

NSCAS Summative Assessment

English Language Arts

Item Specifications

Grade 8

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Stimuli for Assessing ELA Standards

The 2021 revised Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) illustrate a text-centered approach to instruction in which all students become proficient readers through deliberate practice, and all students have access to grade-level, complex texts. Since high-quality, grade-level complex texts provide the basis for instruction in reading and other ELA domains such as vocabulary acquisition, text complexity will also be integral to the assessment of ELA standards. This introductory section of the item specifications document provides guidelines on the length, text complexity, and genres of stimuli to be used for assessing ELA standards. It also provides an overview of available item types.

Reading Standards

The purpose of the **Reading Prose and Poetry** and **Reading Informational Text** standards is for students to learn and apply reading skills and strategies to comprehend grade-level literary and informational texts. For this reason, measures of text complexity must be aligned with college and career readiness expectations for all students.

The **Lexile** guidelines in the table below are based on the range and complexity of texts outlined in the revised standards, which move students to proficiency as they progress through the grades. Meanwhile, the **Word Count** guidelines are based on the type of passage—**common stimulus** or **standalone**—and its intended use in the assessment. **Common Stimulus** passages are longer texts that are used to assess multiple Reading and Vocabulary standards. Students are asked to read a text and answer several questions that explore the text’s central idea(s) and key particulars. **Standalone** passages are much shorter texts that assess just one Reading, Vocabulary, or Writing standard.

Grade	Common Stimulus Passages for Reading				Standalone Passages for Reading			
	Word Count		Lexile		Word Count		Lexile	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
3	200	650	420	820	31	125	420	820
4	450	750	740	1010	38	150	740	1010
5	450	750	740	1010	38	150	740	1010
6	650	950	925	1185	50	200	925	1185
7	650	950	925	1185	50	200	925	1185
8	650	950	925	1185	50	200	925	1185

Vocabulary Standards

The purpose of the **Vocabulary** standards is for students to build and use **conversational**, **academic**, and **discipline-specific** grade-level vocabulary.

- **Conversational vocabulary** refers to words used in everyday, real-life situations.
- **Academic vocabulary** refers to words likely to appear in a variety of content area texts.
- **Discipline-specific vocabulary** refers to words with precise meanings in one content area.

To assess vocabulary standards, target words/phrases must be embedded in context-rich assets that enable students to determine the word/phrase's meaning through context clues or other word-solving strategies (e.g., morphology, word relationships). Whenever possible, vocabulary should be assessed within the context of grade-level complex texts, after doing a careful review of challenging language that is central to understanding the meaning of the text, including figurative language. In addition, many of the vocabulary standards require that stimuli have above-grade-level words so that students must use context clues or other word-solving strategies to determine meaning.

Depending on the type of passage—**common stimulus** or **standalone**—being used to assess a specific vocabulary standard, follow the **Lexile** and **Word Count** guidelines in the table below. **Common Stimulus** passages are longer texts that are used to assess multiple Reading and Vocabulary standards. Students are asked to read a text and answer several questions that explore the text's central idea(s) and key particulars, including its vocabulary. **Standalone passages** are much shorter texts that assess just one Vocabulary standard.

Grade	Common Stimulus Passages for Vocabulary				Standalone Passages for Vocabulary			
	Word Count		Lexile		Word Count		Lexile	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
3	200	650	420	820	31	125	420	820
4	450	750	740	1010	38	150	740	1010
5	450	750	740	1010	38	150	740	1010
6	650	950	925	1185	50	200	925	1185
7	650	950	925	1185	50	200	925	1185
8	650	950	925	1185	50	200	925	1185

Writing Standards

The purpose of the **Writing** standards is for students to learn and apply writing skills and strategies to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes.

Production of Writing Standards

The **Production of Writing** standards focus on writing skills and strategies related to **grammar**, **usage**, and **mechanics**.

- **Grammar** is the rules by which sentences are constructed.
- **Usage** is the way words and phrases are commonly used.
- **Mechanics** are norms of written language and include only spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Stimuli used to assess the Production of Writing standards should be as short as possible, and some standards may require no stimulus. However, other standards may require assets ranging from a short sentence to a short paragraph to assess the targeted writing skill. For example, an item might ask students to correctly place prepositional phrases within a sentence or identify and fix errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement within a short paragraph. In these cases, follow the **Lexile** and **Word Count** guidelines in the table below.

Grade	Stimuli for Writing Standards			
	Word Count		Lexile	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
3	N/A	125	365	565
4	N/A	150	420	820
5	N/A	150	420	820
6	N/A	200	740	1010
7	N/A	200	740	1010
8	N/A	200	740	1010

Modes of Writing Standards

The Modes of Writing standards focus on four broad modes of writing—**Narrative**, **Opinion** (3–5) or **Argumentative** (6–8), **Informative/Explanatory**, and **Research**. The forms that might be used to assess each genre are as follows:

- **Narrative forms** include but are not limited to: short stories, personal narratives, fables, myths, tall tales, fairy tales, plays, poetry, autobiography, biography, essays, screenplays, narrative nonfiction, realistic fiction, historical accounts, memoirs, nonlinear narratives, legends, epics, and ballads.

- **Opinion, or argumentative, forms** include but are not limited to: personal opinion pieces, appeals, editorials, proposals, personal essays, speeches, letters, literary analyses, and persuasive and op-ed pieces.
- **Informative/explanatory forms** include, but are not limited to: descriptive essays, comparative analyses, historical reports, manuals, process pieces, journal, magazine, and newspaper articles, memorandums, scientific reports, compare/contrast, problem/solution, and cause/effect essays.

When deciding what form to use, consider the grade-level appropriateness of the form and how well the form can assess the given standard.

Research standards emphasize the importance of conducting short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem. They focus on gathering relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism. While many research standards are assessed locally, items on state summative tests may give students a research scenario and ask them to do a specific research task (e.g., take notes, organize information, paraphrase details from a source without altering the meaning).

Stimuli used to assess the Modes of Writing standards should be an excerpt of writing that represents the work of a high-achieving student at the target grade level.

To ensure items assess the writing standards without inadvertently assessing the reading standards too, follow the **Lexile** and **Word Count** guidelines in the table below. In general, stimuli should be as short as possible but as long as necessary to assess the targeted writing skill.

Grade	Stimuli for Writing Standards			
	Word Count		Lexile	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
3	N/A	125	365	565
4	N/A	150	420	820
5	N/A	150	420	820
6	N/A	200	740	1010
7	N/A	200	740	1010
8	N/A	200	740	1010

Item Types for Assessing ELA Standards

The following item types are available for assessing ELA standards.

Multiple-Choice (Choice): Students select one response from multiple options. (1 pt)

Multi-select (Choice Multiple): Students select two or more responses from multiple options. Some multi-select items are also two-point items for which students can earn partial credit. (1–2 pts)

Hot Text: Students select a response from within a piece of text or a table of information (e.g., word, section of a passage, number, symbol, or equation), which highlights the selected text. Some hot text items are also two-point items for which students can earn partial credit. (1–2 pts)

Composite: Students interact with multiple interaction types included within a single item. Students may receive partial credit for composite items. (2 pts)

Gap Match: Students select an option or options in an area called the toolbar and move or “drag and drop” these options (e.g., words, phrases, sentences, quotations) into a defined area, or “gap.” (1–2 pts)

Constructed Response: Students can write a short text of 1–2 sentences in response to a question assessing a Modes of Writing standard.

There are three main considerations when deciding which item type to use:

1. Consider various item types.

The item specifications in this document describe possible item approaches and may refer to a specific item type to illustrate an approach. Consider how a similar approach could be used with a different item type, or how the item approach could be adapted to work more naturally with a different item type.

2. Consider the appropriateness of an item type.

To consider the appropriateness of an item type for a specific grade level and to assess a specific standard, ask these questions:

- How complex is the item type for the grade level? Will the item’s functionality make the task too complex?
- Based on the item type, how easy will it be for students to understand what the item is asking them to do?
- How well or how authentically can the item type assess the targeted standard?
- Does the point value for the item type adequately reflect the difficulty of the task?
- Should students be able to earn partial credit for this standard?
- Can the item type increase student engagement without making the task overly complex?

3. Consider the pros and cons of using a technology-enhanced item (TEI).

Use of TEIs should be both intentional and appropriate for the intended grade level and the standard being assessed. TEIs should never be used for technology's sake alone. For example, TEIs should not be used to increase student engagement if they also make the task overly complex (e.g., students must move many parts into many different containers). Such construct-irrelevant complexity is unfair and detracts from students being able to show what they know and can do. Therefore, the best way to ensure TEIs are used intentionally and appropriately is to consider the pros and cons of using a TEI for each item.

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Item Specifications for Reading Prose and Poetry Standards

LA.8.RP.1

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry
Anchor Standard	Central Ideas and Details Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development of themes or central ideas in grade-level literary texts.
Standard	LA.8.RP.1 Determine two or more implied or explicit themes of a text and how they develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.1 asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine two or more implied or explicit themes in a literary text; and • Determine how those themes develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. <p>A theme is an insight about life or human nature that the author of a literary text wants to share with the reader. An implied theme is a theme that is not directly stated but can be inferred from the characters' actions, dialogue, and events in the story. An explicit theme is a theme that is clearly and directly stated by the author within the text. Themes develop over the course of the literary text through the progression of the plot, character development, and the unfolding of events. A theme's relationship to supporting ideas involves how specific events, character actions, or dialogue contribute to developing, illustrating, and reinforcing the theme throughout the text.</p> <p>Describing what a literary text is mostly about (e.g., identity, justice) is not the same as stating its theme, which should be a statement that offers some insight into life or human nature (e.g., Learning through experience shapes our identity and guides our future decisions.; It's important to defend what is right, even when it's difficult.).</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on determining two or more implied or explicit themes in a literary text and how they are supported with key details. The Grade 8 standard progresses to determining how two or more themes develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. This progression shows that students are expected to understand that a literary text can have multiple themes and to deepen their knowledge of how authors develop these themes over the course of a text.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Determine one or more implied or explicit themes of a literary text. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Determine two or more implied or explicit themes of a text and how they develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze the development of two or more implied or explicit themes of a text and how they develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. DOK: 2–3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will determine one or more implied or explicit themes of a literary text. The theme(s) should be explicitly stated in the text or implied but easy to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify the theme(s) of a literary text. The correct answer should be a complete sentence and could be a direct quotation from the text if the theme is explicitly stated. Distractors should refer to other ideas in the text or use non-theme sentences from the text and should represent an incorrect theme or common misconception about the intended theme. 	<p>Students will determine two or more implied or explicit themes of a text (Part A) and how they develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas (Part B). The implied or explicit themes should be accessible for students in Grade 8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but it should ask for two themes, either in a Multi-select format that asks, “Which two themes are developed in the text?” or in a Multiple-Choice format that asks, “Which statement best expresses the themes of the text?” with options that include two possible themes. The correct answers should be distinct but possibly related themes, such as, “Learning through experience shapes our identity and 	<p>Students will analyze the development of two or more implied or explicit themes of a text (Part A) and how they develop over the course of a literary text, including their relationship to supporting ideas (Part B). The implied or explicit themes should be somewhat challenging to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A and Part B can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the correct answers should require students to make deeper inferences from the text in order to address the “analyze” part of the Advanced ALD.

