

ISTEP+ Performance Level Descriptors

English/Language Arts – Grade 8

Grade 8

Pass+

Eighth-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 8 students scoring at the *Pass+* level include:

- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience in a text;
- Analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone;
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how each structure impacts meaning; and
- Analyze how works of literature draw on and transform earlier texts.

When reading **nonfiction**, such as historical or scientific texts and articles, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 8 students scoring at the *Pass+* level include:

- Analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints;
- Analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone;
- Analyze how a text makes connections and distinctions among individuals, events, and ideas;
- Delineate and evaluate arguments; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced; and
- Analyze two or more works with conflicting information, explaining the differences.

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 8 students scoring at the *Pass+* level include:

- Write compositions to describe, explain, and/or convince, providing developed details and facts that connect to the purpose and acknowledge other points of view;
- Use precise words, phrases, sensory language, and content vocabulary appropriate to the audience and purpose; and
- Write focused and detailed compositions containing interesting word choices, effectively organized ideas, well-developed thoughts, and cohesiveness.

Grade 8

Pass

Eighth-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 8 students scoring at the *Pass* level include:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of inferences drawn from the text;
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts;
- Analyze the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text;
- Analyze the development of a theme or central idea over the course of a text; and
- Analyze how dialogue or incidents in a text contribute to its meaning.

When reading **nonfiction**, such as historical or scientific texts and articles, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 8 students scoring at the *Pass* level include:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of inferences drawn from the text;
- Analyze the development of the central idea over the course of a text;
- Analyze the structure in a text, including how major sections contribute to the development of ideas;
- Analyze the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text;
- Analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone; and
- Identify and analyze persuasive and propaganda techniques used in media.

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 8 students scoring at the *Pass* level include:

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

Grade 8 Did Not Pass

Eighth-grade students performing at the *Did Not Pass* level demonstrate limited understanding when reading, comparing, and responding to 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 8 students scoring at the *Did Not Pass* level include:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of what the text says explicitly;
- Provide a detailed, objective summary of the text; and
- Determine the meaning of words or phrases used in a text.

When reading **nonfiction**, such as historical or scientific texts and articles, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 8 students scoring at the *Did Not Pass* level include:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of what the text says explicitly;
- Provide a detailed, objective summary of the text; and
- Determine the meaning of words or phrases used in a text.

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 8 students scoring at the *Did Not Pass* level include:

- Write compositions to describe, explain, and/or convince, providing minimal details and facts that connect to the purpose;
- Use language, words, and tone minimally appropriate to the audience and purpose; and
- Write compositions containing some interesting word choices, organized ideas, and minimally developed thoughts.