ISTEP+ Performance Level Descriptors
English/Language Arts – Grade 6

Grade 6
Pass+
Sixth-grade students performing at the Pass+ level demonstrate advanced understanding when reading, comparing, and responding to a range of grade-level appropriate texts, including literature and nonfiction. Students display advanced writing skills using appropriate Standard English conventions when producing different writing forms.

When reading literature, such as fiction and poetry, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the Pass+ level include:
- Analyze how a section of text fits into the overall structure and contributes to the development of theme, characterization, setting, or plot and
- Explain how the point of view is developed and its influence on mood, tone, and meaning in a text.

When reading nonfiction, such as historical or scientific texts and articles, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the Pass+ level include:
- Analyze how key individuals, events, or ideas are introduced and elaborated on in text;
- Analyze how parts of text contribute to the overall organizational structures of a text;
- Compare and contrast two author’s presentations of similar events; and
- Distinguish claims that the author supports from claims that are not supported.

When writing, students craft well-organized, clearly focused, and detailed argumentative, informative, and narrative compositions, including a response to a literature or nonfiction text, using varied word choices and appropriate Standard English conventions. Specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the Pass+ level include:
- Write compositions to describe, explain, and/or convince, providing details and facts that connect to the purpose;
- Use precise words, phrases, and sensory language appropriate to the audience and purpose;
- Write focused and detailed compositions containing interesting word choices, effectively organized ideas, and well-developed thoughts; and
- Compare and contrast different forms or genres of literature with similar themes or topics.

Grade 6
Pass
Sixth-grade students performing at the Pass level demonstrate proficient understanding when reading, comparing, and responding to a range of grade-level appropriate texts, including literature and nonfiction. Students display proficient writing skills using mostly appropriate Standard English conventions when producing different writing forms.
When reading **literature**, such as fiction and poetry, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the *Pass* level include:

- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of explicit and inferred ideas in what is read;
- Determine how a theme or central idea is conveyed through particular details;
- Describe how the plot unfolds in a text, including how characters respond or change moving toward the resolution;
- Explain how the narrator or point of view in a text is developed; and
- Analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone.

When reading **nonfiction**, such as historical or scientific texts and articles, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the *Pass* level include:

- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of explicit and inferred ideas in what is read;
- Determine how a central idea is conveyed through particular details;
- Analyze how key individuals, events, or ideas are introduced and elaborated on in a text;
- Analyze how an author structures a text;
- Determine an author’s perspective or purpose and explain how it is conveyed in the text; and
- Evaluate the accuracy of information in media messages and identify the audience.

When **writing**, students craft proficient argumentative, informative, and narrative compositions, including a response to a literature or nonfiction text, using varied word choices and mostly appropriate Standard English conventions. Specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the *Pass* level include:

- Write compositions to describe, explain, and/or convince, providing details and facts that connect to the purpose;
- Write to a specific audience and purpose;
- Assess the credibility of sources;
- Write focused and detailed compositions containing some interesting word choices, effectively organized ideas, and developed thoughts.

**Grade 6 Did Not Pass**

Sixth-grade students performing at the *Did Not Pass* level demonstrate limited understanding when reading, comparing, and responding to a range of grade-level appropriate texts, including literature and nonfiction. Students display limited writing skills using basic appropriate Standard English conventions when producing different writing forms.

When reading **literature**, such as fiction and poetry, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the *Did Not Pass* level include:

- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of explicit ideas in what is read;
- Summarize text; and
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as used in a text.
When reading **nonfiction**, such as historical or scientific texts and articles, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the *Did Not Pass* level include:

- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of explicit ideas in what is read;
- Determine an author’s perspective or purpose;
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as used in a text; and
- Identify the audience in media messaging.

When **writing**, students craft limited argumentative, informative, and narrative compositions, including a response to a literature or nonfiction text, using varied word choices and basic appropriate Standard English conventions. Specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 6 students scoring at the *Did Not Pass* level include:

- Write compositions to describe, explain, and/or convince, providing minimal details and facts;
- Use some language appropriate to the audience and purpose;
- Gather relevant information from sources; and
- Write compositions containing some interesting word choices and ideas.