<p>Themes should be expressed as complete statements. For example, a correct answer would be, “Learning through experience shapes our identity and guides our future decisions” not “learning through experience” or “identity.”</p>	<p>guides our future decisions,” and “Self-discovery is a journey that helps individuals understand their true selves and their place in the world.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part B should focus on how the correct themes from Part A develop over the course of the text. Items that focus on “over the course of the text” might ask students to select two pieces of evidence (e.g., direct quotations, paraphrased descriptions of events) or two supporting ideas that best develop the themes, one piece of evidence or supporting idea for each theme. Items that focus on “how the themes develop” might ask, “Which two statements best describe how the author develops the correct themes from Part A?” The answer options should describe techniques an author may use to develop themes, such as through character or plot development, setting, or figurative language. For example, correct answers might be: “The urban and rural settings where Kameron runs reveal the physical and mental challenges he must face to become a great athlete,” and “Bonding with his mother over a shared love of running helps Kameron realize that winning is not the most important goal.” Distractors might describe lesser points in the text or techniques that the author does not use. 	
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LA.8.RP.2

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry		
Anchor Standard	Central Ideas and Details Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development of themes or central ideas in grade-level literary texts.		
Standard	LA.8.RP.2 Analyze how particular events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning.		
Indicator	N/A		
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.2 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze how particular events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning, which may include synthesis or the use of text evidence. <p>The events in a literary text are the main actions or occurrences that drive the story forward and influence the characters and their decisions. Lines of dialogue refer to the spoken words between characters that reveal their thoughts, feelings, and relationships, and can also advance the plot. Descriptive details are the vivid descriptions of settings, characters, and actions that create a mental image for the reader and enhance the overall atmosphere of the story. To develop the plot means to show how the sequence of events unfolds, builds tension, and leads to the resolution of the 'story's conflict. To reveal aspects of characters means to show the traits, motivations, and changes in characters through their actions, dialogue, and interactions with others.</p> <p>The intent of this standard is for students to think deeply about connections between the plot (i.e., how it develops) and the characters (i.e., how they take part in the action, engage in dialogue, etc.), and how this creates meaning.</p>		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing how particular events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning. The Grade 8 standard remains the same, suggesting that students can benefit from having another year to focus on this type of literary analysis.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing		On Track	Advanced

With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Identify the key events, lines of dialogue, and descriptive details in a text that develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze how particular events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Synthesize how specific events, lines of dialogue, and/or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, and/or create meaning, using evidence from the text. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will identify the key events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details in a text that develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can ask students to identify the key event, line of dialogue, or descriptive detail that best develops the plot or a character or otherwise creates meaning in the text. For example, questions about the plot might be framed as: “Which event/sentence/detail from the passage shows the main problem between Kai and her grandmother/the turning point in the story/how the problem between Kai and her grandmother is resolved?” Questions about characters might be posed similarly, for example, “Which detail from the passage best shows that Kai’s grandmother is wise?”” Finally, questions about meaning can be more targeted and specific to the text, such as, “Which line of dialogue best shows that Kai realizes the value of her grandmother’s wisdom?” 	<p>Students will analyze how particular events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, or create meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can refer to key events, lines of dialogue, or descriptive details from the text and then ask students about their importance. For example, a question about plot development might read, “How do the events in paragraphs X–Y advance the plot of the story?” with the correct answer referring to a specific element of plot, such as the conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, or resolution. Students can also be asked about character development. For example, “What does the conversation between Kai and her grandmother in paragraphs 14–19 reveal about their relationship?” with the correct answer highlighting a specific aspect of Kai’s character, such as curiosity, determination, or independence. Finally, students can be asked more generally about how some part of the text creates meaning. For example, “Why is the vivid description of the marketplace in lines 7–12 important to the poem?” with the correct answer being, “It shows the thrill of standing in a bustling marketplace yet explains why the speaker still feels like an outsider.” 	<p>Students will synthesize how specific events, lines of dialogue, and/or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of characters, and/or create meaning, using evidence from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track. However, to address the “synthesize” and “evidence” aspects of the ALD, Advanced items must have a Part B that asks for multiple pieces of textual evidence to support the correct answer from Part A, with all options being direct quotations or paraphrased details from the text.

LA.8.RP.3

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry
Anchor Standard	Author's Craft Citing relevant and thorough evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development and interaction of individuals, ideas, and events in grade-level literary text.
Standard	LA.8.RP.3 Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.3 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and/or contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text, which may include evaluating the effectiveness of the techniques used. <p>The point of view refers to the vantage point from which a narrative is told (e.g., first person, second person, third person, third-person limited, third-person omniscient). Authors make choices about how to establish, convey, and contrast the points of view of the audience and the characters in a literary text, such as through the use of descriptive language, the internal thoughts and feelings of characters, the dialogue between characters, and the characters' interactions.</p> <p>The audience is the group of readers or viewers that the author intends to reach with a literary work. The characters are the individuals who participate in the action of the story.</p> <p>Authors of literary texts can use point of view to create different effects, such as suspense, humor, and dramatic irony. Suspense is when the author creates a feeling of anticipation or anxiety in the audience about what will happen next in the story. Humor is the quality of amusing or entertaining the audience, often through clever dialogue or situations. Dramatic irony is when the audience knows something that the characters do not, creating a contrast between the character's understanding and the reality of the situation.</p> <p>This standard is meant to encourage thinking about how point of view influences the meaning of a literary text. It is not about labeling the point of view as first-person, third-person, etc.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text. The Grade 8 standard progresses to analyzing how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text. This progression requires a more nuanced understanding of point of view, as students must now consider how the author’s choices about point of view affect the reader or viewer and create different effects.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Describe the contrasting points of view of different characters and the audience that create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Evaluate how effectively an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text, using evidence from the text. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will describe the contrasting points of view of different characters and the audience that create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text. The points of view should be explicitly stated in the text or implied but easy to understand. • Stems can ask students to describe the contrasting points of view of a character and the reader, which create	Students will analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and/or contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text. The points of view should be accessible for students in Grade 8. • Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but the On Track items should add a Part B that asks students how the author establishes, conveys, or contrasts the points	Students will evaluate how effectively the author establishes, conveys, and/or contrasts the points of view of the audience and the characters to create effects such as suspense, humor, or dramatic irony in a literary text, using evidence from the text. The points of view should be implied in

<p>an effect like suspense, humor, or dramatic irony. The question should focus on how a character and the reader view another character, event, or idea in the story differently and do not need to explicitly state the effect. For example, the question might read, “Which statement best describes how the time traveler and the reader view the time traveler’s arrival in the past differently?” with a correct answer being, “The time traveler is awe-struck and eager to approach the ancient city, while the reader suspects that the city is full of danger and decay.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, stems might ask, “Which detail from the passage best explains why the reader views the ancient city differently than the time traveler?” with the answer options all being direct quotations or paraphrased details. For example, a correct answer might be, “The narrator notes that the city’s once-magnificent statues now show signs of ruin, suggesting they were deliberately marred by human hands,” while a plausible distractor might be, “The narrator describes the city’s impressive buildings, which resemble living organisms, as architectural marvels.” 	<p>of view of the audience and the characters. This might be done by asking students for one or more pieces of textual evidence (e.g., direct quotations, paraphrased details) that support the correct answer to Part A.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, a single-part item can focus on the analysis piece only. For example, “How do the time traveler’s and reader’s contrasting points of view affect the story?” with the correct answer being, “The contrast between the time traveler’s inner excitement about meeting ancient humans and the reader’s awareness that their city seems unwelcoming creates suspense.” Or “How does the author show that the time traveler finds humor in his situation?” with a correct answer being, “by comparing the ordinary tasks the time traveler would be doing in the present with the extraordinary ones that await him in the past.” Or “How do these lines from the play create a contrast between what the characters and the audience know?” with the correct answer being, “Because the chorus only shares these details with the audience, the character’s actions seem ridiculous.” Regardless of the question, the answer options should focus on techniques authors use to contrast the points of view of the reader and characters (e.g., by giving the reader information that the characters do not have or do not recognize the importance of, by contrasting the character’s internal thoughts in a way that gives the reader more insight into the reality of the situation, by including dialogue or descriptions that are meant to be interpreted differently by the reader and the characters). These are general suggestions only, as the answer options should be specific to the text. 	<p>the text and somewhat challenging to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part A can be similar to the single-part item approach for On Track. However, the Advanced items should include a Part B that asks students for the one or two pieces of textual evidence that are most effective in developing the correct points of view (e.g., reader vs. character) or effect (suspense, humor, dramatic irony) from Part A. All options for Part B should be direct quotations or paraphrased details from the text, with the distractors being details that are still related to the characters but less important to their points of view or the story.
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LA.8.RP.4

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry
Anchor Standard	Author's Craft Citing relevant and thorough evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development and interaction of individuals, ideas, and events in grade-level literary text.
Standard	LA.8.RP.4 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more literary texts and how their structures contribute to style and meaning.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.4 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast the structure of two or more literary texts and how their structures contribute to style and meaning. <p>The structure of a literary text includes the elements that contribute to its form and meaning, as well as how those elements fit together to create an overall structure. For example, the structure of a narrative text typically includes a conflict, events (rising action, climax, falling action), and a resolution. The structure of a poem may include stanzas and rhyme schemes, which help tell a story or provide a description of a topic. The structure of a drama may include acts, scenes, and stage directions, which help the reader visualize the performance.</p> <p>The style of a literary text is the distinctive way in which an author uses language, including word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, and tone. Style contributes to the overall feel and impact of the text, influencing how readers perceive and interpret the story.</p> <p>The intent of this standard is for students to think more deeply about how the structure of a literary text contributes to its style and meaning. Literary texts for this standard should be paired and conceptually related by structure. To compare and/or contrast sufficiently, students are being asked to consider how an area of similarity or difference is treated in each text.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing the structure of a literary text, and how the structure contributes to its theme(s) and meaning. The Grade 8 standard progresses to comparing and contrasting the structure of two or more literary texts and how their structures contribute to style and meaning. This progression shows that students are expected to have a more sophisticated understanding of how authors use structure to craft literary texts, particularly in how structure contributes to an author's style. Additionally, students should be able to examine these structural features across multiple texts.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely:</p> <p>Compare and/or contrast the structure of two or more literary texts (e.g., chapters, scenes, stanzas). DOK: 2–3</p>	<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely:</p> <p>Compare and contrast the structure of two or more literary texts and how their structures contribute to style and meaning. DOK: 3</p>	<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely:</p> <p>Compare and contrast the structure of two or more literary texts and evaluate which structures are most effective in contributing to style and meaning. DOK: 3</p>
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will compare and/or contrast the structure of two or more literary texts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask how the structures of Text 1 and Text 2 are similar and/or different in how they present information, such as, “Which statement best describes how the two poems are structured?” or “How do the structures of the two plays differ?” The correct answer should provide the most accurate descriptions of the structures used, and the distractors should provide inaccurate but plausible descriptions of structural elements (e.g., chapters, scenes, stanzas). Alternatively, a Gap Match item might be used to ask students to compare 	<p>Students will compare and/or contrast the structure of two or more literary texts and how their structures contribute to style and/or meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A can be similar to the first item approach for Developing, but On Track items must have a Part B that asks how the structures contribute to style or meaning. Alternatively, the item can simply ask, “Which statement best explains how the structure of the two poems contributes to their style/meaning?” with the correct answer being, “Both the shape of the first poem and repetition in the second poem emphasize the importance of the river to the people living near it,” and a 	<p>Students will compare and/or contrast the structure of two or more literary texts and evaluate which structures are most effective in contributing to style and/or meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students why a structural element in one text is more effective than the other. For example, “Choose two ways the structure of the first poem is more effective at creating the feeling of a river flowing.” Correct answers should explain why the specific structural choices are effective, such as, “The lines of the poem make the shape of a curving river,” and “The poem’s lack of punctuation emphasizes that a river never pauses or stops.” Distractors

