

Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP)

Summative

Item Specifications

English Language Arts

Grade 6

Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Summative Alabama Item Specifications Grade 6 English Language Arts

The *Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Summative* item specifications are based upon the development of summative assessments that measure the Alabama Course of Study Standards. The item specifications define the purpose of the *ACAP Summative* and provide important information regarding the content to be measured. The item specifications also serve as a road map to guide Alabama educators in the development and subsequent review of items that best measure the Course of Study Standards for a given grade and subject area. Each item specification is aligned to the given strand, subcategory, and standard and includes the following key information:

- Evidence statements
- Content limits/constraints
- Recommended Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) or cognitive levels
- Item types for measuring a given standard
- Information regarding whether or not context is allowable
- Sample item stem information

The appendices to this document include sample test items, along with information about the item, including item type, page reference, alignment, point value, depth of knowledge, and answer key. Also included is a sample text-dependent writing item and sample student responses. These sample items are provided to be an additional resource foreducators to help guide instruction and assessment-building in the classroom. Teachers can use the sample items as models when leading classroom discussion as well as creating items for classroom tests or quizzes. In each sample item, the level of rigor needed in the item in order to align with the content standard is evident.

Definitions

Course of Study Standards: The Course of Study Standards are a set of content curriculum statements that define what students should know and be able to do at a given grade level. The goal is to prepare students for future opportunities and options in the workplace and for everyday life. Through the implementation of the Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts, students will be well equipped for the workforce upon graduation or be ready to pursue higher levels of education in Alabama’s colleges and universities.

Strand: A strand is a group of related content standards. Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, and Language are the strands for Grade 6 English Language Arts.

Subcategory: A subcategory is a smaller grouping of standards within the strand. For example, in the strand of Reading Literature are the subcategories of Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.

Standard: The standard defines what students should understand (know) and be able to do at the conclusion of a course or grade. The standard text in the item specification is preceded by a standard identifier; for example, RI.6.13 indicates the strand as Reading Informational Text, the student grade level as sixth (6), and the standard number as thirteen (13).

Evidence Statements: Evidence statements are closely aligned to the standard and do not deviate from the requirements of the standard. Standards that are substantial in content do provide for a better opportunity to “go deeper into the standard,” which is the case for many of the Alabama Course of Study Standards. The evidence statements serve that purpose.

Assessment Limits/Content Constraints: Assessment limits and/or content constraints define the range of content knowledge and degree of difficulty that is allowable when items are written to measure a given standard.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK): Depth of knowledge involves the cognitive complexity or the nature of thinking required for a given item. Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels are used in the development of items for cognitive demand. Therefore, when developing items for depth of knowledge, the item should be as demanding cognitively as what the actual standard expects. Webb’s Depth of Knowledge includes four levels, from the lowest (basic recall) to the highest (extended thinking.) The English language arts *ACAP Summative* assessment items are written to one of three cognitive levels of complexity as follows:

- Level 1: Recall
- Level 2: Application of a Skill/Concept
- Level 3: Strategic Thinking

Item Types: The *ACAP Summative* assessments are composed of various item types. These item types are described in the following section.

Text Types/Context: Text types/context provides information regarding the types of stimulus materials that must be used with or in the items. If a text type is present, that means that the item is to be drawn from the content of the text. If context is noted as “Allowed” in the item specification, then the item may use context. If context is required, then the item measuring the given standard must have context. If no context is noted in the item specification, the item measuring the given standard must not have context.

Sample Item Stem Information: A statement that explains what students are expected to do when they respond to a given item.

Item Types

The *Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Summative* assessments are composed of various item types. These item types are described below.

Multiple-Choice (MC) Items: MC items have four answer choices, including three distractors and one correct answer. Distractors for English language arts represent common misconceptions, incorrect logic, or incorrect understanding of a text, etc. A correct response to an MC item is worth one score point in the English language arts *ACAP Summative*.

Multiple-Select (MS) Items: MS items are similar in structure to MC items. MC items have a stem and four answer options, one of which is correct. However, unlike an MC item, an MS item is composed of more than four options and more than one correct answer. In other words, multiple responses are required a given MS item. For English language arts, there are two types of MS configurations. One has five answer options, two of which are correct, and one has six answer options, two or three of which are correct. Directions for the number of options to select are provided with each item. A correct response to an MS item is worth two score points in the English language arts *ACAP Summative*.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) Items: EBSR items have two parts. The first part answers an inferential or key concept question related to a text and includes one correct response. The second part may focus on evidence from the text to support the inference or key concept in the first part or may focus on an inference or statement that continues from the first part. The second part varies depending on the standard being assessed. The second part includes one correct response. A correct response to an EBSR item is worth two score points in the English language arts *ACAP Summative* when both parts are correct.

Technology-Enhanced (TE) Items: TE items share the same functional structure as traditional paper-and-pencil test items; however, the expansive features and functions of a computer-based medium allow for the incorporation of technical enhancements into traditional elements of a test item, such as the item stem, the stimulus (if any), the response area, or a combination of all three. These items require the use of one or more tools. A correct response to a TE item is worth one or two score points in the English language arts *ACAP Summative*. English language arts TE items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Drag and Drop Input:** These TE items provide a student with draggable entities that can be configured to be used once or multiple times.
- **Drop-Down List Input:** These TE items allow a student to select elements in drop-down lists that can be embedded within text or tables.
- **Hot Text:** These TE items allow a student to select words, phrases, or sentences in a paragraph or paragraphs to address a task.
- **Matching:** These TE items allow for the use of text or graphics as the matching objects. For example, the student selects one object and then selects a second object to connect them.
- **Matching Table:** These TE items include a table with multiple rows and columns, and the student makes matches between the given elements in the rows and columns. The table can be customized to allow for only a single selection in a row or column or for multiple selections within each.

Performance Task—Text-Dependent Writing (TDW) Items: TDW items appear only in English language arts grades 4–8. TDW items require the student to provide a literary analysis of a reading passage, passage set, or other type of stimulus that the student has read during the test event. A student is then asked to draw on basic writing skills while inferring and synthesizing information from the passage, passage set, or other stimulus (using and referencing content from the source[s] to support the analysis) in order to develop

a comprehensive, holistic essay response. TDW items frequently ask students to analyze and explain in detail a more complex line of reasoning.

The demand required of a student’s reading and writing skills in response to a TDW item is similar to the demands required for a student to be college and career ready. TDW items are scored using a 4-point rubric.

Reading

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading

Item specifications are one of the key requirements for a high-quality, legally defensible, standards-based assessment. Item specifications help define important characteristics of the items (i.e., test questions) developed for each standard. These item specifications provide guidelines to help clarify the focus of what is to be assessed, what items may include, and what items may not include (i.e., assessment limits). Item specifications are used by item writers, item editors, and item reviewers as a common reference throughout the item-development process, from initial writing to final approval. These English language arts item specifications are based on Alabama Course of Study Standards.

Reading has two strands: Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text.

Each Reading strand has three subcategories: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	RL.6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Evidence Statements	The student will cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. The student will draw inferences from the text.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Determining the correct response will require an understanding of ideas and/or events stated explicitly in the text or a portion of the text. Determining the correct response will require the use of details and/or events stated explicitly in the text to support a larger idea, connection, or inference. Determining the correct response may require an understanding of the layers of support for an idea.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which sentence from the passage best supports the inference that the narrator will continue to study sea life?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details.</p> <p>The student will provide a summary of the text that is distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>Determining the correct response will require an understanding of the theme or central idea of a literature text.</p> <p>Determining the correct response will require an understanding of the key elements of a literature text and/or an ability to distinguish the most important details from the least important details in a literature text.</p> <p>Determining the correct response will require an understanding of separating personal opinions or judgments from using details to determine the theme or central idea of a literature text.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which sentences from [passage title] best demonstrate the theme of the passage? Choose two answers.

