
Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

Reading

Achievement Level
Descriptors

June 2013

Minnesota Department of
Education

Contents

Achievement Level Descriptors for Reading MCA-III, MCA-Modified and MTAS.....2

Guide to Understanding the Reading MTAS Achievement Level Descriptors7

GRADE 3 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS8

GRADE 4 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS10

GRADE 5 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS12

GRADE 6 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS14

GRADE 7 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS16

GRADE 8 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS18

GRADE 10 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS.....20

Achievement Level Descriptors for Reading MCA-III, MCA-Modified and MTAS

Overview

Minnesota issued its revised *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts* in 2010. For this revision of standards, Minnesota supplemented the Common Core English language arts standards, which were adopted in their entirety. The first operational assessments based on the reading strand of the revised standards were administered in spring 2013.

The 2010 *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts* represent greater expectations in reading comprehension over what was expected in the 2003 academic standards. These expectations are operationalized in the test specifications and assessments through increased complexity and rigor in the reading passages and test items. A goal of the revised standards and assessments is to ensure that students demonstrate college and career readiness.

Minnesota Reading Assessments

The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) in this document are written for three reading assessments administered as part of the Minnesota assessment system. The test specifications and ALDs for all the Minnesota reading assessments are anchored on the reading strand of the *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts*. The ALDs for the three tests describe performance expectations that differ significantly according to the population taking the test, what is assessed in the test and how it is assessed.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments–Series III (MCA)

The Reading MCA is administered to students in the general population. All but a small percentage of students in grades 3-8 and 10 take the Reading MCA. The majority of students receiving special education services take this test as their reading assessment for accountability purposes.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Modified (MCA-Modified)

The Reading MCA-Modified is an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams may select this assessment for students who have disabilities that preclude their demonstrating proficiency on the MCA. The MCA-Modified is based on the same test specifications as the MCA, but test difficulty and length are reduced. The U.S. Department of Education is withdrawing support for this assessment, and its last administration in Minnesota occurs spring 2014.

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

The Reading MTAS is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. IEP teams may select this assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Reading MTAS test specifications are based on a reduced number of the grade-level standards assessed by the MCA and MCA-Modified. These selected standards have been reduced in depth, breadth and complexity.

Achievement Standards

Following the first administration of new assessments, the Minnesota Department of Education must convene content area experts and stakeholders to determine, through a standard setting process, the

levels of performance that are reported to students, parents and schools. Standard setting committees set the cut scores that delineate four levels of achievement on Minnesota statewide assessments. The achievement levels for the general, modified and alternate assessments are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Achievement level labels

MCA	MCA-Modified	MTAS
Does Not Meet the Standards	Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards	Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards
Partially Meets the Standards	Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards	Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards
Meets the Standards	Meets the Modified Achievement Standards	Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards
Exceeds the Standards	Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards	Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students who achieve the “Meets” and “Exceeds” levels on the MCA, MCA-Modified or MTAS are considered proficient with regard to the knowledge, skills and processes (KSPs) described in the academic standards.

The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) for the Minnesota assessments in reading provide a description of grade-level student performance for each of the achievement levels. The reading strand of the Minnesota English language arts academic standards outlines the goals teachers and students work toward over the course of an academic year. The Minnesota assessments measure students’ attainment of these goals, and the ALDs explain grade-level student performance in each level of achievement based upon assessment results. Students who are proficient on the Minnesota assessments are considered to be on a trajectory for postsecondary success, and this high expectation is reflected in the ALDs for performance in the “Meets” and “Exceeds” achievement levels. Students who are proficient readers by this measure are on a path to leave high school well prepared for entry-level coursework without remediation in post-secondary education or training. As may be noted in the ALDs for the Minnesota reading assessments, post-secondary readiness for education, training or engagement in the workforce represents quite different expectations for students taking alternate assessments from those for students taking the assessment administered to the general population.