<p>and contrast the structures of the two texts. For example, students could be asked to move descriptions from a toolbox into a table with headings for each poem and a generic heading for “both poems.” Both correct and incorrect (unused) descriptions can be in the toolbox, requiring students to consider the structural elements of the poems carefully. For example, the options might include: the poem has stanzas, the poem is told in free verse, the poem has a rhyme scheme, the poem relies heavily on repetition, the poem includes dialogue, the poem is mostly a description, the lines of the poem make a shape, the poem is a single flowing thought expressed in one sentence, the poem includes a series of short sentences that create a rhythm, etc.</p>	<p>plausible distractor being, “The playful free verse in the first poem and formal rhyme scheme in the second poem emphasize that people have different views of the river.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Track items can also be similar to the second item approach for Developing, but the options in the Gap Match toolbox should combine information about structure with how that structure contributes to style or meaning. This might work best for two texts about the same topic, such as two poems about a river. For example, correct answers for an item that focuses on how structure contributes to meaning might include: each stanza describes one way people rely on the river; the free verse mimics how the river flows smoothly beside people’s homes; the dialogue among children portrays the river as a place of adventure; the alternating rhyme scheme contrasts the river as a source of work and play. 	<p>should be plausible but incorrect explanations of structural choices, such as, “The poem’s stanzas alternate between describing an adult’s view of the river and a child’s view.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another approach would be to ask, “Which statement best explains how the structure of the two poems most contributes to their style and meaning?” with the correct answer reflecting the most significant contribution (e.g., “Both poems use a circular structure to show that the river is part of a continuous cycle that never ends.”), and the distractors describing lesser contributions or common misconceptions about the structure, meaning, and/or style of the two texts. • Stems for Part B, if included, should ask for textual evidence to support the correct answer to Part A, either in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased details.
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LA.8.RP.5

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry
Anchor Standard	Knowledge and Ideas Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate how an author’s perspective or use of point of view shapes the style and meaning of grade-level literary text.
Standard	LA.8.RP.5 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.5 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works. <p>A modern work of fiction is a contemporary literary text that reflects current themes, settings, and characters, often addressing modern-day issues and perspectives.</p> <p>A theme is a message about life or human nature that the author wants to share with the reader.</p> <p>A pattern of events is the sequence and structure of events that occur in stories (e.g., a quest to find wisdom or a valuable object, a battle between two sides—one good and the other evil).</p> <p>A character type, also called an archetype, is a typical character that represents universal patterns of human nature, such as the hero, the mentor, or the villain.</p> <p>A myth is a story that often involves supernatural beings or events, explains natural or social phenomena, and/or conveys cultural values.</p> <p>A traditional story is a narrative passed down through generations, often reflecting the beliefs, customs, and values of a culture.</p> <p>A religious work is a text that conveys the teachings, beliefs, and stories central to a particular religion.</p> <p>Modern texts often draw on the themes, patterns of events, and/or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works for the purpose of creating deeper connections with readers, providing familiar frameworks, and exploring timeless human experiences in contemporary contexts.</p> <p>Literary texts for this standard must be paired, with one text being a modern work and the other a classic work. In addition, the modern work must draw on themes, patterns of events, and/or character types from the classic work.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on comparing and contrasting a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period. The Grade 8 standard progresses to analyzing how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works. This progression shows that students are expected to have a greater understanding of literary genres as well as greater knowledge of classic texts.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Compare the themes, patterns of events, or character types found in a modern work of fiction with those found in myths, traditional stories, or religious works. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works. DOK: 3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Evaluate how effectively a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, using evidence from the text. DOK: 3	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will compare the themes, patterns of events, or character types found in a modern work of fiction with those found in a myth, traditional story, or religious work. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This standard should only be assessed using paired passages. One passage should be a classic text such as a myth or a traditional story and the other should be a modern work with related themes, patterns of events, or character types.Students developing the skills needed for this standard will not yet be able to analyze how one text draws on another, but they should be able to compare the two texts.	Students will analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This standard should only be assessed using paired passages. One passage should be a classic text such as a myth or a traditional story and the other should be a modern work with related themes, patterns of events, or character types.Stems can ask students how the author of the modern work draws	Students will evaluate how effectively a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, using evidence from the text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This standard should only be assessed using paired passages. One passage should be a classic text such as a myth or a traditional story and the other should be a modern work with related themes, patterns of events, or character types.Stems for Part A can ask students how effectively the author of a modern	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can ask students to identify a shared theme, pattern of events, or character type across two texts, with one text being a modern work of fiction and the other being a myth, traditional story, or religious work. The answer options that describe themes should be complete sentences. For example, a shared theme between a modern work and the myth of Pandora’s box might be, “Both stories explore the consequences of curiosity, highlighting the impact of human actions on the world.” • Stems can also ask students to identify shared patterns of events or character types. For example, “How are the endings of the two stories similar?” with the correct answer being, “Both stories end with the main character having to face the consequences of their actions,” and a plausible distractor being “Both stories end with the main character discovering an important truth about themselves.” Or “How is the modern character Abrielle similar to the mythological character Sisyphus?” with a correct answer being, “Both characters reveal inner strength and determination when faced with seemingly impossible challenges,” and a plausible distractor being, “Both characters show that examining the same problem from a different angle can lead to a solution.” 	<p>on a theme, pattern of events, or character type from the classic work. For example, a question about a theme might be, “How does the modern work draw on the myth of Pandora’s box to show that hope still exists even in the worst of times?” A Multi-select item format could be used to ask about a pattern of events: “Choose two ways that Abrielle’s story draws on events from the myth of Sisyphus.” Finally, a question about a character type might ask, “How is Abrielle similar to Sisyphus at the beginning of the story but different by the end?”</p>	<p>work draws on a theme, pattern of events, or character type from a classic work. However, this approach may require providing more context in the stem. For example, “The modern work and the myth of Pandora’s box both develop the theme that human actions often have unintended consequences. How does the modern work make the reader feel more hopeful at the end than the myth?” The correct answer might be, “Because the consequences in the modern work are less extreme than the consequences in the myth.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another approach to Part A would be to ask, “How does the modern work most effectively draw on the myth of Pandora’s box?” with the correct answer reflecting the most significant contribution (e.g., “by illustrating how Reginald’s uncontrollable curiosity leads to his downfall, just as Pandora’s did”), and the distractors describing lesser contributions or common misconceptions about the theme, pattern of events, or character type. • Stems for Part B should ask for textual evidence to support the correct answer to Part A, either in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased details.
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LA.8.RP.6

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry
Anchor Standard	Knowledge and Ideas Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate how an author’s perspective or use of point of view shapes the style and meaning of grade-level literary text.
Standard	LA.8.RP.6 Synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.6 asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text; and Synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others. <p>A theme is an insight about life or human nature that the author of a literary text wants to share with the reader. An implied theme is a theme that is not directly stated but can be inferred from the characters’ actions, dialogue, and events in the story. A stated theme is a theme that is clearly and directly stated by the author within the text.</p> <p>To synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text means to combine and integrate these themes to form a comprehensive understanding of the text’s deeper messages. To draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others means to reflect on how the themes relate to one’s own experiences and the experiences of others. For example, the synthesized themes of how standing up for what is right and advocating for those who cannot speak for themselves help create a more just world leads to the conclusion that individual actions can contribute to broader social justice. This understanding can deepen students’ awareness of the importance of moral courage and advocacy in themselves and others.</p> <p>Literary texts for this standard must have multiple themes that can be synthesized, as shown in the example above.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on synthesizing the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others. The Grade 8 standard is identical, showing that students are expected to further develop their ability to synthesize themes and apply this understanding to more complex texts.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely:</p> <p>Describe the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text. DOK: 2–3</p>	<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others. DOK: 3</p>	<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others, quoting or paraphrasing specific evidence from the text. DOK: 3</p>
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will describe the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to describe the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text, with the correct answer being a direct quotation if the theme is explicitly stated, or a paraphrased statement if the theme is implied. For example, “Which statement best describes a theme of the text?” The correct answer for a text about a teenage boy’s efforts to protect a rare bird might be: “The bond between humans and nature can inspire acts of courage and selflessness.” Themes should always be expressed as complete statements rather than ideas (“the bond between humans and nature”) or topics (“nature”). 	<p>Students will synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items should focus on “others” only, e.g., story characters; reflection of “self” is appropriate for classroom activities. For explicitly stated themes, the stem could include the sentence(s) from the text that state the theme, and then ask, “How does this theme affect the characters in the story?” For implied themes, the stem could include a thematic idea or topic in the question, such as, “How does the story’s theme about the bond between humans and nature affect Javon?” A correct answer might be: “It inspires him to take courageous actions, demonstrating a commitment to something larger than himself.” On the other hand, a plausible distractor might be: “It causes him to question his previous beliefs and seek advice from others.” 	<p>Students will synthesize the implied or stated theme(s) in a literary text to draw conclusions and deepen understanding of self and others, quoting or paraphrasing specific evidence from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but Advanced items must add a Part B that asks for textual evidence to support the correct answer to Part A, with the evidence being direct quotations or paraphrased details from the text.

LA.8.RP.7

Content Strand	Reading Prose and Poetry
Anchor Standard	Knowledge and Ideas Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate how an author’s perspective or use of point of view shapes the style and meaning of grade-level literary text.
Standard	LA.8.RP.7 Analyze regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within and across a range of literary texts.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RP.7 asks students to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within and across a range of literary texts. <p>A perspective is an attitude or belief based on personal knowledge and experience. A regional perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints specific to a geographic area or community. For example, a tale set in the Pacific Northwest might focus on the relationship between the people and the natural environment, highlighting the importance of forests and rivers. A national perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints shared by the majority within a country. For example, a narrative might include a description of the awe-inspiring views of the Northern Lights from Norway, emphasizing how this natural phenomenon inspires a sense of wonder and pride among the people. An international perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints of many people across many nations. For example, a narrative might focus on a global initiative to raise awareness and provide clean water for communities in need. A multicultural perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints of many people within or across cultural groups. For example, a narrative might focus on two characters from different cultures who both show respect for their elders, a common value among many cultures. Characters or ideas refer to the variety of people, situations, and experiences that an author includes in a literary text to represent different perspectives.</p> <p>This standard can be measured by asking about characters or ideas within the same text or across two texts. If measured across texts, the texts should be paired and conceptually related.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on comparing and contrasting regional, national, and/or multicultural perspectives by explaining how an author or narrator/speaker introduces, illustrates, or describes diverse characters or individuals, events, and ideas within and across literary texts. The Grade 8 standard progresses from comparing and contrasting to analyzing the same perspectives and an international perspective to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within and across a range of literary texts. This progression shows that students are now expected to apply a similar literary analysis to a greater range and diversity of texts.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Compare and contrast regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to understand connections between characters or ideas within and/or across a range of literary texts. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within and across a range of literary texts. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within and across a range of literary texts, quoting or paraphrasing specific evidence from the text. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will compare and/or contrast regional, national, international, or multicultural perspectives to understand connections between characters or ideas within or across literary texts. Answer options should avoid stereotypes and negative portrayals of any given culture.	Students will analyze regional, national, international, or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within or across literary texts.	Students will analyze regional, national, or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between characters or ideas within or across literary texts, quoting or paraphrasing specific evidence from the text.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can ask students about the similarities and/or differences between characters or ideas, either within a text or across texts. For example, the question might ask, “How is the description of the Northern Lights similar and different in the two stories?” Correct answers should be central to the stories and well-supported by the texts. A correct answer to this question might be: “Both stories highlight the wonder and beauty of this natural phenomenon, but only the people of Norway view it as a source of national pride.” In a similar way, a technology-enhanced item could ask students to compare and contrast the two texts by moving correct descriptions into a table with headings for each text and a generic heading for “both texts.” • Another valid approach is to identify a specific perspective in the stem and then ask how that perspective is shown in the two texts. For example, “How do the authors develop the characters’ sense of responsibility for preserving nature in the texts?” A correct answer might be, “by detailing how the main characters repair trails and remove invasive species in forests and rivers near their homes.” Meanwhile, a plausible distractor could be, “by describing how the main characters enjoy spending their time outdoors hiking in forests and fishing in rivers.” 	<p>Answer options should avoid stereotypes and negative portrayals of any given culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but they should ask students to analyze rather than just identify the perspectives. For example, in a Multi-select item, students might be asked to, “Choose two ways the authors show the contrasting perspectives of the people of Norway and the tourists who visit Norway toward the Northern Lights.” The two correct answers might be, “by describing daily life with the Northern Lights as a backdrop” and “by detailing the incredible efforts of people to get a spectacular view of the Northern Lights.” A plausible distractor might be, “by explaining the science behind the natural phenomenon of the Northern Lights.” 	<p>Answer options should avoid stereotypes and negative portrayals of any given culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the Advanced items should include a Part B that asks for textual evidence to support the correct answer(s) to Part A, with the evidence being direct quotations or paraphrased details from the text(s).
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Item Specifications for Reading Informational Text Standards