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	RL.6.3. Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds.</p> <p>The student will understand how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>Determining the correct response may require an analysis of the interactions between and among elements of a story or drama, not merely an identification of a specific element or event in the plot.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may require drawing inferences and/or conclusions about the development of the plot of a narrative text.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may require an understanding of how characters respond to change in a narrative text.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may require some inferences about a character’s change, drawn from incidents and/or interactions with other characters in a text. The correct response may relate to an effect of an incident or interaction with another character in a text.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts (story or drama) that may vary in complexity

Sample Item
Stem Information
(as applicable)

Part A
How does the narrator respond to the tour of the aquarium?

Part B
Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in part A?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Craft and Structure
Standard	RL.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will determine the meaning of words and phrases as used in a literature text as well as the use either of particular language or the impact of the language.</p> <p>The student will analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>Determining the correct response will require an understanding of the figurative or connotative meaning of words and phrases and an analysis of the word choice.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may also require an understanding of how the language impacts the meaning or tone of a text.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>Read the lines from the poem.</p> <p>[lines from the poem]</p> <p>Which phrase from the lines suggests a positive feeling?</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Craft and Structure
Standard	RL.6.5. Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text.</p> <p>The student will analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Determining the correct response may require an analysis of how, e.g., specific scenes, conversations, or descriptions contribute to the theme, setting, or plot of a narrative text.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>Read the paragraph from the passage.</p> <p>[paragraph from the passage]</p> <p>How does the paragraph contribute to the passage?</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Craft and Structure
Standard	RL.6.6. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator in a text.</p> <p>The student will explain how an author develops the point of view of the speaker in a text.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>Determining the correct response may require an analysis of the development of the narrator’s or speaker’s point of view.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may include explaining the literature devices an author uses to develop point of view, including description, dialogue, and narration.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	How does the author develop the point of view in the passage?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	RL.6.8. Differentiate among odes, ballads, epic poetry, and science fiction.
Evidence Statements	The student will differentiate between odes, ballads, epic poetry, and science fiction.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Determining the correct response will require knowledge of the differences between odes, ballads, epic poetry, and science fiction.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>Part A</p> <p>Which statement best explains why [passage title] fits into the science fiction genre?</p> <p>Part B</p> <p>Which sentence from the passage best supports the answer in part A?</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Literature

Strand	Reading Literature
Subcategory	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	RL.6.9. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
Evidence Statements	The student will compare and contrast the approach to similar themes and topics in texts written in different forms or genres.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Determining the correct response may require an understanding of similarities and differences between two different literature genres.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	How do the authors of [passage 1] and [passage 2] reveal the themes in both passages?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	RI.6.11. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly.</p> <p>The student will cite textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>Determining the correct response may require an analysis of key ideas directly stated in the text or a portion of the text.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may require the use of key ideas and/or details stated explicitly in the text to support a larger idea, connection, or inference.</p> <p>Determining the correct response may require an understanding of the layers of support for an idea, with a focus on the strongest support.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which sentence from the passage best supports the idea that each snowflake is an original?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	RI.6.12. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will determine a central idea of a text based on details within the text.</p> <p>The student will provide a summary of the text that is distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>Determining the correct response will require an understanding of the details in the text that support a central idea of an informational text.</p> <p>Determining the correct response will require an understanding of the key elements of an informational text and/or an ability to distinguish the most important details from the least important details in an informational text.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>Part A</p> <p>Which statement is a central idea of the passage?</p> <p>Part B</p> <p>Which detail from the passage best supports the answer in part A?</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Key Ideas and Details
Standard	RI.6.13. Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced in a text.</p> <p>The student will analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is illustrated in a text.</p> <p>The student will analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is elaborated in a text.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	The item may require an analysis of how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	In the section “What are snow crystals?” how is the idea of the shape of snow crystals introduced?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts; Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Craft and Structure
Standard	RI.6.14. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
Evidence Statements	The student will determine the meaning of words and phrases as well as the use of figurative, connotative, and technical language or the impact of the language.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Determining the correct response will require an understanding of the figurative, connotative, or technical meanings of words and phrases. Determining the correct response may also require an understanding of how the language impacts the text.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Read the sentences from the passage. Poets write about how quiet the world sounds after a snowstorm. They are making a scientific observation. New snow has a <u>sound-dampening</u> effect. What does sound-dampening mean as it is used in the sentences?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts; Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Craft and Structure
Standard	RI.6.15. Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text.</p> <p>The student will analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section contributes to the development of the ideas.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	The item may require an analysis of how a part of a text fits into the overall structure of a text and/or the item may direct students to analyze how a part of a text contributes to the development of the ideas in the text.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	How does the second paragraph relate to the overall structure of the passage?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Craft and Structure
Standard	RI.6.16. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
Evidence Statements	The student will determine an author’s point of view in an informational text. The student will determine an author’s purpose.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	The item may focus on an author’s perspective or viewpoint as evident in the text. The focus of the item may be on how an author conveys a particular point of view or purpose; the correct answer will focus on how an author conveys a purpose or point of view.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Move the phrase that describes the author’s purpose into the chart. Then, move the phrase that explains how that purpose is conveyed in the passage into the chart. Move one phrase into each box of the chart. [A labeled chart for “Author’s Purpose” and “How it is Conveyed” follows. Students can choose a purpose and method used to convey the purpose from a list under each side of the chart.]

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	RI.6.17. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
Evidence Statements	The student will integrate information presented in different media or formats, including visual and quantitative formats, to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Determining the correct response may require that students draw a conclusion by integrating the information presented in the texts.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which statement about snowflakes is supported by information in both the passage and figure 2?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	RI.6.18. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
Evidence Statements	The student will evaluate the argument and claims in a text. The student will distinguish claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	An item may focus on the argument and claims presented in a text and how they are developed. The item may require an evaluation of the author’s use of reasoning and evidence as well as persuasive techniques commonly used in argument (e.g., bandwagon, appeal to authority). The item may require differentiation between supported and unsupported claims in a text. The item may ask students to determine one or more claims made in the text or to determine the general argument of the text as a whole.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which information best supports the claim that snow can appear colorful?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

Strand	Reading Informational Text
Subcategory	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Standard	RI.6.19. Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).
Evidence Statements	The student will compare and contrast two authors’ presentations of the same events.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	The item will require comparison of the information presented in both texts. The item may require the determination of conflicting information or the interpretation of facts. An item may require students to find textual evidence to support an analysis of the two texts.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	How are the two passages different in the ways the authors present information?

Writing

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Writing

Item specifications are one of the key requirements for a high-quality, legally defensible, standards-based assessment. Item specifications help define important characteristics of the items (i.e., test questions) developed for each standard. These item specifications provide guidelines to help clarify the focus of what is to be assessed, what items may include, and what items may not include (i.e., assessment limits). Item specifications are used by item writers, item editors, and item reviewers as a common reference throughout the item-development process, from initial writing to final approval. These English language arts item specifications are based on Alabama Course of Study Standards.

