpretation of text features; • facts, details, or other information drawn from the text features but unrelated to the test item; • incorrect or irrelevant information drawn from text features; and • plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** ask the student for literal references, such as

- *On what page would you find...?*;
- *In which chapter would you find...?*; or
- *In what kind of reference book would you find information about...?*

Note: When assessing a text feature (e.g., subheadings/captions), answer choices may be developed from other areas of the text but should be parallel and balanced.

Note: When assessing a text feature in an informational/expository nonfiction article or in a functional selection (how-to documents, webpages, etc.), Benchmark LA.6.6.1.1 should be used. When assessing a text feature in a fiction or literary nonfiction passage, Benchmark LA.6.2.2.1 should be used.

Sample Item 24 Text Features

The sample item below is based on “Welcome to Marksdale State Park” on page G–7.

Which text feature on the website provides the most accurate information about the locations of Marksdale State Park facilities?

- ★ **A.** the map and key
- B.** the subtitle and graphics
- C.** the message written by the director
- D.** the list of activities shown in the left column

Sample Item 25 Text Features

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

The section *Time Line of Composers and Musical Events from 1700 to 1850* is important to the article because it

- A.** estimates the number of musicians influenced by Ben Franklin.
- B.** shows the impact Ben Franklin had on the development of music.
- ★ **C.** places Ben Franklin’s invention within a framework of other significant musical events.
- D.** illustrates the superiority of Ben Franklin’s glass harmonica compared to other musical instruments.

BENCHMARK LA.6.6.2.2

Strand	6 Information and Media Literacy
Standard	2 The student uses a systematic process for the collection, processing, and presentation of information.
Benchmark	<p>LA.6.6.2.2 The student will collect, evaluate and summarize information using a variety of techniques from multiple sources (e.g., encyclopedias, websites, experts) that includes paraphrasing to convey ideas and details from the source, main idea(s) and relevant details.</p> <p><i>Assessed with LA.5.6.2.2 The student will read and record information systematically, evaluating the validity and reliability of information in text by examining several sources of information.</i></p>
Clarification	<p>The student will use a variety of techniques and strategies to analyze and evaluate information within or across texts.</p> <p>The student will identify the validity (i.e., correctness or soundness) and reliability (i.e., dependability) of information in texts by identifying supporting facts and analyzing the development of argument(s) within or across texts. In addition, the student may be asked to apply information from texts in a valid and/or reliable way.</p> <p>The student will identify the relationships between two or more ideas or among other textual elements found within or across texts (i.e., synthesize information).</p>
Content Focus	<p>Synthesize Information (within/across texts) Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/across texts) Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)</p>
Content Limits	<p>Texts should be grade-level appropriate and present information in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aid the student’s determination of validity and reliability of information; • express a relationship among two or more ideas; • express a relationship among ideas and certain text features; and • reflect ideas that can be analyzed and evaluated. <p>This type of information may come from both primary and/or secondary sources.</p> <p>Synthesis should be assessed by identifying the relationships among two or more ideas.</p>

Text Attributes

Texts should be informational but on occasion may be literary; both may include either primary or secondary sources.

Primary sources may include, but are not limited to, eyewitness accounts of events, such as letters, journals, diaries, and historical documents.

Secondary sources may include, but are not limited to, encyclopedias, books, newspapers, and magazine articles.

Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.

Evidence presented in the text should be logical, internally consistent, and clearly developed by the author to assess validity/reliability.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect analysis of validity and/or reliability of the text;
- facts or details drawn from text but unrelated to the test item;
- incorrect interpretations of the accuracy of information found in the text;
- incorrect synthesis of information; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Whenever possible, validity and reliability items should use direct quotations from the text in the answer choices.

Note: For differentiating between Benchmark LA.6.1.7.7 and Benchmark LA.6.6.2.2, items that require students to compare or contrast specific details within the text should be aligned with Benchmark LA.6.1.7.7. Items that require students to synthesize similarities or differences and to draw conclusions from those similarities or differences within or across text(s) should be aligned with Benchmark LA.6.6.2.2.

Sample Item 26**Analyze and Evaluate Information**

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

The information in the article would be most useful for a presentation on

- A. eighteenth-century fashions.
- B. the compositions of Mozart.
- C. the lives of American musicians.
- ★ D. eighteenth-century musical history.

Sample Item 27 **Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information**

The sample item below is based on “Ben’s Harmonica” on page G–2.

Based on information in the article, which is the most accurate statement regarding the glass harmonica?

- ★ **A.** The glass harmonica became popular in both the United States and Europe.
- B.** The glass harmonica was introduced in Europe a year after it was invented.
- C.** The glass harmonica was played in concert halls in Europe by Ben Franklin.
- D.** The glass harmonica became known to Europeans through the music of Mozart.

**SPECIFICATIONS
FOR
GRADE 7**

Grade 7

Reporting Category 1: Vocabulary

GRADE 7			
Reporting Category 1: Vocabulary			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.3	The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context Clues
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.3		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.3		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.7	<p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.6.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Greek and Latin mythology (e.g., mercurial, Achilles' heel) and identify frequently used words from other languages (e.g., laissez faire, croissant).</i></p> <p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.7.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i></p> <p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.8.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.7		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.7		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.8	The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Words/Phrases Word Relationships
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.8		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.8		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.9	The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Meanings
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.9		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.9		

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.6.3

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.
Clarification	The student, using context clues, will identify the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
Content Focus	Context Clues
Content Limits	<p>Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess words unfamiliar to most students.</p> <p>Excerpted text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word.</p> <p>If an item stem directs the student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word.</p> <p>The assessed word should be no more than two grade levels above the tested grade.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Texts must contain a word unfamiliar to most students, and clear and sufficient context must be present for students to determine the meaning of the word.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect meanings of the assessed word;• meanings of the assessed word that are correct but are not appropriate for the context surrounding the word;• contextual meanings drawn from the text but unrelated to the assessed word or test item; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 28 **Context Clues**

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Read this excerpt from the essay.

I was looking for a pencil, rummaging through papers in the back of my desk drawer, where things accumulate for years, when I turned up one of Poppa’s old business cards . . .

What does *accumulate* mean as used in the excerpt above?

- ★ **A.** to pile up
- B.** to mingle
- C.** to fall apart
- D.** to disappear

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.6.7

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. <i>Also assesses LA.7.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i>
Clarification	The student will analyze affixes, or root words, or words/phrases derived from other languages, including Greek and Latin, to determine meaning in a text. Appropriate word strategies, simple analysis, and/or inference may be required.
Content Focus	Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should contain vocabulary for assessing the analysis of word structure and for assessing words and phrases derived from other languages, including Greek and Latin. Assessed words should be no more than two grade levels above the tested grade. If a stem directs the student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or when assessing foreign words and phrases, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word or phrase.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain appropriate words to assess affixes, root words, and foreign words and phrases.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect meanings of words, based on structural analysis, that do not fit the context;• incorrect meanings of foreign words/phrases that do not fit the context;• words with construct similar to the correct response (e.g., same prefix); and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Please refer to page 25 in the Grade 6 Specifications to see a sample item for Benchmark LA.7.1.6.7.

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.6.8

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.
Clarification	The student will analyze the meanings of words, phrases, and word relationships by using strategies, including, but not limited to, context clues and word structure.
Content Focus	Analyze Words/Phrases Word Relationships
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess the analysis of words and phrases and the identification of word relationships (e.g., synonyms, antonyms). Analogies should not be assessed. When assessing Analyze Words/Phrases <ul style="list-style-type: none">• excerpted text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the phrase being assessed; and• if an item stem directs a student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar phrase, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed phrase. When assessing Word Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the terms <i>synonym</i> and <i>antonym</i> should not be used in stem construction. Wording should be <i>most similar in meaning</i> or <i>most opposite in meaning</i>;• excerpted text should not be used when students are required to analyze word relationships within answer choices;• only grade-level appropriate words found within the text should be assessed; and• the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed words.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain appropriate words, phrases, and word relationships to assess knowledge of vocabulary at grade level.

- Distractor Attributes** Distractors may include, but are not limited to
- incorrect meanings of assessed words or phrases found within excerpted text;
 - word relationships constructed similarly to the correct response;
 - meanings of the assessed words or phrases that are correct but are not appropriate for the context;
 - details drawn from the text but unrelated to the assessed phrases or test item; and
 - plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: When constructing answer choices using word pairs, the words within the pair should be the same part of speech.

Sample Item 29 Analyze Words/Phrases

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Read this sentence from the essay.

A thousand pictures flashed through my mind, but one scene came sharply into view.

Which phrase best restates the meaning of *came sharply into view*?

- A. appeared like a movie.
- B. shone as a bright light.
- C. prompted more memories.
- ★ D. stood out more clearly than others.

Sample Item 30 Word Relationships

The sample item below is based on “Clown Alley” on page G–10.

Which pair of words used in the article are most similar in meaning?

- A. clumsy, shabby
- B. mingles, performs
- C. categories, techniques
- ★ D. exaggerated, oversized

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.6.9

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.
Clarification	The student will analyze words that have multiple meanings and determine the correct meaning of the word as used in the text.
Content Focus	Multiple Meanings
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess words with multiple meanings. Words with multiple meanings should be assessed using words on grade level or not more than two grades above or below grade level. Excerpted text must contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain words with multiple meanings and must provide clear and sufficient context for the student to determine the correct meaning.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• correct meanings of the assessed word but inappropriate to the text;• meanings drawn from the text but unrelated to the meaning of the assessed word or test item;• words constructed similarly to the correct response (e.g., same affix, same tense); and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 31 Multiple Meanings

The sample item below is based on “Volunteer Day” on page G–12.

Read this sentence from the flier.

Board the bus for your chosen activity, and ride with the organization’s representatives and other volunteers to your activity site.

In which of the following sentences does *board* have the same meaning as in the sentence above?

- A. She received room and board in exchange for her work at the dormitory.
- B. The event was overseen by committee members and a board of directors.
- C. The city decided to board up the abandoned house so no one could enter.
- ★ D. He was not able to make a phone call before it was time to board the plane.

Grade 7

Reporting Category 2: Reading Application

GRADE 7			
Reporting Category 2: Reading Application			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, or explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author's Purpose (within/across texts) • Author's Perspective (within/across texts) • Author's Bias (within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Idea (stated or implied) • Summary Statement • Relevant Details • Conclusions/Inferences • Predictions
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.4	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause and Effect
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.4		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.4		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.5	The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.5		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.5		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare (similarities within/across texts) • Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.7.2

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.
Clarification	The student will identify the author’s purpose or perspective. The student will analyze the impact of the author’s purpose or perspective within or across texts.
Content Focus	Author’s Purpose (within/across texts) Author’s Perspective (within/across texts) Author’s Bias (within/across texts)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts used in assessing author’s purpose should contain an identifiable author’s purpose for writing, including, but not limited to, persuading, entertaining, conveying a particular tone or mood, informing, or expressing an opinion. The author’s purpose, perspective, and bias should be recognizable within or across texts.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts may include, but are not limited to, persuasive articles, essays, editorials, and informational articles.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• facts and details that do not support the author’s purpose or represent the author’s perspective or bias;• incorrect interpretations of the author’s purpose, perspective, or bias;• incorrect analysis or evaluation of the impact of the author’s purpose, perspective, or bias; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. Note: Distractors should not be a list of general categories (e.g., to inform, to persuade) but should include specific examples related to the text.

Sample Item 32 **Author’s Purpose**

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Read this excerpt from the essay.

Maybe he was five feet six if his heels were not worn. Maybe he weighed 155 pounds if he had a good meal. Maybe he could see a block away if his glasses were clean.

Why does the author describe Poppa’s appearance in this way?

- A. to provide a clear image of Poppa
- ★ B. to suggest that Poppa’s strengths were internal
- C. to contrast Poppa’s size with the size of his project
- D. to explain why Poppa might choose to avoid challenges

Sample Item 33 **Author’s Perspective**

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Which word best describes the author’s feelings toward his father?

- ★ A. appreciative
- B. critical
- C. obedient
- D. resentful

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.7.3

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.
Clarification	The student will determine the main idea (stated or implied), identify a correct summary statement, locate relevant details and facts, draw logical conclusions, make appropriate inferences, and use details to make predictions beyond a text within or across grade-level appropriate texts.
Content Focus	Main Idea (stated or implied) Summary Statement Relevant Details Conclusions/Inferences Predictions
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should include an identifiable main idea (stated or implied) and relevant details from which students may draw logical conclusions or make inferences within or across texts. Paraphrasing should not be assessed. Items may assess a student’s ability to identify a correct summary statement.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. The text should include a main idea (stated or implied) with relevant details, which will enable students to draw logical conclusions and make appropriate inferences.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details that do not support the main idea; • incorrect interpretations of the main idea that are too broad, too narrow, or are a specific fact; • incorrect inferences, conclusions, or predictions based on details found in the text; • incorrect summary statements; and • plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. <p>Note: Items should not assess a student’s ability to identify details of least importance when assessing a summary or main idea statement.</p>

Note: A main idea should be stated in a complete sentence.

Note: A summary statement should be expressed in a complete sentence.

Note: When the main idea is assessed in a literary text, it should be assessed as a summary statement (e.g., “Which statement best summarizes the events in the passage?”). When the main idea is assessed in an informational text, it should be assessed as a main idea statement (e.g., “Which sentence best expresses the main idea of the article?”).

Sample Item 34 **Summary Statement**

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Which sentence best summarizes the essay?

- A. The author is discouraged because he is losing a political campaign.
- B. The author helps his father work through what could have been a crisis.
- C. The author returns to his old house and sees a large spruce tree still growing.
- ★ D. The author continues his campaign when he remembers a lesson his father taught him.

Sample Item 35 **Relevant Details**

The sample item below is based on “Clown Alley” on page G–10.

The French clown who “was the first to perform with his face white from his job” most likely appeared with his face coated with

- A. chalk.
- ★ B. flour.
- C. greasepaint.
- D. makeup.

Sample Item 36 **Conclusions/Inferences**

The sample item below is based on “Clown Alley” on page G–10.

Based on the introductory paragraph, what can the reader conclude about Linda McBryde?

- A. She invents designs when creating clown faces.
- B. She has few eggs in her collection of clown faces.
- ★ C. She is dedicated to preserving a record of clown faces.
- D. She spends little time decorating eggs with clown faces.

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.7.4

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.
Clarification	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships within texts. Additionally, the student may need to discern a causal relationship implied in the text through the assimilation of facts and details provided.
Content Focus	Cause and Effect
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts used in assessing cause-and-effect relationships should contain identifiable causal relationships embedded in the text and/or contain sufficient facts and details to assist students in discerning implied causal relationships.
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Texts should include an identifiable cause-and-effect relationship that may be stated and/or implied.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect causal relationships based on the text;• incorrect rationales and/or interpretations of implied causal relationships; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. <p>Note: When constructing cause-and-effect items using literary texts, it is preferred that interactions and situations between characters be attributed to Benchmark LA.7.2.1.2 and the content focus of character development and/or character point of view.</p>

Sample Item 37 **Cause and Effect**

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Why is the author’s discovery of his father’s business card a significant event?

- A. The author is reminded of his family history.
- ★ B. The author is inspired to continue his campaign.
- C. The author remembers why he is running for office.
- D. The author recalls moving to a new house with his family.

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.7.5

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.
Clarification	The student will identify and analyze text structures/organizational patterns and determine how they impact meaning in texts.
Content Focus	Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Content Limits	Text structures found within grade-level appropriate texts should be identifiable and may include, but are not limited to, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, and argument/support. Text features should not be assessed in this benchmark but will be assessed in LA.7.2.2.1 for literary text and in LA.7.6.1.1 for informational text.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Informational texts are more suited than literary texts toward item development for this benchmark; however, a literary text may occasionally be appropriate (e.g., one that utilizes chronological order, comparison/contrast, or cause/effect). Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Text structures must be clearly evident as indicated by signal words and phrases. Texts must contain an identifiable organizational pattern. Texts may include identifiable viewpoints, positions, or persuasive arguments. Support should be objective and substantial. Paired texts or different sections within a text should include similar or opposing viewpoints, positions, or arguments.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect interpretations of text structures/organizational patterns;
- incorrect relationships (e.g., cause/effect, comparison/contrast) within the organizational pattern;
- incorrect chronological order;
- incorrect details drawn from the text;
- incorrect rationale as support for or against an argument; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Distractors should include a brief elaboration on how the organizational pattern impacts meaning in the text and should **not** be a list of general categories (e.g., chronological order, comparison/contrast, cause/effect).

Sample Item 38**Organizational Patterns**

The sample item below is based on “Volunteer Day” on page G–12.

The author organizes this flier by providing a

- A. process indicating the importance of Volunteer Day.
- B. chronology of activities associated with Volunteer Day.
- ★ C. description of Volunteer Day followed by an activity list.
- D. comparison of the popularity of Volunteer Day activities.

BENCHMARK LA.7.1.7.7

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.7.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.
Clarification	The student will identify similarities between elements within or across texts or will identify differences between elements within or across texts.
Content Focus	Compare (similarities within/across texts) Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should include elements that can be compared or contrasted and may include, but are not limited to, character, setting, descriptive language, subject, author’s purpose, author’s perspective, main idea, and themes and topics.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts should provide sufficient information that establishes a clear relationship between the similarities or a clear relationship between the differences. Texts should include elements that compare and/or contrast. To assess this benchmark across texts, items should be based on two related texts that contain elements that can be compared or contrasted. To assess this benchmark within a text, items should be based on elements that can be compared or contrasted.

Distractor Attributes Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect comparisons;
- incorrect contrasts;
- similarities or differences that are drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;
- facts and details that are drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: When constructing a comparison item, distractors should **not** contrast elements. When constructing a contrast item, distractors should **not** compare elements.

Note: For differentiating between Benchmark LA.7.1.7.7 and Benchmark LA.7.6.2.2, items that require students to compare or contrast specific details within the text should be aligned with Benchmark LA.7.1.7.7. Items that require students to synthesize similarities or differences and to draw conclusions from those similarities or differences within or across text(s) should be aligned with Benchmark LA.7.6.2.2.

Sample Item 39 Compare

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Which sentence provides the best description of how Cuomo and his father handle difficult situations?

- A. Both are easily distracted.
- B. Each relies on the other for help.
- C. Each questions his own decisions.
- ★ D. Both are determined to overcome challenges.