LA.8.RI.1

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Central Ideas and Details Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development of themes or central ideas in grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.1 Determine two or more implied or explicit central ideas and how they develop over the course of an informational text, including their relationship to supporting ideas.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.1 asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine two or more implied or explicit central ideas of an informational text; and • Determine how those ideas develop over the course of the text, including their relationship to supporting details. <p>A central idea is the main point or primary message the author wants to convey in the text. An implied central idea is not directly stated in the text but can be inferred from the details, examples, and overall context provided by the author. An explicit central idea is clearly and directly stated by the author within the text. Central ideas develop over the course of the text through the introduction of new information, the elaboration of key points, and the use of supporting evidence and examples. Meanwhile, a central idea's relationship to supporting ideas involves how specific details, examples, etc. are used to develop and reinforce the central idea.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on determining two or more implied or explicit central ideas of an informational text and how they are supported with key details. The Grade 8 standard progresses to determining two or more implied or explicit central ideas of an informational text and how they develop over the course of an informational text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. This progression suggests that students have a greater understanding of how authors develop multiple central ideas within an informational text.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely:</p> <p>Determine two or more implied or explicit central ideas of an informational text. DOK: 2–3</p>	<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely:</p> <p>Determine two or more implied or explicit central ideas and how they develop over the course of an informational text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. DOK: 2–3</p>	<p>With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze two or more implied or explicit central ideas and how they develop over the course of an informational text, including their relationship to supporting ideas. DOK: 3</p>
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will determine two or more implied or explicit central ideas of an informational text. The central ideas should be explicitly stated in the text or implied but easy to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify two central ideas of an informational text. This can be done in a Multi-select format that asks, “Which two central ideas are developed in the text?” or a Multiple-Choice format that asks, “Which statement best expresses the central ideas of the text? The correct answers should be complete sentences and could be direct quotations from the text if the central ideas are explicit or paraphrased summaries if the central 	<p>Students will determine two or more implied or explicit central ideas of a text (Part A) and how they develop over the course of an informational text, including their relationship to supporting ideas (Part B). The implied or explicit central ideas should be accessible for students in Grade 8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approach for Developing. Stems for Part B should focus on “how the central ideas develop” or how the central ideas develop “over the course of the text.” Items that focus on “how the central ideas develop” might ask, “Which two statements best describe how the author develops the correct central ideas from Part A?” The answer 	<p>Students will analyze two or more implied or explicit central ideas (Part A) and how they develop over the course of an informational text, including their relationship to supporting ideas (Part B). The implied or explicit central ideas should be somewhat challenging to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A and Part B can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the correct answers should require students to make deeper inferences from the text in order to address the “analyze” part of the Advanced ALD.

<p>ideas are implied. For a text about elephant communication, for example, the central ideas might be: “Elephants use vibrations in the ground to communicate,” and “The anatomy of elephants supports their ability to sense vibrations.” Distractors should be other ideas in the text that are not a central idea but rather just a detail or should express likely misinterpretations of the central idea. For example, a plausible distractor for the same text might be, “Elephants use their trunks to send signals through the air,” which is mentioned in the text but does not reflect the text’s central focus on communication through ground vibrations.</p>	<p>options would be techniques authors use to develop central ideas (e.g., descriptions, examples, research findings, comparisons, quotations from experts, historical facts, text features). For example, correct answers for the text about elephant communication might be: “by describing specific elephant behaviors observed in the wild” and “by explaining the specialized structures in elephants’ feet and inner ears.” Distractors should describe lesser points in the text or techniques the author does not use. Items that focus on “over the course of the text” should ask students to consider details from different parts of the text, such as the beginning and end.</p>	
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LA.8.RI.2

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Central Ideas and Details Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development of themes or central ideas in grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.2 Analyze how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.2 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning, which may include drawing on specific supporting details in an informational text. <p>An individual is a person who plays a significant role in the text and whose actions, decisions, or experiences are central to the topic(s) being discussed.</p> <p>An event is a significant occurrence described in the text that has some impact on the topic(s) of the text.</p> <p>An idea or concept is a thought, theory, or principle that is central to the text and is explored or explained by the author.</p> <p>To draw on specific supporting details means to use textual evidence as support. This part of the standard may be addressed with direct quotations from the text or with paraphrased details.</p> <p>The intent of this standard is for students to think deeply about the important elements in an informational text (e.g., events, individuals, facts, details) and the relationships between them, including how they interact.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing the relationships and interactions between individuals, events, and/or ideas or concepts, drawing on specific supporting details in an informational text. The Grade 8 standard progresses to analyzing how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning. This progression suggests that students are ready to advance from understanding the relationships in a text to understanding how those relationships contribute to meaning.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Explain the development of particular events, interactions between individuals, and/or key facts and details. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning, drawing on specific supporting details in an informational text. DOK: 2–3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will explain the development of particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details in an informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students how the author develops an event, interaction, or key fact/detail. For example, “How does the author introduce the scientific study to be conducted on elephant communication?” with the correct answer being, “by detailing the specialized equipment researchers would need to document the desired elephant behavior.” Or “How does the author develop the idea that early Arctic explorer Matthew Henson competed with other explorers to be 	<p>Students will analyze how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning in an informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems should ask students how an event, interaction, or key fact/detail contributes to meaning, rather than how the author develops them as in Developing. For example, “What do the scientific studies on elephant communication help the reader understand?” with the correct answer being, “the complexity and sophistication of elephants’ social interactions” and a plausible distractor being, “the importance of preserving elephants’ habitats to maintain their numbers.” Or “What do 	<p>Students will analyze how particular events, interactions between individuals, or key facts and details contribute to meaning, drawing on specific supporting details in an informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but Advanced items must have a Part B that asks for textual evidence (e.g., direct quotations, paraphrased details) to support the correct answer(s) to Part A.

<p>the first to discover the North Pole?” with the correct answer being, “by including parts of his journal entries that describe the exploration as a race and add drama to each setback.” Or “How does the author help the reader understand the sounds cicada insects make when they gather in large numbers?” with two correct answers being, “by explaining how the tymbal organ produces their distinctive buzzing” and “by comparing the loudness of their singing to a rock concert.”</p>	<p>Matthew Henson’s journal entries reveal most about Artic explorers in the early 1900s?” with two correct answers being, “the harsh and dangerous conditions they faced” and “the teamwork required to survive their expeditions.” Or “How does understanding the sounds cicadas make contribute to the text?” with the correct answer being, “It shows how a small insect can protect itself from predators by gathering in large numbers,” and a plausible distractor being, “It explains why the insects are considered important symbols in some cultures.”</p>	
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LA.8.RI.3

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Author's Craft Citing relevant and thorough evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development and interaction of individuals, ideas, and events in grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.3 Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts perspective or purpose in a text and how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.3 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how an author establishes or conveys a perspective or purpose and distinguishes it from that of others, which may include evaluating its effectiveness. <p>An author's perspective is different from the author's purpose, as it includes the author's attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and biases about the subject of the text. These beliefs and biases are based on the author's personal knowledge and experience. For example, an author writing about elephants might have a perspective that is shaped by their background as a scientist and their fieldwork with wild elephants. As a result, the text may emphasize how elephant communication has been observed and documented through careful study and research.</p> <p>The author's purpose is why the author wrote the text, such as to inform, persuade, entertain, or explain about a specific topic, perspective, situation, etc. However, it is not enough to use broad terms like "to inform," "to persuade," "to entertain," or "to explain" to describe the author's purpose, as these descriptions should be specific to the text. For example, an author's purpose for writing might be to inform readers of a theory that elephants communicate over long distances by sending vibrations through the ground and then present scientific evidence that proves this theory to be true.</p> <p>Authors distinguish their perspectives or purposes from that of others by presenting unique evidence, using specific language, and addressing or refuting opposing viewpoints. For example, the elephant researcher Caitlin O'Connell's work often contrasts with other studies by emphasizing the importance of seismic communication in elephants, which she has extensively documented through her fieldwork.</p>

	Informational texts for this standard must include examples of an author acknowledging and/or responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing how an author establishes or conveys a perspective or purpose and distinguishes it from that of others. The Grade 8 standard progresses to analyzing how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts perspective or purpose in a text and how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. This progression shows that students are expected to be able to contrast authors’ perspectives or purposes as well as understand that authors of informational texts are part of a larger community of writers who do not always agree.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Describe how an author establishes, conveys, or contrasts perspective or purpose in a text. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts perspective or purpose in a text and how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints . DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Evaluate how effective an author is at establishing, conveying, and contrasting perspective or purpose in a text and how effective the author is at acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will describe how an author establishes, conveys, or contrasts perspective or purpose in an informational text. The author’s perspective or purpose should be explicitly stated in the text or implied but easy to understand. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can explicitly state the author’s perspective or purpose and then ask students which technique the author uses to establish or convey it. Common	Students will analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts perspective or purpose in a text and how the author acknowledges or responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. The author’s perspective or purpose should be accessible for students in Grade 8. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approaches in Developing,	Students will evaluate how effective an author is at establishing, conveying, and contrasting perspective or purpose in a text and/or how effective the author is at acknowledging or responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems for Part A should ask students to evaluate either the author’s effectiveness at establishing, conveying, or contrasting a

<p>techniques an author might use include tone, text structure, word choice, facts, opinions, examples, anecdotes, text features, descriptions, etc. For example, “How does the author establish that the purpose of the text is to prove a theory about elephant communication?” with a correct answer being, “by emphasizing how each step in the research was the first of its kind and yielded exciting new findings.” Or “How does the author convey her belief that previous researchers overlooked the idea that elephants might communicate through seismic vibrations?” with two correct answers being, “by describing the specific behaviors of elephants that led to the discovery” and “by emphasizing the significance of the research and its impact on future studies.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, a two-part item could ask, “What is the author’s purpose for writing about elephant communication?” or “What does the author believe about elephant communication?” in Part A, and then ask how the author develops this purpose or perspective in Part B. 	<p>but the correct answer should require students to make a deeper inference from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part B should focus on how the author acknowledges or responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. For example, the stem might ask, “How does the author respond to other theories about elephant communication?” with the correct answer being, “by explaining why they are accurate but limited in scope and depth.” Or “How does the author position her research on elephant communication?” with the correct answer being, “She suggests that her extensive fieldwork and detailed observations of elephants offer a better understanding than previous research due to her comprehensive data collection and analysis.” 	<p>perspective/purpose or their effectiveness at acknowledging or responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. For example, “Why is the author’s decision to explain each discovery and reveal the final results at the end of the passage an effective way to highlight the importance of her research?” with the correct answer being, “Because it illustrates the step-by-step process and the growing excitement scientists feel as they work towards proving a theory.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part B should ask for one or more pieces of textual evidence to support the correct answer from Part A, with the answer choices being direct quotations or paraphrased details.
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LA.8.RI.4