Writing has two subcategories: Text Types and Purposes and Research to Build and Present Knowledge.

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Text Types and Purposes

Strand	Writing
Subcategory	Text Types and Purposes
Standard	<p>W.6.21. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. d. Establish and maintain a formal style. e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will introduce claim(s).</p> <p>The student will organize the reasons and evidence clearly.</p> <p>The student will support a claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <p>The student will use credible sources.</p> <p>The student will demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text.</p> <p>The student will use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.</p> <p>The student will establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>The student will provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in item stem.

DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>A student is writing an argumentative essay about problems with the use of technology in the classroom. The student is writing a paragraph that focuses on a specific claim. Read the claim.</p> <p>Claim: The use of technology can be an obstacle for student performance during the school day.</p> <p>Which sentences in the student’s paragraph provide the most relevant evidence to support the claim? Choose two answers.</p> <p>[A simulated student paragraph is provided. The sentences are all available for the student to select using the hot text functionality.]</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Text Types and Purposes

Strand	Writing
Subcategory	Text Types and Purposes
Standard	<p>W.6.22. Write informative or explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison or contrast, and cause and effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. e. Establish and maintain a formal style. f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will introduce a topic.</p> <p>The student will organize ideas.</p> <p>The student will include formatting, graphics, or multimedia for comprehension.</p> <p>The student will develop the topic of an informative/explanatory text with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or quotations.</p> <p>The student will use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</p> <p>The student will use precise language to inform about or explain the topic.</p>

	<p>The student will use domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p> <p>The student will establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>The student will provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in item stem.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which sentence is an example of formal language that could be used in an informative essay?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Text Types and Purposes

Strand	Writing
Subcategory	Text Types and Purposes
Standard	<p>W.6.23. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator, characters, or both; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will engage the reader by establishing a context.</p> <p>The student will introduce a narrator and/or characters.</p> <p>The student will organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>The student will use narrative techniques to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>The student will use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</p> <p>The student will use precise words and phrases to convey experiences and events.</p>

	<p>The student will use relevant descriptive details to convey experiences and events.</p> <p>The student will use sensory language to convey experiences and events.</p> <p>The student will provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	Sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in item stem.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>A student is writing a narrative for language arts class. Read a paragraph from the narrative.</p> <p>Lanie paced backstage, waiting for her turn. She could have watched the act before her as a distraction. But she needed to run through the song in her head that she was about to perform on the piano for the school talent show. She heard the music from the violin onstage stop. Lanie knew it was now her turn.</p> <p>Which sentence should the student include at the end of the paragraph to best add descriptive details?</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Strand	Writing
Subcategory	Research to Build and Present Knowledge
Standard	W.6.27. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will conduct short research projects.</p> <p>The student will answer a question.</p> <p>The student will draw on several sources and refocus the inquiry when appropriate.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	The stimulus should be constructed to assess likely relevancy of information from sources.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>A student is writing a report on the importance of children eating breakfast. The student has found multiple sources. Choose the source that would most likely provide the most relevant information to answer each research question that the student wants to address in the report. Then, move that source into the correct box of the chart.</p> <p>[A chart is included with a question on each side of the chart. The draggers are specific sources that the student can choose from to answer the questions.]</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Strand	Writing
Subcategory	Research to Build and Present Knowledge
Standard	W.6.28. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources.</p> <p>The student will assess the credibility of each source.</p> <p>The student will quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>The student will provide basic bibliographic information for sources.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	A stimulus may not be necessary.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>Read the source a student found written by an art critic about a famous painting.</p> <p>Vincent van Gogh’s famous painting <i>The Starry Night</i> is both fanciful and factual. Van Gogh’s appreciation for nature is apparent in the swirling sky and twisting bushes in the foreground. He also reveals his feelings for his hometown in the sleeping village that rests quietly despite the turmoil in the sky. The painting is one of peace, but it is also full of motion.</p> <p>Which sentence best paraphrases the information from the source?</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Strand	Writing
Subcategory	Research to Build and Present Knowledge
Standard	<p>W.6.29. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apply <i>Grade 6 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics”). b. Apply <i>Grade 6 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will draw evidence from literature texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>The student will draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	This standard is best measured through text-dependent writing. The student will draw from literature and informational texts and use textual evidence in the writing.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	TDW
Text Types/Context	one or more grade-appropriate literature or informational texts that may vary in complexity
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	See Appendix A page 58

Item Specifications for English Language Arts:

Performance Task—Text-Dependent Writing (TDW) Items

Text-Dependent Writing items appear only in English language arts. TDWs require the student to provide a literary analysis of a reading passage, passage set, and/or other type of stimulus that the student has read during the test event. A student is then asked to draw on basic writing skills while inferring and synthesizing information from the passage, passage set, or other stimulus (making use of and referencing content from the source[s] to support the analysis) in order to develop a comprehensive, holistic essay response. TDW items frequently ask students to analyze and explain a more complex line of reasoning in detail. The demand required of a student's reading and writing skills in response to a text-dependent writing task is similar to the demands required for a student to be college and career ready. TDW items are scored using a 4-point rubric.

The TDW passage set is considered one of the operational reading passage sets, and it is presented like the other reading passages with all of its associated items (MC, MS, EBSR, TE, TDW). The student reads the passage set and answers the items (MC, MS, EBSR, and/or TE) that follow. This model helps to scaffold the student's comprehension of the passage set and begins to prepare the student for the TDW task. The TDW task is the last item in the passage set. This model thus meets standard W.6.29: Draw evidence from literature or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

In the table, the passage types for the TDW passage set may include, but are not limited to, the following text types.

Passage Types for Text-Dependent Writing

Literature Texts	Informational Texts
<p>Stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adventure stories • folktales • legends • tall tales • fables • fantasy • realistic fiction • myths • historical fiction • excerpts from longer works <p>Dramas Poetry</p>	<p>Literary Nonfiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biographies • autobiographies • history • social studies • science • technical • journals/memoirs/diaries • essays • editorials • historical documents

Language

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Language

Item specifications are one of the key requirements for a high-quality, legally defensible, standards-based assessment. Item specifications help define important characteristics of the items (i.e., test questions) developed for each standard. These item specifications provide guidelines to help clarify the focus of what is to be assessed, what items may include, and what items may not include (i.e., assessment limits). Item specifications are used by item writers, item editors, and item reviewers as a common reference throughout the item-development process, from initial writing to final approval. These English language arts item specifications are based on Alabama Course of Study Standards.

Language has two subcategories: Conventions of Standard English Types and Vocabulary Acquisition and Use.

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Conventions of Standard English

Strand	Language
Subcategory	Conventions of Standard English
Standard	<p>L.6.37. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrate knowledge of subject-verb agreement when interrupted by a prepositional phrase, with inverted word order, and with indefinite pronouns as subjects. b. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive). c. Use intensive pronouns (e.g., <i>myself, ourselves</i>). d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. e. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents). f. Recognize variations from Standard English in their own and others’ writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will use subject-verb agreement correctly in writing when it is interrupted by prepositional phrases, inverted word order, and with indefinite pronouns as subjects.</p> <p>The student will ensure that pronouns are in the proper case.</p> <p>The student will use intensive pronouns.</p> <p>The student will recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number.</p> <p>The student will recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun person.</p> <p>The student will recognize and correct vague pronouns.</p>

	<p>The student will recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking.</p> <p>The student will identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	A stimulus may or may not be needed.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Conventions of Standard English

Strand	Language
Subcategory	Conventions of Standard English
Standard	L.6.38. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive or parenthetical elements. b. Spell correctly.
Evidence Statements	The student will use punctuation to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. The student will spell correctly.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	A stimulus may or may not be needed.
DOK(s)	1, 2
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Which sentence uses parentheses incorrectly?