There is a range of student performance represented within each achievement level described by the ALDs. As they wrote the descriptors for each grade and at each achievement level, the ALD development team members envisioned a student whose performance falls in the middle of the range. To capture the KSPs that differentiate student performance at one level from another, it was also necessary to keep in mind the upper and lower thresholds of the range within an achievement level in order to adequately distinguish the level from adjacent levels.

During the standard setting process, content area experts—the majority of whom were educators—created a second type of ALDs to be used for setting cut scores. Working from the ALDs in this document, standard setters described student performance that “just barely meets” the criteria for inclusion in an achievement level. These “just barely meets,” or threshold, ALDs and the resulting cut scores, represent the minimum performance required to meet a given achievement level’s expectations.

Strand, Substrands, Skill Domains and Standards

As indicated above, the Minnesota reading assessments test the reading strand of the *Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards–English Language Arts*. The reading strand is composed of two substrands: Literature and Informational Text. The literature and/or informational text substrands are referenced in each of 10 standards. Seven of the 10 standards are assessed on the MCA and MCA-Modified. Four of the 10 standards are assessed on the MTAS. The three reading standards that are excluded from Minnesota statewide assessments do not lend themselves to standardized, large-scale testing formats and are to be evaluated by teachers in the classroom.

The 10 standards in the Reading strand are grouped by skill domains. Table 2 shows how the substrands, skill domains and standards are represented in the ALDs.

Table 2. Skill domains, standards and substrands included in reading assessments

Skill domains and standards*	Substrands assessed	Assessments
<i>Key Ideas and Details</i>		
Standard 1	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Standard 2	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Standard 3	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
<i>Craft and Structure</i>		
Standard 4	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified, MTAS
Standard 5	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified
Standard 6	Literature and Informational Text	MCA, MCA-Modified
<i>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</i>		
Standard 7	—	—
Standard 8	Informational Text only	MCA, MCA-Modified
Standard 9	—	—
<i>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</i>		
Standard 10	—	—

*Standards 7, 9 and 10 involve extended tasks or projects that are assessed by the teacher over time. They are not included in the Minnesota reading assessments and are not addressed in the ALDs.

Development of the Achievement Level Descriptors

The ALD development team included Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) staff as well as Minnesota educators. After this team wrote draft ALDs, the drafts for one grade were submitted for review to HumRRO, an independent organization. HumRRO has done extensive work in the evaluation of achievement and performance level descriptors, as well as the alignment of test items to content standards. The draft ALDs and HumRRO’s evaluation were then prepared for presentation to Minnesota’s Technical Advisory Committee for review. A second draft of the ALDs was then prepared incorporating recommendations as appropriate. This second draft was used during the standard setting process. The standard setting committee recommended no substantive changes to the ALDs, and the ALDs were thus considered final when the Commissioner of Education approved the cut score recommendations of the standard setting committee.

MDE staff on the ALD development team included two Reading MCA assessment specialists, a Reading Alternate Assessment specialist, and a Reading Academic Standards specialist. The MDE assessment

director and the supervisor of alternate assessments helped facilitate the meetings. MDE staff was joined by a high school English Language Arts teacher and a literacy coordinator for the elementary grades.

Before beginning its work, the ALD development team reviewed the draft ALDs issued by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The team appreciated the work Smarter Balanced has done to distinguish threshold performance at each next higher level in addition to providing descriptions of the range of performance. The ALD development team also noted with interest the Consortium's policy descriptors for college and career readiness at each of its four achievement levels.

Because these ALDs are essential to the standard setting process for the reading assessments, the ALD team relied primarily on the academic standards for Reading and the MCA, MCA-Modified and MTAS test specifications to create the descriptions. Several questions were critical to the process:

- How does text range in complexity within a grade level and across grade levels?
- To what degree do students master each of the standards at each of the achievement levels?
- For which KSPs is it possible to describe gradations of performance across four levels and for which KSPs is it not feasible?
- How, according to the test specifications, are students able to show their mastery of KSPs?