GRADE 7			
Reporting Category 3: Literary Analysis—Fiction/Nonfiction			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, conflict/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot Development • Setting • Character Development • Character Point of View • Theme • Conflict (e.g., internal or external) • Resolution
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.2		
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice sets the author's tone and advances the work's theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive Language (e.g., mood, imagery) • Figurative Language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification)
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.	
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.7		

BENCHMARK LA.7.2.1.2

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
Benchmark	LA.7.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and interpret elements of plot development (foreshadowing, flashback, theme, and setting) within or across texts. The student will also identify, analyze, and interpret other literary elements, such as character development, character point of view, and conflict and resolution within or across texts. In addition, the student will identify, analyze, and interpret how plot events in the text contribute to conflict and resolution within or across texts.
Content Focus	Plot Development Setting Character Development Character Point of View Theme Conflict (e.g., internal or external) Resolution
Content Limits	Texts should be grade-level appropriate and contain identifiable literary elements (e.g., theme, character development, character point of view, setting, plot development, conflict, resolution).
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary and may include, but are not limited to, fiction, nonfiction (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, personal and historical essays, diary entries, memoirs), poetry, and drama. When assessing theme, the text must have a strongly implied theme. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. To assess this benchmark within or across texts, items should be based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one text that contains a variety of literary elements; or • two texts with related literary elements (e.g., theme, character development, character point of view, setting, plot development, conflict, resolution).

- Distractor Attributes** Distractors may include, but are not limited to
- details that may contribute to but do not significantly support the conflict, plot, theme, etc.;
 - facts, details, or ideas drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;
 - inaccurate interpretations of character development, character point of view, plot development, setting, conflict, theme, etc.;
 - a summary statement that is unrelated to the overall theme; and
 - plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Theme is neither the plot nor the story’s topic expressed in a word or phrase (e.g., the strength of love, the importance of nature, childhood, friendship). A theme should be stated in a complete sentence. For example, rather than a phrase such as *the rewards of old age*, this phrase should be in the form of a sentence: *Old age can be a time of great satisfaction.*

Sample Item 40 Character Development

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Which sentence from the essay illustrates the characteristic the author appreciates most about his father?

- A. “We didn’t know what to say to him.”
- B. “Poppa never had occasion to give anyone a calling card, but he loved having them.”
- ★ C. “When we saw our spruce, defeated, its cheek on the canvas, our hearts sank. But not Poppa’s.”
- D. “Maybe he weighed 155 pounds if he had a good meal. Maybe he could see a block away if his glasses were clean.”

Sample Item 41 Theme

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Which statement best describes Poppa’s approach to life?

- A. He was proud of his family ancestry.
- B. He provided a good home for his children.
- C. He believed a person should work hard and be physically strong.
- ★ D. He thought people should meet whatever challenges life brings their way.

Sample Item 42 Conflict

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

What is the narrator’s main conflict in “Poppa and the Spruce Tree”?

- A. He misses his father.
- ★ B. He is disheartened by his campaign.
- C. He is not able to remember his father.
- D. He worries that the spruce will not survive.

BENCHMARK LA.7.2.1.7

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
Benchmark	LA.7.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the author’s use of descriptive and/or figurative language and will determine how the author’s use of language impacts meaning in a variety of grade-level appropriate texts.
Content Focus	Descriptive Language (e.g., tone, mood, irony, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia) Figurative Language (e.g., hyperbole, symbolism, simile, metaphor, personification)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should contain clear examples of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia) and figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole). Idioms and allusions should not be assessed.
Text Attributes	Texts may be literary or informational and may include, but are not limited to, fiction, nonfiction (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, personal and historical essays, diary entries, speeches, editorials, memoirs), poetry, and drama. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examples of descriptive language or figurative language drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item; • inaccurate interpretations of descriptive language or figurative language; and • plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: If two descriptive language distractors are used, they must be balanced with two figurative language distractors. The correct answer determines the content focus for the item.

Note: Distractors may also include all descriptive language examples or all figurative language examples.

Note: When assessing author's tone (e.g., melancholic, nostalgic, forlorn) and mood (e.g., sorrowful, gloomy, optimistic) in a text, distractors should **not** be a list of words but should include specific examples related to the text.

Sample Item 43 Figurative Language

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

Read this sentence from the essay.

We came home from the store that night to find the spruce pulled almost totally from the ground and flung forward, its mighty nose bent in the asphalt of the street.

Which literary device does the author use in the sentence above?

- A. simile, comparing the tree to asphalt
- B. metaphor, representing the tree as a roadway
- ★ C. personification, giving the tree human qualities
- D. hyperbole, exaggerating the condition of the tree

GRADE 7			
Reporting Category 4: Informational Text/Research Process			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.2.2.1 LA.7.2.2.1 LA.8.2.2.1	The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.6.1.1 LA.7.6.1.1 LA.9.6.1.1	The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.6.2.2 LA.7.6.2.2 LA.8.6.2.2	<p>The student will collect, evaluate and summarize information using a variety of techniques from multiple sources (e.g., encyclopedias, websites, experts) that includes paraphrasing to convey ideas and details from the source, main idea(s) and relevant details.</p> <p><i>Assessed with LA.5.6.2.2 The student will read and record information systematically, evaluating the validity and reliability of information in text by examining several sources of information.</i></p> <p>The student will assess, organize, and check the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize Information (within/across texts) • Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/across texts) • Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)

BENCHMARK LA.7.2.2.1

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	2 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of nonfiction, informational, and expository texts to demonstrate an understanding of the information presented.
Benchmark	LA.7.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and determine meaning from a variety of text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes) found within a text.
Content Focus	Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Content Limits	Text features should be assessed within grade-level appropriate literary nonfiction texts (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, diary entries, memoirs) or literary fictional texts when appropriate. Texts should include a single, identifiable text feature or should contain a variety of text features. Tables of contents, glossaries, indices, bold text, and key/guide words should not be assessed.
Text Attributes	Literary nonfiction texts are more suited than literary fictional texts toward item development for this benchmark; however, a literary text may occasionally be appropriate. Stimuli found in text may include headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, and text boxes.

Distractor Attributes Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- facts, details, or other information drawn from the text features but unrelated to the test item;
- incorrect analysis and interpretation of the text features;
- incorrect or irrelevant information drawn from text features; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** ask the student for literal references, such as

- *On what page would you find...?;*
- *In which chapter would you find...?;* or
- *In what kind of reference book would you find information about...?*

Note: When assessing a text feature (e.g., subheadings/captions), answer choices may be developed from other areas of the text but should be parallel and balanced.

Note: When assessing a text feature in a fiction or literary nonfiction passage, Benchmark LA.7.2.2.1 should be used. When assessing a text feature in an informational/expository nonfiction article or in a functional selection (how-to documents, webpages, etc.), Benchmark LA.7.6.1.1 should be used.

Sample Item 44 Text Features

The sample item below is based on “Poppa and the Spruce Tree” on page G–8.

After reading the essay, what can readers conclude from the title of the essay and the illustration?

- A. The spruce tree is the main focus of the father’s attention.
- B. The father is more concerned with the spruce tree than his family.
- ★ C. The spruce tree is symbolic of the father’s determination and strength.
- D. The father’s attitude toward the spruce tree reveals his stubbornness and pride.

BENCHMARK LA.7.6.1.1

Strand	6 Information and Media Literacy
Standard	1 The student comprehends the wide array of informational text that is part of our day to day experiences.
Benchmark	LA.7.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and determine meaning from a variety of text features found within a text.
Content Focus	Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Content Limits	<p>Text features should be assessed using grade-level appropriate texts that may include, but are not limited to, informational articles and functional reading materials (e.g., websites, consumer documents, how-to articles, brochures, fliers, other real-world documents).</p> <p>Texts should include a single, identifiable text feature or should contain a variety of text features.</p> <p>Making a report, conducting interviews, preparing to take a test, and performing a task should not be assessed.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be informational.</p> <p>Texts may include, but are not limited to, grade-level appropriate informational articles and functional reading materials (e.g., websites, consumer documents, how-to articles, brochures, fliers, other real-world documents).</p> <p>Stimuli found in text may include headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, and text boxes.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorrect analysis and interpretation of text features; • facts, details, or other information drawn from the text features but unrelated to the test item; • incorrect or irrelevant information drawn from text features; and • plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** ask the student for literal references, such as

- *On what page would you find...?*;
- *In which chapter would you find...?*; or
- *In what kind of reference book would you find information about...?*

Note: When assessing a text feature (e.g., subheadings/captions), answer choices may be developed from other areas of the text but should be parallel and balanced.

Note: When assessing a text feature in an informational/expository nonfiction article or in a functional selection (how-to documents, webpages, etc.), Benchmark LA.7.6.1.1 should be used. When assessing a text feature in a fiction or literary nonfiction passage, Benchmark LA.7.2.2.1 should be used.

Sample Item 45 **Text Features**

The sample item below is based on “Volunteer Day” on page G–12.

The author’s use of italicized print in the flier aids the reader’s understanding by

- A. indicating where each activity is scheduled to take place.
- B. emphasizing how volunteers should prepare for the activities.
- ★ C. drawing attention to specific times matched with specific activities.
- D. highlighting the different activities available to interested volunteers.

BENCHMARK LA.7.6.2.2

Strand	6 Information and Media Literacy
Standard	2 The student uses a systematic process for the collection, processing, and presentation of information.
Benchmark	LA.7.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, and check the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.
Clarification	<p>The student will use a variety of techniques and strategies to analyze and evaluate information within or across texts.</p> <p>The student will identify the validity (i.e., correctness or soundness) and reliability (i.e., dependability) of information in texts by identifying supporting facts and analyzing the development of argument(s) within or across texts. In addition, the student may be asked to apply information from texts in a valid and/or reliable way.</p> <p>The student will identify the relationships between two or more ideas or among other textual elements found within or across texts (i.e., synthesize information).</p>
Content Focus	<p>Synthesize Information (within/across texts)</p> <p>Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/across texts)</p> <p>Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)</p>
Content Limits	<p>Texts should be grade-level appropriate and present information in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aid the student’s determination of validity and reliability of information; • express a relationship among two or more ideas; • express a relationship among ideas and certain text features; and • reflect ideas that can be analyzed and evaluated. <p>This type of information may come from both primary and/or secondary sources.</p> <p>Synthesis should be assessed by identifying the relationships among two or more ideas.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be informational but on occasion may be literary; both may include either primary or secondary sources.</p> <p>Primary sources may include, but are not limited to, eyewitness accounts of events, such as letters, journals, diaries, and historical documents.</p>

Secondary sources may include, but are not limited to, encyclopedias, books, newspapers, and magazine articles.

Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.

Evidence presented in the text should be logical, internally consistent, and clearly developed by the author to assess validity/reliability.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect analysis of validity and/or reliability of the text;
- facts or details drawn from text but unrelated to the test item;
- incorrect interpretations of the accuracy of information found in the text;
- incorrect synthesis of information; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Whenever possible, validity and reliability items should use direct quotations from the text in the answer choices.

Note: For differentiating between Benchmark LA.7.1.7.7 and Benchmark LA.7.6.2.2, items that require students to compare or contrast specific details within the text should be aligned with Benchmark LA.7.1.7.7. Items that require students to synthesize similarities or differences and to draw conclusions from those similarities or differences within or across text(s) should be aligned with Benchmark LA.7.6.2.2.

Sample Item 46 Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information

The sample item below is based on “Volunteer Day” on page G–12.

Which sentence from the flier best supports why students should volunteer?

- ★ **A.** “It’s important to be more than just a resident in a community; getting involved allows you to be an active, participating citizen.”
- B.** “Any interest you might have can usually translate into an opportunity to help your community by doing something you enjoy.”
- C.** “Board the bus that will take you back to the Community Center, where you will be able to talk with other volunteers and share your experiences.”
- D.** “For elderly or physically disabled people who cannot do repairs to their homes, Happy Homes provides volunteer painters to repaint old homes, outside or in.”

SPECIFICATIONS
FOR
GRADE 8

GRADE 8			
Reporting Category 1: Vocabulary			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.3	The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context Clues
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.3		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.3		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.7	<p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.6.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Greek and Latin mythology (e.g., mercurial, Achilles' heel) and identify frequently used words from other languages (e.g., laissez faire, croissant).</i></p> <p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.7.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i></p> <p>The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words.</p> <p><i>Also assesses LA.8.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) • Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.7		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.7		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.8	The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Words/Phrases • Word Relationships
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.8		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.8		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.9	The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Meanings
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.9		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.9		

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.6.3

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.
Clarification	The student, using context clues, will identify the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
Content Focus	Context Clues
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess words unfamiliar to most students. Excerpted text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word. If an item stem directs the student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word. The assessed word should be no more than two grade levels above the tested grade.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain a word unfamiliar to most students, and clear and sufficient context must be present for students to determine the meaning of the word.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect meanings of the assessed word;• meanings of the assessed word that are correct but are not appropriate for the context surrounding the word;• contextual meanings drawn from the text but unrelated to the assessed word or test item; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 47 **Context Clues**

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Read this sentence from the passage.

Thankfully, the men dragged out sleeping bags and sodden clothes and hung them in the rigging to dry.

What does the word *sodden* mean as used in the sentence above?

- A. bed
- B. dirty
- C. sailing
- ★ D. soaked

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.6.7

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.6.7 The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. <i>Also assesses LA.8.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i>
Clarification	The student will analyze affixes, or root words, or words/phrases derived from other languages, including Greek and Latin, to determine meaning in a text. Appropriate word strategies, simple analysis, and/or inference may be required.
Content Focus	Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should contain vocabulary for assessing the analysis of word structure and for assessing words and phrases derived from other languages, including Greek and Latin. Assessed words should be no more than two grade levels above the tested grade. If a stem directs the student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or when assessing foreign words and phrases, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word or phrase.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain appropriate words to assess affixes, root words, and foreign words and phrases.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect meanings of words, based on structural analysis, that do not fit the context;• incorrect meanings of foreign words/phrases that do not fit the context;• words with construct similar to the correct response (e.g., same prefix); and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Please refer to page 25 in the Grade 6 Specifications to see a sample item for Benchmark LA.8.1.6.7.

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.6.8

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.6.8 The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.
Clarification	The student will analyze the meanings of words, phrases, and word relationships by using strategies, including, but not limited to, context clues and word structure.
Content Focus	Analyze Words/Phrases Word Relationships
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess the analysis of words and phrases and the identification of word relationships (e.g., synonyms, antonyms). Analogies should not be assessed. When assessing Analyze Words/Phrases <ul style="list-style-type: none">• excerpted text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the phrase being assessed; and• if an item stem directs a student back to the text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar phrase, the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed phrase. When assessing Word Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the terms <i>synonym</i> and <i>antonym</i> should not be used in stem construction. Wording should be <i>most similar in meaning</i> or <i>most opposite in meaning</i>;• excerpted text should not be used when students are required to analyze word relationships within answer choices;• only grade-level appropriate words found within the text should be assessed; and• the text should contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed words.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain appropriate words, phrases, and word relationships to assess knowledge of vocabulary at grade level.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect meanings of assessed words or phrases found within excerpted text;
- word relationships constructed similarly to the correct response;
- meanings of the assessed words or phrases that are correct but are not appropriate for the context;
- details drawn from the text but unrelated to the assessed phrases or test item; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: When constructing answer choices using word pairs, the words within the pair should be the same part of speech.

Sample Item 48 Analyze Words/Phrases

The sample item below is based on “Copper Kettle Sweetheart” on page G–17.

Read these lines from the poem.

... a slim beam
of afternoon sun came through the coal chute
“just about kissing the kettle,” ...

Which sentence below best expresses the meaning of these lines?

- ★ A. A passing sunbeam made the kettle glow.
- B. A sunbeam made a permanent mark on the kettle.
- C. The rim of the kettle was hidden from the sunbeam.
- D. The room was illuminated as a sunbeam hit the kettle.

Sample Item 49 Word Relationships

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Which pair of words from the passage are most similar in meaning?

- A. bitter, grey
- B. dragged, drifted
- ★ C. expedition, journey
- D. launched, surrounded

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.6.9

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.6.9 The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.
Clarification	The student will analyze words that have multiple meanings and determine the correct meaning of the word as used in the text.
Content Focus	Multiple Meanings
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should be used to assess words with multiple meanings. Words with multiple meanings should be assessed using words on grade level or not more than two grades above or below grade level. Excerpted text must contain clear and sufficient context for determining the meaning of the assessed word.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts must contain words with multiple meanings and must provide clear and sufficient context for the student to determine the correct meaning.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• correct meanings of the assessed word but inappropriate to the text;• meanings drawn from the text but unrelated to the meaning of the assessed word or test item;• words constructed similarly to the correct response (e.g., same affix, same tense); and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Sample Item 50 **Multiple Meanings**

The sample item below is based on “The Last Frontier of Texas” on page G–19.

Read this sentence from the brochure.

Entrance fees are charged to enter the park (open year round) and can be paid at the Maverick and Persimmon Gap entrance stations.

In which sentence below does *charged* have the same meaning as in the sentence above?

- A. The athletes charged the field with great enthusiasm.
- B. The bull charged the red cape that was held in front of it.
- C. The committee was charged with the task of raising funds.
- ★ D. The group was charged a fair price for their concert tickets.

GRADE 8			
Reporting Category 2: Reading Application			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, or explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author's Purpose (within/across texts) • Author's Perspective (within/across texts) • Author's Bias (within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Idea (stated or implied) • Summary Statement • Relevant Details • Conclusions/Inferences • Predictions
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.4	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause and Effect
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.4		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.4		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.5	The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.5		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.5		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare (similarities within/across texts) • Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.7.2

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.7.2 The student will analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.
Clarification	The student will identify the author’s purpose or perspective. The student will analyze the impact of the author’s purpose or perspective within or across texts.
Content Focus	Author’s Purpose (within/across texts) Author’s Perspective (within/across texts) Author’s Bias (within/across texts)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts used in assessing author’s purpose should contain an identifiable author’s purpose for writing, including, but not limited to, persuading, entertaining, conveying a particular tone or mood, informing, or expressing an opinion. The author’s purpose, perspective, and bias should be recognizable within or across texts.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. Texts may include, but are not limited to, persuasive articles, essays, editorials, and informational articles.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• facts and details that do not support the author’s purpose or represent the author’s perspective or bias;• incorrect interpretations of the author’s purpose, perspective, or bias;• incorrect analysis or evaluation of the impact of the author’s purpose, perspective, or bias; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. Note: Distractors should not be a list of general categories (e.g., to inform, to persuade) but should include specific examples related to the text.

Sample Item 51 **Author’s Purpose**

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Read this sentence from the passage.

Sometimes looking out abeam they could see a great tunnel formed as the crest of a towering wave hung toppling over its base, then broke.

What is the most likely reason the author describes the storm in this way?

- A. to suggest that the storm helped the men escape
- ★ B. to show how helpless the crew felt during the storm
- C. to explain why the boat turned sideways into the wind
- D. to indicate that the storm created vivid images for the men

Sample Item 52 **Author’s Perspective**

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

With which sentence below would the author of this passage most likely agree?

