MasteryGuide™ English Language Arts

Assessment Specifications and Blueprints

English Language Arts Pilot Design

The English Language Arts (ELA) through-year assessment system uses a genre-based design where students are asked to read literary and informational passages and answer a series of items designed to measure key language and reading skills such as syntax, vocabulary, key ideas, author's craft, and making connections. Each reading item is coded to a CCSS standard and learning progression indicator (item specification) derived from a developmental cognitive theory of acquisition of reading skill that combines the core ideas of the CCSS and the work of Dr. Karin Hess (Hess, 2011). Items are also aligned to Webb's Depth of Knowledge and tagged with item descriptors detailing how the items measure the intended attributes within content strands as appropriate to an end-of-year test.

Each ELA testlet is designed to measure the most appropriate standards for the passage(s), typically covering between four to seven standards per passage or passage set. In addition, each testlet includes standalone items typically covering an additional three to five standards.

The ELA testlets are designed with increasing text and item complexity within grade-level margins, from readily accessible to moderately complex to highly complex text, reflecting students' anticipated learning across the school year. By the end of the year, students will have taken six reading testlets, for a total of 108 items, as well as a performance task focused on writing.

Standalone syntax and vocabulary items provide an opportunity to dig deeper into student progress over the course of the school year and determine at what level students most need support in order to demonstrate acquisition of skills. These standalone items focus on word meaning (vocabulary) and sentence-level meaning (syntax) and include a brief stimulus (a sentence or brief paragraph) within the item itself. Reading comprehension items focus on local or global attributes. Local attributes focus on paragraph-level meaning, while global attributes focus on whole-passage understanding and analysis of paired passages.

Additionally, students will complete a writing performance task testlet. For this testlet, students will revisit reading questions they have previously answered based on passages they have seen before in an earlier administration. These items are included to help elicit ideas and information students can use when writing their response to a prompt. The written responses are not meant to be full essays, but rather shorter responses that develop an idea and support the idea with evidence from the passage or passages.

Passages are selected based on several factors, including passage length (i.e. word count) and text complexity. The word count range centers on what the average student can read in five minutes at each grade level. Text complexity is determined using two factors: quantitative and qualitative measures. Lexile is used as the primary quantitative measure to help determine grade-level appropriateness. Passages are then reviewed for qualitative factors such as meaning or purpose, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. The qualitative measures are very important as some passages cannot be measured quantitatively (e.g., poetry and drama) and others tend to fall either lower or higher in complexity than Lexile indicates (e.g., science text tends to fall higher based on domain-

specific language, though definitions are often provided for the terms, and some literary pieces tend to fall lower if an author uses simpler language to express complex ideas). These factors are also used to sequence passages in increasing complexity and length throughout the school year. All passages are reviewed internally and by educator committees.

Items are developed by New Meridian's team of content, accessibility and fairness, and editorial experts. Representatives from the state departments of education review the items, followed by a review conducted by a cadre of educators recruited by their state department.

Passage Specifications

Grade Level	Priority Focus Topics	Beginning of Year Readily Accessible Text	Middle of Year Moderately Complex Text	End of Year Highly Complex Text
3	What we learn from reading stories of the past (where people live, fables/ folktales/ myths, diverse voices, perspective)	Lexile range: 200–510 Word count[1]: <415	Lexile range: 355–610 Word count: <460	Lexile range: 510–820 Word count: <535
4	Importance of communities and how they are formed (culture, food, helping others, medicine)	Lexile range: 540–775 Word count: <470	Lexile range: 657–876 Word count: <560	Lexile range: 775–1010 Word count: <615
5	How humans view and learn about nature (fables/ tales of the natural world, customs/ traditions, archeology)	Lexile range: 540–775 Word count: <605	Lexile range: 657–875 Word count: <635	Lexile range: 775–1010 Word count: <695
6	Costs and benefits of technology (people/ science that shaped today, inventions that may change the future, important inventions that changed history)	Lexile range: 725–995 Word count: <660	Lexile range: 880–1060 Word count: <700	Lexile range: 995–1185 Word count: <750
7	Identity (What makes a person who they are? What inspires people? What	Lexile range: 725–995	Lexile range: 880–1060	Lexile range: 995–1185

[1] Word counts are determined based on oral reading fluency data gathered and reported on by Hasbrouck and Tindal in 2006. See references for full citation.