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Strand	Language
Subcategory	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
Standard	<p>L.6.40. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>Grade 6 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>audience, auditory, audible</i>). c. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
Evidence Statements	<p>The student will use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>The student will use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and/or roots as clues to the meaning of a word.</p> <p>The student will consult print and digital reference materials to find the pronunciation of key words and phrases.</p> <p>The student will consult print and digital reference materials to determine or clarify the precise meaning or part of speech.</p>
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	<p>The item will focus on determining the most likely meaning of a word or phrase based on the context in which the word or phrase appears. Adequate context must be provided within the text.</p>

	<p>The item may require discrete knowledge of Greek and Latin roots appropriate for Grade 6. The item may require the ability to assess the meaning of new words given the definition of Greek and Latin roots.</p> <p>The item will focus on the use of a reference resource to clarify the meaning of a word.</p>
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed
Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	<p>Read the sentences from the passage. Choose the underlined phrase in the sentence that best helps explain the meaning of the word <u>[vocabulary word]</u>.</p> <p>[A paragraph follows with several phrases underlined for the student to select from using the hot text functionality.]</p>

Item Specifications for Grade 6 English Language Arts: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Strand	Language
Subcategory	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
Standard	L.6.41. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context. b. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words. c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., <i>stingy</i>, <i>scrimping</i>, <i>economical</i>, <i>unwasteful</i>, <i>thrifty</i>).
Evidence Statements	The student will interpret figures of speech in context. The student will use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. The student will distinguish among the connotations of words with similar definitions.
Assessment Limits/Content Constraints	The item will focus on the use and intended or most likely meaning of a figure of speech. The item may focus on word relationships and how they can help determine meanings of unknown words. The item may focus on the nuances of the meanings of words with similar definitions.
DOK(s)	2, 3
Item Types	MC, MS, EBSR, TE
Text Types/Context	Allowed

Sample Item Stem Information (as applicable)	Read the sentences from [passage title]. [sentences from the passage] What does the author mean by the phrase “[idiomatic language]”?
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Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Passage Set 1

A Quick Guide to Snow and Snowflakes

Are there days when you wish for snow? If you live in a warm, dry place like one of the Arizona deserts, snow almost never falls. Florida, on the other hand, has plenty of moisture, but the temperatures are often not low enough for snow to form. Snow requires two things: moisture and low temperatures. Snow crystals cannot form without both of these.

What is snow?

Snow is precipitation in the form of ice crystals. Ice crystals form in a cloud when the temperature in the cloud is below freezing. Freezing occurs at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Water droplets form when water changes from a vapor to a liquid. The tiny water droplets then freeze into ice crystals. When the Sun heats the water in lakes or streams, the water evaporates—or turns into vapor. This vapor rises into the atmosphere, condenses, and forms clouds. If the atmosphere is warm, rain falls from the clouds. If the atmosphere is cold (below freezing), snow falls.

What are snow crystals?

Scientists use the terms “snow crystal” and “snowflake” to describe two different things. A snow crystal is a single crystal of ice, but a snowflake is a cluster of snow crystals that falls to Earth. Snow crystals are very different from sleet.

Sleet occurs when drops of rain freeze as they fall to Earth. Snow crystals, on the other hand, are formed in a cloud before they fall to Earth.

Dr. Kenneth Libbrecht, a physics professor at the California Institute of Technology, studies snow crystals. He puts them under high-powered microscopes and photographs them. He says that the most basic form of a snow crystal is a hexagonal prism (figure 1). Some are long and thin. Others are short and thick. The size varies, but the shape remains the same. Small snow crystals usually take the simple form of a hexagonal prism.

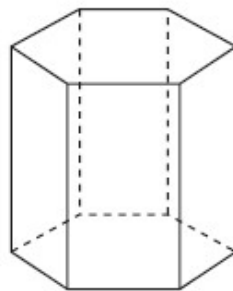


figure 1

As snow crystals grow, branches sprout from the corners to make more complicated shapes. There are six corners, so most snow crystals have six arms. The arms tend to grow at about the same rate, so they are all about the same length. Of course, not all snow crystals have a perfect shape. It is difficult to see some snow crystals with the human eye. This is a drawing of one that was photographed through a high-powered microscope (figure 2).



figure 2

What are snowflakes?

Snowflakes occur when snow crystals join together. Most snowflakes are about a half an inch wide. Much-larger snowflakes may form when the ground temperature is near freezing and light winds are blowing. Big snowflakes can be almost two inches wide. It is difficult to measure snowflakes, however, since they tend to melt!

Why is snow white?

Snow crystals have no color at all. When they fall as snowflakes, they appear white. Most natural materials, such as grass, dirt, or rocks, absorb some sunlight, which gives them their colors. Snow does not absorb sunlight. It reflects almost all light, so it looks white.

Sometimes deep snow will appear blue. As the light travels through many layers of snow, some of it is absorbed. Red light is absorbed more easily than blue light, so the light bouncing back tends to look blue.

Why is snow crunchy?

Snow affects how sound waves travel. When the snow is fresh and fluffy, it absorbs sound waves. Poets write about how quiet the world sounds after a snowstorm. They are making a scientific observation. New snow has a sound-dampening effect.

But as the snow is packed down, the snow crystals compress together. This creates a crunchy or creaking sound. Experts at the National Snow and Ice Data Center say that “the colder the snow, the louder the crunch.” As the snow begins to melt, it makes no noise at all.

Why study snow?

Scientists like Dr. Libbrecht study snowflakes to understand exactly how they form and assemble themselves into particular shapes. This is called self-assembly. Snowflakes use a simple form of self-assembly. The cells in our body, for example, form and divide on their own. Biological self-assembly, the kind that occurs in the human body, is much more complex than snowflake self-assembly. However, scientists often gain insight into more complex mechanisms by understanding simple ones. “There is a great deal of interesting physics, chemistry, and materials science wrapped up in snowflake growth, and studying the lowly snowflake may indeed teach us something useful,” Dr. Libbrecht says. He adds, “History has shown over and over that the fundamental knowledge gained by doing basic science (without worrying about what it’s good for) often leads to useful engineering applications.” Dr. Libbrecht does not know what those applications

might be, but he thinks that scientists should try to understand how nature works because all knowledge is useful.

When people learn that he studies snowflakes, many ask, “Is every snowflake unique?”

“Yes!” he says, and then he explains. “It’s like shuffling a deck and getting the exact same shuffle for 52 cards. You could shuffle every second for the entire life of the universe, and you wouldn’t come close to getting two of the same.”

Each and every snowflake is amazing in its own way.

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Passage-Based Sample Item 1

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the idea that each snowflake is an original?

- (a) As snow crystals grow, branches sprout from the corners to make more complicated shapes.
- (b) It is difficult to see some snow crystals with the human eye.
- (c) Much-larger snowflakes may form when the ground temperature is near freezing and light winds are blowing.
- (d) Each and every snowflake is amazing in its own way.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	19
Alignment	RI.6.11
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	D

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Passage-Based Sample Item 2

In the section "What are snow crystals?" how is the idea of the shape of snow crystals introduced?