- ★ A. The men would not have survived without Shackleton.
- B. The men should have arrived on Elephant Island more quickly.
- C. The men should have prepared for the expedition more carefully.
- D. The men would not have been trapped if they had set a proper course.

Sample Item 53 **Author’s Bias**

The sample item below is based on “The Last Frontier of Texas” on page G–19.

Which sentence from the brochure best indicates the author’s bias in favor of the Big Bend landscape?

- A. “One-day rafting trips are the most popular way to enjoy Big Bend’s remote canyon beauty.”
- B. “Shorter interpretive trails into Boquillas and Santa Elena Canyons focus on the unrelenting power of the Rio Grande.”
- C. “Hiking trails to Lost Mine Peak, the South Rim, and the Window offer panoramic mountain and desert views from high atop the peaks of the Chisos Mountains.”
- ★ D. “Stark and dramatic contrasts in topography, climate, scenery, and its unique world of plant and animal life make Big Bend more of an awe-inspiring experience than just a place to visit.”

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.7.3

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.
Clarification	The student will determine the main idea (stated or implied), identify a correct summary statement, locate relevant details and facts, draw logical conclusions, make appropriate inferences, and use details to make predictions beyond a text within or across grade-level appropriate texts.
Content Focus	Main Idea (stated or implied) Summary Statement Relevant Details Conclusions/Inferences Predictions
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should include an identifiable main idea (stated or implied) and relevant details from which students may draw logical conclusions or make inferences within or across texts. Paraphrasing should not be assessed. Items may assess a student’s ability to identify a correct summary statement.
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary or informational. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. The text should include a main idea (stated or implied) with relevant details, which will enable students to draw logical conclusions and make appropriate inferences.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• details that do not support the main idea;• incorrect interpretations of the main idea that are too broad, too narrow, or are a specific fact;• incorrect inferences, conclusions, or predictions based on details found in the text;• incorrect summary statements; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. Note: Items should not assess a student’s ability to identify details of least importance when assessing a summary or main idea statement.

Note: A main idea should be stated in a complete sentence.

Note: A summary statement should be expressed in a complete sentence.

Note: When the main idea is assessed in a literary text, it should be assessed as a summary statement (e.g., “Which statement best summarizes the events in the passage?”). When the main idea is assessed in an informational text, it should be assessed as a main idea statement (e.g., “Which sentence best expresses the main idea of the article?”).

Sample Item 54 **Main Idea**

The sample item below is based on “The Earthmovers” on page G–23.

If this article were published in a newspaper, which headline best expresses the main idea?

- ★ **A.** “Oldest Known Earthworks Discovered in Louisiana”
- B.** “Research Uncovers Evidence of New Native American Groups”
- C.** “Jones and Saunders Publish Findings After Four Years of Research”
- D.** “Striking Similarities Found Between Watson Brake and Poverty Point”

Sample Item 55 **Relevant Details**

The sample item below is based on “The Earthmovers” on page G–23.

Based on their investigations, how do Saunders and Jones think the mounds at Watson Brake and Poverty Point were created?

- A.** The mounds were built by nomadic groups who practiced different styles of construction.
- ★ **B.** The mounds were built by small groups who worked together over a period of several hundred years.
- C.** The mounds were built by a settled group who organized themselves to build projects of this magnitude.
- D.** The mounds were built by a single tribe who contributed to the project as they moved in and out of the area.

Sample Item 56 **Conclusions/Inferences**

The sample item below is based on “The Earthmovers” on page G–23.

Read this quotation from Joe Saunders.

“I think we’re going to find many more surprises that will make us reevaluate what was going on in that period of history.”

In the quotation above, Saunders is indicating that

- A. most archaeological discoveries are the result of hard work.
- ★ B. new evidence changes the understanding of archaeological theory.
- C. many archaeological sites in North America still need to be explored.
- D. new findings about Watson Brake must be published in archaeological journals.

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.7.4

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.
Clarification	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships within texts. Additionally, the student may need to discern a causal relationship implied in the text through the assimilation of facts and details provided.
Content Focus	Cause and Effect
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts used in assessing cause-and-effect relationships should contain identifiable causal relationships embedded in the text and/or contain sufficient facts and details to assist students in discerning implied causal relationships.
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Texts should include an identifiable cause-and-effect relationship that may be stated and/or implied.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorrect causal relationships based on the text;• incorrect rationales and/or interpretations of implied causal relationships; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text. <p>Note: When constructing cause-and-effect items using literary texts, it is preferred that interactions and situations between characters be attributed to Benchmark LA.8.2.1.2 and the content focus of character development and/or character point of view.</p>

Sample Item 57 **Cause and Effect**

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Why did six men sail on the *James Caird* while the others stayed behind?

- A. There was not enough food for all the men.
- B. Some of the men were too weak to travel farther.
- ★ C. There was not enough room in the boat for all the men.
- D. Some of the men wanted to wait until after winter to leave.

Sample Item 58 **Cause and Effect**

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

What caused the trip of the *James Caird* to be a fierce ordeal?

- A. The supplies and food were scarce.
- B. The ice floes split and the wind dropped.
- C. The pressure on the hull of the boat was extreme.
- ★ D. The weather created stormy seas and huge waves.

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.7.5

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.
Clarification	The student will identify and analyze text structures/organizational patterns and determine how they impact meaning in texts.
Content Focus	Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Content Limits	<p>Text structures found within grade-level appropriate texts should be identifiable and may include, but are not limited to, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, and argument/support.</p> <p>Text features should not be assessed in this benchmark but will be assessed in LA.8.2.2.1 for literary text and in LA.8.6.1.1 for informational text.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Informational texts are more suited than literary texts toward item development for this benchmark; however, a literary text may occasionally be appropriate (e.g., one that utilizes chronological order, comparison/contrast, or cause/effect).</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Text structures must be clearly evident as indicated by signal words and phrases.</p> <p>Texts must contain an identifiable organizational pattern.</p> <p>Texts may include identifiable viewpoints, positions, or persuasive arguments. Support should be objective and substantial. Paired texts or different sections within a text should include similar or opposing viewpoints, positions, or arguments.</p>

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect interpretations of text structures/organizational patterns;
- incorrect relationships (e.g., cause/effect, comparison/contrast) within the organizational pattern;
- incorrect chronological order;
- incorrect details drawn from the text;
- incorrect rationale as support for or against an argument; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Distractors should include a brief elaboration on how the organizational pattern impacts meaning in the text and should **not** be a list of general categories (e.g., chronological order, comparison/contrast, cause/effect).

Sample Item 59 **Text Structures/Organizational Patterns**

The sample item below is based on “Copper Kettle Sweetheart” on page G–17.

How does the poet organize the events in the poem?

- A. The poet uses cause and effect to arrange the events in the poem.
- B. The poet uses questions and answers to relate the events in the poem.
- C. The poet uses chronological order to introduce events as they occurred.
- ★ D. The poet uses description to weave past and present events into the poem.

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.7.7

Strand	1 Reading Process
Standard	7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.
Benchmark	LA.8.1.7.7 The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).
Clarification	The student will identify similarities between elements within or across texts or will identify differences between elements within or across texts.
Content Focus	Compare (similarities within/across texts) Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should include elements that can be compared or contrasted and may include, but are not limited to, character, setting, descriptive language, subject, author’s purpose, author’s perspective, main idea, and themes and topics.
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be literary or informational.</p> <p>Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.</p> <p>Texts should provide sufficient information that establishes a clear relationship between the similarities or a clear relationship between the differences.</p> <p>Texts should include elements that compare and/or contrast.</p> <p>To assess this benchmark across texts, items should be based on two related texts that contain elements that can be compared or contrasted.</p> <p>To assess this benchmark within a text, items should be based on elements that can be compared or contrasted.</p>

Distractor Attributes Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect comparisons;
- incorrect contrasts;
- similarities or differences that are drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;
- facts and details that are drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: When constructing a comparison item, distractors should **not** contrast elements. When constructing a contrast item, distractors should **not** compare elements.

Note: For differentiating between Benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 and Benchmark LA.8.6.2.2, items that require students to compare or contrast specific details within the text should be aligned with Benchmark LA.8.1.7.7. Items that require students to synthesize similarities or differences and to draw conclusions from those similarities or differences within or across text(s) should be aligned with Benchmark LA.8.6.2.2.

Sample Item 60 Compare

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Read this sentence from the passage.

There were storms and seas so big that in the trough of a wave the boat seemed surrounded by mountains of water.

Based on the sentence above, in what way are waves similar to mountains?

- A. Both are jagged.
- ★ B. Both are enormous.
- C. Both are difficult to climb.
- D. Both are topped with foam.

GRADE 8			
Reporting Category 3: Literary Analysis—Fiction/Nonfiction			
Benchmark			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, conflict/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot Development • Setting • Character Development • Character Point of View • Theme • Conflict (e.g., internal or external) • Resolution
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.2		
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice sets the author's tone and advances the work's theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive Language (e.g., mood, imagery) • Figurative Language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification)
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author's use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader's senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.	
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.7		

BENCHMARK LA.8.2.1.2

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
Benchmark	LA.8.2.1.2 The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and interpret elements of plot development (foreshadowing, flashback, theme, and setting) within or across texts. The student will also identify, analyze, and interpret other literary elements, such as character development, character point of view, and conflict and resolution within or across texts. In addition, the student will identify, analyze, and interpret how plot events in the text contribute to conflict and resolution within or across texts.
Content Focus	Plot Development Setting Character Development Character Point of View Theme Conflict (e.g., internal or external) Resolution
Content Limits	Texts should be grade-level appropriate and contain identifiable literary elements (e.g., theme, character development, character point of view, setting, plot development, conflict, resolution).
Text Attributes	Texts should be literary and may include, but are not limited to, fiction, nonfiction (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, personal and historical essays, diary entries, memoirs), poetry, and drama. When assessing theme, the text must have a strongly implied theme. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts. To assess this benchmark within or across texts, items should be based on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one text that contains a variety of literary elements; or• two texts with related literary elements (e.g., theme, character development, character point of view, setting, plot development, conflict, resolution).

Distractor Attributes Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- details that may contribute to but do not significantly support the conflict, plot, theme, etc.;
- facts, details, or ideas drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;
- inaccurate interpretations of character development, character point of view, plot development, setting, conflict, theme, etc.;
- a summary statement that is unrelated to the overall theme; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Theme is neither the plot nor the story’s topic expressed in a word or phrase (e.g., the strength of love, the importance of nature, childhood, friendship). A theme should be stated in a complete sentence. For example, rather than a phrase such as *the rewards of old age*, this phrase should be in the form of a sentence: *Old age can be a time of great satisfaction.*

Sample Item 61 **Character Development**

The sample item below is based on “Copper Kettle Sweetheart” on page G–17.

Which phrase best describes the narrator’s father?

- A. considerate but stern
- B. energetic and impatient
- C. honest but unimaginative
- ★ D. affectionate and entertaining

BENCHMARK LA.8.2.1.7

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
Benchmark	LA.8.2.1.7 The student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the author’s use of descriptive and/or figurative language and will determine how the author’s use of language impacts meaning in a variety of grade-level appropriate texts.
Content Focus	Descriptive Language (e.g., tone, mood, irony, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia) Figurative Language (e.g., hyperbole, symbolism, simile, metaphor, personification)
Content Limits	Grade-level appropriate texts should contain clear examples of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia) and figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole). Idioms and allusions should not be assessed.
Text Attributes	Texts may be literary or informational and may include, but are not limited to, fiction, nonfiction (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, personal and historical essays, diary entries, speeches, editorials, memoirs), poetry, and drama. Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.
Distractor Attributes	Distractors may include, but are not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• examples of descriptive language or figurative language drawn from the text but unrelated to the test item;• inaccurate interpretations of descriptive language or figurative language; and• plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: If two descriptive language distractors are used, they must be balanced with two figurative language distractors. The correct answer determines the content focus for the item.

Note: Distractors may also include all descriptive language examples or all figurative language examples.

Note: When assessing author's tone (e.g., melancholic, nostalgic, forlorn) and mood (e.g., sorrowful, gloomy, optimistic) in a text, distractors should **not** be a list of words but should include specific examples related to the text.

Sample Item 62 Figurative Language

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Read this excerpt from the passage.

The *James Caird* was the biggest of the ship’s boats. Even so she looked pitifully small to face the great grey seas of the southern ocean.

Which literary device is used in the excerpt above?

- A. hyperbole, exaggerating the size of the boat
- B. metaphor, representing the boat as a body of water
- ★ C. personification, attributing human characteristics to the boat
- D. simile, comparing the appearance of the boat to the color of the ocean

GRADE 8		
Reporting Category 4: Informational Text/Research Process		
Benchmark		Content Focus
Grade 6 LA.6.2.2.1 Grade 7 LA.7.2.2.1 Grade 8 LA.8.2.2.1	The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 LA.6.6.1.1 Grade 7 LA.7.6.1.1 Grade 8 LA.9.6.1.1	The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 LA.6.6.2.2 Grade 7 LA.7.6.2.2 Grade 8 LA.8.6.2.2	<p>The student will collect, evaluate and summarize information using a variety of techniques from multiple sources (e.g., encyclopedias, websites, experts) that includes paraphrasing to convey ideas and details from the source, main idea(s) and relevant details.</p> <p><i>Assessed with LA.5.6.2.2 The student will read and record information systematically, evaluating the validity and reliability of information in text by examining several sources of information.</i></p> <p>The student will assess, organize, and check the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize Information (within/across texts) • Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/across texts) • Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)

BENCHMARK LA.8.2.2.1

Strand	2 Literary Analysis
Standard	2 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of nonfiction, informational, and expository texts to demonstrate an understanding of the information presented.
Benchmark	LA.8.2.2.1 The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and determine meaning from a variety of text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes) found within a text.
Content Focus	Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Content Limits	Text features should be assessed within grade-level appropriate literary nonfiction texts (e.g., biographies, autobiographies, diary entries, memoirs) or literary fictional texts when appropriate. Texts should include a single, identifiable text feature or should contain a variety of text features. Tables of contents, glossaries, indices, bold text, and key/guide words should not be assessed.
Text Attributes	Literary nonfiction texts are more suited than literary fictional texts toward item development for this benchmark; however, a literary text may occasionally be appropriate. Stimuli found in text may include headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, and text boxes.

Distractor Attributes Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- facts, details, or other information drawn from the text features but unrelated to the test item;
- incorrect analysis and interpretation of the text features;
- incorrect or irrelevant information drawn from text features; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** ask the student for literal references, such as

- *On what page would you find...?*;
- *In which chapter would you find...?*; or
- *In what kind of reference book would you find information about...?*

Note: When assessing a text feature (e.g., subheadings/captions), answer choices may be developed from other areas of the text but should be parallel and balanced.

Note: When assessing a text feature in a fiction or literary nonfiction passage, Benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 should be used. When assessing a text feature in an informational/expository nonfiction article or in a functional selection (how-to documents, webpages, etc.), Benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 should be used.

Sample Item 63 **Text Features**

The sample item below is based on “Shackleton’s Epic Voyage” on page G–14.

Based on the map and the italicized introduction, what can the reader conclude about Shackleton and his crew?

- A. They were unable to avoid becoming stuck at sea.
- B. They were unable to reach the whaling settlement.
- C. They visited many locations before heading toward a whaling settlement.
- ★ D. They had to travel for years over a great distance to reach their destination.

BENCHMARK LA.8.6.1.1

Strand	6 Information and Media Literacy
Standard	1 The student comprehends the wide array of informational text that is part of our day to day experiences.
Benchmark	LA.8.6.1.1 The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.
Clarification	The student will identify, analyze, and determine meaning from a variety of text features found within a text.
Content Focus	Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Content Limits	<p>Text features should be assessed using grade-level appropriate texts that may include, but are not limited to, informational articles and functional reading materials (e.g., websites, consumer documents, how-to articles, brochures, fliers, other real-world documents).</p> <p>Texts should include a single, identifiable text feature or should contain a variety of text features.</p> <p>Making a report, conducting interviews, preparing to take a test, and performing a task should not be assessed.</p>
Text Attributes	<p>Texts should be informational.</p> <p>Texts may include, but are not limited to, grade-level appropriate informational articles and functional reading materials (e.g., websites, consumer documents, how-to articles, brochures, fliers, other real-world documents).</p> <p>Stimuli found in text may include headings, subheadings, sections, titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, and text boxes.</p>
Distractor Attributes	<p>Distractors may include, but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorrect analysis and interpretation of text features; • facts, details, or other information drawn from the text features but unrelated to the test item; • incorrect or irrelevant information drawn from text features; and • plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Items should **not** ask the student for literal references, such as

- *On what page would you find...?*;
- *In which chapter would you find...?*; or
- *In what kind of reference book would you find information about...?*

Note: When assessing a text feature (e.g., subheadings/captions), answer choices may be developed from other areas of the text but should be parallel and balanced.

Note: When assessing a text feature in an informational/expository nonfiction article or in a functional selection (how-to documents, webpages, etc.), Benchmark LA.8.6.1.1 should be used. When assessing a text feature in a fiction or literary nonfiction passage, Benchmark LA.8.2.2.1 should be used.

Sample Item 64 **Text Features**

The sample item below is based on “The Last Frontier of Texas” on page G–19.

The purpose of the brochure’s headings and subheadings is to inform readers about

- A. places to stay overnight in Big Bend National Park.
- B. important supplies needed in Big Bend National Park.
- ★ C. information needed for planning a trip to Big Bend National Park.
- D. safety measures to observe while hiking in Big Bend National Park.

BENCHMARK LA.8.6.2.2

Strand	6 Information and Media Literacy
Standard	2 The student uses a systematic process for the collection, processing, and presentation of information.
Benchmark	LA.8.6.2.2 The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.
Clarification	<p>The student will use a variety of techniques and strategies to analyze and evaluate information within or across texts.</p> <p>The student will identify the validity (i.e., correctness or soundness) and reliability (i.e., dependability) of information in texts by identifying supporting facts and analyzing the development of argument(s) within or across texts. In addition, the student may be asked to apply information from texts in a valid and/or reliable way.</p> <p>The student will identify the relationships between two or more ideas or among other textual elements found within or across texts (i.e., synthesize information).</p>
Content Focus	<p>Synthesize Information (within/across texts)</p> <p>Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/across texts)</p> <p>Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)</p>
Content Limits	<p>Texts should be grade-level appropriate and present information in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aid the student’s determination of validity and reliability of information; • express a relationship among two or more ideas; • express a relationship among ideas and certain text features; and • reflect ideas that can be analyzed and evaluated. <p>This type of information may come from both primary and/or secondary sources.</p> <p>Synthesis should be assessed by identifying the relationships among two or more ideas.</p>

Text Attributes

Texts should be informational but on occasion may be literary; both may include either primary or secondary sources.