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Author's Craft Citing relevant and thorough evidence to support ideas, evaluate the development and interaction of individuals, ideas, and events in grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.4 Compare and contrast the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.4 asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how words, phrases, and sentences contribute to the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text; and Compare and contrast the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. <p>The structure of an informational text refers to the primary way an author organizes information in a text. Common text structures used in informational texts include but are not limited to: description, sequence, chronology, cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, question-answer, classification, definition, or argument and evidence. Authors of informational texts often use multiple structures within a text because it allows them to present information in the most effective and engaging way for their audience. The role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept refers to how specific sentences within a paragraph contribute to the reader's understanding of the main idea(s) of the text.</p> <p>To compare and/or contrast sufficiently, students are being asked to consider how an area of similarity or difference is treated in each text.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing how the major sections of text contribute to the development of ideas in an informational text. The Grade 8 standard progresses to comparing and contrasting the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. This progression shows that students are continuing to develop their understanding of the choices authors make about structure and how structural features contribute to meaning in informational texts.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Describe how words, phrases, and sentences contribute to the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Compare and contrast the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Compare and contrast the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, and evaluate the roles of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will describe how a word, phrase, or sentence contributes to the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can include a specific sentence from a paragraph in the text and then ask students to explain how a word, phrase, or the entire sentence contributes to the structure of the paragraph. The target sentence should be one that serves an important	Students will compare and/or contrast the structures of two paragraphs in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems for Part A can ask students to compare and/or contrast the structures of two paragraphs in the same text. For example, “How do the structures of paragraphs 4 and 5 help develop an important concept about	Students will compare and/or contrast the structures of two paragraphs in an informational text, and evaluate the roles of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approach for On Track. However, stems for Part B should ask students to, “Choose the two details that <u>most effectively</u> support the correct answer to Part A. Select one detail from each

<p>function in the text as a whole, clearly contributing to the development of ideas. In addition, it should be one that has a clear and common text structure, such as description, sequence, cause-effect, etc. For example, a target sentence from a text about elephant communication might describe the elephant behavior of tiptoeing and the question might ask, “What is the purpose of this sentence in the paragraph?” The answer options should explain the role of the sentence in the paragraph rather than simply identifying its structure. For example, a correct answer might be, “It highlights the effect that made the scientist curious enough to research the cause.” Distractors should include plausible but incorrect references to text structures other than the correct one (i.e., cause-effect).</p>	<p>elephant communication?” A correct answer might be, “Paragraph 4 describes the observations that prompted a new theory, and paragraph 5 explains the steps taken to begin the research,” while a plausible distractor could be, “Paragraph 4 shares the findings of the research, and paragraph 5 acknowledges the people who made the research possible.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part B could ask for textual evidence (e.g., direct quotations, paraphrased details) that best supports the correct answer to Part A. 	<p>paragraph.” In addition, answer options for Advanced items should be more nuanced than they are for On Track items.</p>
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LA.8.RI.5

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Knowledge and Ideas Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate how an author’s perspective or use of point of view shapes the style and meaning of grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.5 Analyze how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.5 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation, which may include evaluating the effectiveness of the texts at addressing the differences. <p>How two authors present information on the same topic typically varies based on the techniques they use. Sometimes, the authors even provide conflicting information on the same topic. For example, if two authors are writing about how elephants communicate, one author might argue that elephants primarily use vocalizations to communicate, emphasizing the importance of their ability to produce infrasonic sounds that travel long distances. Meanwhile, another author might argue that seismic vibrations are a more important form of elephant communication, highlighting how elephants detect and respond to vibrations in the ground that also travel over long distances. This is an example of where the texts disagree on matters of interpretation, with interpretation meaning the way each author has understood and explained the primary methods of elephant communication. An example of where the texts disagree on matters of evidence is when one author (e.g., an elephant researcher) uses scientific studies to support their claims, while another author (e.g., a journalist) relies on anecdotal evidence or expert opinions. Here, the evidence is the data and descriptions used to support the argument.</p> <p>Texts for this standard must be paired and conceptually related by topic. In addition, the texts must provide conflicting information on the same topic.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on comparing and contrasting how two or more authors provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but shifts from comparing and contrasting to analyzing the same conflicting information. This progression suggests that students are developing a better understanding of the choices authors make when writing informational texts and how these choices impact the reader’s comprehension and interpretation.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Explain how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze how two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation, and evaluate how effective the texts are at addressing the differences. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will explain how two texts provide conflicting information on the same topic. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students developing the skills needed for this standard will not yet be able to analyze where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation. However, they should be able to explain the conflicting information.	Students will analyze how two texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach in Developing, but the correct answer should require students to make a deeper inference from the text.	Students will analyze how two texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, including where the texts disagree on matters of evidence or interpretation, and evaluate how effective the texts are at addressing the differences. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students which author’s presentation of conflicting information is more effective. For

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify the conflicting information. For example, “Which statement best explains the conflicting information about Great Zimbabwe given in the two texts?” Here, a correct answer might be, “Text 1 claims that the ancient city was built by ancestors of the Shona, while Text 2 argues it was more likely built by the Lemba people, who were skilled masons.” A plausible distractor might be, “Text 1 presents the theory that key structures in the ancient city had ceremonial purposes, while Text 2 suggests they also had practical purposes like defense.” (This distractor accurately describes the texts but is not an example of conflicting information.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part B, if included, can ask students why the authors disagree, with the correct answer highlighting whether the disagreement is a matter of evidence or interpretation. For example, “Which two details show the most likely reason for this conflicting information?” with the answer options being direct quotations or paraphrased details from the texts. 	<p>example, “Why is Text 2’s illustration of Great Zimbabwe more effective than Text 1’s timeline of the Late Iron Age at explaining who built Great Zimbabwe?” Here, a correct answer might be, “Because it shows how most of the city was constructed from stone,” while a plausible distractor might be, “Because it reveals why specific parts of the city were likely used for defense.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part B, if included, can ask for textual evidence to support the correct answer to Part A, either in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased details. For example, a correct answer might be, “The illustration shows which materials were used for which structures,” while a plausible distractor might be, “The illustration notes the heights of different structures in the city.”
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LA.8.RI.6

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Knowledge and Ideas Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate how an author’s perspective or use of point of view shapes the style and meaning of grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.6 Analyze the development of an argument and evaluate the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.6 asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the development of an argument; and Evaluate the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. <p>An argument refers to an author’s primary claim, which is developed through reasons and evidence. Authors use different types of reasoning to support the argument, such as logical reasoning, ethical reasoning, emotional appeals, anecdotal evidence, statistical evidence, or comparisons to similar ideas or situations.</p> <p>Evaluating the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used means assessing how well the reasoning supports the argument, considering factors such as clarity, relevance, and persuasiveness.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on analyzing the development of an argument and identifying the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but shifts to evaluating the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. This progression shows that students are continuing to develop their skills of analyzing and now evaluating argumentative texts.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Analyze the development of an argument and/or identify the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze the development of an argument and evaluate the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. DOK: 3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze the development of multiple arguments in a text and evaluate the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the arguments. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will analyze the development of an argument and/or identify the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. The argument should be explicitly stated in the text or implied but easy to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A can ask students to analyze the development of an argument. For a speech aimed at persuading TV broadcasters to improve their television programming, the question might be, “How does the speaker develop the main argument of the speech?” Correct answers should require students to analyze multiple paragraphs or the entire text to determine both the argument and the primary technique used to develop the argument. For example, a correct 	<p>Students will analyze the development of an argument and evaluate the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. The argument should be accessible for students in Grade 8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A can be similar to the first item approach for Developing, which asks students to analyze the development of an argument. Part B should focus on why the type of reasoning used is effective, with a correct answer being something like, “Because the speaker’s harsh descriptions of poor-quality TV programming appeal to the broadcasters’ sense of pride and professionalism in what they do.” 	<p>Students will analyze the development of multiple arguments in a text and evaluate the effectiveness of the type(s) of reasoning used to support the argument. The arguments should be implied in the text and somewhat challenging to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems for Part A and Part B can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but Part A must ask students to analyze the development of multiple arguments. Alternatively, Part A might ask students, “Which argument is most strongly developed in the passage?” with all options being arguments or key points the author or speaker makes in the text. Part B would then ask, “Which type of reasoning is most

<p>answer for this speech might be: “The speaker criticizes the programming TV broadcasters currently make and urges them to produce more educational programs that serve the public interest.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part B, if included, can ask, “What type of reasoning is used to support the correct argument from Part A?” Here, a correct answer might be, “The speaker gives several examples of what he considers worthless programming.” • Alternatively, Part A can ask students to identify the type(s) of reasoning used to support the author’s argument and Part B can ask for the textual evidence that best supports the correct answer to Part A. For this approach, the Part A stem could include a quotation of an explicitly stated argument and then ask, “How does the speaker develop this argument in the text?” Or the question could paraphrase the argument, such as, “How does the speaker develop the argument that TV broadcasters should produce educational programming that serves the public interest?” 		<p>effective in supporting the correct argument from Part A?” with all options being accurate descriptions of reasoning used in the text or misinterpretations of reasoning used in the text, and the correct answer being the most effective reasoning.</p>
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LA.8.RI.7

Content Strand	Reading Informational Text
Anchor Standard	Knowledge and Ideas Citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support ideas, evaluate how an author’s perspective or use of point of view shapes the style and meaning of grade-level informational texts.
Standard	LA.8.RI.7 Analyze specific regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between individuals or ideas within and across a range of informational texts.
Indicator	N/A
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.RI.7 asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze specific regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between individuals or ideas within and across a range of informational texts. <p>A perspective is an attitude or belief based on personal knowledge and experience. A regional perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints specific to a geographic area or community. For example, a text might explore the traditional and contemporary art forms of Native American tribes in the Southwest, such as pottery, weaving, and jewelry making. A national perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints shared by the majority within a country. For example, a text might highlight the significance of the Space Race, a competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve space exploration milestones, and how it spurred technological advancements and national pride. An international perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints of many people across many nations. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and describes the rights and freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. A multicultural perspective reflects the customs, traditions, and viewpoints of many people within or across cultural groups. For example, a text might explore various music genres from around the world, such as reggae, K-pop, and flamenco, and how they reflect the cultural heritage and contemporary influences of their regions.</p>