- (a) by explaining the process scientists use to observe snow crystals
- (b) by presenting anecdotes from scientists who have studied snow crystals in nature
- (c) by comparing opinions from different scientists about snow crystals
- (d) by sharing the way scientists believe the formation of snow crystals occurs

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	21
Alignment	RI.6.13
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	A

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Passage-Based Sample Item 3

Which statement about snowflakes is supported by information in **both** the passage and figure 2?

- (a) Snowflakes can teach us something useful.
- (b) Snowflakes can sometimes appear blue.
- (c) Snowflakes can have complex designs.
- (d) Snowflakes can dampen sound.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	25
Alignment	RI.6.17
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	3
Answer Key	C

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Passage-Based Sample Item 4

Which information **best** supports the claim that snow can appear colorful?

- (a) Blue light tends to bounce off deep snow.
- (b) Fresh snow absorbs sound waves.
- (c) White clouds produce snow.
- (d) The Sun creates red light.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	26
Alignment	RI.6.18
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	3
Answer Key	A

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)
Text-Dependent Writing Scoring Guidelines



TEXT DEPENDENT WRITING (TDW) SCORING GUIDELINES

4	3	2	1
<p>Demonstrates effective analysis of text and skillful writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the text(s) Strong organizational structure and focus on the task with logically grouped and related ideas, including an effective introduction, development, and conclusion Thorough analysis based on explicit and implicit meanings from the text(s) to support claims, opinions, and ideas Substantial, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using an effective combination of details, examples, quotes, and/or facts Substantial reference to the main ideas and relevant key details of the text(s) Skillful use of transitions to link ideas within categories of textual and supporting information Effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) Few errors, if any, are present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present do not interfere with meaning 	<p>Demonstrates adequate analysis of text and appropriate writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequately addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the text(s) Appropriate organizational structure and focus on the task with logically grouped and related ideas, including a clear introduction, development, and conclusion Clear analysis based on explicit and implicit meanings from the text(s) to support claims, opinions, and ideas Sufficient, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using an appropriate combination of details, examples, quotes, and/or facts Sufficient reference to the main ideas and relevant key details of the text(s) Appropriate use of transitions to link ideas within categories of textual and supporting information Appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) Some errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present seldom interfere with meaning 	<p>Demonstrates limited analysis of text and inconsistent writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistently addresses some parts of the task to demonstrate a partial understanding of the text(s) Weak organizational structure and focus on the task with ineffectively grouped ideas, including a weak introduction, development, and/or conclusion Inconsistent analysis based on explicit and/or implicit meanings from the text(s) that ineffectively supports claims, opinions, and ideas Limited and/or vague reference to the text(s) using some details, examples, quotes, and/or facts Limited reference to the main ideas and relevant details of the text(s) Limited use of transitions to link ideas within categories of textual and supporting information Inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) Errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present may interfere with meaning 	<p>Demonstrates minimal analysis of text and inadequate writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimally addresses part(s) of the task to demonstrate an inadequate understanding of the text(s) Minimal evidence of an organizational structure and focus on the task with arbitrarily grouped ideas that may or may not include an introduction, development, and/or conclusion Minimal analysis based on the text(s) that may or may not support claims, opinions, and ideas Insufficient reference to the text(s) using few details, examples, quotes, and/or facts Minimal reference to the main ideas and relevant details of the text(s) Few, if any, transitions to link ideas Little or no use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) Many errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present often interfere with meaning

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Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing Task

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Writer's Checklist

PROOFREAD after you write

- I addressed all parts of the writing task.
- I included evidence from the text to support ideas in my essay.
- I stayed organized and focused on the writing task.
- I used correct language, a variety of sentence types, and paragraph transitions in my essay.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.
- I reread the essay to make sure it was clear and well organized.

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 1, Response Score 4

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

How do weather conditions affect the looks and appearance of snow? Well, that's what I'm here to tell you. Weather condition affects snow falling at all, the size and shape of the snow, and even the color. Snow is formed when water droplets in clouds freeze. It has to be at least thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit for that to happen. The water droplets turn into ice crystals, and sometimes they cluster together and form snowflakes. Then they parcipitate down and give us snow.

Snow has to have certain weather condition to fall in the first place. That is illustrated here, "Snow requires two things: moisture and low temperatures." Snow needs very specific weather condition to form. Another example of that is, "If you live in a warm, dry place like one of the Arizona deserts, snow almost never falls." Once more, snow has to have the correct conditions. It is ubruptly clear from my evidence that snow has to have specific condition to form and fall.

Weather conditions can effect how small or large the snow itself is. That is seen here, "Sleet occurs when drops of rain freeze as they fall to Earth." Only when certain weather conditions are met can sleet be made. Another piece of evidence showing that is here, "A snow crystal is a single crystal of ice, but a snowflake is a cluster od snow crystals that fall to Earth." Again, these conditions have to be met for a snowflake to be made. Weather condition obviously can effect the shape and size of snow crystals, snowflakes, and sleet.

My final reason that weather conditions affect snow is that it can change the color. Sounds crazy, right? Well, you can see what I mean here. "As the light travels through many layers of snow, some of it is absorbed." When the snow absorbs light, it affects it's color. That can be seen here, "As the light travels through many layers of snow, some of it is absorbed." When the snow absorbs light, it affects it's color. That can be seen here. "Sometimes deep snow will appear blue." Since it absorbs the sunlight, it reflects to look blue. It is apparent that weather condition can change the color of snow.

Weather conditions affect snow in many ways. It makes it fall and form, determines the size and shape, and changes the color. It has to be a moist environment, and it has to be cold. After that, it either becomes snow crystals, snowflakes, or sleet. Once the snow has fallen, and if there's enough, when the sun shines the snow will absorb it and change colors. Who knew weather condition affected snow in so many ways?

Item information on following page

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 4 – Demonstrates effective analysis of text and skillful writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response effectively addresses all parts of the task by analyzing how specific temperature and moisture must be for snow formation, how conditions effect the shape and size of various types of frozen precipitation (snow crystals, snowflakes, and sleet), and under what conditions snow can appear as different colors to demonstrate an in depth understanding of the text. The response demonstrates a strong organizational structure and focus on the task with logically grouped and related ideas (<i>has to have certain weather condition to fall; conditions can effect how small or large the snow itself is; it can change the color</i>). An effective introduction (<i>How do weather conditions affect the looks and appearance of snow?</i>) and conclusion (<i>Who knew weather condition affected snow in so many ways?</i>) support the organization. Development is effective throughout the response. Thorough analysis is provided based on explicit an implicit meaning from the text (it is abruptly clear from my evidence that snow has to have specific conditions to form and fall; when certain weather conditions are met can sleet be made; When the snow absorbs light, it affects it's color. That can be seen here...) supports claims, opinions, and ideas. The insightful analysis demonstrates the student's control and skill as well as an in-depth understanding of the texts. The response includes substantial, accurate, and direct references to the text (Snow is formed when water droplets in clouds freeze. It has to be at least thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit for that to happen; "Snow requires two things: moisture and low temperatures"; "Sometimes deep snow will appear blue"; Since it absorbs the sunlight, it reflects to look blue) using an effective combination of details, examples, quotes, and facts provides ample support. A skillful use of transitions (<i>Once more...; My final reason...</i>) link ideas throughout the response, creating a sense of coherence and completeness. Precise language is used effectively (It makes if fall and form, determines the size and shape, and changes the color). Few errors are present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The errors present do not interfere with meaning
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	4	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 2, Response Score 4

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

There are many ways that weather conditions can effect the looks and appearance of snow. You may be wondering what exactly is snow? Well, snow is basicly frozen rain, that can stick to the ground in right temperatures. Its has to be at least 32 degrees Fahrenheit for snow to fall. But, that all has to do with the weather and the vast effect it has on the physical appearance to snow.