Primary sources may include, but are not limited to, eyewitness accounts of events, such as letters, journals, diaries, and historical documents.

Secondary sources may include, but are not limited to, encyclopedias, books, newspapers, and magazine articles.

Other stimuli may include, but are not limited to, illustrations with captions, graphics, and charts.

Evidence presented in the text should be logical, internally consistent, and clearly developed by the author to assess validity/reliability.

Distractor Attributes

Distractors may include, but are not limited to

- incorrect analysis of validity and/or reliability of the text;
- facts or details drawn from text but unrelated to the test item;
- incorrect interpretations of the accuracy of information found in the text;
- incorrect synthesis of information; and
- plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

Note: Whenever possible, validity and reliability items should use direct quotations from the text in the answer choices.

Note: For differentiating between Benchmark LA.8.1.7.7 and Benchmark LA.8.6.2.2, items that require students to compare or contrast specific details within the text should be aligned with Benchmark LA.8.1.7.7. Items that require students to synthesize similarities or differences and to draw conclusions from those similarities or differences within or across text(s) should be aligned with Benchmark LA.8.6.2.2.

Sample Item 65 Synthesize Information

The sample item below is based on “The Earthmovers” on page G–23.

Based on the information in the first and last paragraphs, which statement best describes the early North Americans?

- A. A spirit of goodwill prevailed in the Native-American culture enabling them to work together in harmony.
- B. Leaders of the Native-American tribes discovered tools used to create a large-scale construction project.
- C. Organizers of the first Native-American tribes created large mounds of earth in order to create a historical monument.
- ★ D. A social structure existed in the Native-American culture enabling them to accomplish a large-scale construction project.

Sample Item 66 Synthesize Information

The sample item below is based on “Schaus Swallowtail/Migration of the Monarch Butterfly” on page G–25.

Which statement is best supported by the information in this article?

- A. Monarch butterflies live in warmer climates, and they migrate along the same paths as most birds.
- B. Monarch butterflies are larger than most butterflies, which allows them to migrate greater distances.
- ★ C. An individual monarch butterfly most likely has an inborn memory that directs its migration pattern.
- D. An individual monarch butterfly most likely retraces its own migration route from one year to the next.

Sample Item 67 Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information

The sample item below is based on “The Earthmovers” on page G–23.

Which statement from the article best supports the idea that the early people of Watson Brake were nomads?

- A. “The two largest mounds show no signs of habitation, which suggests they were monuments . . .”
- ★ B. “Along with the evidence from the fish bones, this suggests that people visited the site only in the warmer months.”
- C. “They were also eating wild plants, judging from the charred seeds of goosefoot, knotweed, and possibly marsh elder.”
- D. “. . . Native Americans hauled around tons of gravel and soil, probably in skins and perhaps baskets, with a specific goal in mind.”

Sample Item 68 Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information

The sample item below is based on “The Last Frontier of Texas” on page G–19.

Which sentence from the brochure best emphasizes the natural beauty of Big Bend National Park?

- A. “Since Big Bend is one enormous ‘photo-op,’ a camera is a necessity.”
- B. “Located in a setting 5,400 feet above sea level, the Lodge and each of its 72 rooms have a breathtaking view of the spectacular mountain range.”
- C. “Hiking trails to Lost Mine Peak, the South Rim, and the Window offer panoramic mountain and desert views from high atop the peaks of the Chisos Mountains.”
- ★ D. “Stark and dramatic contrasts in topography, climate, scenery, and its unique world of plant and animal life make Big Bend more of an awe-inspiring experience than just a place to visit.”

APPENDIX A FCAT 2.0 TOPICS FLORIDA’S NEXT GENERATION SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS (NGSSS), GRADES 3–10

Appendix A is provided to item and reading passage writers as a guide to possible topics for item contexts or for commissioned or public-domain reading passages, where appropriate. Item or passage contexts must be grade appropriate and must be appropriate for use on a large-scale assessment.

For many items, the topics for item contexts are dictated by the assessed benchmarks in each content area. For other items, contexts may be very limited, or there may be no context at all, depending on the content limits of the benchmark. The topics listed are adapted from Florida’s NGSSS and are not intended to be an exhaustive or exclusive list for writers to consider.

Essential Skills

- Literacy
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Leadership

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

- Earth/ Space Science
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Concepts of Technology
- Communications Technology
- Computer Technology
- Information Technology
- Technology Processes
- Concepts of Engineering
- Engineering Tools
- Engineering Design and Testing
- Mathematics

Health and Physical Education

- Movement Competency
- Cognitive Abilities
- Lifetime Fitness
- Personal Health
- Health Care

Business Management and Administration

- Finance
- Financial Literacy
- Business Plans
- Marketing
- Entrepreneurship
- Transportation of Goods
- Manufacturing

Business Management and Administration (continued)

- Agriculture
- Hospitality Industry
- Tourism Industry

Social Studies

- U.S. History
- Civics and Government
- Geography
- Economics

World Languages

- Culture Perspectives
- Culture Comparisons
- Culture Communities

Arts

- Dance
- Music
- Theater
- Visual Arts

Reading and Literature

- Adventure
- Animals
- Careers
- Entertainment
- Family
- Friendship
- Hobbies/ Crafts
- Humor
- Mystery
- Romance
- School
- Sports/ Games
- Trips/ Journey

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 1 Reading Process						
Standard 6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
LA.3.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	LA.4.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	LA.5.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	LA.6.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	LA.7.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	LA.8.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	LA.910.1.6.3 use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.
LA.3.1.6.6 identify shades of meaning in related words (e.g., blaring, loud). Assessed by LA.3.1.6.9.	LA.4.1.6.6 identify shades of meaning in related words (e.g., blaring, loud). Assessed by LA.4.1.6.9.	LA.5.1.6.6 identify shades of meaning in related words (e.g., blaring, loud). Assessed by LA.5.1.6.9.				
LA.3.1.6.7 use meaning of familiar base words and affixes (prefixes and suffixes) to determine meanings of unfamiliar complex words.	LA.4.1.6.7 use meaning of familiar base words and affixes to determine meanings of unfamiliar complex words.	LA.5.1.6.7 use meaning of familiar base words and affixes to determine meanings of unfamiliar complex words. Also assesses LA.5.1.6.11.	LA.6.1.6.7 identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Also assesses LA.6.1.6.11.	LA.7.1.6.7 identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Also assesses LA.7.1.6.11.	LA.8.1.6.7 identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Also assesses LA.8.1.6.11.	LA.910.1.6.7 identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Also assesses LA.910.1.6.11.

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 1 Reading Process						
Standard 6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
<p>LA.3.1.6.8 use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine meanings of words.</p>	<p>LA.4.1.6.8 use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine meanings of words.</p>	<p>LA.5.1.6.8 use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine meanings of words.</p>	<p>LA.6.1.6.8 identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.</p>	<p>LA.7.1.6.8 identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.</p>	<p>LA.8.1.6.8 identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.</p>	<p>LA.910.1.6.8 identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.</p>
<p>LA.3.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p> <p>Also assesses LA.3.1.6.6.</p>	<p>LA.4.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p> <p>Also assesses LA.4.1.6.6.</p>	<p>LA.5.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p> <p>Also assesses LA.5.1.6.6.</p>	<p>LA.6.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p>	<p>LA.7.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p>	<p>LA.8.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p>	<p>LA.910.1.6.9 determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.</p>

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 1 Reading Process						
Standard 6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
		<p>LA.5.1.6.11 use meaning of familiar roots and affixes derived from Greek and Latin to determine meanings of unfamiliar complex words.</p>	<p>LA.6.1.6.11 identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Greek and Latin mythology (e.g., mercurial, Achilles’ heel) and identify frequently used words from other languages (e.g., laissez faire, croissant).</p>	<p>LA.7.1.6.11 identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</p>	<p>LA.8.1.6.11 identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</p>	<p>LA.910.1.6.11 identify the meaning of words and phrases from other languages commonly used by writers of English (e.g., ad hoc, post facto, RSVP).</p>
		Assessed by LA.5.1.6.7.	Assessed by LA.6.1.6.7.	Assessed by LA.7.1.6.7.	Assessed by LA.8.1.6.7.	Assessed by LA.910.1.6.7.

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 1 Reading Process						
Standard 7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
LA.3.1.7.2 identify the author’s purpose (e.g., to inform, entertain, or explain) in text and how an author’s perspective influences text.	LA.4.1.7.2 identify the author’s purpose (e.g., to inform, entertain, explain) in text and how an author’s perspective influences text.	LA.5.1.7.2 identify the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and how an author’s perspective influences text.	LA.6.1.7.2 analyze the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, or explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	LA.7.1.7.2 analyze the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	LA.8.1.7.2 analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	LA.910.1.7.2 analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of text and understand how they affect meaning.
LA.3.1.7.3 determine explicit ideas and information in grade-level text, including but not limited to main idea, relevant supporting details, strongly implied message and inference, and chronological order of events.	LA.4.1.7.3 determine explicit ideas and information in grade-level text, including but not limited to main idea, relevant supporting details, implied message, inferences, chronological order of events, summarizing, and paraphrasing.	LA.5.1.7.3 determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	LA.6.1.7.3 determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	LA.7.1.7.3 determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	LA.8.1.7.3 determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	LA.910.1.7.3 determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 1 Reading Process						
Standard 7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
LA.3.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	LA.4.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	LA.5.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	LA.6.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	LA.7.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	LA.8.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	LA.910.1.7.4 identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.
LA.3.1.7.5 identify the text structure an author uses (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, and sequence of events) and explain how it impacts meaning in text.	LA.4.1.7.5 identify the text structure an author uses (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, sequence of events) and explain how it impacts meaning in text.	LA.5.1.7.5 identify the text structure an author uses (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, sequence of events) and explain how it impacts meaning in text.	LA.6.1.7.5 analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	LA.7.1.7.5 analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	LA.8.1.7.5 analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	LA.910.1.7.5 analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 1 Reading Process						
Standard 7 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
LA.3.1.7.6 identify themes or topics across a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections.	LA.4.1.7.6 identify themes or topics across a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections.	LA.5.1.7.6 identify themes or topics across a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections.				
LA.3.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements, settings, characters, and problems in two texts.	LA.4.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	LA.5.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	LA.6.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	LA.7.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	LA.8.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements in multiple texts (e.g., setting, characters, problems).	LA.910.1.7.7 compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 2						
Literary Analysis						
Standard 1						
The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
LA.3.2.1.2 identify and explain the elements of story structure, including character/character development, setting, plot, and problem/resolution in a variety of fiction.	LA.4.2.1.2 identify and explain the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, problem/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.	LA.5.2.1.2 locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, problem/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.	LA.6.2.1.2 locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, conflict/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.	LA.7.2.1.2 locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	LA.8.2.1.2 locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 2							Literary Analysis
Standard 1							The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.
The student will:							
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10	
						LA.910.2.1.5 analyze and develop an interpretation of a literary work by describing an author’s use of literary elements (e.g., theme, point of view, characterization, setting, plot), and explain and analyze different elements of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, allusion, imagery).	

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 2 Literary Analysis						
Standard 1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
<p>LA.3.2.1.7 identify and explain an author’s use of descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language (e.g., personification, similes, metaphors, symbolism), and examine how it is used to describe people, feelings, and objects.</p>	<p>LA.4.2.1.7 identify and explain an author’s use of descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language (e.g., personification, similes, metaphors, symbolism), and examine how it is used to describe people, feelings, and objects.</p>	<p>LA.5.2.1.7 identify and explain an author’s use of descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language (e.g., personification, similes, metaphors, symbolism), and examine how it is used to describe people, feelings, and objects.</p>	<p>LA.6.2.1.7 locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice sets the author’s tone and advances the work’s theme.</p>	<p>LA.7.2.1.7 locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.</p>	<p>LA.8.2.1.7 locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.</p>	<p>LA.910.2.1.7 analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author’s use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts.</p>

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 2 Literary Analysis						
Standard 2 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of nonfiction, informational, and expository texts to demonstrate an understanding of the information presented.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
LA.3.2.2.1 identify and explain the purpose of text features (e.g., table of contents, glossary, headings, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations).	LA.4.2.2.1 locate, explain, and use information from text features (e.g., table of contents, glossary, headings, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations).	LA.5.2.2.1 locate, explain, and use information from text features (e.g., table of contents, glossary, index, transition words/phrases, headings, subheadings, charts, graphs, illustrations).	LA.6.2.2.1 locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	LA.7.2.2.1 locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	LA.8.2.2.1 locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	LA.910.2.2.1 analyze and evaluate information from text features (e.g., transitional devices, table of contents, glossary, index, bold or italicized text, headings, charts and graphs, illustrations, subheadings).

Note: Beginning spring 2013, this benchmark will be reported in Reporting Category 4.

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 6 Information and Media Literacy						
Standard 1 The student comprehends the wide array of informational text that is part of our day to day experiences.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
<p>LA.3.6.1.1 read informational text (e.g., graphs, charts, manuals) and organize information for different purposes, including but not limited to being informed, following multi-step directions, making a report, conducting interviews, preparing to take a test, and performing a task.</p>	<p>LA.4.6.1.1 read informational text and text features (e.g., format, graphics, legends, illustrations, diagrams) to organize information for different purposes (e.g., being informed, following multi-step directions, creating a report, conducting interviews, preparing to take a test, performing a task).</p>	<p>LA.5.6.1.1 read and interpret informational text and organize the information (e.g., use outlines, timelines, and graphic organizers) from multiple sources for a variety of purposes (e.g., multi-step directions, problem solving, performing a task, supporting opinions, predictions, and conclusions).</p>	<p>LA.6.6.1.1 explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.</p>	<p>LA.7.6.1.1 explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.</p>	<p>LA.8.6.1.1 explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.</p>	<p>LA.910.6.1.1 explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader’s understanding.</p>

APPENDIX B: READING CONTENT ASSESSED BY THE FCAT 2.0

Strand 6 Information and Media Literacy						
Standard 2 The student uses a systematic process for the collection, processing, and presentation of information.						
The student will:						
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grades 9–10
		<p>LA.5.6.2.2 read and record information systematically, evaluating the validity and reliability of information in text by examining several sources of information.</p>	<p>LA.6.6.2.2 collect, evaluate and summarize information using a variety of techniques from multiple sources (e.g., encyclopedias, websites, experts) that includes paraphrasing to convey ideas and details from the source, main idea(s) and relevant details.</p> <p>Assessed with LA.5.6.2.2.</p>	<p>LA.7.6.2.2 assess, organize, and check the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p>	<p>LA.8.6.2.2 assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p>	<p>LA.910.6.2.2 organize, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information from multiple sources (including primary and secondary sources) to draw conclusions using a variety of techniques, and correctly use standardized citations.</p>

APPENDIX C: FCAT 2.0 READING REPORTING CATEGORIES AND CONTENT FOCUS CHART

FCAT 2.0 Reading Benchmarks Grades 6–8			
Reporting Category 1: Vocabulary			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.3	The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context Clues
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.3		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.3		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.7	The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. <i>Also assesses LA.6.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Greek and Latin mythology (e.g., mercurial, Achilles’ heel) and identify frequently used words from other languages (e.g., laissez faire, croissant).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Word Structure (e.g., affixes, root words) • Analyze Words/Phrases Derived from Latin, Greek, or Other Languages
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.7	The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. <i>Also assesses LA.7.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i>	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.7	The student will identify and understand the meaning of conceptually advanced prefixes, suffixes, and root words. <i>Also assesses LA.8.1.6.11 The student will identify the meaning of words and phrases derived from Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin mythology.</i>	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.8	The student will identify advanced word/phrase relationships and their meanings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Words/Phrases • Word Relationships
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.8		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.8		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.6.9	The student will determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings in context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Meanings
Grade 7	LA.7.1.6.9		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.6.9		

FCAT 2.0 READING REPORTING CATEGORIES AND CONTENT FOCUS CHART

Reporting Category 2: Reading Application			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, or explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author’s Purpose (within/across texts) • Author’s Perspective (within/across texts) • Author’s Bias (within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author’s purpose (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain, explain) and perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.2	The student will analyze the author’s purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level text through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Idea (stated or implied) • Summary Statement • Relevant Details • Conclusions/Inferences • Predictions
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.3	The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.	
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.4	The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause and Effect
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.4		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.4		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.5	The student will analyze a variety of text structures (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, lists) and text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Structures/Organizational Patterns (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, argument/support, definition/explanation, question/answer, listing/description)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.5		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.5		
Grade 6	LA.6.1.7.7	The student will compare and contrast elements in multiple texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare (similarities within/across texts) • Contrast (differences within/across texts)
Grade 7	LA.7.1.7.7		
Grade 8	LA.8.1.7.7		

FCAT 2.0 READING REPORTING CATEGORIES AND CONTENT FOCUS CHART

Reporting Category 3: Literary Analysis—Fiction/Nonfiction			Content Focus
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, rising/falling action, conflict/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot Development • Setting • Character Development • Character Point of View • Theme • Conflict (e.g., internal or external) • Resolution
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.2	The student will locate and analyze elements of characterization, setting, and plot, including rising action, conflict, resolution, theme, and other literary elements as appropriate in a variety of fiction.	
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.2		
Grade 6	LA.6.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice sets the author’s tone and advances the work’s theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive Language (e.g., mood, imagery) • Figurative Language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification)
Grade 7	LA.7.2.1.7	The student will locate and analyze an author’s use of allusions and descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language in a variety of literary text, identifying how word choice is used to appeal to the reader’s senses and emotions, providing evidence from text to support the analysis.	
Grade 8	LA.8.2.1.7		

FCAT 2.0 READING REPORTING CATEGORIES AND CONTENT FOCUS CHART

Reporting Category 4: Informational Text/Research Process			Content Focus
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.2.2.1 LA.7.2.2.1 LA.8.2.2.1	The student will locate, use, and analyze specific information from organizational text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, captions, bold print, italics, glossaries, indices, key/guide words).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, italicized text, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.6.1.1 LA.7.6.1.1 LA.9.6.1.1	The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, graphs) aid the reader's understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Features (e.g., headings, subheadings, titles, subtitles, sections, captions, graphs, italicized text, charts, tables, illustrations, maps, diagrams, text boxes)
Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8	LA.6.6.2.2 LA.7.6.2.2 LA.8.6.2.2	<p>The student will collect, evaluate and summarize information using a variety of techniques from multiple sources (e.g., encyclopedias, websites, experts) that includes paraphrasing to convey ideas and details from the source, main idea(s) and relevant details.</p> <p><i>Assessed with LA.5.6.2.2 The student will read and record information systematically, evaluating the validity and reliability of information in text by examining several sources of information.</i></p> <p>The student will assess, organize, and check the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>The student will assess, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information in text, using a variety of techniques by examining several sources of information, including both primary and secondary sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize Information (within/across texts) Analyze and Evaluate Information (within/ across texts) Determine the Validity and Reliability of Information (within/across texts)

APPENDIX D

FCAT 2.0 READING GLOSSARY

The following glossary is a reference list provided for item writers and is not intended to comprise a comprehensive vocabulary list for students. The terms defined in this glossary pertain to the NGSSS in reading and language arts for Grades 3–10 and the content assessed on FCAT 2.0 Reading.