By keeping these questions in mind, the ALD developers are certain they created descriptors that can be supported by evidence in the test design and in student performance on both statewide and classroom assessments. Understanding how test items can tease out partial comprehension of reading passages and understanding of textual analysis is vital to the process of creating ALDs. Variables that can be managed in test items include the degree of specificity or abstraction to which students must drill down, the amount of scaffolding provided directly or through carefully chosen wording, and the alignment to measures of cognitive complexity. It is also necessary to understand how the level of granularity of KSPs determines the extent to which they can be described across a continuum of performance levels. It is possible to distinguish four levels of performance in many KSPs, but in others it is not. For example, for some KSPs, we expect students to demonstrate mastery at the "Meets" level and the KSP will not be carried through to the "Exceeds" descriptor. In another instance, a KSP may not lend itself to fine distinctions in levels of performance. In this case, the KSP may appear only at the "Meets" level, and students are either able to do it or not.

A key assumption in the development of these Reading ALDs is that text increases in complexity and sophistication with each successive grade. Although there are identical or nearly identical descriptors across some grades, it must be understood that the texts students are using to demonstrate these skills are increasingly difficult.

The ALD development team drafted the MCA ALDs over the course of six working sessions. During these sessions, the team referred frequently to the academic standards and the test specifications, as noted above. The team also relied on the language of Webb's Depth of Knowledge scale to describe cognitive complexity and on the Lexile metric to anchor discussions of textual complexity and sophistication. Multiple points of view were represented in the working sessions, and discussions were lively. The ALD team began work on each grade level by first describing the "Meets the Standards"

performance of students working with literature and informational text. The “Meets” level separates proficient performance from performance that is partially proficient or not proficient. Because the reading assessments are targeted to make the distinction between proficient and less than proficient, there is more evidence of student performance to draw upon at this achievement level. It is also important to develop an accurate description of the “Meets” level since it is critical for purposes of accountability. After describing “Meets the Standards,” the ALD team turned its attention to “Exceeds the Standards,” and then worked its way down the scale to “Partially Meets” and “Does Not Meet.”

The draft ALDs that resulted from these sessions were subsequently reviewed and revised by MDE’s reading assessment specialists to ensure that the team’s intentions and commentary were accurately reflected in the descriptors. They also reviewed the articulation of the descriptors across achievement levels within a grade as well as the articulation of each of the four achievement levels across grades. In other words, did descriptions of what students know and can do increase appropriately from “Does Not Meet the Standards” to “Exceeds the Standards” within a grade? And did descriptions of what students know and can do at a level such as “Meets the Standards” increase appropriately across the grades?

After the draft of the MCA ALDs was complete, the alternate assessment staff at MDE used the ALDs as the starting point for the MCA-Modified and MTAS ALDs. The MCA-Modified is aligned to the same academic standards as the MCA; the regulations for the MCA-Modified require that grade-level standards be assessed but allow states to increase accessibility for students with disabilities and to set modified achievement standards. Accessibility is addressed in the MCA-Modified by reducing the complexity and number of passages students must read and by presenting fewer test questions overall. In addition, items are embedded in the passage, items have three answer options rather than four and language simplification guidelines are carefully applied. The modified achievement standard for this population of students with disabilities allows students to be proficient while demonstrating a reduced number of KSPs with lower levels of cognitive complexity.

The MTAS ALDs are based on Standards 1 through 4, which have been greatly reduced in depth, breadth and complexity. MDE refers to these standards as “extended standards” because the low end of the range of performance expected on these standards has been extended downward to include very basic skills of low cognitive complexity. MDE’s alternate assessment staff wrote the MTAS ALDs last and relied heavily on the MTAS test specifications where the extended standards are described (Minnesota does not publish alternate academic standards).

Finalizing the ALDs

The ALDs were presented to the standard setting committees in June 2013 as a policy document. It is the state’s intention that students who achieve a given proficiency level can demonstrate the knowledge, skills and processes described in these ALDs, and the purpose of standard setting was not to review or revise this document but to apply it in the determination of cut scores. The standard setting committees were required to create threshold or “just barely meets” descriptors from these ALDs and to apply them to the performance they saw demonstrated in the standard setting materials. The standard setting committees reported no issues with the performance descriptions at each level of the ALDs. The ALDs were then finalized when the Commissioner of Education approved the cut scores recommended by the standard setting committees.