	This standard can be measured by asking about diverse characters or individuals, events, or ideas within the same text or across two texts. If measured across texts, the texts should be paired and conceptually related.	
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on comparing and contrasting regional, national, and/or multicultural perspectives by explaining how an author or narrator/speaker introduces, illustrates, or describes characters or individuals, events, and ideas within and across informational texts. The Grade 8 standard progresses from comparing and contrasting to analyzing these perspectives and international perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between individuals or ideas within and across a range of informational texts. This requires students to have greater knowledge of specific perspectives and be able to apply that knowledge to a wider range of texts.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Compare and contrast specific regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to understand connections between individuals or ideas within and/or across a range of informational texts. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Analyze specific regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between individuals or ideas within and across a range of informational texts. DOK: 2–3	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze specific regional, national, international, and/or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and distinctions between individuals or ideas within and across a range of informational texts, quoting or paraphrasing specific evidence from the text. DOK: 2–3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will compare and/or contrast regional, national, international, or multicultural perspectives to understand connections between individuals or ideas within or across informational texts. Answer options should avoid stereotypes and negative portrayals of any given culture.	Students will analyze specific regional, national, international, or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and/or distinctions between individuals or ideas within or across informational texts.	Students will analyze specific regional, national, or multicultural perspectives to make connections among and/or distinctions between individuals or ideas within or across informational texts, quoting or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can ask students about the similarities and/or differences between individuals or ideas, either within a text or across texts. For example, students might read one text about Louis Braille, who created the braille system to enable visually impaired individuals to read, and another text about Thomas Edison, who invented the light bulb. Then the question might ask, “How are the descriptions of the inventors Louis Braille and Thomas Edison similar in the texts?” The correct answer should be central to the stories and well-supported by the text. A correct answer to this question might be, “Both texts emphasize the inventors’ creativity and problem-solving abilities and show how their inventions have significantly improved people’s lives.” In a similar way, a technology-enhanced item could ask students to compare and contrast the two texts by moving correct descriptions into a table with headings for each inventor and a generic heading for “both inventors.” • Another valid approach is to describe a specific perspective in the stem and then ask how that perspective is shown in the two texts. For example, “The Space Race was a competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve space exploration milestones, which spurred technological advancements and national pride. How do the authors develop this idea of a competition in the texts?” 	<p>Answer options should avoid stereotypes and negative portrayals of any given culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but they should ask students to analyze rather than compare/contrast the perspectives. For example, students might be asked to, “Choose two ways the texts show the national pride of American astronauts and Russian cosmonauts.” Here, the two correct answers might be, “by describing them as pioneers who have a spirit of adventure” and “by describing them as heroes who have strength and bravery.” A plausible distractor might be, “by sharing the nicknames that reveal their unique personalities.” • Alternatively, this might be done with a technology-enhanced item that asks students to move the correct ways of showing national pride into a table with the headings, “astronauts,” “cosmonauts,” and “both.” This format would highlight the connections among <u>and</u> distinctions between the Americans and Russians. 	<p>paraphrasing specific evidence from the text.</p> <p>Answer options should avoid stereotypes and negative portrayals of any given culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems for Part A can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the Advanced items should include a Part B that asks for textual evidence to support the correct answer(s) to Part A, with the evidence being direct quotations or paraphrased details from the text(s).
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Item Specifications for Vocabulary Standards

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LA.8.V.1.a

Content Strand	Vocabulary
Anchor Standard	Acquisition and Use Build and use a range of conversational, academic, and discipline-specific grade-level vocabulary and apply to reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
Standard	LA.8.V.1 Integrate grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately for a variety of tasks and purposes.
Indicator	LA.8.V.1.a Use context clues (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) to determine the meanings of words and phrases.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.V.1.a asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context clues to determine the meanings of words and phrases. <p>Context clues are hints given within a text that help to define an unfamiliar word or phrase. Context clues can be explicit in the text or implicit, and they can take many forms. They can be the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph, a word's position or function in a sentence, a definition, example, restatement, cause/effect relationship, comparison, or explanation in the text.</p> <p>For assessment, this standard should focus on unknown words and phrases, meaning those that are above grade level and likely unfamiliar to students. In addition, priority should be given to assessing above-grade-level academic vocabulary embedded in complex, grade-level texts. Academic vocabulary refers to words and phrases that are likely to appear in a variety of content area texts (e.g., ELA, math, science, social studies). However, target words and phrases for this standard may also include conversational or discipline-specific vocabulary.</p> <p>Finding appropriate target words and phrases requires carefully reviewing the text for challenging language that is also central to the text's meaning. The target word or phrase should be one not typically known by students at this grade, so context is needed. Finally, there must be sufficient context in the text to determine meaning.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on using context clues (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) to determine the meanings of words and phrases. The Grade 8 standard remains the same, showing that students need additional time and practice with these more advanced word-solving strategies.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Use explicit context clues (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) to determine the meanings of words and phrases. DOK: 1	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Use context clues (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) to determine the meanings of words and phrases. DOK: 1–2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Use implicit context clues (e.g., inference, connotation, allusion) to determine the meanings of words and phrases. DOK: 2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will use explicit context clues to determine the meaning of an above-grade-level word or phrase in a literary or informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to choose the meaning of an unknown, above-grade-level word or phrase that is central to the text based on an explicit context clue in the text. For example, in an informational text about Nebraska’s history, a sentence might read, “Nebraska’s settlers were <u>staunch</u> supporters of the Homestead Act of 1862, firmly believing they should be	Students will use context clues to determine the meaning of an above-grade-level word or phrase in a literary or informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to choose the meaning of an unknown, above-grade-level word or phrase that is central to the text based on context clues elsewhere in the passage. For example, in an informational text about Nebraska’s history, a paragraph might read, “Nebraska’s settlers showed incredible <u>perseverance</u> in the face of challenges. They made	Students will use implicit context clues to determine the meaning of an above-grade-level word or phrase in a literary or informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Similar to the On Track ALD, stems can ask students to choose the meaning of an unknown, above-grade-level word or phrase that is central to the text based on an implicit context clue elsewhere in the passage. For the Advanced ALD, however, determining meaning must involve making deeper inferences from the text and may even	

<p>allowed to claim and cultivate the land in the Great Plains.” The explicit clue of “firmly believing” provides context that shows staunch means strongly committed to something. Students could be asked, “What does the word <u>staunch</u> mean in the sentence?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, students could be asked which words from the sentence help them understand the meaning of <u>staunch</u>. 	<p>relentless efforts to grow crops and make homes in the area despite difficult weather and soil conditions and limited water sources. They persisted in those efforts until they achieved success.” Students would be asked, “What does the word <u>perseverance</u> mean in the paragraph?” The context clues of “in the face of challenges,” “relentless efforts,” and “persisted” help students establish the meaning of the tested word <u>perseverance</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can also ask students to identify the word or words in the text that best help the reader understand the meaning of <u>perseverance</u>. Distractors would clearly represent a misunderstanding of context to determine word meaning, such as “settlers” and “grow crops” in the example above. 	<p>require multiple pieces of context to help students determine meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, a two-part item might ask students for the meaning of the word or phrase in Part A and the context clue(s) that best support that meaning in Part B.
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LA.8.V.1.b

Content Strand	Vocabulary
Anchor Standard	Acquisition and Use Build and use a range of conversational, academic, and discipline-specific grade-level vocabulary and apply to reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
Standard	LA.8.V.1 Integrate grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately for a variety of tasks and purposes.
Indicator	LA.8.V.1.b Use commonly occurring Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meanings of words (e.g., recede, precede).
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.V.1.b asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the meaning of commonly occurring Greek and Latin affixes (prefixes and suffixes) and roots in words; and Use commonly occurring Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of words. <p>Affixes refer to both prefixes and suffixes. A prefix is an affix placed at the beginning of a word to modify its meaning (e.g., “super-” in “supervise”). A suffix is an affix placed at the end of a word to modify its meaning (e.g., “-al” in “technical”). A root word is the basic part of a word that carries its main meaning; a root word can stand alone or be combined with prefixes and/or suffixes. For example, “recede” and “precede” both share the root word “-cede-,” which means to go.</p> <p>For assessment, this standard should focus on unknown words, meaning those that are above grade level and likely unfamiliar to students.</p> <p>Academic vocabulary refers to words and phrases that are likely to appear in a variety of content area texts (e.g., ELA, math, science, social studies). Academic vocabulary should be prioritized, as it includes many words with the same root word but different affixes (e.g., contradict, dictate, dictionary, predict, prediction, verdict).</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on using commonly occurring Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meanings of words (e.g., recede, precede). The Grade 8 standard is identical, emphasizing that students need wide exposure to affixes and roots to build a strong vocabulary.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Determine the meaning of commonly occurring Greek and Latin affixes and roots in words. DOK: 1–2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Use commonly occurring Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meanings of words (e.g., recede, precede). DOK: 1–2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Use more complex Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meanings of above-grade words and phrases (e.g., belligerent, exclaim). DOK: 1–2
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will determine the meaning of commonly occurring Greek/Latin affixes and/or roots in words in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems should ask students to determine the meaning of affixes and/or roots in words that use common Greek and Latin affixes and/or roots. Some Grade 8 affixes might include: hyper-, hypo-, -ive, -ure, among others. Some common Greek or Latin roots for the grade might include: -voc-/voke- (to call), -cogn- (to know), -mort- (death), among others. There must be context to support the meaning. The stem could read, “In paragraph X, the author says, ‘The Nebraska settlers’ <u>recognition</u> of the fertile soil in certain areas helped them choose the best locations for their farms.’ What is the meaning of the root -cogni- in the word ‘<u>recognition</u>’?” 	<p>Students will use commonly occurring Greek/Latin affixes and/or roots to determine the meaning of an unknown word or phrase in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems should ask students to determine the meaning of an unknown word or phrase that includes a common affix or root word for the grade level. The stem may include a culled sentence from the text with the target word. For example: “This sentence is from the passage. ‘Among the early Nebraska settlers, there was a <u>heterogeneous</u> mix of cultures and backgrounds.’ Based on the meaning of the prefix hetero-, what does the word <u>heterogeneous</u> mean in the sentence?” The correct answer would be “consisting of people from different or diverse populations” since hetero- means different. The distractors should be plausible meanings of the word based on the context (e.g., having a positive attitude, working toward a common goal). 	<p>Students will use more complex Greek/Latin affixes and/or roots to determine the meaning of above-grade words or phrases in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but the items for Advanced should focus on more complex affixes/roots and/or provide fewer explicit definitions of affixes/roots.

LA.8.V.2.a

Content Strand	Vocabulary
Anchor Standard	Context and Connotation Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
Standard	LA.8.V.2 Interpret an author’s use of figurative, connotative, and technical language in grade-level literary and informational text.
Indicator	LA.8.V.2.a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.V.2.a asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify figures of speech, (e.g., verbal irony, puns); and Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. <p>Figures of speech are expressions that use words in a non-literal way to create an effect or convey a deeper meaning. They often involve comparisons (e.g., similes, metaphors), exaggerations (e.g., personification), or allusions (i.e., references to well-known stories or events).</p> <p>Verbal irony is when someone says something but means the opposite, often to highlight a contrast between expectations and reality. For example, saying “What a beautiful day!” during a storm or “Fantastic, my favorite show got canceled” when they are disappointed.</p> <p>Puns are humorous plays on words that exploit multiple meanings or similar sounds, such as, “I used to be a baker, but I couldn’t make enough dough,” or “The math book looked sad because it had too many problems.”</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on interpreting figures of speech, including literary, biblical, and mythological allusions, in context. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same, but it adds two new figures of speech, verbal irony and puns, as examples. This progression shows that students are still gaining knowledge of various figures of speech and continuing to develop their ability to interpret how authors use figurative language to convey meaning.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Identify figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in grade-level text. DOK: 1	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. DOK: 2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Analyze figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) and how they affect the overall meaning of the text. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will identify figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students which sentence from the text includes a figure of speech in general or a specific figure of speech, such as verbal irony or a pun. For example, “Which sentence from the passage includes wordplay for a humorous effect?”, or “Which sentence from the text includes a pun?” Students would choose “The early Nebraska settlers found the Great Plains to be quite plain, but they still managed to cultivate a rich life there.” 	<p>Students will interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to explain the author’s intended purpose when using figures of speech. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘Early Nebraska settlers joked that their “cozy” homes were perfect for those who loved the great outdoors because the wind blew right through the walls.’ What is the author revealing in this sentence?” The correct answer would be: “The settlers faced harsh living conditions even inside their homes.” Distractors could be “The settlers liked to feel connected to nature,” etc. 	<p>Students will analyze figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) and how they affect the overall meaning of a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to analyze figures of speech from a text and how they affect the overall meaning of the text. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘The settlers referred to their endless fields of dirt as “gardens of opportunity,” even though growing anything was a constant struggle.’ How does this example of verbal irony affect the overall meaning of the passage?” The correct answer would be, “It shows that settlers remained hopeful in the face of challenges .” The distractors would be misinterpretations of how the sentence impacts the text (e.g., “It suggests that settlers reached the success they strived for.”)