Affix—A word part that cannot stand alone (morpheme) and that changes the meaning or function of a base word to which it is attached, such as the prefix *ad-* and the suffix *-ing* in *adjoining*.

Alliteration—The repetition of the same sound, usually of a consonant, at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other or at short intervals. Example: The repetition of *f* and *g* in *fields ever fresh, groves ever green*.

Allusion—A reference to a statement, well-known person, place, or event from literature, history, mythology, politics, sports, science, or the arts. Allusions usually come from a body of information that the author presumes the reader will know.

Analyze—To analyze a literary work, parts are examined to understand how they work together to create meaning as a whole. Examples of analysis are to compare, to contrast, to deduce, or to categorize.

Antagonist—A principal character or force in opposition to a protagonist, or main character. The antagonist is usually another character but sometimes can be a force of nature, a set of circumstances, some aspect of society, or a force within the protagonist. The antagonist is often, but not always, the villain in a literary work.

Antonym—A word having a meaning opposite to that of another word.

Argument/support—A text structure/organizational pattern that uses reason to try to lead a reader to think or act in a certain way. Argument begins with a statement of an idea or opinion, which is then supported with facts and logical reasoning to achieve its purpose. Argument may be found in a single text or paired texts in which opposing views are expressed.

Author's bias—A personal judgment either for or against a particular person, position, or thing. Bias can be favorable or unfavorable and can be used to sway an audience. An important skill of critical reading is the ability to detect an author's bias and prejudice.

Author's perspective—The viewpoint that an author brings to a piece of writing. Sometimes the author's perspective is recognizable through the tone of a piece.

Author’s purpose—An author’s purpose is his or her reason for creating a particular work. The purpose may be to entertain, to explain or to inform, to express an opinion, or to persuade readers to do or believe something. An author may have more than one purpose for writing, but usually one is the most important.

Base word—A complete word that can stand alone. Other words or word parts (affixes) can be added to base words to form new words (e.g., *teach* in *reteach* or *teaching*).

Cause and effect—Two events are related as cause and effect when one event brings about the other. The following statement shows a cause-and-effect relationship: *Because of my broken arm, the doctor said I couldn’t play baseball.* Cause and effect is also a text structure/organizational pattern that presents relationships between ideas in a text. In this method of development, the writer analyzes the reason(s) for an action, event, or decision, or analyzes resulting consequences to support a point.

Character development—The method(s) a writer uses to create and develop characters. To develop a character, (a) a writer may describe a character’s physical appearance; (b) the speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions of a character may be used to reveal the character’s nature; (c) the speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions of other characters may be used to develop a character; or (d) the narrator may make direct comments about a character.

Character point of view—An important aspect within character development is character point of view. The viewpoint or voice of a character is developed by a writer and enables readers to better understand the events of a text through a character’s thoughts, feelings, beliefs, motives, or actions.

Chart—A type of graphic aid that presents information, shows a process, or makes comparisons, usually in rows and columns.

Chronological order—The order in which events happen in time (sequence of events). A writer may use clue words or signal words to alert the reader to these events, such as *first*, *next*, *then*, *finally*, etc. Chronological order (sequence) is also a text structure/organizational pattern in which ideas are grouped on the basis of order or time.

Compare/contrast—Writing that examines the similarities and differences between two or more subjects. The writer uses transitions to signal similarities and differences, such as *like*, *likewise*, *in contrast*, *similarly*, and *in the same way*. As a text structure/organizational pattern, compare/contrast writing may end with a conclusion that explains a decision or provides new understanding of the subjects.

Comparison—The process of pointing out what two or more things have in common.

Conflict—A struggle or clash between opposing characters, forces, or emotions that moves the plot forward in literary text. Almost every story has a main conflict (or problem)—a conflict that is the story’s focus.

Consumer documents—Printed materials that accompany products and services. They are intended for the buyers or users of the products or services and usually provide information about use, care, operation, or assembly. Some common consumer documents are applications, contracts, warranties, manuals, instructions, package inserts, labels, brochures, and schedules.

Context clues—Unfamiliar words are often surrounded by words or phrases called context clues that help readers understand their meanings. A context clue may be a definition, a synonym, an example, a comparison or a contrast, or any other expression that enables readers to infer the word’s meaning. When readers meet unfamiliar words, context clues narrow the possible word choices, thereby making word identification more accurate.

Contrast—To emphasize the dissimilarities and differences of things, qualities, events, or problems.

Definition/explanation—An organizational pattern that is devoted to defining a complex term or idea. The concept is initially defined and then further expanded with examples, explanations, and restatements.

Descriptive language—Language intended to create a mood, person, place, thing, event, emotion, or experience. Descriptive language uses images that appeal to the reader’s senses, helping the reader to imagine how a subject looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels. Descriptive language is used in fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. Some examples of descriptive language include imagery, alliteration, and mood.

Diction—A writer’s or speaker’s choice of words and way of arranging the words in sentences. Diction can be broadly characterized as formal or informal. It can also be described as technical or common, abstract or concrete, and literal or figurative. For example, a writer for *Scientific American* would use a more formal, more technical, and possibly more abstract diction than a writer for the science section of a local newspaper.

Drawing conclusions—A special kind of inference that involves not reading between the lines but reading beyond the lines. The reader combines what he or she already knows with information from the text. Readers can draw a conclusion from stated facts or facts they infer and then combine all the facts to support their conclusion.

Evaluate—To form opinions about what is read. Through this process readers may develop their own ideas about characters and events.

Excerpt—A passage or segment taken from a text. The length of the excerpt may be a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire chapter.

Exposition—In fiction, the structure of the plot normally begins with exposition. In the early part of the story, the exposition sets the tone, establishes the setting, introduces the characters, and gives the reader important background information.

External conflict—In an external conflict, a character struggles against an outside force, which may be another character, society as a whole, or something in nature.

Fact—Knowledge or information that can be verified.

Falling action—In the plot of a story, falling action is the action that occurs after the climax. During the falling action, conflicts are resolved and mysteries are solved.

Fiction—Imaginative works of prose, primarily the novel and the short story. Although fiction may draw on actual events and real people, it springs mainly from the imagination of the writer. The purpose is to entertain as well as enlighten the reader.

Figurative language—Language that involves the use of words and/or phrases that describe one thing in terms of another and that is not meant to be understood on a literal level. Figurative language always involves some sort of imaginative comparison between seemingly unlike things. The most common are simile (*My heart is like a singing bird*), metaphor (*My soul is an enchanted boat*), and personification (*The wind stood up and gave a shout*).

Flashback—An interruption in the action of a plot to tell what happened at an earlier time. A flashback breaks the usual movement of the narrative by going back in time. Flashback usually gives background information that helps the reader understand the present situation.

Foreshadowing—A writer’s use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the plot. Foreshadowing creates suspense and prepares the reader for what is to come.

Functional materials—A form of informational nonfiction (e.g., websites, how-to articles, brochures, fliers) encountered in real-world situations. Functional materials also include consumer documents and workplace documents.

Hyperbole—A figure of speech in which a statement is exaggerated for emphasis or for humorous effect. Writers often use hyperbole to intensify a description or to emphasize the essential nature of something. For example, if a writer says that a limousine is a mile long, he/she is using hyperbole.

Imagery—Language that appeals to the senses. It is used in all types of writing, but especially in poetry. Imagery consists of descriptive words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for the reader. Imagery usually appeals to one or more of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—to help the reader imagine exactly what is being described.

Inference—The act or process of deriving logical conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true; the conclusions drawn from this process.

Informational nonfiction—Writing that provides factual information and that often explains ideas or teaches processes. See examples given in the table on page 4.

Internal conflict—A struggle between opposing needs, desires, or emotions within a single character. Many literary works, especially longer ones, contain both internal and external conflicts, and an external conflict often leads to internal problems.

Interpret—To translate, analyze, or give examples drawn from a text. This process involves making an inference beyond the literal meaning of a text in order to determine meaning.

Irony—A contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens. Irony involves the tension that arises from the discrepancy, either between what one says and what one means (verbal irony), between what a character believes and what a reader knows (dramatic irony), or between what occurs and what one expects to occur (situational irony). Exaggeration, sarcasm, and understatement are techniques writers use to express irony.

Listing/description—In this organizational pattern, pieces of information (facts, reasons, ideas, examples, features, steps, characteristics, etc.) are listed. The order of the facts may reflect the order of importance or simply another logical order.

Literary device—A literary technique used to achieve a particular effect, such as descriptive language and figurative language.

Literary elements—Refers to the particular elements common to all literary and narrative forms. Some examples of literary elements are theme, setting, conflict, characters, plot, and point of view.

Literary nonfiction—Like fiction, except that the characters, setting, and plot are real rather than imaginary. Its purpose is usually to entertain or express opinions or feelings. Literary nonfiction can include autobiographies, biographies, and essays. See examples given in the table on page 4.

Main idea (stated/implied)—The main idea is the most important idea expressed in a piece of writing. It may be the central idea of an entire work or a thought expressed in the topic sentence of a paragraph. The implied main idea is the main idea of a passage or an article that is not directly stated but formed from what is suggested by an author from the supporting details.

Metaphor—A comparison of two things that have some quality in common. Unlike a simile, a metaphor does not contain a word such as *like*, *as*, *than*, or *resembles*. Instead, it states that one thing actually is something else.

Mood—The feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for the reader. The use of connotation, details, imagery, figurative language, foreshadowing, setting, and rhythm can help establish mood.

Moral—A lesson taught in a literary work, such as a fable. For example, the moral *Do not count your chickens before they hatch* teaches that one should not count on one's fortunes or blessings until they appear. A moral of a literary work should not be confused with a theme.

Multiple meanings—The particular meaning of a word that is dependent upon how it is used in a sentence.

Myth—A traditional story, usually of unknown authorship, that deals with basic questions about the universe. Heroes and gods often figure prominently in myths, which may attempt to explain such things as the origin of the world, mysteries of nature, or social customs.

Nonfiction—Writing that tells about real people, places, and events. Unlike fiction, nonfiction is mainly written to convey factual information, although writers of nonfiction shape information in accordance with their own purposes and attitudes. Nonfiction can be a good source of information, but readers frequently have to examine it carefully in order to detect biases, notice gaps in the information provided, and identify errors in logic. Nonfiction includes a diverse range of writing and can be informational or literary in nature. Some examples of nonfiction are newspaper articles, movie reviews, speeches, true-life adventure stories, advertising, and more.

Onomatopoeia—The use of words whose sounds suggest their meanings (e.g., *meow*, *buzz*, *splash*).

Organizational patterns—Text structures found in all types of nonfiction (and even some fiction); the building blocks that serve every writing purpose—informative, expository, argumentative, or persuasive. Common types of organizational patterns include chronological order (sequence of events), compare/contrast, and cause and effect.

Paraphrasing—Helps readers to clarify meaning by restating information in their own words.

Personification—A figure of speech in which a nonhuman thing or quality is written about as if it were human. In the phrase *the blue stars shiver*, human attributes are given to stars. *Rocks lie on their backs* and *the rock has an open wound* are other examples.

Perspective—A position from which something is considered or evaluated; standpoint.

Plot/plot development—The action or sequence of events in a story. Plot is usually a series of related incidents that builds and grows as the story develops. There are five basic elements in a plot line: (a) exposition; (b) rising action; (c) climax; (d) falling action; and (e) resolution or denouement.

Point of view—The vantage point from which a writer tells a story. The three main points of view in literary texts are omniscient, third-person limited, and first person.

Predicting—A reading strategy that involves gathering and using text clues to make a reasonable guess about what will happen next in a story.

Prefix—A word part, such as *dis-* in *disbelieve*, attached to the front of a root word to produce a derivative word or inflected form.

Primary source—Materials written by people who were present at events, either as participants or as observers. Letters, diaries, autobiographies, speeches, and photographs are examples of primary sources.

Problem/solution—A text structure in which the main ideas are organized into two parts: a problem and a subsequent solution that responds to the problem, or a question and an answer that responds to the question.

Protagonist—The main character in fiction or drama. The protagonist is the character upon whom the reader focuses attention, the person who sets the plot in motion. Most protagonists are rounded, dynamic characters who change in some important way by the end of the story, novel, or play. The protagonist is often, but not always, the hero in a literary work.

Pun—Play on the multiple meanings of a word or on two words that sound alike but have different meanings. Example: *I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.*

Question/answer—An organizational pattern that involves the author posing questions about a particular subject or topic, then providing the reader with key information and support that answers those questions.

Relevant details—A fact revealed by an author or speaker that supports an attitude or tone in a piece of poetry or prose. In informational nonfiction, relevant details provide information that supports the author’s main point.

Resolution (or denouement)—The portion of a play or story where the central problem is solved. The resolution comes after the climax and falling action and is intended to bring the story to a satisfactory end. An insight or a change as a result of the conflict is shown in the resolution.

Rising action—The events in a story that move the plot forward. Rising action involves conflicts and complications and builds toward the climax of the story.

Root word—In the English language, many roots are derived from ancient Greek and Latin languages. A root is a word part that cannot stand by itself and must be combined with other word parts, such as prefixes and suffixes, in order to convey core meaning. Knowing the meaning of a word’s root can help the reader determine the word’s meaning.

Sarcasm—A form of verbal irony, usually harsh, that is often used as an insult.

Satire—Type of writing that ridicules human weakness, vice, or folly in order to bring about social reform. Satires often try to persuade the reader to do or believe something by showing the opposite view as absurd or even as vicious and inhumane. One of the favorite techniques of the satirists is exaggeration, overstating something to make it look worse than it is. For example, George Orwell’s novel *Animal Farm* uses barnyard animals to mock the way people abuse political power.

Secondary source—Records of events that were created some time after the events occurred; the writers were not directly involved or were not present when the events took place. Encyclopedias, textbooks, biographies, most newspaper and magazine articles, and books and articles that interpret or review research are examples.

Setting—The time and place of the action in a story, play, or poem. Elements of setting may include geographic location, historical period (past, present, or future), season of the year, time of day, and the beliefs, customs, and standards of a society. Setting can function in several ways in a text: it can provide atmosphere, create conflict, or reveal character.

Shades of meaning—Shades of meaning are small, subtle differences in meaning between similar words and phrases. Example: *glance*, *glare*, and *peek* all refer to the concept of looking but have a different meaning. Context clues help resolve which shade of meaning is intended.

Simile—A comparison of two things that have some quality in common. In a simile, the comparison is conveyed by means of the word *like* or *as* (e.g., *She stood in front of the altar, shaking like a freshly caught trout.* —Maya Angelou).

Suffix—A word part that is added to the end of a root word, serving to form a new word or functioning as an inflectional ending, such as *-ness* in gentleness, *-ing* in walking, or *-s* in sits.

Summary statement—A general statement that presents the main points or facts in condensed form, omitting unimportant details and information.

Symbolism—The use of something concrete (e.g., an object, a setting, an event, an animal, or a person) that functions in a text to represent something more than itself. A symbol must be something tangible or visible, while the idea it symbolizes must be something abstract or universal. For example, a dark forest has often been used as a symbol of being lost and confused in life. In James Hurst’s “The Scarlet Ibis,” the fragile ibis functions as a symbol of the frail little boy and his unusual nature.

Synonym—A word that has the same or almost the same meaning as another word (e.g., *rob/steal*, *parcel/package*, *occasionally/sometimes*).

Synthesize—A systematic process that involves identifying the relationships among two or more ideas. When synthesizing, the reader combines or puts together information from two or more places or sources. The reader might also read information under pictures and on maps and charts, combining information from all areas to draw conclusions. At times, the reader may be asked to look at how ideas or information in one text is presented similarly to or differently from that found in another text.

Table—A type of graphic aid that presents a group of facts in rows and columns and demonstrates how the facts interrelate.

Text box—A distinct section of a page that amplifies or highlights information found in the main text and often provides additional information.

Text features—Design elements that include the organizational structure of a text and help make the key ideas and supporting information understandable. Text features include headings, text boxes, subheadings, sections, titles, subtitles, italic type, bulleted or numbered lists, and graphic aids, such as charts, tables, timelines, illustrations, and photographs.

Text structure—The temporal and spatial arrangement of elements in a written, oral, or visual text. For example, the text structure of a narrative film might involve moving back and forth among different time periods in recounting events, or the text structure of an argumentative essay might involve a linear arrangement of definitions, arguments, evidence, counterarguments, and rebuttal. Common forms of text structure or organizational patterns found in written texts include compare/contrast, cause/effect, chronological order, and argument/support.

Theme—An underlying message about life or human nature that the author wants the reader to understand and that may give readers insight into the author’s view of the world. A theme is a complex and original revelation about life that is usually unstated, yet it is vital. A theme is not the same as a moral, which is a rule of conduct, nor should it be reduced to a familiar saying or cliché, such as *Crime doesn’t pay*. For example, the theme of “The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst might be expressed as *Pride, love, and cruelty are often intermingled in human relationships*.

Tone—An expression of a writer’s attitude toward a subject. Unlike mood, which is intended to shape the reader’s emotional response, tone reflects the feelings of the writer. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, playful, ironic, bitter, or objective.

Topic—The general category or class of ideas, often stated in a word or phrase, to which the ideas of a text as a whole belong (e.g., subject matter or central idea of a conversation, discussion, or a piece of writing).

Trait—A distinguishing feature, as of a character in a story.

Transition words/phrases/expressions—Words and phrases that indicate relationships between ideas in a paragraph or composition.

Validity/reliability—A systematic process that involves evaluating whether or not information in a text is valid (correct or sound) and reliable (dependable). The reader engages in this process by checking specific information found in a text for its accuracy and dependability, evaluating and applying that information, and verifying the best supporting evidence based on correct and logical conclusions.

Word relationships—Analyses of word pairs used in a text that are connected by either a similar or opposite meaning.

Workplace document—Materials that are produced or used within a work setting, usually to aid in the functioning of the workplace. They include job applications, office memos, training manuals, job descriptions, and sales reports.