	influences people's education and career choices? How can people find their voice?)	Word count: <640	Word count: <680	Word count: <750
8	Change (personal, historical, social – how people create change, how change causes conflicts and resolutions, what it means to be "grown up")	Lexile range: 725–995 Word count: <665	Lexile range: 880–1060 Word count: <730	Lexile range: 995–1185 Word count: <755

Reading Testlet Specifications

Reading testlets are designed to adhere to the following specifications:

Number of questions per reading testlet	18
Interaction types	Approximately: • 75% choice single- or multiple-select multiple choice) – All standalone items and many reading comprehension items are choice items. • 10% evidence-based selected response (EBSR) – This item type is only used on MOY and EOY testlets as it is a more complex item construct, requiring evidence to support a response. • 15% technology-enhanced (TEI) (summary gap match, inline choice, gap match, match) – This item type is used sparingly on BOY testlets and more regularly on MOY and EOY testlets.
Complexity (Webb's Depth of Knowledge)	• Standalone items (Vocabulary, Syntax) – DOK 1 or 2 • Comprehension items (Reading Lit, Reading Info) – DOK 2 or 3
Score points per item	Most items are worth 1 point; however, EBSRs and some TEI and multiple-select items are worth 2 points due to their increased complexity and additional student interactions.
Area	• Vocabulary – word or phrase-level meaning • Syntax – sentence-level meaning • Reading Comprehension – paragraph, whole, paired-text meaning **NOTE**: Items assess the attribute and align to a CCSS standard.

Writing Performance Task Testlet Specifications

Writing performance task testlets are designed to adhere to the following specifications:

Number of reading questions per performance task	5 (from previous administration – serving a pre-writing purpose, to elicit ideas and evidence students can use in their writing – not included in summative score)

Number of writing prompts per performance task	1
Writing interaction type	Constructed Response (CR)
Complexity Extended Response (Webb's Depth of Knowledge)	4
Score points per item	8
Area	Writing: Written Expression
	Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions

MGA ELA Blueprints

Grade 3

Beginning of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.2 – RL.7	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Beginning of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.2 – RI.8	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7, RL.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Performance Task

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	5	2 to 3	N/A
Writing: Written Expression	W.1 or W.2, W.4	1	3 to 4	6
Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions	L.1 – L.3			2

Grade 4

Beginning of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.6	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Beginning of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.8	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7, RL.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Performance Task

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	5	2 to 3	N/A
Writing: Written Expression	W.1 or W.2, W.4			6
Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions	L.1 – L.3	1	3 to 4	2

Grade 5

Beginning of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Beginning of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.4, RI.6 – RI.8	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7, RL.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Performance Task

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	5	2 to 3	N/A
Writing: Written Expression	W.1 or W.2, W.4	1	3 to 4	6
Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions	L.1 – L.3			2

Grade 6

Beginning of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.6	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Beginning of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.8	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7, RL.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Performance Task

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	5	2 to 3	N/A
Writing: Written Expression	W.1 or W.2, W.4	1	3 to 4	6
Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions	L.1 – L.3			2

Grade 7

Beginning of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.6	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Beginning of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.6, RI.8	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Performance Task

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	5	2 to 3	N/A
Writing: Written Expression	W.1 or W.2, W.4			6
Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions	L.1 – L.3	1	3 to 4	2

Grade 8

Beginning of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.4, RL.6	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Beginning of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	6	1 to 2	6
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.6, RI.8	6	2 to 3	6 to 10

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Literary Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RL.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Literary Comprehension	RL.1 – RL.7, RL.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Middle of Year and End of Year Reading Informational Text

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Vocabulary	RI.4, L.4, L.5	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Syntax	L.1, L.3	4	1 to 2	4
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	10	2 to 3	10 to 16

Performance Task

Area	Standards	Number of Items	Depth of Knowledge	Points
Reading: Informational Comprehension	RI.1 – RI.9	5	2 to 3	N/A
Writing: Written Expression	W.1 or W.2, W.4	1	3 to 4	6
Writing: Knowledge of Language and Conventions	L.1 – L.3			2

References

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Change Log

Version	Date	Changes Made	Author
0.1	11.2023	Initial draft	Wendi Anderson
0.2	12.2023	Internal revisions and editing	Wendi Anderson
0.3	7.2024	Internal revisions (Attributes, PT confirmation, Removed draft watermark)	Ann Gordon
0.4	7.2024	Blueprint tables reviewed and formatted	Ann Gordon Jacelyn Spicer
0.5	12.5.2024	Checked all MOY/EOY item counts and updated to ensure all correct 4 / 4/ 10 counts	Ann Gordon