LA.8.V.2.b

Content Strand	Vocabulary	
Anchor Standard	Context and Connotation Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.	
Standard	LA.8.V.2 Interpret an author’s use of figurative, connotative, and technical language in grade-level literary and informational text.	
Indicator	LA.8.V.2.b Determine the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.	
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.V.2.b asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to use their knowledge of word relationships (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs, cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to understand the meanings of words.</p> <p>Since knowledge of word relationships requires a deeper understanding of words, target words should be on or below grade level and embedded in a context-rich asset.</p> <p>Technical language is subject-specific, Tier 3 vocabulary.</p>	
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on determining the relationship between words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category). The Grade 8 standard more broadly focuses on determining the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. This progression suggests that students have acquired a strong foundation of word knowledge and can use a broad range of word relationships to determine the meaning of words.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of

performing in Developing can likely: Determine the relationship between particular words. DOK: 1	performing in On Track can likely: Determine the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. DOK: 1–2	Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Use the relationship between above-grade-level words to better understand each of the words and construct meaning. DOK: 2
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will determine the relationship between particular words in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to determine the relationship between particular on or below-grade-level words in a literary or informational text. Because context will be key to determining the intent of the word, sentences should be pulled from the text itself. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘The brave Nebraska settlers were courageous as they faced the numerous challenges of building new homes on the frontier, including harsh weather, scarce resources, and the need to establish a community from scratch. “Which words from the sentence mean the same thing?” The correct answer would be “brave/courageous,” while distractors might include “numerous/new,” “harsh/scarce” and “challenges/resources.”	<p>Students will determine the relationship between particular words in a literary or informational text to better understand each of the words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to determine the relationship between two or more words in a text. Because context will be key to determining the intent of the word, sentences should be pulled from the text itself. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘The Nebraska settlers were courageous as they faced the numerous challenges of building new homes on the <u>harsh</u> frontier, including <u>severe</u> weather, scarce resources, and the need to establish a community from scratch.’ What is the relationship between <u>harsh</u> and <u>severe</u> in the sentence?” The correct answer would be: “They both support the idea that the settlers sometimes had difficult conditions to deal with,” while distractors might include “They both suggest that the settlers were often emotional due to their poor conditions,” etc.	<p>Students will use the relationship between above-grade-level words to better understand each of the words and construct meaning in a literary or informational text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to use the relationships between above-grade-level words to better understand those words and construct meaning in the text. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘The Nebraska settlers showed remarkable fortitude as they worked diligently to establish new homes in the unforgiving frontier.’ What is the relationship between ‘fortitude’ and ‘diligently’ in the sentence?” The correct answer would be “Both words connect to the idea of the strong character of the Nebraska settlers.” Incorrect answers could be along the lines of, “Fortitude speaks to their physical abilities while diligently speaks to their mental abilities,” etc.

LA.8.V.2.c

Content Strand	Vocabulary
Anchor Standard	Context and Connotation Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
Standard	LA.8.V.2 Interpret an author’s use of figurative, connotative, and technical language in grade-level literary and informational text.
Indicator	LA.8.V.2.c Distinguish between the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., willful, resolute).
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.V.2.c asks students to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the connotations and denotations of words; and Distinguish between the connotations of words with similar denotations. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to determine the shades of meanings among related words, distinguishing between their denotations—dictionary definitions—and connotations, or the emotional associations that a word has beyond its dictionary definition. One way of classifying the connotations of words is to identify whether the emotional association is positive, negative, or neutral. For example, if a character in a story is described as “willful,” students should be asked to consider what qualities the word “willful” suggests that words with similar denotations (e.g., assertive, determined, persistent, resolute) do not. In this case, the author may be trying to show that the character is defiant, which has a negative connotation. Meanwhile, several words with similar denotations have positive connotations, such as assertive (confidently self-assured), determined (having a strong resolve), persistent (continuing firmly in a course of action), and resolute (admirably purposeful and unwavering).</p> <p>Since distinguishing nuanced meanings of words requires a deeper understanding of those words, target words should be at or below grade level and embedded in context.</p> <p>Technical language is subject-specific, Tier 3 vocabulary.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on distinguishing between the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., polite, diplomatic). The Grade 8 standard remains the same, though the examples given are slightly more advanced words (e.g., willful, resolute), showing that students continue to gain vocabulary each year.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in Developing can likely: Identify the connotations (e.g., positive, negative, neutral) and denotations of words. DOK: 1	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found in Grade 8, a student performing in On Track can likely: Distinguish between the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., willful, resolute). DOK: 1–2	With a range of texts with text complexity commonly found at the intersection of Grade 8 and Grade 9, a student performing in Advanced can likely: Apply knowledge of the connotations of complex words with similar denotations (e.g., steadfast, tenacious) to create meaning or understand the text. DOK: 2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will identify the connotations (e.g., positive, negative, neutral) and denotations of words in a literary or informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to identify the connotations and denotations of on or below-grade-level words in a literary or informational text. Because context will be key to determining the intent of the word, sentences should be pulled from the text itself. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘The Nebraska settlers were determined and confident as they worked together to build a thriving	Students will distinguish between the connotations of words with similar denotations of words in a literary or informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to distinguish between the connotations of on or below-grade-level words in a literary or informational text based on connotations and denotations. For example: “Read these sentences from the passage. ‘The Nebraska settlers were <u>thrifty</u> as they managed their limited resources to survive on the frontier. However, some settlers were so <u>sparing</u> that they often went	Students will apply knowledge of the connotations of complex words with similar denotations to create meaning or understand a literary or informational text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but Advanced items must use more complex words that are slightly above grade level.Stems can also ask students to explain how two words with similar denotations add meaning to a text. For example, “Read this sentence from the passage. ‘The Nebraska settlers were <u>steadfast</u> in their commitment to building new homes, showing	

<p>community on the harsh frontier.’ Which word in the sentence suggests something negative?” The options would be: determined, confident, thriving, and harsh (correct answer).</p>	<p>without basic necessities, making life unnecessarily hard.’ What is the relationship between <u>thrifty</u> and <u>sparing</u> in the sentence?” The correct answer would be “Both words suggest a careful use of resources, but ‘sparing’ is more restrictive than ‘thrifty.’” Incorrect answers would be “Both words suggest a lack of understanding about how to use resources, but ‘thrifty’ shows they were starting to address the problem while ‘sparing’ suggests they had stopped worrying,” etc.</p>	<p><u>persistent</u> resolve despite the many obstacles they faced on the frontier.’ How do the words <u>steadfast</u> and <u>persistent</u> help the reader understand the passage?” The correct answer would be “Both words suggest that the settlers took on their challenges with determination, which led to the success of Nebraska as an area where people could start a new life.” The distractors would be misunderstandings of the text based on incorrect connotative meanings (e.g., negative or neutral rather than positive).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another way of applying knowledge to show an understanding of the text would be to ask students to replace the target words with synonyms that more clearly distinguish their connotative meanings. For example, the words “steadfast” and “persistent” in the stimulus above would be replaced with “unwavering” and “continuous” as the correct answer options.
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Item Specifications for Writing Standards

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LA.8.W.1.a

Content Strand	Writing		
Anchor Standard	Production of Writing Use a recursive writing process to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the discipline, audience, and/or context.		
Standard	LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.		
Indicator	LA.8.W.1.a Apply knowledge of rules for capitalization.		
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.1.a asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply knowledge of rules for capitalization. <p>The rules for capitalization include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Capitalizing the first word of a sentence2) Capitalizing proper nouns (e.g., names of people, places, and specific things)3) Capitalizing titles when used with names (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Dr.)4) Capitalizing days of the week, months, and holidays5) Capitalizing the pronoun “I”6) Capitalizing the first word in a direct quotation7) Capitalizing the names of specific courses (e.g., History 101, Algebra II)8) Capitalizing the names of historical events and periods (e.g., the Renaissance, World War II)9) Capitalizing the names of organizations, institutions, and government bodies (e.g., the United Nations, Harvard University)10) Capitalizing the names of planets and celestial bodies (e.g., Mars, the Milky Way)		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on applying knowledge of rules for capitalization. The Grade 8 standard is identical, showing that students are still working on applying this important writing skill.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	

Apply knowledge of some of the rules for capitalization (e.g., proper nouns, titles, sentence beginnings). DOK: 1	Apply knowledge of rules for capitalization. DOK: 1	Consistently apply knowledge of rules for capitalization. DOK: 1
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will apply knowledge of some rules of capitalization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify examples of correct capitalization. Items for this standard can be presented without an asset, as context is unnecessary to assess the skill. Stems can simply ask, “Which sentence is correctly capitalized?” The options should be variations of the same sentence. Also, in keeping with the spirit of the ALD, items should require the application of more common capitalization rules, such as capitalization of names, proper nouns, holidays, or titles. For example, “Nebraska settlers took time from their busy days to celebrate holidays like Arbor Day, which was founded in the state by J. Sterling Morton in 1872” (correct answer), with distractors such as, “Nebraska settlers took time from their busy days to celebrate holidays like Arbor day, which was founded in the state by J. Sterling Morton in 1872,” etc. 	<p>Students will apply knowledge of rules for capitalization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but items for On Track can ask students to apply all capitalization rules and use less common examples. As in Developing, the item should be presented without an asset, as context is unnecessary to assess the skill. Stems can simply ask, “Which sentence is correctly capitalized?” The options do not need to be variations of the same sentence as in Developing, and they can include examples of multiple capitalization rules or errors. For example, the correct answer might be, “The Nebraska settlers, driven by the opportunities provided by the Homestead Act of 1862, worked tirelessly to establish their farms and communities on the vast plains, under the governance of the United States Congress.” Distractors might include: “Nebraska’s journey to Statehood marks a significant chapter in American History, as the state was admitted to the Union on March 1, 1867, after overcoming legislative challenges and establishing a Legal System,” and other sentences with at least one incorrect capitalization. 	<p>Students will consistently apply knowledge of rules for capitalization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to apply all capitalization rules, and a Multiple-select or technology-enhanced item type can be used to assess consistent application of capitalization rules. For example, a Gap Match item can be used that asks students to move correctly and incorrectly capitalized titles, phrases, and sentences into a clearly labeled chart. Alternatively, students can be presented with a short stimulus text with multiple opportunities to choose between options, with the correct answer demonstrating correct capitalization. For example, the stimulus might read, “In larger towns like Lincoln, the _____ (Capital City / capital city) of Nebraska, people would gather to celebrate _____ (Independence Day / Independence day). There would be a reading of _____ (the Declaration of Independence / the declaration of independence) and a performance of the national anthem, _____ (“The Star-Spangled Banner” / “the Star-spangled Banner”). Additionally, options for any type of item can include more complex or less common words or phrases to be capitalized. For example, an option might include the name of the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which is capitalized irregularly, or a long title such as, “Heartland Homesteading: Life on the Nebraska Frontier.”