APPENDIX F FCAT 2.0 READING TEST DESIGN SUMMARY

Number of Items

The data in this table give ranges for the approximate number of multiple-choice items on FCAT 2.0 Reading. These ranges include both operational and field-test items.

Grade	FCAT 2.0 Reading
3	50–55
4	50–55
5	50–55
6	50–55
7	50–55
8	50–55
9	50–55
10	50–55
Retake	50–55

Reporting Categories for Reading Items

FCAT 2.0 Reading is based on the benchmarks found in the Reading and Literature strands of the Language Arts NGSSS. The four reading reporting categories used for FCAT 2.0 design, scoring, and reporting are Vocabulary, Reading Application, Literary Analysis—Fiction/Nonfiction, and Informational Text/Research Process.

The table below indicates the relative emphasis on each reporting category by providing the percentage of raw score points available in each category assessed on the FCAT 2.0 at different grade levels. As students progress through the grades, more emphasis is placed on higher-level thinking skills in the Informational Text/Research Process reporting category. In each category, the percent may vary as much as $\pm 5\%$.

FCAT 2.0 Reading Reporting Category Percentages				
Grades	Vocabulary	Reading Application	Literary Analysis Fiction/Nonfiction	Informational Text/Research Process
3–5	20%	30%	30%	20%
6–7	20%	30%	30%	20%
8	20%	25%	25%	30%
9–10	20%	25%	25%	30%

Duration of Test

The table below displays the number of minutes allowed for regular test takers for each NGSSS test. All tests are administered in two sessions with the exception of the Reading Retake, which must be taken in one day.

Grade	FCAT 2.0 Reading (in minutes)
3	140
4	140
5	140
6	140
7	140
8	140
9	140
10	140

FCAT 2.0 Reading Texts

Proposed reading selections and articles are reviewed by Florida educators for quality and grade-level appropriateness. A committee of Florida citizens and educators conducts a review of all reading selections and articles to ensure they are free of any bias to a particular group of students or of cultural insensitivity.

The range of the number of words per selection allows a variety of texts, such as poetry, plays, and literary and informational pieces, to be included in the test.

Length of FCAT 2.0 Reading Texts

Grade	Range of Number of Words per Text	Average Number of Words per Text
3	100–700	500
4	100–900	500
5	200–1000	600
6	200–1100	700
7	300–1100	700
8	300–1200	700
9	300–1400	900
10	300–1500	1000

APPENDIX G
FCAT 2.0 READING TEXTS
GRADES 6, 7, AND 8

Grade 6

Ben’s HarmonicaG–2
 New KidG–4
 Welcome to Marksdale State ParkG–7

Grade 7

Poppa and the Spruce TreeG–8
 Clown AlleyG–10
 Volunteer DayG–12

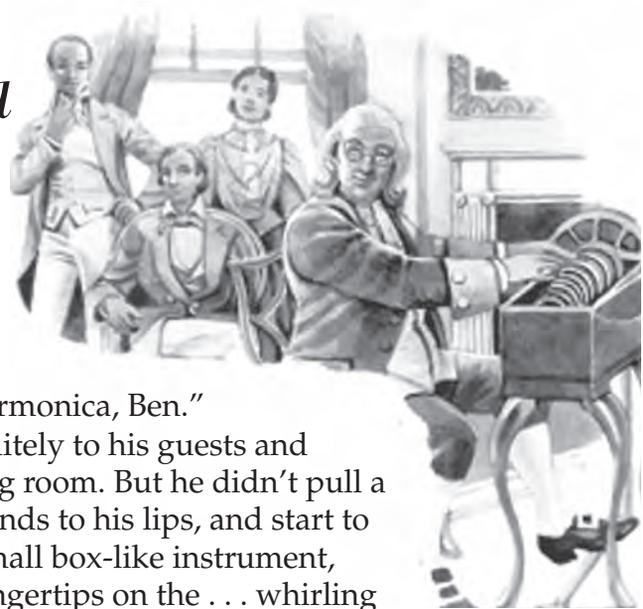
Grade 8

Shackleton’s Epic VoyageG–14
 Copper Kettle SweetheartG–17
 The Last Frontier of TexasG–19
 The EarthmoversG–23
 Schaus Swallowtail/Migration of the Monarch ButterflyG–25

Ben's Harmonica

by Barbara C. Wessinger

Illustration by Barbara Kiwak



“GIVE US A TUNE on your harmonica, Ben.” Ben Franklin nodded politely to his guests and sauntered across his drawing room. But he didn’t pull a mouth organ from his pocket, cup his hands to his lips, and start to blow a tune. Instead, he sat down at a small box-like instrument, pumped its foot pedal, and placed his fingertips on the . . . whirling glass bowls!

Although we know him best as a statesman and scientist, Ben Franklin was also the first American to invent an important musical instrument—the glass harmonica, or *armonica* as Franklin called it. The glass harmonica consisted of a series of graded¹ glass bowls arranged one inside another along the length of a horizontal spindle. Pumping the foot pedal turned the spindle, rotating the bowls through a trough of water inside the instrument. The player applied his or her fingers to the wet rims of the bowls, producing soft, clear tones similar to the sounds you get when you run your finger around the wet rim of a water goblet.²

Ben got the idea for the glass harmonica after hearing a talented musician in London perform an entire concert on crystal glasses. Delighted by the dulcet³ tones, Franklin began thinking of a better way to produce music on glass, something easier to play and transport than individual goblets with varying amounts of water inside. He built the first model of the armonica in 1761 and gradually perfected the instrument. To get tones ranging over three octaves,⁴ Ben used thirty-seven glass basins in twenty-three assorted sizes; the thickness of the glass determined the variations in tone for same-sized bowls.

In 1764 a young musician, Stephen Forrage, gave the first glass harmonica concert in Philadelphia, and the audience is said to have admired the “sweetness and delicacy of tone” of the new instrument. For a while the glass harmonica became quite popular in both the United States and Europe. When an English musician, Marriane Davies, introduced it in Vienna in 1773, the seventeen-year-old Mozart was so intrigued⁵ that he wrote a composition for the armonica, with parts for flute, oboe, viola, and cello.

¹ **graded:** put in order by size

² **goblet:** a glass

³ **dulcet:** sweet-sounding

⁴ **octaves:** several series of eight musical tones

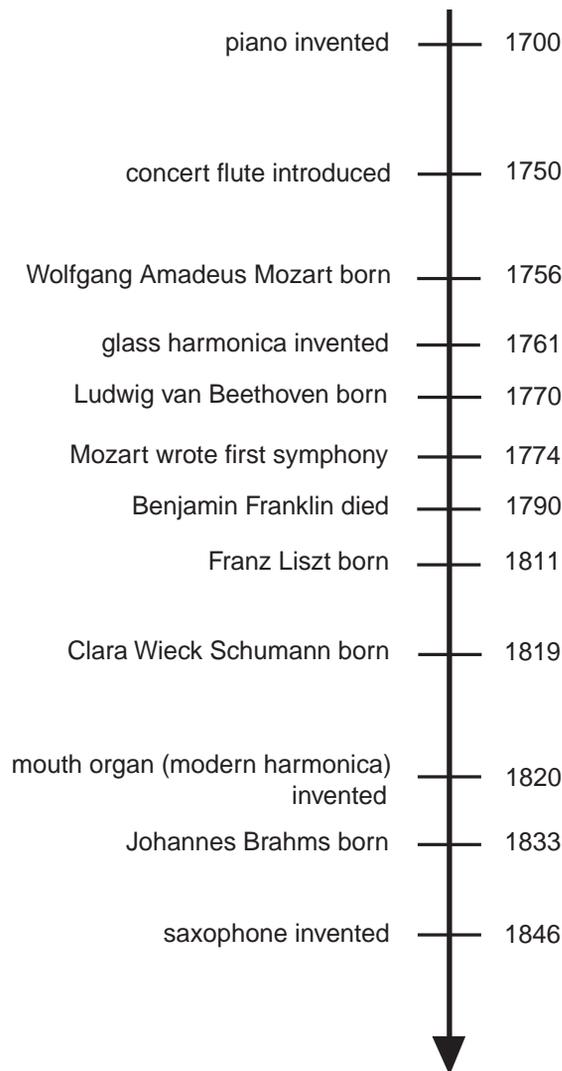
⁵ **intrigued:** interested or curious

Although the delicate tones of the glass harmonica were perfect for drawing-room musicales⁶ and garden party concerts, the instrument gradually faded from fashion as concert halls grew larger: its soft tones were practically impossible to hear in large auditoriums and theaters, especially over the booming brass of orchestras.



⁶ **musicales:** small musical programs

Time Line of Composers and Musical Events from 1700 to 1850



"Ben's Harmonica." Reprinted by permission of *Cricket* magazine, July 1995, Vol. 22, No. 11, © 1995 by Barbara C. Wessinger. Illustration by Barbara Kiwak. Photograph of Glass Harmonica courtesy of the Historical and Interpretive Collections of The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA.



New Kid

by Dori Hillestad Butler

Kayla hated being the new kid. She hated being stared at. The boy who sat across from her had been staring at her since she sat down.

Kayla was about to tell him to take a picture, it lasts longer, when suddenly he said, “Nice shirt.”

Kayla glanced at her AAU Junior Olympics shirt.

“I’ve got one just like it at home,” the boy said.

“You were at the Junior Olympics?” Kayla asked. What were the odds of her running into another Junior Olympics competitor at her new school?

“Yup. Basketball,” he said proudly. “What’s your sport?”

“Table tennis,” Kayla replied.

“Oh.” He rolled his eyes.

Kayla had seen that reaction before. She crossed her arms. “I suppose you think table tennis isn’t a *real* sport,” she said.

“Well, you have to admit table tennis just isn’t as physical as basketball.” Kayla cringed¹ when he said table tennis. “It’s a rec room game,” he went on. “Like pool. Or checkers.”

“Maybe you and I should play a match sometime,” she said.

¹ **cringed**: made a face or flinched

He smiled as though this was the most ridiculous thing he'd ever heard. "You're challenging *me*?" he asked. He turned to the boy who sat behind him.

That boy raised his eyebrows as if Kayla were foolish to challenge the other boy to *anything*.

Kayla ignored him. "Are you up to a challenge?" she asked the first boy.

"Name the time and place," he said.

"My house. After school today," Kayla said.

"You got it," he said.

Later Kayla found out the boy's name was Michael Savitch. She also found out Michael didn't just play basketball. He played practically everything.

"Do you really think you can beat him?" asked a girl named Holly.

"Maybe," Kayla said.

"Could we watch?" asked Holly's friend Mindy.

"Sure," Kayla said.

Holly and Mindy invited Kayla to eat lunch with them. They introduced her to Jessica. Jessica introduced her to Paula. Paula introduced her to Sara. And each time, Kayla was introduced as "the girl who's going to beat Michael Savitch at table tennis."

"Wow!" Each girl looked at Kayla with admiration.

Was Michael really *that* good? Kayla wondered. What if she made a fool of herself? What if Michael actually beat her? Would Holly, Mindy, Jessica, Paula, and Sara still want to be her friends?

Kayla's mom looked surprised when Kayla came home with nine people that day. "We're going to play some table tennis," Kayla said.

Kayla grabbed a bag of apples from the fridge and headed down to the basement. The other kids clattered down the stairs behind her.

"We'll have to move some boxes," Kayla said. "We're not quite moved in yet."

"No problem," Michael said. He and the boys picked up the boxes at one end of the table and set them around the corner. Kayla and the girls moved the boxes from the other end of the table.

The boys stopped when they had cleared a six-foot area behind the table. "You need to clear all the way to the wall," Kayla said.

"What for?" one of the boys asked. "Are we here for table tennis or cheap labor?"

"*Table tennis*," Kayla said through gritted teeth. "And I need lots of room to play."

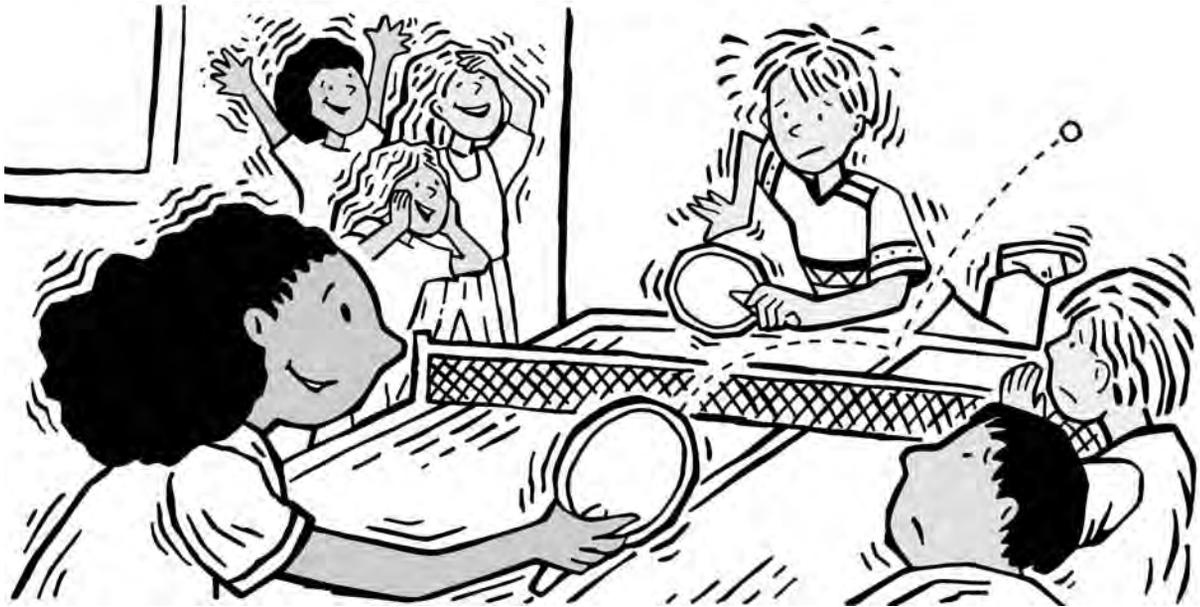
"OOOOO," said the boys. But they grudgingly moved the rest of the boxes. Kayla crawled under the table and opened the box labeled table tennis supplies.

When everything was set up, Michael asked, "Could we warm up a little?"

"Sure," Kayla said.

The girls lined up along one side of the table. The boys lined up along the other. The only sound in the room was the *plink plunk* of the ball as it bounced from court to court.

If Michael had any tricks, he didn't show them during their easy volleys. Kayla didn't show hers either.



“You ready to play?” Kayla asked.

Michael nodded. He won the serve, and the game began. Michael wasn’t bad. But Kayla was better.

Michael’s main problem was not knowing when to go for the kill shot. He also got confused when Kayla gave him a loop shot.

Kayla had Michael running all over his court. The kids who were watching the game had to move away from the table so they wouldn’t get plowed over. Kayla won the first game 21 to 7. The girls cheered and the boys groaned.

“That’s O.K.,” Michael panted. His damp hair was plastered to his forehead. “I’m warmed up now.”

Sure you are, Kayla thought to herself. She hadn’t even shown him her sidespin yet.

The second game was over even faster than the first. Kayla won that one 21 to 5. The girls jumped up and down, clapping. “She won!” Holly cried. “She beat Michael Savitch!” Mindy yelled.

Kayla bounced the ball on the table a few times and looked over at Michael. “Still think table tennis isn’t a physical game?” she asked.

Michael wiped his face with the bottom of his shirt. He didn’t say anything.

“Should we try another nonphysical game?” Kayla asked. “Maybe eightball?”

Michael eyed the pool table wearily. “Give me a few days to practice up first,” he said.

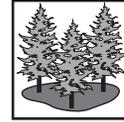
Kayla smiled. She’d made her point. Good thing, too. She was awful at pool.

“New Kid” by Dori Hillestad Butler. Used with permission of the author.



Welcome to Marksdale State Park

Where fun, fitness, and education come together



[Find a State Park](#) [Trail Map/Directions](#) [Camping/Lodging](#) [Fees/Schedules](#) [Nature Information](#)

Don't miss our new sizzling summer classes available May 23–Aug 5!!

- **Swimming lessons:** Ages 4–adult. Cost: \$5 per class or \$15 for one month.
- **Hiking:** Have a state park ranger hike through our trails with you and teach you about the park's wildlife and plants. We have a number of endangered plants and animals that our park helps protect. Click [here](#) to learn more today!
- **Soccer:** Our youth soccer program is unusual in that it is non-competitive. Different teams are formed every day. The focus is on individuals learning new skills and learning to work as a team, not on one team winning it all.
- **Boating:** These classes are for adults only. See director for fees and schedule. Fishing allowed with permit only.
- **Bicycling:** Our trails are built to accommodate bicyclists. Signs are posted for self-guided tours of our park. Group cycling is also available with a park guide. Trails range from easy to challenging.

A Message from the Director:

Hiking trails! Sport fields! Playgrounds! Campgrounds! Water activities! Located on Lake McQueeney, Marksdale State Park offers something for everyone. Marksdale is a perfect spot for a hot summer day. Sign up for one of our new summer community classes, or take a camping trip with your friends or family. Our facilities are set up with modern systems, so you don't have to rough it to enjoy nature—unless you want to!

Glen Harwood, Park Director

Award for the Spring Photography Contest: Congratulations to Melissa Rhoades, a sophomore at Marksdale High School! Her winning shot was of a young girl catching her first baseball on our field. Chosen for the look of supreme joy on the girl's face, the picture offers a first-rate look at what it means to visit our park. Learning new skills and having fun are two things we are all about. Come play!

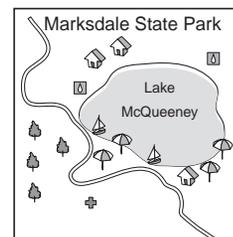
Special note about trash in our park: In an effort to keep our park clean, for your sake and that of our wildlife, we have placed trash cans and recycling bins with secure lids throughout the park. Please ensure that the lids are on tightly when you are finished. It keeps our raccoon friends from getting into things they shouldn't! Their curiosity and fine motor skills are impressive! Your cooperation is appreciated.



Are you 13–17 years old? Ever wonder what it would be like to be a park ranger? It's a competitive field, but you can get ahead by volunteering with our Teen Ranger Program. Depending on your age and responsibilities, you can even earn college credit for certain universities!



KEY	
	Cabin available
	Restrooms/showers
	Boat docking area
	Beach area
	Trees, hiking, trails
	Highway (41)
	First Aid Station



"Welcome to Marksdale State Park" property of the Florida Department of Education.

Poppa and the Spruce Tree

by Mario M. Cuomo

In this essay Mario Cuomo, former governor of New York, recalls an experience with his father that serves as an inspiration to him. It was first published in the Diaries of Mario M. Cuomo.