Guide to Understanding the Reading MTAS Achievement Level Descriptors

The **Achievement Level Descriptors** (ALDs) listed in each of the four achievement levels below describe the knowledge and skills assessed on the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS).

Helpful Terms for Understanding the Structure of the Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) and What They Represent

ALD: Describes student performance at each of the four specific levels of achievement associated with a particular reading skill. An ALD can be classified in one of four achievement levels: Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards, Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards, Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards, Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards. See the description listed under each achievement level heading.

Strand: This is the content area under assessment. The title of the strand for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills is **Reading**.

Sub-strand: The Reading standards are organized under two subcategories called sub-strands. The two sub-strands assessed on the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills are Literature and Informational Text. The description of the types of texts found within these sub-strands is taken from the *Reading Test Specifications for Minnesota Test of Academic Skills* pages 3-9. This document is available on the Minnesota Department of Education website. [View the MTAS Grades 3–8,10 DRAFT Test Specifications: Reading \(2010 standards\).](#)

The Literary and Informational passages found on the MTAS mirror high interest/low level materials that are accessible for instruction for this population. The topics are age-appropriate and generally known to the population being assessed. Concepts presented in the passages are not abstract.

Standard: Standards provide the general description of knowledge and skills in reading that all students must satisfy to meet state requirements. Extension of standards and benchmarks represent a reduction in depth and complexity while maintaining a clear link to the grade-level content standard. Extended standards and extended benchmarks were written when appropriate for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills.

Skill Domain: This is a general categorization of standards related to reading as presented in the Minnesota Academic Standards, English Language Arts K-12, 2010. [View the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts \(2010\).](#)

Two of four skill domains are assessed on the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills. They are

1. Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3: e.g., main idea/central message, details, and characterization)
2. Craft and Structure (Standard 4: e.g., vocabulary, content-area vocabulary)

ALDs listed in each of the four achievement levels can apply to one or more of the standards in each skill domain.

GRADE 3 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify topic of a reading passage
- Recognize a primary character in a story or poem

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Recognize literal meanings of known words
- Recognize the meaning of common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Recognize clearly stated main idea/central message and some details in a reading passage
- Identify a primary character in a story or poem
- Recognize the actions of a primary character in a story or poem
- Recognize some steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Identify literal meanings of known words by using explicit context clues
- Identify the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and details in a reading passage
- Identify main characters in a story or poem
- Identify the actions of characters in a story or poem
- Identify basic sequence of events or steps in a process
- Recognize an effect when given a cause

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of known words by using explicit context clues
- Determine the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage

Identify the actions and emotions of characters in a story or poem

Answer literal questions about a story or poem

Sequence events or steps in a process

Identify an effect when given a cause

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new words by using context clues

Determine the meaning of new grade-level, content area vocabulary

GRADE 4 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify topic of a reading passage
- Recognize a primary character in a story or poem

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Recognize literal meanings of known words
- Recognize the meaning of common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Recognize clearly stated main idea/central message and some details in a reading passage
- Identify a primary character in a story or poem
- Recognize the actions of a primary character in a story or poem
- Recognize some steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process
- Answer literal questions about a story or poem

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Identify literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues
- Recognize the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and details in a reading passage
- Identify main characters in a story or poem
- Identify the key actions and emotions of characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Identify basic sequence of events or steps in a process
- Recognize setting in a story or poem

Summarize parts of a text (e.g., paragraph)

Recognize an effect when given a cause

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues

Determine the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage

Identify the actions, emotions and behavior of characters in a story or poem

Answer literal and basic inferential questions about a story, poem or informational text

Sequence events or steps in a process

Make connections between characters and setting

Summarize whole text

Identify a cause and/or effect

Draw a simple conclusion based on information in a reading passage

Make basic inferences based on a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new and/or multiple meaning words by using context clues