People usually think that snow is just white, but thats not entirely true. See, snow flakes only appear to be white because of the way the sun reflects them. See, naturistic things absorb sunlight and the absortation gives them colors, but that's not the case with snow. It depends on the deepness of the snow as to wether it has color or not. Deep snow can appear to be blue, because the snow after many layers tend to absorb the sunlight as well.

Snowflakes form when the ground temperature is is near or below freezing, as the passage states on page 4, also when light winds are blowing. Obviously, snow cannot form when he weather is sunny and humid. 32 degrees farhenheit is the freezing temperature, making it possible for frozen precipitation. The weather does have a lot of effect on snow and a lot of other things as well. The weather has to be cold, or no snow.

Believe it or not, snowflakes and snow crystals are two different things. A snow scrystal is just one ice crystal, whilst a snowflake is a group of snow crystals that fall to the Earth. Snow crystals are fromed, as the passage says on page 2, in a cloud before they come to Earth. Sleet is formed when rain drops freeze as they fall to Eath. So, the way snow flakes and snow crystals even form depend on the weather, so that would effect the way they look and maybe even feel when they stick to the ground.

Well, as you've just read, weather of course effects the looks and appearance of snow. Snow can have vast difference. There is an endless list of differences among snow, and they, of course, form from the weather conditions at that time. I mean without the weather snow wouldn't even happen. Or rain, or life, but that's besides the point.

Item information on following page

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 4 – Demonstrates effective analysis of text and skillful writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response effectively addresses all parts of the task by analyzing how sun, temperature, and wind can affect color and form of frozen precipitation (Flakes, crystals or sleet) to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the texts. The response demonstrates a strong organizational structure and focus on the task with logically grouped and related ideas (the variables that affect the color of snowflakes, temperature, the difference between snow crystals, snowflakes, and sleet). An effective introduction (<i>There are many ways that weather conditions can effect the looks and appearanceof snow</i>) and conclusion (<i>Well, as you’ve just read, weather of course effects the looks and appearance of snow</i>) support the organization. Development is effective throughout the response. Thorough analysis based on explicit meanings from the text (<i>...think that snow is just white, but thats not entirely true; 32 degrees farhenheit is the freezing temperature, making it possible for frozen precipitation; The weather does have a lot of effect the way snow flakes and snow crystals even form depend on the weather, so that would effect the way they look and maybe even feel when they stick to the ground on snow</i>) supports claims and ideas. The insightful analysis demonstrates the student’s control and skill as well as an in-depth understanding of the text. The response includes substantial, accurate, and direct references to text (<i>Snow crystals are fromed, as the passage says on page 2, in a cloud before they come to Earth; Sleet is formed when rain drop freeze as they fall to Eath</i>) using an effective combination of details, examples and facts are made. A skillful use of transitions (<i>Believe it or not, snowflakes and snow crystals are two different things; People usually think that snow is just white, but that’s not true</i>) link ideas throughout the response. Precise language is used effectively (<i>...that all has to do with the weather and the fast effect it has on the physical appearance to snow</i>). There are errors in spelling, usage, capitalization, and punctuation but the errors do not interfere with meaning.
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	4	



Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 1, Response Score 3

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Weather conditions can affect the looks and appearance of snow. If the sun is covered by a cloud you might see the snow differently than you would if the sun wasn't. Also it depends on where you are and how much snow there is.

Snowflakes are formed when snow crystals join together. Most snowflakes can be close to two inches wide. However, it can be very difficult to measure snowflakes since they melt.

Most people say that snow crystals are white but actually, snow crystals have no color at all. When they fall as snowflakes they seem to look white. A lot of natural materials such as grass or dirt absorb sunlight, which gives them their colors. However, snow does not absorb sunlight. It reflects almost all light. This is what makes it look white.

Sometimes, when there is very deep snow, it will appear blue. When light travels through many layers of snow, some of it is absorbed. Red light is absorbed way more easily than blue light, so the light that is bouncing back looks blue.

Now that you know how weather conditions can affect the way that snow looks and appears, maybe next time you see snow you will know why it is blue!

Item information on following page

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 3 – Demonstrates adequate analysis of text and appropriate writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response adequately addresses all parts of the task by analyzing how different conditions affect snowflake formation, when and why snow appears white, and under what circumstances it appears blue to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the texts. The response demonstrates an appropriate organizational structure and maintains focus on the task with logically grouped and related ideas (ground temperature, light, and deep snow). The response includes a clear introduction (<i>Weather conditions can affect the looks and appearance of snow</i>), development, and conclusion (<i>Now that you know how weather conditions can affect the way that snow looks</i>), all of which support the organizational structure. Clear analysis based on explicit meanings from the text (<i>snow does not absorb sunlight. It reflects almost all light. This is what makes it look white; Red light is absorbed way more easily than blue light, so the light that is bouncing back looks blue</i>) supports claims and demonstrates sufficient understanding of the text. The response includes sufficient and accurate references to text (<i>Large snowflakes can be close to two inches wide; A lot of natural materials such as grass or dirt absorb sunlight which gives them they're colors</i>) using appropriate combination of main ideas, facts, and examples. There is appropriate use of precise and domain specific language (<i>so that the light that is bouncing back looks blue</i>). An appropriate use of transitions (<i>Most people say say that snow crystals are white but actually, snow crystals have no color at all.</i>) links ideas within categories. Errors in sentience formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization and punctuation may be present but seldom interfere with meaning.
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	3	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 2, Response Score 3

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Many different types of weather conditions can affect how snow can appear or form. Snow crystals have really no color but when they fall from the sky as snowflakes they appear to be white. Unlike some natural materials such as grass or dirt, snow doesn't absorb sunlight, it actually reflects almost all light, and that's what makes it look white. Sometimes snow that is deeper into the ground can appear blue. This is because as the light travels through many layers of snow, some of it is absorbed. Red light tends to be absorbed more easily than blue light, so light bouncing off of the snow tends to look blue.

Temperature can also affect how snow appears. This is because in order for snow to form the temperature in the clouds has to be 32 degrees Fahrenheit or lower for water to freeze. So sometimes the temperature in the atmosphere is barely cold enough for water to freeze so the water won't freeze as much as other times so when the snow falls it will appear to be more melted and more like an ice looking snow than normal white fluffy snow.

This is how different types of weather conditions affect how snow can appear or form.