Poppa taught me a lot about life, especially its hard times. I remembered one of his lessons one night when I was ready to quit a political campaign I was losing and wrote about it in my diary:

Tired, feeling the many months of struggle, I went up to the den to make some notes. I was looking for a pencil, rummaging through papers in the back of my desk drawer, where things accumulate for years, when I turned up one of Poppa's old business cards, the ones we made up for him, that he was so proud of: *Andrea Cuomo, Italian-American Groceries—Fine Imported Products*. Poppa never had occasion to give anyone a calling card, but he loved having them.

I couldn't help wondering what Poppa would have said if I told him I was tired or discouraged. Then I thought about how he dealt with hard circumstances. A thousand pictures flashed through my mind, but one scene came sharply into view.

We had just moved to Holliswood, New York, from our apartment behind the store. We had our own house for the first time; it had some land around it, even trees. One, in particular, was a great blue spruce that must have been 40 feet tall.

Less than a week after we moved in, there was a terrible storm. We came home from the store that night to find the spruce pulled almost totally from the ground and flung forward, its mighty nose bent in the asphalt of the street. My brother Frankie and I could climb poles all day; we were great at fire escapes; we could scale fences with barbed wire—but we knew nothing about trees. When we saw our spruce, defeated, its cheek on the canvas,¹ our hearts sank. But not Poppa's.

Maybe he was five feet six if his heels were not worn. Maybe he weighed 155 pounds if he had a good meal. Maybe he could see a block away if his glasses were clean. But he was stronger than Frankie and me and Marie and Mamma all together.

¹ **cheek on the canvas:** a boxing term used to describe physical defeat

Poppa and the Spruce Tree

We stood in the street looking down at the tree. The rain was falling. Then he announced, “O.K., we gonna push ’im up!” “What are you talking about, Poppa? The roots are out of the ground!” “Shut up, we gonna push ’im up, he’s gonna grow again.” We didn’t know what to say to him. You couldn’t say no to him. So we followed him into the house and we got what rope there was and we tied the rope around the tip of the tree that lay in the asphalt, and he stood up by the house, with me pulling on the rope and Frankie in the street in the rain, helping to push up the great blue spruce. In no time at all, we had it standing up straight again!

With the rain still falling, Poppa dug away at the place where the roots were, making a muddy hole wider and wider as the tree sank lower and lower toward security. Then we shoveled mud over the roots and moved boulders to the base to keep the tree in place. Poppa drove stakes in the ground, tied rope from the trunk to the stakes, and maybe two hours later looked at the spruce, the crippled spruce made straight by ropes, and said, “Don’t worry, he’s gonna grow again . . .”

I looked at the card and wanted to cry. If you were to drive past that house today, you would see the great, straight blue spruce, maybe 65 feet tall, pointing straight up to the heavens, pretending it never had its nose in the asphalt.

I put Poppa’s card back in the drawer, closed it with a vengeance. I couldn’t wait to get back into the campaign.



“Poppa and the Spruce Tree.” From DIARIES OF MARIO M. CUOMO by Mario M. Cuomo, copyright © 1984 by Mario M. Cuomo. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

Clown Alley

by Linda Granfield

Circus legend has it that a collection of eggs painted with the faces of famous clowns was tragically destroyed by fire long ago. Linda and Leon McBryde of Virginia have honored this egg-painting tradition by creating their Department of Clown Registry, a collection of more than six hundred eggs that documents for history the faces of male and female clowns from around the world. Linda paints each face on a goose egg and then completes the decoration with a variety of materials. It takes up to a week to create one egg portrait.



Throughout history there have always been people who can make other people laugh. Early clowns, from the *stupidus* of ancient Rome to the court jester, often both offended and delighted listeners with their comments and songs. They were not the silent performers seen in today's circus rings. Clowns lost their voices when the large dimensions of three-ring circuses made it impossible for the audience to hear them.

There are different categories of circus clowns. Walk-around clowns use an animal or a prop, like a huge rubber hammer, as part of their routines. A carpet clown mingles with the audience and performs while the acts change in the rings. Then there are acrobatic clowns, riding clowns, juggling clowns and others. They all join in the charivari [shiv-uh-ree], the noisy entrance of the clowns.

Everything a clown does looks easy, but it's not. Making people laugh can be hard work.

Clowns must be in good physical condition to prevent injuries. Each slapstick¹ move is carefully timed and well-rehearsed. Most clowns have also been trained as acrobats, jugglers or aerial artists, and many incorporate such skills into their acts.

Clown alley—from the old ringmaster's² call, "Clowns, allez" [ah-lay] (French for "go")—is the name of the dressing area where the clowns put on their makeup and costumes.

¹ **slapstick:** funny and exaggerated

² **ringmaster:** a person who introduces the acts in a circus ring

This area is usually near the entrance to the arena because of the frequent number of costume changes, the many props to grab, and the need for the clowns to be ready at all times to hustle out into the ring.

Generally, there are three categories of circus clowns—whiteface, auguste [oh-gust] and character. Each has a specific makeup style and costume. Each has a typical act as well.

The neat whiteface is usually a strict, in-charge character who sets up the punch line for the joke with a partner who is typically an auguste. His facial features are neatly detailed in red or black, and his outfit looks something like loose pajamas with a ruffle around the neck.

Circus legend has it that the auguste clown got his name from a German nickname for someone who is clumsy. The auguste wears light-colored makeup, but white is used around the mouth and eyes, and there's a big red nose. This clown performs a great deal of slapstick humor. An oversized suit or baggy pants with suspenders allows freedom of movement for all the clumsy tumbles he takes. He also wears big shoes.

Character clowns perform as different personalities—cowboys, scarecrows, grandmothers or symphony conductors. The most famous character clown, however, is the tramp. Tramps wear different styles of makeup and costumes that are torn or shabby. Some tramp clowns are happy-go-lucky. Others are extremely sad. Still others act like gentlemen who just happen to be out of money.

Making Faces

Entertainers have been wearing makeup since ancient times. In the early days, the face was sometimes whitened with flour to emphasize large, dark eyes and bright red lips, so everyone in the audience could see each exaggerated facial expression. (Legend has it that a French clown who was a baker by profession was the first to perform with his face white from his job!)

A clown today whitens his face with greasepaint. All the makeup can be ordered from companies whose catalogs advertise everything from “age stipple” and “crepe wool hair” to clown white makeup (often the choice of performers who entertain at a fast-food restaurant).

A closeup look at a clown's face frightens some people because the eyebrows aren't drawn where they naturally grow, lips are lost in a sea of red, and the hairline is often gone completely. But the face is meant to be seen fifty feet above the ring, and from this distance every feature looks right.

It takes clowns a great deal of practice to create their performance faces. A clown's face is a protected trademark and is never to be exactly copied. It's also considered bad taste for a clown to appear in public partially out of costume, or for a clown to do “normal” things, like eating lunch, while in character.

Clowns have a long and interesting history and use serious techniques. However, the children and adults at the circus don't need to know these facts to get ready for fun when they hear “Bring in the clowns!”

“Clown Alley.” Excerpt from *Circus*. Copyright © 1997 by Linda Granfield. First published in Canada by Groundwood Books/Douglas & McIntyre Ltd. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. Photo of painted eggs as clowns. Used by permission of Linda McBryde, Department of Clown Registry, Buchanan, VA.

Volunteer Day

Have you ever heard someone use the phrase “be a good neighbor”? They were likely talking about how we can be good to our neighbors by being friendly and getting to know them, by offering them help when they need it or even when they don’t ask for it. Well, if we applied that belief system to the world in general, we’d find that it would be a better place to live. One way we can do this is by “being a good neighbor” to the community in which we live. It not only feels good to help others in our communities, but it also enables us to be more involved in building and strengthening our communities. It’s important to be more than just a resident in a community; getting involved allows you to be an active, participating citizen.

There are many different ways we can be involved in helping others in our communities. Any interest you might have can usually translate into an opportunity to help your community by doing something you enjoy. At Volunteer Day, you can choose from a long list of community needs and select the activity that best fits your interests. What better way is there to enjoy your own hobbies while helping others at the same time?

Come to Volunteer Day, choose which activity you’d like to participate in for the day, and hopefully the feeling you have at the end of the day will inspire you to become a volunteer on a regular basis. See below for a schedule of events on Volunteer Day.

Volunteer Day Schedule:

7:30 a.m.: Meet at the Community Center for juice and bagels.

8–8:30 a.m.: Visit with representatives from the many participating organizations. Choose which activity you’d like to help with for the day.

8:30–9 a.m.: Board the bus for your chosen activity, and ride with the organization’s representatives and other volunteers to your activity site.

9 a.m.–Noon: Work as a volunteer.

Noon–1 p.m.: Share lunch with your volunteer group. Don’t forget to bring a sack lunch from home!

1–3:30 p.m.: Continue your volunteer work.

3:30 p.m.: Board the bus that will take you back to the Community Center, where you will be able to talk with other volunteers and share your experiences.

See below for a list of volunteer opportunities for Volunteer Day so you can begin thinking about which activity you might want to join.

Paint houses: Do you enjoy making art? If so, this volunteer opportunity might be just right for you! Happy Homes is a local organization that provides home repairs for needy people in the form of painting. For elderly or physically disabled people who cannot do repairs to their homes, Happy Homes provides volunteer painters to repaint old homes, outside or in. Happy Homes also provides painters to create beautiful murals inside schools or community centers.

Play games at nursing homes: If you enjoy board games and talking with people, Elder Care might be the right organization for you. Elder Care provides companionship to nursing home residents by sending volunteers into nursing homes to spend time with them, play board games with them, and talk with them.

Plant flowers: Do you enjoy being outside in nature? City Parks Association has many great opportunities for people who love to be outdoors. Help plant flowers and bushes in city parks, help lay trails at Cave Springs Park, or help pick up trash around the river banks. These activities are very active, so remember to be prepared with plenty of drinking water!

Read to children with learning disabilities: Do you enjoy working with young children? Do you like books? Love and Learning is an organization that provides volunteers to help children with learning disabilities. Read books out loud to groups of children four to six years old, or read one-on-one with struggling readers seven to eight years old.

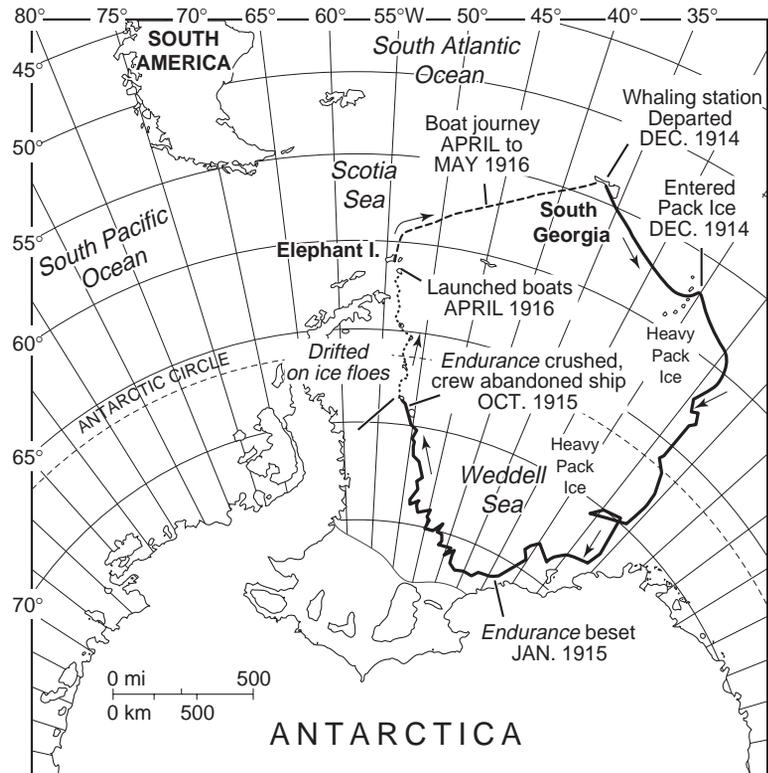
Play with animals: Do you love animals? Furry Friends is an organization that visits local animal shelters and provides volunteers to spend time with the animals while their cages are being cleaned. Walk dogs, play with puppies, snuggle with cats, or hand-feed rabbits.

“Volunteer Day” property of the Florida Department of Education.

Shackleton's Epic Voyage

Michael Brown

Marooned on desolate Elephant Island, the British explorer Shackleton and five other men make a grim voyage across the icy seas to reach a whaling settlement after their ship has foundered.



“Stand by to abandon ship!”

The command rang out over the Antarctic seas, and it meant the end of all Ernest Shackleton's plans. He was the leader of an expedition which had set out to cross the unknown continent of Antarctica. It was a journey no one before him had ever attempted.

For months his ship, the *Endurance*, had been trapped in ice. It drifted helplessly in the Weddell Sea, over 400 miles east of the Antarctic mainland and 1,200 miles south of the southernmost tip of South America. The pressure on the hull of the *Endurance* was extreme, and the ship's timbers groaned under the strain. Now Shackleton's first goal was to lead his men to safety. They would try to cross the polar sea on foot, head for the nearest tiny island, 250 miles to the west.

Slowly the men climbed overboard with the ship's stores. Shackleton, a gaunt bearded figure, gave the order “Hoist out the boats!” There were three, and they would be needed if the ice thawed.

Two days later, on October 30th, 1915, the *Endurance* broke up and sank beneath the ice. In the bitter cold, the chances of survival seemed small. But spurred on by Shackleton the 27 men set off, dragging their stores and the ship's boats on sledges across the uneven ice.

For five months the crew of the *Endurance* pushed their way slowly northwest across the frozen seas. Sometimes they dragged the sledges painfully behind them. Sometimes they drifted on large ice floes that slowly split into smaller and smaller pieces until they had to be abandoned. At times they took

to the boats and sailed or rowed through melting ice. At last, in April 1916, they reached Elephant Island—a tiny, barren, rocky outcrop 540 miles from the nearest inhabited land, Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands.

By now the situation was grim. Food and other supplies were low. Still worse, five months of constant cold and hardship had weakened all of the men. They were in poor condition to face the coming winter.

Seeing this, Shackleton knew that he and his crew could not last much longer. He decided on a desperate attempt to find help before winter set in. He turned to the men. “We will make our camp here. Six of us will take the *James Caird* and try to reach Stromness. It’s our only chance.” Stromness was a whaling base on the island of South Georgia, 800 miles N.E. of Elephant Island. To reach it they must cross some of the stormiest seas in the world.

The *James Caird* was the biggest of the ship’s boats. Even so she looked pitifully small to face the great grey seas of the southern ocean. Shackleton had the keel¹ strengthened and added make-shift decking to give more shelter.

By April 24th all was ready, and the *James Caird* was launched from the beach. Some of the crew were soaked to the skin as they worked; this could be deadly in the bitter cold and wind so they changed clothes with those who were to stay behind. Shackleton shook hands with the men he was leaving, and then amidst cheers the *James Caird* set sail.

The little knot of men left behind was dwarfed by the high peaks of Elephant Island, and was soon lost from sight.

The *James Caird* was alone on the vast heaving seas. With one arm gripping the mast, Shackleton guided the boat through the ice floes that threatened to hole the sides. At last they were in clear water and, with a fair wind, set their course for South Georgia.

Now began a fierce ordeal for the crew of the *James Caird*. The boat was small and crowded. It was almost impossible for the men to find space among the stores and the rocks carried for ballast. All cooking must be done over a single primus stove that needed three men to handle it. One held a lamp, the other two lifted the cooking pot off whenever the violent pitching of the boat threatened to upset it. A fine spray of water constantly soaked its way through the flimsy decking.

There were storms and seas so big that in the trough of a wave the boat seemed surrounded by mountains of water. The waves towering above cut off the wind so that the sails flapped uselessly.

Four days passed. A gale sprang up that threatened to swamp the *James Caird* and hurl her crew into the icy seas. “Lower the sails,” shouted Shackleton, above the roar of the wind. “We’ll heave-to under bare poles and lie to the sea anchor.” The sea anchor was a triangular canvas bag at the end of a long line which held the bows of the boat into the wind. If the seas hit them sideways on, they would capsize.

No man aboard had faced such waves before. Sometimes looking out abeam² they could see a great tunnel formed as the crest of a towering wave hung toppling over its base, then broke. Time after time it seemed they *must* be overwhelmed, but they survived.

¹ **keel**: a central structure in the bottom of a ship's frame

² **abeam**: across the width of a ship

Shackleton's Epic Voyage

The spray shot at them like burning arrows. It froze thick on the canvas decks and the bare masts, and would soon make the boat top-heavy. Shackleton saw the danger. "We must get the ice off, or we'll capsize," he warned.

Some of the men struggled on to the heaving deck and chipped ice away with axes to free the boat of the deadly weight. Others hurled things overboard—spare oars and sleeping bags—anything they could do without that would lighten the load.

At last on the morning of the seventh day, the wind dropped. The sea calmed, the skies cleared, and for the first time the sun shone. Thankfully, the men dragged out sleeping bags and sodden clothes and hung them in the rigging to dry. Cape pigeons flew overhead and porpoises played in the sea alongside. Shackleton and his men lay on deck soaking up the warmth. Hope surged in them; life was not so miserable after all.

Extract from SHACKLETON'S EPIC VOYAGE by Michael Brown. (Hamish Hamilton, 1969) Text copyright 1969 by Showell Styles.

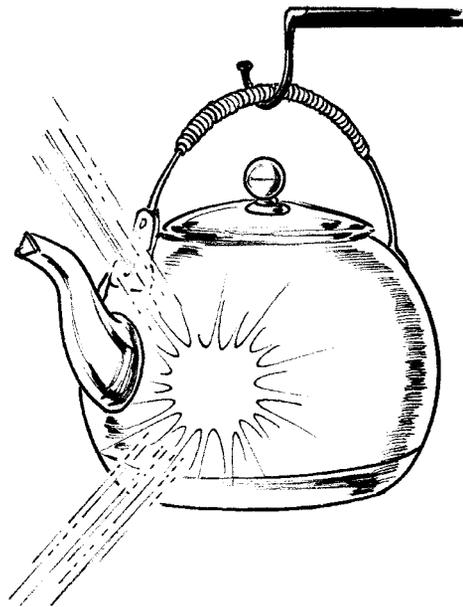
COPPER KETTLE SWEETHEART

by Madelyn Eastlund

Some folks on the ridge thought Papa called Ma his copper kettle sweetheart 'cause her hair had both color and sheen of the dented old kettle that Papa kept high-polished and hung from a fat hook in the kitchen and they laughed that Papa likened her so. When ladies met for quilting they would tease Ma and ask didn't Ma mind that Papa called her that name instead of pretty words? But Ma always answered she was suited.