Determine the meaning of new grade-level, content area vocabulary

GRADE 5 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify topic of a reading passage
- Recognize a primary character in a story or poem

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Recognize literal meanings of known words
- Recognize the meaning of common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Recognize clearly stated main idea/central message and some details in a reading passage
- Identify a primary character in a story or poem
- Recognize the actions of a primary character in a story or poem
- Recognize some steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process
- Answer literal questions about a story or poem
- Identify setting in a story or poem

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Identify literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues
- Recognize the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and supporting details in a reading passage
- Identify the key actions, emotions and behavior of characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Identify basic sequence of events or steps in a process
- Identify explicit connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize parts of a text (e.g., paragraph)

Recognize an effect when given a cause
Draw a simple conclusion based on information in a reading passage
Make basic inferences based on a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new words by using context clues
Determine the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage
Identify multiple traits and behaviors of characters in a story or poem
Answer literal and basic inferential questions about a story, poem or informational text
Sequence events or steps in a process
Make relevant connections between characters and setting
Summarize whole text
Identify a cause and/or effect
Draw appropriate conclusions based on a literal interpretation of a reading passage
Make logical inferences based on a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new and/or multiple meaning words by using context clues
Determine the meaning of new grade-level, content area vocabulary

GRADE 6 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Recognize clearly expressed main idea/central message of a reading passage

Identify a primary character and character's basic emotions in a story or poem

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Recognize literal meanings of known words

Recognize the meaning of common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Identify main idea/central message and some details in a reading passage

Identify primary characters and their actions and basic emotions in a story or poem

Recognize some steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process

Answer literal questions about a story or poem

Identify setting in a story or poem

Identify an appropriate summary of a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Identify literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues

Recognize the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Identify main idea/central message and relevant, supporting details in a reading passage

Identify characters and their key actions, emotions and behaviors in a story or poem

Answer literal questions about a story, poem or informational text

Identify sequence of key events or steps in a process

Identify explicit connections between characters and setting in a story or poem

Summarize parts of a text (e.g., paragraph)

Recognize cause and effect
Draw a simple conclusion based on information in a reading passage
Make basic inferences based on a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new words by using context clues
Determine the meaning of grade-level, content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage
Identify multiple traits and behaviors of characters in a story or poem
Answer literal and basic inferential questions about a story, poem or informational text
Sequence events or steps in a process
Make relevant connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
Summarize whole text
Identify a cause and/or effect
Draw appropriate conclusions based on a literal interpretation of a reading passage
Make logical inferences based on a reading passage
Identify the plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new and/or multiple meaning words by using context clues
Determine the meaning of new grade-level, content area vocabulary

GRADE 7 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Recognize clearly expressed main idea/central message of a reading passage
- Identify a primary character and character's basic emotions in a story or poem
- Make predictions about a reading passage minimally based on explicit information in the text

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Recognize literal meanings of known words
- Recognize the meaning of common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and some details in a reading passage
- Identify primary characters and their actions and basic emotions in a story or poem
- Recognize some steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process
- Answer literal questions about a story or poem
- Identify the setting of a story or poem
- Identify an appropriate summary of a reading passage
- Given a cause, recognize an effect
- Make inferences or predictions about a reading passage partially based on information in the text

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues
- Recognize the meaning of grade-level content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and relevant, supporting details in a reading passage
- Identify characters and their key actions, emotions and behaviors in a story or poem
- Answer literal questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Identify sequence of key events or steps in a process
- Identify explicit connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize parts of a text (e.g., paragraph)
- Recognize cause and effect
- Draw simple conclusions based on information in a reading passage
- Make basic inferences and predictions based on a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new words by using context clues
- Determine the meaning of grade-level content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage
- Identify multiple traits and behaviors of characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal and basic inferential questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Sequence events or steps in a process
- Make relevant connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize whole text
- Identify cause and effect
- Draw appropriate conclusions based on a literal interpretation of a reading passage
- Make logical inferences, predictions and generalizations based on a reading passage