Item information on following page

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 3 – Demonstrates adequate analysis of text and appropriate writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response adequately addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the text by addressing two examples of weather conditions that affect the looks and appearance of snow while referencing the text. The response demonstrates an appropriate organizational structure and maintains focus on the task with logically grouped and related ideas (the effects of light on the appearance of snow and the effect of temperature on snow). The response includes a clear introduction (<i>Many different types of weather conditions can affect how snow can appear or form</i>), development, and conclusion (<i>This is how different types of weather conditions affect how snow can appear or form</i>), all of which support the organizational structure. Clear analysis based on explicit meanings from the text (<i>Unlike some natural materials such as grass or dirt, snow doesn't absorb sunlight; So sometimes the temperature in the atmosphere is barely cold enough for water to freeze...so when the snow falls it will appear to more melted</i>) supports claims and demonstrates understanding of the text. The response includes sufficient and accurate references to the text (<i>This is because as light travels through many layers of snow, some of it is absorbed; This is because in order for snow to form the temperature in the clouds has to be 32 degrees Fahrenheit or lower for water to freeze</i>) using an appropriate combination of main ideas, facts, and examples. An appropriate use of transitions (<i>Unlike some natural materials such as grass or dirt; This is because in order for snow to form...</i>) links ideas. There is appropriate use of precise and domain-specific language (<i>...some of it is absorbed; ...the temperature in the atmosphere is barely cold enough for water to freeze...</i>). The errors present seldom interfere with meaning.
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	3	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 1, Response Score 2

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Weather condition affect the appearance of snow by the shape or the color. Snow crystals have no color at all but when they fall they land on dirt, grass, and even rocks which gives them color. Also, sometimes they absorb sunlight. Sometimes deep snow will turn out blue. Also, ice crystals form in a cloud if the weather hits below freezing which occurs at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Water droplets form when water changes from vapor to a liquid which means that tiny water droplets soon form into ice crystals. Also, sleet occurs when rain freezes as it is falling onto Earth. Snowflakes may form when the ground temperature is near freezing and the wind is lightly blowing. There can be a lot of history behind one tiny snowflake. Like all snowflakes have different designs. They don't just form they grow which is incredible. They form a self-assembly just to become a snowflake. All snowflakes are different remember that.

Item information on following page

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 2 – Demonstrates limited analysis of text and inconsistent writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task demonstrating a partial understanding (The response mentions color, water crystals and sleet but there is a lack of understanding on how weather conditions affect the looks and appearance of snow). The response demonstrates a weak organizational structure and focus on the task. Ideas are grouped ineffectively. Weak development (lists information about snow but does not explain how the appearance is affected) and a weak conclusion (<i>All snowflakes are different remember that</i>) contribute to the weak organization. Inconsistent analysis based on explicit meaning from the texts (There is mention of light being absorbed by snow and colors changing, but the response does not connect how this makes snow appear blue) ineffectively supports claims and ideas. The response includes limited reference to the text (<i>Snowflakes may form when the ground temperature is near freezing and the wind is lightly blowing. There can be a lot of history behind one tiny snowflake. Like all snowflake have different designs</i>) using some main ideas, details, and facts. A limited use of transitions (<i>Also, sometimes they absorb sunlight; Also, ice crystals form in a cloud if the weather hits below freezing which occurs at 32 degrees Fahrenheit; Also, sleet occurs when rain freezes as it is falling onto Earth</i>) inconsistently links ideas. There are errors in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation (no space between the end and the beginning of sentences).
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	2	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 2, Response Score 2

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

When snow crystals are formed they have no color. When snow does not absorb the sunlight it needs it reflects what almost looks like light so it appears to be white. Some of the time when deep snow will appear through a lot of layers of snow, some of its absorbed red light. The red light absorbs more easier than the blue light the light that keeps bouncing back appears to be a blue light. Some weather conditions can cause snow's appearance to have color and non color it depends on weather snow's absorbing the sun it needs or if its not weather condition can vary in lots of ways. If scientist like Dr. Libbrecht continue to study snow more information would be found and more information about snow would be taught in schools, classes...etc. Snow's appearance can be effected by the wheater

Item information on following page

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 2 – Demonstrates limited analysis of text and inconsistent writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task demonstrating a partial understanding of the text (The student mentions how snow can appear blue and mentions Dr. Libbrecht and his study of snow., but it is not tied back to the main idea). • This response has a weak organizational structure and focus on the task. The weak introduction (<i>When snow crystals are formed they have no color</i>), ineffective development, and weak conclusion (<i>Snow’s appearance can be effected by the wheater</i>) all contribute to the weak organization. • Inconsistent analysis based on explicit meaning from the text (<i>Some weather conditions can cause snow’s appearance to have color and non color it depends on wrather snow’s abrsorbing the sun it needs or if its not weather condition can vary in lots of ways</i>) ineffectively supports claims. • The response includes limited references to the text using details to describe how snow can appear blue, but this is not put into context for the reader. • A limited use of transitions inconsistently link ideas (the information about Dr. Libbrecht is presented without any connection to how weather conditions affect the looks and appearance of snow). • An inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the texts is evident. • There are errors that may interfere with meaning.
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	2	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 1, Response Score 1

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Most snow flakes are small, but when the ground temparute is near freezing and light wilns are blowing, snowflakes become much larger. Also if the snow is dep as stated in the passage the snow may appear blue. Snow also effects how soundwaves travel.

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<p>Score 1 – Demonstrates minimal analysis of text and inadequate writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response minimally addresses part of the task (presents three ideas about snow, but none of them are developed or explained). • The response presents minimal evidence of an organizational structure and focus on the task; the student’s ideas are grouped arbitrarily with little development. There is no attempt at an introduction or conclusion. • There is minimal analysis and few details for any claims. The response appears more as a brief answer to a question than as an essay. • The response includes minimal references to the text (<i>the snow may appear blue</i>) using facts, examples, and details. • Few transitions (<i>Also</i>) link ideas. • There is little use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary in this response. • Errors interfere with meaning (<i>wilns</i>).
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	1	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 2, Response Score 1

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The way weather conditions effect the apparence of snow is if it is cloudy we do not get as much sun light so snow is not as colorful. I know this because the story said that it was reflectant of most light and may only appear blue sometimes.

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	36–38	<p>Score 1 – Demonstrates minimal analysis of text and inadequate writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response minimally addresses the task to demonstrate an inadequate understanding of the text. • The response demonstrates minimal evidence of an organizational structure and focus on the task; The introduction restates part of the task and there is little development. • Minimal analysis (<i>I know this because the story said that it was reflectant of most light...</i>) does little to support claims, opinions, and ideas. • The response includes a single reference to the text (<i>...if it is cloudy we do not get as much sun light so snow is not as colorful</i>). • Few, if any, transitions are used to link ideas. • There is little use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary in this response. • Errors are present, but they do not interfere with meaning.
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	1	

Appendix A: Passage-Based Sample Items (including Text-Dependent Writing)

Text-Dependent Writing: Student Responses

Student 1, Response Score Off-Topic

The passage describes the formation of snow crystals and snowflakes. Write an essay analyzing how weather conditions affect the look and appearance of snow. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

APPLICATIONS ARE LIKE A JOB THEN YOU TRY TO WORK THEIR SOME PEOPLE TRY TO HAVE A PART TIME JOB LIKE NIGHT SHIFT OR DAY SHIFT SOME PEOPLE TRY TO HAVE JOBS AND CASE OF THAY HAVE TO PAY BILLS AND THEIR HOUSE

Item Information		Response Score Annotation
Page Reference	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response does not address the task.
Alignment	W.6.29	
Depth of Knowledge	3	
Response Score	Off-Topic	

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 1

A student is writing an article arguing in favor of getting rid of plastic straws. Read the introduction to the student's article.