My sister and seven brothers and me sat beside Pa in the evening, like steps on the porch—and we listened to him play a lively tune on mouth harp¹ or fiddle. But mostly we liked when he told us tales of when he was a boy. He'd point his pipe up at the copper kettle. Ma would say "Not again, Jeb," but she'd poke her needle pleased-like into her quilt block. I could see by fire's glow her face flushed a pretty pink.

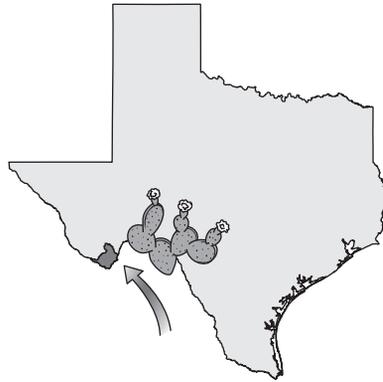
¹ mouth harp: harmonica



He'd tell about the time he and his Pa
was sent into the cellar by his Ma
to bring up some potatoes for her stew.
"They were piled way back in a dark corner.
And darned if them spuds hadn't poked new roots
into the dirt floor. Sure a puzzlement!
Things don't grow in total dark. Then my Pa
noticed the kettle mama kept polished."
Our eyes went round oohs of surprise although
we knew the story well: how a slim beam
of afternoon sun came through the coal chute
"just about kissing the kettle," he'd say.
"That kettle just being there without plan—
that copper kettle so highly polished,
just couldn't help reflect the light that touched
right into that dark corner and the spuds
couldn't help be warmed and set down their roots."
He always ended, "We need a copper
kettle in our lives—don't never forget.
Your Ma, she's my shining copper kettle."

"Copper Kettle Sweetheart" by Madelyn Eastlund, first appeared in *The Lyric*. Vol. 80, No. 2.

THE LAST FRONTIER OF TEXAS



Big Bend National Park, named for the great turn the Rio Grande makes in Southwest Texas, encompasses over 800,000 acres.

Established in 1944, this extraordinary park contains three natural divisions: the Rio Grande with its meandering 118 miles of lush, green floodplain; the sprawling Chihuahuan Desert; and the majestic Chisos Mountain Range.

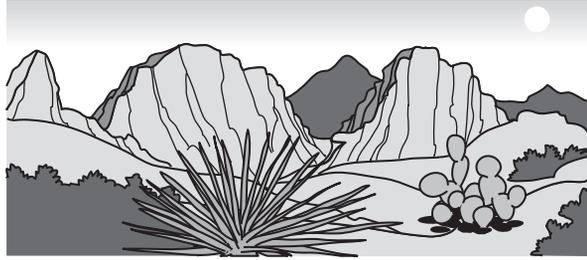
Called the “Last Frontier of Texas,” Big Bend nevertheless boasts excellent paved roads to and through the park. Stark and dramatic contrasts in topography, climate, scenery, and its unique world of plant and animal life make Big Bend more of an awe-inspiring experience than just a place to visit.

Touring this expansive and diverse park is, indeed, motivating and memorable. Accessible to all types of travelers, the park is visitor-friendly to families, motorcyclists, hikers, RVers, and campers.

Guests can stay overnight in modern comfort and convenience at Chisos Mountains Lodge. Campers stay at various campsites in the Chisos Basin, Rio Grande Village, and near the Castolon Historic Area. Entrance fees are charged to enter the park (open year round) and can be paid at the Maverick and Persimmon Gap entrance stations. If the entrance stations are closed, you may pay your entrance fee at the Panther Junction Visitor Center.

Wherever you start your expedition into the Big Bend experience, you’ll be on the road to adventure. The border-to-border Chihuahuan Desert; the Chisos Mountains; and the steep canyons of Boquillas, Mariscal, and Santa Elena beckon you to Big Bend National Park.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES



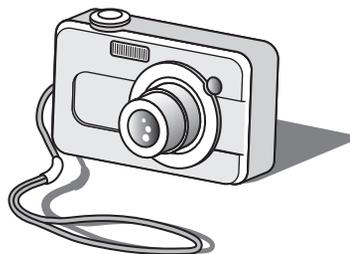
CHISOS MOUNTAINS LODGE—Located in a setting 5,400 feet above sea level, the Lodge and each of its 72 rooms have a breathtaking view of the spectacular mountain range. Motel-type units and unique stone cottages reminiscent of regional adobe dwellings are also available.

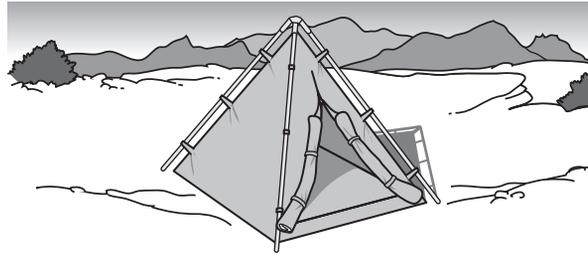
DINING—The Chisos Mountains Lodge Dining Room serves up a panoramic view of the mountains, accompanied by a menu of American, Mexican, and “Tex-Mex” selections.

CONVENIENCE STORES—Four stores are located within the park: one each at Chisos Mountains Lodge, Castolon Historic Area, Panther Junction, and Rio Grande Village. Each offers a variety of groceries and beverages as well as camping and picnic supplies. Souvenirs, gifts, and basic necessities are reasonably priced. Panther Junction offers gas, diesel fuel, motor oils, and accessories. The Rio Grande Village store has the basics: gas and motor oils.

UNUSUAL GIFTS, INDIAN AND MEXICAN CRAFTS—Creative gift-giving and keepsake collection start at Chisos Mountains Lodge. Park souvenirs, books, videotapes, guides, local crafts, and mineral specimens are featured items.

PHOTO SUPPLIES—Since Big Bend is one enormous “photo-op,” a camera is a necessity. Film and cameras are available at most of our stores.





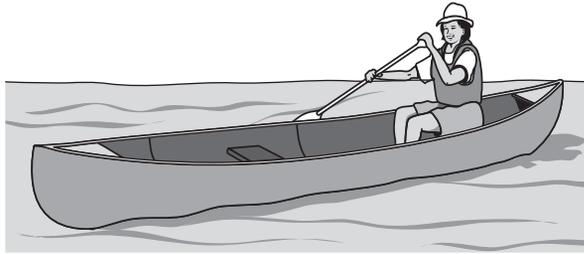
CAMPGROUNDS AND TRAILER SITES—Campsites are located in the Chisos Basin, at Rio Grande Village, and near the Castolon Historic Area. Operated on a “first come, first served” basis, sites cannot be reserved. If you do stay overnight in the backcountry, you must obtain a permit from a ranger station. Registration for self-contained units (25 sites) is available at the Rio Grande Village store. Electric, water, and sewer connections are provided.

NATIONAL PARK RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROGRAMS—Programs are scheduled year round and include narrated slide programs, seminars, and guided walks. Write the National Park Service or inquire locally for a schedule of activities.



HIKING—Hiking trails to Lost Mine Peak, the South Rim, and the Window offer panoramic mountain and desert views from high atop the peaks of the Chisos Mountains. Tuff Canyon, Blue Creek, and the Chimneys Trails give hikers excellent vantage points from which to marvel at the rugged beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert. Shorter interpretive trails into Boquillas and Santa Elena Canyons focus on the unrelenting power of the Rio Grande.



FLOATING THE RIVER—One-day rafting trips are the most popular way to enjoy Big Bend’s remote canyon beauty. Since changing water conditions may affect the choice of watercraft, independent outfitters offer three boating options: paddle rafts, oar rafts, and canoes. Rafting trips down the Rio Grande may be arranged through several outfitters outside the park. Reservations must be made in advance directly through the outfitter of your choice. Inquire at the front desk or park visitor centers for further information.

FACILITIES

POST OFFICE—Located at Chisos Basin, the address is Basin Rural Station, Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834. Mail is delivered Monday through Saturday.

ATM—Machines are located in Study Butte on the park’s western boundary.

TIPS



WHAT TO WEAR—Comfortable, casual attire is recommended. Protect your skin from the desert sun with caps or hats, sunscreen, and long-sleeved shirts. Because distances between convenience stores are vast within the park, it is imperative that you carry a supply of drinking water.

MEDICAL SERVICES—There are no facilities within the park. If you are taking prescription medications, bring along sufficient quantities.

TRANSPORTATION—The closest airports are in Midland/Odessa and El Paso. Train service is available to Alpine. Contact your travel agent for current information.

The Earthmovers

By Shanti Menon

BEFORE THE DAYS OF GIANT STEEL AND STONE monuments, people in North America made monuments of earth. They piled tons of it into oval, conical, and flat mounds for reasons that elude archeologists. Until now, the oldest mound complex was thought to be a 3,500-year-old site at Poverty Point, in northeast Louisiana. But a new study reveals that mounds at Watson Brake, just 55 miles away, are at least 1,900 years older than those at Poverty Point, making them the continent's oldest known large-scale earthworks, and early evidence for organized society in North America.

Reca Bamburg Jones, an amateur archaeologist, first recognized the importance of Watson Brake in 1981, after a timber company cleared the area. The largest mound, some 25 feet high, had been known to locals, including Jones. But after the clear-cutting, Jones noticed that it was connected by 3-foot-high ridges to ten other mounds that ranged in height from 3 to 15 feet, forming an oval enclosure 300 yards across. Jones and archeologist Joe Saunders of Northeast Louisiana University began an intensive study of the site in 1993. In September 1997, they published their findings.



The mound builders probably used skins to haul tons of gravel and soil.

The people of Watson Brake, Jones and Saunders discovered, came there each year to hunt and fish along the Arkansas River, which in those days ran within half a mile of the site. They ate mainly fish like drum, catfish, and sucker. Layers of seasonal secretions in the fishes' bones show that they were caught in the late spring to fall. Saunders also found remains of such animals as deer, turkey, squirrel, rabbit, turtle, and dog, as well as thousands of mussel and aquatic snail shells. "None of the snail shells were broken," Saunders notes. "We think they were steaming or boiling them." They were also eating wild plants, judging from the charred seeds of goosefoot, knotweed, and possibly marsh elder. These plants seed from summer to fall. Along with the evidence from the fish bones, this suggests that people visited the site only in the warmer months. Interestingly, these wild plants would later be among the first to be domesticated in eastern North America.

The Watson Brake people hadn't invented pottery yet, although they did fire clay to make strange cubes and spheres—for what purpose no one knows. These small clay objects and tiny drills used for making beads were unlike anything at nearby Poverty Point, leading Saunders to believe Watson Brake could be older. Several dating techniques¹ later showed that the Watson

Brake mounds were built between 5,400 and 5,000 years ago. Nearly a thousand years before the pyramids were built and before the first pillars were erected at Stonehenge, Native Americans hauled around tons of gravel and soil, probably in skins and perhaps baskets, with a specific goal in mind. While the mounds on the northern half of the site follow the edge of a natural terrace, the southern mounds follow no natural feature. "The southern half is purposefully completing the enclosure, the oval shape," says Saunders. "That certainly shows planning." The two largest mounds show no signs of habitation, which suggests they were monuments of some kind.

Archeologists would expect a project on so large a scale to have been built by a settled people, with an elite group directing those of lower rank. Early Native Americans, who were probably nomadic hunter-gatherers, were not thought to have the social organization necessary for large-scale construction. Saunders thinks several small bands must have come together and cooperated over centuries to build and maintain Watson Brake. Other mounds in Louisiana, though not as firmly dated, seem to be from roughly the same period. "For now, I think we can say it's the earliest large-scale earthworks," says Saunders. "Will it be predated? I have no doubt. And I don't care. I think we're going to find many more surprises that will make us reevaluate what was going on in that period of history."

¹ **dating techniques:** methods of determining the age of sites and objects

Schaus Swallowtail

by Annette Thompson

Watch the flexing of a Schaus swallowtail’s wings and you may see it do something no other butterfly can. It flies backward and then stops in midair before flitting forward. Without this aerial trick, you might mistake it for its larger, more common cousin, the Giant swallowtail. The Schaus’s glossy chestnut brown side, punctuated with yellow and blue, spans only 4 inches. Each graceful wing lift reveals a golden underside.

This odd little flier was once the rarest North American butterfly. Nowadays, you’re likely to spot them leisurely working lantana blossoms along golf course fairways in the Florida Keys. You wouldn’t be seeing them at all, however, if not for a caring college professor.

At the beginning of the 1900s, Schaus swallowtails thrived in tropical hardwood hammocks from Miami south through the

Keys. As the region urbanized, the butterfly’s range shrank until only a few colonies remained between Biscayne Bay and Key Largo—one of the chain’s northernmost islands. By 1980 sightings were rare. A concerned U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service official asked Dr. Tom Emmel, his former University of Florida biology professor, to study the remaining Schaus in 1984.

Tom trudged through the South Florida hammocks and found fewer than 70 adults in 4 tiny colonies. “The report was taken very seriously,” he says. Tom discovered that loss of habitat and an intensive chemical mosquito-control program had forced the decline.

“Pesticide use was not only impacting the swallowtail, but also 50% of all insect species there,” Tom says. “That affected the rest of the ecosystem—in particular the millions of migrating birds that come

through Florida to breed in eastern North America each year. It was horrendous.”

Tom returned to Gainesville and organized a statewide forum to examine the impact of pesticides. Afterward, local governments became more



Schaus Swallowtail/Migration of the Monarch Butterfly

savvy¹ about intrusive mosquito control and reduced pesticide strengths. Later, in 1991, the region stopped spraying for mosquitoes during the butterfly's crucial flight season.

That same year, Tom found six small breeding colonies; by 1992 there were eight. Meanwhile, he appealed to state and federal agencies to establish a captive breeding program of the endangered butterfly at the university. "That summer we finally got permission to remove swallowtail eggs from the wild," Tom recalls. "Even after pesticide spraying stopped, it would take years to re-establish populations naturally." In June 1992 he received permission to collect 100 eggs.

Then, two months later on August 24, Hurricane Andrew swept South Florida. "It came ashore over the main colony," Tom says. Suddenly the Gainesville breeding program became the only place on Earth where the Schaus existed. Tom and his students carefully raised eggs to the pupa stage, and then began reintroducing the

butterflies to the wild in the spring of 1995. Within five years a dozen colonies were re-established.

However, Tom didn't stop there. He wanted to expand the Schaus habitat. "We started looking at maps and saw several large golf courses with dozens of acres of beautiful land. We thought, 'Why not get them to help by planting hundreds of nectar plants and wild lime and torchwood trees [the larva's only known food source]?' They responded with great enthusiasm."

Now, in between excursions into the South Florida jungle, the soft-spoken professor shares his passion for the importance of the environment with students. "I voluntarily choose to teach the largest introductory biology classes. This generation is key to preserving our resources. We must study nature in order to value it," he urges.

Dr. Emmel understands deeply the need to be mindful of the natural world. For he, too, did something most rare. He helped the Schaus stop in midair in its flight toward extinction.

¹ **savvy**: knowledgeable



Migration of the Monarch Butterfly

Unlike most other insects in temperate climates, monarch butterflies cannot survive a long cold winter. Instead, they spend the winter in roosting spots. Monarchs west of the Rocky Mountains travel to small groves of trees along the California coast. Those east of the Rocky Mountains fly farther south to the forests high in the mountains of Mexico. The monarch's migration is driven by seasonal changes. Day length and temperature changes influence the movement of the monarch.

In all the world, no butterflies migrate like the monarchs of North America. They travel much farther than all other tropical butterflies, up to three thousand miles. They are the only butterflies to make such a long, two-way migration every year. Amazingly, they fly in masses to the same winter roosts, often to the exact same trees. Their migration is more the type we expect from birds or whales. However, unlike birds and whales, individuals only make the round-trip once. It is their children's grandchildren that return south the following fall.

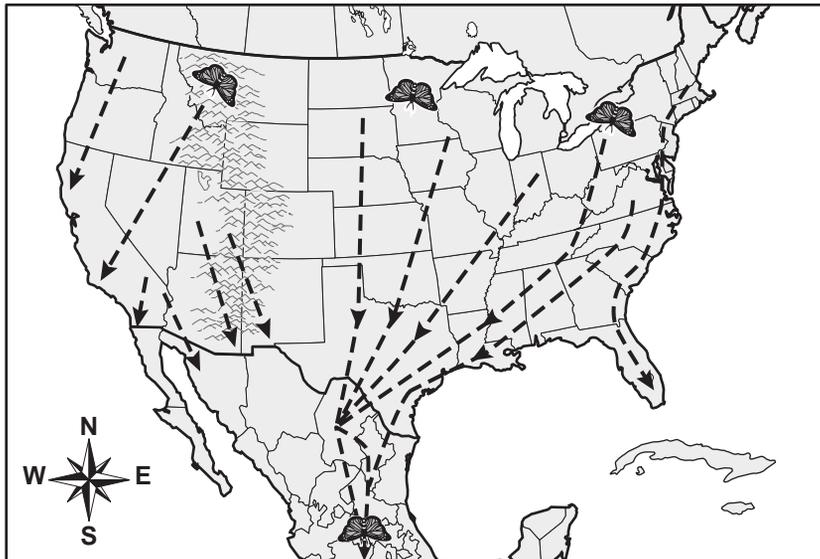
Migration of the Monarch Butterfly

When the late summer and early fall monarchs emerge from their pupae, or chrysalides, they are biologically and behaviorally different from those emerging in the summer. The shorter days and cooler air of late summer trigger changes. In Minnesota this occurs around the end of August. Even though these butterflies look like summer adults, they won't mate or lay eggs until the following spring. Instead, their small bodies prepare for a strenuous flight. Otherwise solitary animals, they often cluster at night while moving ever southward. If they linger too long, they won't be able to make the journey; because they are cold-blooded, they are unable to fly in cold weather.

Fat, stored in the abdomen, is a critical element of their survival for the winter. This fat not only fuels their flight of one to three thousand miles, but must last until the next spring when they begin the flight back north. As they migrate southwards, monarchs stop to feed on nectar, and they actually gain weight during the trip! Some researchers think that monarchs conserve their "fuel" in flight by gliding on air currents as they travel south. This is an area of great interest for researchers; there are many unanswered questions about how these small organisms are able to travel so far.

Another unsolved mystery is how monarchs find the overwintering sites each year. Somehow they know their way, even though the butterflies returning to Mexico or California each fall are the great-great-grandchildren of the butterflies that left the previous spring. No one knows exactly how their homing system works; it is another of the many unanswered questions in the butterfly world.

Monarch Butterfly Migration Routes



Monarchs west of the Rocky Mountains return each fall to the California coast. They cluster near bays, sheltered from the wind, or farther inland where they are protected from storms. The millions of monarchs from areas east of the Rockies, including the central and eastern Canadian provinces and the eastern and midwestern United States, migrate each year to the mountains of central Mexico.

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