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new and or multiple meaning words by using context clues
- Determine the meaning of new grade-level content area vocabulary

GRADE 8 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Recognize clearly expressed main idea/central message of a reading passage

Identify a primary character and character's basic emotions in a story or poem

Make predictions about a reading passage minimally based on explicit information in the text

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Recognize known words

Recognize common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Identify main idea/central message and some details in a reading passage

Identify primary characters and their actions and basic emotions in a story or poem

Identify one difference between two characters in a story or poem

Recognize steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process

Answer literal questions about a story or poem

Identify the setting in a story or poem

Identify an appropriate summary of a reading passage

Given a cause, recognize an effect

Make inferences or predictions about a reading passage partially based on information in the text

Recognize the basic plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues

Recognize the meaning of grade-level content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and relevant, supporting details in a reading passage
- Identify characters and their key actions, emotions and behaviors in a story or poem
- Contrast two characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Identify sequence of key events or steps in a process
- Identify explicit connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize parts of a text (e.g., paragraph)
- Recognize cause and effect
- Draw simple conclusions based on information in a reading passage
- Make basic inferences and predictions based on a reading passage
- Recognize the general plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new words by using context clues
- Determine the meaning of grade-level content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage
- Identify multiple traits and behaviors of characters in a story or poem
- Compare and contrast characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal and basic inferential questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Sequence events or steps in a process
- Make relevant connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize whole text
- Identify cause and effect
- Draw appropriate conclusions based on a literal interpretation of a reading passage
- Make logical inferences, predictions and generalizations based on a reading passage
- Identify the plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new words or multiple meaning words by using context clues
- Determine the meaning of new grade-level content area vocabulary

GRADE 10 – ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at a limited number of the most fundamental skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given extensive verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Recognize clearly expressed main idea/central message of a reading passage

Identify a primary character and character's basic emotions in a story or poem

Make predictions about a reading passage minimally based on explicit information in the text

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Recognize known words

Recognize common content area vocabulary

Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at some of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given frequent verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, the students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

Identify main idea/central message and details in a reading passage

Identify primary characters and their actions and basic emotions in a story or poem

Identify one difference between two characters in a story or poem

Recognize steps in a basic sequence of events or in a process

Answer literal questions about a story or poem

Identify the setting of a story or poem

Identify an appropriate summary of a reading passage

Given a cause, recognize an effect

Make inferences or predictions about a reading passage partially based on information in the text

Recognize the basic plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Determine literal meanings of new words by using explicit context clues

Recognize the meaning of grade-level content area vocabulary

Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at many of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given occasional verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Identify main idea/central message and relevant, supporting details in a reading passage
- Identify characters and their key actions, emotions and behaviors in a story or poem
- Contrast two characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Identify sequence of key events or steps in a process
- Identify explicit connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize parts of a text (e.g., paragraph)
- Recognize cause and effect
- Draw conclusions based on information in a reading passage
- Make basic inferences and predictions based on a reading passage
- Recognize the general plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new words by using context clues
- Determine the meaning of grade-level content area vocabulary

Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

Students at this level succeed at most of the skills on the extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. Given little or no verbal, visual, and/or tactile supports which provide extra context about the task to be completed, students may demonstrate skills that include:

Key Ideas and Details (Standards 1, 2, 3)

- Make connections between main idea/central message and key details of a reading passage
- Identify multiple traits and behaviors of characters in a story or poem
- Compare and contrast characters in a story or poem
- Answer literal and basic inferential questions about a story, poem or informational text
- Sequence events or steps in a process
- Make relevant connections between characters and setting in a story or poem
- Summarize whole text
- Identify cause and effect
- Draw appropriate conclusions based on a reasonable interpretation of a reading passage
- Make logical inferences, predictions and generalizations based on a reading passage
- Identify the plot of a story

Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

- Determine literal meanings of new and multiple meaning words by using context clues
- Determine the meaning of new grade-level content area vocabulary