Plastic trash makes its way into Earth's oceans, where it may have a negative impact on sea animals. A simple way to reduce the amount of plastic waste is to stop using plastic drinking straws.

Which **two** sentences should the student include in the introductory paragraph to **best** support the claim?

- (a) Many American cities have already taken steps to get rid of plastic straws.
- (b) Dentists say that using a straw with certain drinks can help protect a person's teeth.
- (c) When my family goes out to eat, my sister uses a straw with her drink, but I rarely do.
- (d) Plastic grocery bags are similar to straws in that they can end up on beaches and in oceans.
- (e) Environmental organizations say that Americans throw away millions of plastic straws each day.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Select
Page Reference	30
Alignment	W.6.21b
Point Value	2
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	A, E

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 2

Which sentence is an example of formal language that could be used in an informative essay?

- (a) Journalists have to do so much writing day in and day out.
- (b) It seems to me that the settlers had quite a tough existence.
- (c) The communication system that birds use is highly developed.
- (d) The ability of the committee to get any work done is really, really lacking.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	32
Alignment	W.6.22e
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	C

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 3

A student is writing a narrative for language arts class. Read a paragraph from the narrative.

Lanie paced backstage, waiting for her turn. She could have watched the act before her as a distraction. But she needed to run through the song in her head that she was about to perform on the piano for the school talent show. She heard the music from the violin onstage stop. Lanie knew it was now her turn.

Which sentence should the student include at the end of the paragraph to **best** add descriptive details?

- (a) Then, Lanie felt really nervous, and her heart began to beat fast while her hands shook in front of her.
- (b) At that time, Lanie felt uneasy about performing in front of others, her hands moving back and forth.
- (c) Suddenly, Lanie felt her heart beating wildly in her throat, her hands trembling like a tree in an earthquake.
- (d) Abruptly, Lanie felt hesitant to go out on stage, while her hands quivered from her distress.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	34
Alignment	W.6.23d
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	C

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 4

A student is writing a report on the importance of children eating breakfast. The student has found multiple sources. Choose the source that would most likely provide the **most** relevant information to answer **each** research question that the student wants to address in the report. Then, move that source into the correct box of the chart.

?

What types of foods are best to eat for breakfast?	How does eating breakfast benefit school-age children?

a web article written by a nutrition expert titled "Morning Power Recipes for Kids"

a magazine article written by a chef titled "Delicious Desserts"

a website from a corporation that advertises protein bars for sale

a government website that explains why breakfast is the most important meal of the day

a video from a television program showing foods sold at a local farmers market

Item Information		Answer Key(s) Description					
Item Type	Technology Enhanced	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What types of foods are best to eat for breakfast?</th> <th style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">How does eating breakfast benefit school-age children?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">a web article written by a nutrition expert titled "Morning Power Recipes for Kids"</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">a government website that explains why breakfast is the most important meal of the day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		What types of foods are best to eat for breakfast?	How does eating breakfast benefit school-age children?	a web article written by a nutrition expert titled "Morning Power Recipes for Kids"	a government website that explains why breakfast is the most important meal of the day
What types of foods are best to eat for breakfast?	How does eating breakfast benefit school-age children?						
a web article written by a nutrition expert titled "Morning Power Recipes for Kids"	a government website that explains why breakfast is the most important meal of the day						
Page Reference	36						
Alignment	W.6.27						
Point Value	2						
Depth of Knowledge	2						
Answer Key	(see description)						

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 5

A student is writing a report about why the yellowhammer became Alabama’s state bird. Which sources would provide the **best** information for the student? Move **two** answers into the chart.

?

Credible Sources for the Report

[an instructional guide on bird-watching in Alabama](#)
[a newspaper article on the official announcement of Alabama’s state bird](#)
[a government site listing the official state bird of each state](#)
[an interview with an Alabama yellowhammer expert](#)
[an online video about attracting yellowhammers to Alabama yards](#)
[a book explaining the habits and habitats of yellowhammers](#)

Item Information		Answer Key(s) Description			
Item Type	Technology Enhanced	<table border="1" style="width: 80%; margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Credible Sources for the Report</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">a newspaper article on the official announcement of Alabama’s state bird</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">an interview with an Alabama yellowhammer expert</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Credible Sources for the Report	a newspaper article on the official announcement of Alabama’s state bird	an interview with an Alabama yellowhammer expert
Credible Sources for the Report					
a newspaper article on the official announcement of Alabama’s state bird					
an interview with an Alabama yellowhammer expert					
Page Reference	37				
Alignment	W.6.28				
Point Value	2				
Depth of Knowledge	2				
Answer Key	(see description)				

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 6

Choose a pronoun from each drop-down menu to correctly complete the sentence.

Katie and went to see that new movie, and to our surprise, both really liked it.

Drop-down 1

went

- we
- I
- me

Drop-down 2

both

- they
- us
- we

Item Information		Answer Key(s) Description
Item Type	Technology Enhanced	Drop-down 1 – I Drop-down 2 - we
Page Reference	43	
Alignment	L.6.37b	
Point Value	2	
Depth of Knowledge	2	
Answer Key	(see description)	

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 7

Which sentences correctly use an intensive pronoun? Choose **two** answers.

- (a) My sister herself showed up to surprise me.
- (b) Mom brought dinner for Tiffany and myself.
- (c) Yesterday, our class met the president himself.
- (d) Bring the materials back to myself when you finish.
- (e) Your completed work needs to be reviewed by yourself.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Select
Page Reference	43
Alignment	L.6.37c
Point Value	2
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	A, C

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 8

Which sentence uses parentheses incorrectly?

- (a) The best part of a picnic is (cooking juicy burgers) on an outdoor grill.
- (b) History (my best subject in school) is the first class on my schedule this year.
- (c) A giraffe (Jim's favorite animal) spends most of its day eating leaves from trees.
- (d) My uncle is an antique dealer (a fascinating career, I think) in Atlanta, Georgia.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	45
Alignment	L.6.38a
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	A

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 9

Read the sentences.

The Tuskegee Airmen were influential as the first African American men in a flying unit in the United States military. They piloted many successful missions in World War II and helped lead to the integration of the military in 1948.

What does the word influential mean as it is used in the sentences?

- (a) lucky
- (b) hopeful
- (c) popular
- (d) significant

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	46
Alignment	L.6.40a
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	D

Appendix B: Sample Standalone Items

Standalone Sample Item 10

Read the sentences.

The weather was changing, and the sky was growing dark. The wind blew down from the mountains, tickling the long grass and causing the flowers to dance in the breeze.

What does the phrase “tickling the long grass” mean in the sentences?

- a) The wind blew the grass in one direction.
- b) The wind caused the grass to move slightly.
- c) The wind bent the grass down to the ground.
- d) The wind made the grass come out of the ground.

Item Information	
Item Type	Multiple Choice
Page Reference	48
Alignment	L.6.41a
Point Value	1
Depth of Knowledge	2
Answer Key	B

Appendix C: Passage Length Ranges

This chart shows the approximate word count ranges per grade for the reading passages in the *ACAP Summative Assessments*. Passages may be under or over the minimum or the maximum of the range based on the needs of the passage content or as recommended by Alabama educator review committee comments.

Approximate Word Count Ranges by Grade Level

Grade	Word Count Range
Grade 2	150–350
Grade 3	550–650
Grade 4	600–700
Grade 5	650–800
Grade 6	650–800
Grade 7	750–850
Grade 8	750–850