LA.8.W.1.b

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Production of Writing Use a recursive writing process to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the discipline, audience, and/or context.
Standard	LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.
Indicator	LA.8.W.1.b Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dashes) to indicate a pause or break and an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.1.b asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dashes) to indicate a pause or break • Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission. <p>Punctuation is used to indicate a pause or break when the writer wants to create a momentary pause in the flow of the sentence or to separate ideas. The punctuation used can be a comma, ellipsis, or dash.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comma example: She walked away from the meeting confident, even excited. • Ellipsis example: He started to explain, but then . . . he couldn't find the words. • Dashes example: The results—though unexpected—were quite impressive. <p>An ellipsis can also be used to indicate an omission. For example, ellipses are often used when quoting text from sources, such as, "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth . . . a new nation . . . dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	There is no specific Grade 7 standard for using punctuation, though there is a Grade 6 standard (LA.6.W.1.b) that focuses on using punctuation (e.g., commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off non-restrictive clauses. The Grade 8 standard progresses to using punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dashes) to indicate a pause or break and an ellipsis to indicate an omission, which requires a more advanced understanding of both punctuation and sentence structure.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dashes) to indicate a pause or break or an ellipsis to indicate an omission. DOK: 1	Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dashes) to indicate a pause or break and an ellipsis to indicate an omission. DOK: 1	Consistently use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dashes) to indicate a pause or break and an ellipsis to indicate an omission. DOK: 1
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will use punctuation to indicate a pause or break or an ellipsis to indicate an omission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to use punctuation (commas, ellipses, dashes) to indicate a pause/break or an ellipsis to indicate an omission. Because context is unnecessary, there is no need to have a stimulus sentence. Instead, items can simply ask, “Which sentence uses punctuation correctly to show a pause or break?” or “Which sentence uses an ellipsis correctly to show an omission?” The options would be four versions of the same sentence. For an item that assesses dashes, for example, the correct answer might be: “After traveling for months, the settlers finally reached Nebraska; however, they had to rest and regain strength before building their new homes—a task that would take many weeks,” with distractors such as “After traveling for months—the settlers finally reached Nebraska; however, they needed to rest and regain strength before building their new homes, a task that would take many weeks,” “After traveling for months, the settlers finally reached Nebraska; however—they had to rest and regain strength before building their new homes—a task that would take many weeks,” etc. 	<p>Students will use punctuation to indicate a pause or break and/or an ellipsis to indicate an omission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing. However, to differentiate between Developing and On Track, the answer options for On Track items should be four different sentences with more advanced syntax than that used for the single sentence tested in Developing. 	<p>Students will consistently use punctuation to indicate a pause or break and/or an ellipsis to indicate an omission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to apply correct usage of punctuation to indicate both a pause/break and an omission, using a Multi-select or technology-enhanced item format to assess consistent usage. For example, in a Gap Match item, students can move the sentences in which commas are used correctly to indicate a pause or break and the sentences in which ellipses are used correctly to indicate an omission into a clearly labeled chart. Sentences with incorrect usage of punctuation would not be selected but remain in the toolbox. Alternatively, a stem could ask students to move sentences in which an ellipsis is used correctly to indicate a pause to one side of the chart and sentences in which an ellipsis is used correctly to indicate an omission into the other side of the chart. Again, sentences with incorrect usage of ellipses would not be selected but remain in the toolbox.

LA.8.W.1.c

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Production of Writing Use a recursive writing process to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the discipline, audience, and/or context.
Standard	LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.
Indicator	LA.8.W.1.c Explain the function of and use different types of verbals in sentences (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives).
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.1.c asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the function of different types of verbals in sentences (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives) • Use different types of verbals in sentences. <p>Verbals are words that are derived from verbs but function as different parts of speech in a sentence. They include gerunds, participles, and infinitives.</p> <p>Gerunds are verbals that function as nouns. They are formed by adding “-ing” to a verb. For example, “Swimming is my favorite hobby,” where “swimming” is the subject of the sentence.</p> <p>Participles are verbals that function as adjectives. They can be present participles (ending in “-ing”) or past participles (usually ending in “-ed” or “-en”). For example, “The shining stars lit up the night sky,” where “shining” is the present participle describing the noun “stars.” Also, “The painted fence looked brand new,” where “painted” is a past participle describing the noun “fence.” And finally, “The fallen leaves covered the ground,” where “fallen” is a past participle describing the noun “leaves.”</p> <p>Infinitives are verbals that can function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. They are formed by using “to” followed by the base form of a verb. For example, “To read is to travel,” where “to read” is functioning as a noun and the subject of the sentence. Also, “She has a book to read,” where “to read” is functioning as an adjective describing the noun “book.” And finally, “He came to read,” where “to read” is functioning as an adverb describing why he came.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	There is no specific Grade 7 standard for using punctuation, though there is a Grade 6 standard (LA.6.W.1.d) that focuses on explaining the function of articles (e.g., definite and indefinite) and applying knowledge to

	writing. The Grade 8 standard advances significantly to explaining the function and use of different types of verbals in sentences (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives), which requires greater knowledge of grammar and how to apply it to writing.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Identify and/or use different types of verbals in sentences. DOK: 1–2	Explain the function of and use different types of verbals in sentences (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives). DOK: 1–2	Consistently explain the function of and use different types of verbals in sentences (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives). DOK: 1–2
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will identify and/or use different types of verbals in sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to identify verbals (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives) in sentences. Because context is unnecessary to identify verbals, there is no need to have a stimulus sentence. Instead, items can simply ask, “Which sentence includes a gerund?” The options would be four sentences, one with a gerund and the others without. For example: “Building their homes in Nebraska was a challenging task for the settlers” (correct answer), “The settlers faced harsh weather conditions in Nebraska,” “Many families were traveling together to start new lives in Nebraska,” and “The Nebraska settlers built their homes and farms from scratch.”	Students will explain the function of and use different types of verbals in sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to explain the function of different verbals (e.g., gerunds, participles, infinitives) in sentences. Because context is unnecessary, there is no need to have a stimulus sentence. Instead, stems can simply ask students to, “Read the sentence. ‘Building their homes in Nebraska was a challenging task for the settlers.’ What is the function of the word ‘Building’ in the sentence?” The options would be: “It functions as a noun because it is the subject of the sentence” (correct answer), “It functions as an adjective because it describes what is being made,” “It functions as a verb because it says what	Students will consistently explain the function of and use different types of verbals in sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to explain the function of different types of verbals in sentences by labeling them with the correct term (e.g., gerund, participle, infinitive). A technology-enhanced item type can be used to assess the consistent application of this skill. For example, a Gap Match item can provide a sentence that includes all three (3) types of verbals and then ask students to move each type of verbal into a clearly labeled chart. With this approach, the provided sentence might read, “Building their homes in Nebraska, the settlers, determined to succeed, worked tirelessly to establish a community.” To get the correct answer, students would move “Building” to the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can also ask students to use different types of verbals in sentences. This can be done with a technology-enhanced item that presents a short stimulus and asks students to, for example, “Choose the word that best completes each sentence. _____ (Driven / Driving) by the promise of free land, many settlers moved to Nebraska to start new lives. _____ (Faced / Facing) harsh weather conditions, the settlers had to adapt quickly to survive on the plains.” This example focuses on just one type of verbal, participles, though it features both present and past participles. 	<p>action is being taken,” and “It functions as an adverb because it tells how the action will be taken.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items that assess using different types of verbals can follow the second item approach for Developing. However, On Track items should include more than one type of verbal in the short stimulus, such as gerunds and participles. 	<p>Gerund column, “determined” to the Participle column, and “to succeed” to the Infinitive column. Note that the Advanced ALD is the only level that should require students to know the labels and definitions for each type of verbal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items that assess using different types of verbals in sentences can follow the second item approach for On Track. However, Advanced items can include all three (3) types of verbals in the short stimulus, or they can assess more challenging uses of verbals in sentences, such as using infinitives as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.
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LA.8.W.1.d

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Production of Writing Use a recursive writing process to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the discipline, audience, and/or context.
Standard	LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.
Indicator	LA.8.W.1.d Distinguish between and use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, and types of grammatical mood (e.g., indicative, subjunctive, conditional, imperative).
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.1.d asks students to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between and use active and passive voice • Distinguish between and use formal and informal tone • Distinguish between and use types of grammatical mood (e.g., indicative, subjunctive, conditional, imperative). <p>Voice refers to the form a verb takes to indicate whether the subject of the verb performs or receives the action. Active voice is when the subject of the sentence performs the action. For example, “The cat chased the mouse.” (The subject “cat” performs the action “chased.”) Passive voice is when the subject of the sentence receives the action. For example, “The mouse was chased by the cat.” (The subject “mouse” receives the action “was chased.”) Passive voice is often used in scientific and academic writing, such as, “The wild elephants were studied by a team of top researchers in the field.”</p> <p>Tone refers to the writer’s attitude or approach towards the subject and the audience. A formal tone is more serious and uses standard language and grammar. For example, “The results of the experiment were conclusive and demonstrated a significant correlation.” An informal tone is more casual and conversational. For example, “The experiment worked out great and showed a clear link.”</p> <p>Grammatical mood refers to the form a verb takes to express the speaker’s attitude toward the action or state. The indicative mood is used to make factual statements or ask questions. For example, “She walks to</p>

	school every day.” The subjunctive mood is used to express wishes, hypothetical situations, or actions that are contrary to fact. For example, “If I were a bird, I would fly.” The conditional mood is used to express actions or events that are dependent on a condition. For example, “If it rains, we will stay indoors.” The imperative mood is used to give commands or make requests. For example, “Please close the door.”		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.1.c) focuses on distinguishing between and using types of clauses, modifiers, and adjectives. The Grade 8 standard advances significantly to distinguishing between and using active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, and types of grammatical mood (e.g., indicative, subjunctive, conditional, imperative). This progression shows that students are becoming much more sophisticated in their understanding of grammar.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
Identify and/or use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, and/or types of grammatical mood. DOK: 1–2	Distinguish between and use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, and types of grammatical mood (e.g., indicative, subjunctive, conditional, imperative). DOK: 1–2	Consistently distinguish between and use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, and types of grammatical mood (e.g., indicative, subjunctive, conditional, imperative). DOK: 1–2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will identify or use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, or types of grammatical mood. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to identify active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, or types of grammatical mood. Because context is unnecessary to identify voice, tone, or grammatical mood, there is no need to have a stimulus sentence. Instead, items can simply ask, “Which sentence shows the use of active	Students will distinguish between or use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, or types of grammatical mood. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to distinguish between active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, or types of grammatical mood. In some cases, because context may not be unnecessary, there is no need to have a stimulus sentence. In other cases, context may be helpful. For example,	Students will consistently distinguish between or use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, or types of grammatical mood. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the first item approach for On Track, but a Multi-select or technology-enhanced item should be used to assess the consistent application of this skill. For example, a Gap Match item can ask students to move sentences from the toolbox into a chart with columns for	

<p>voice?” For this question, the options would be: “Numerous challenges were faced by the settlers during their journey to Nebraska,” “Stories and resources were shared by the families to help each other through these difficult times,” “The settlers built their homes on the vast plains of Nebraska” (correct answer), etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can also ask students to use active and passive voice, formal and informal tone, or types of grammatical mood. This can be done with a technology-enhanced item that presents a short stimulus and asks students to, for example, “Choose the clauses that maintain the active voice in the paragraph. After establishing their homes on the vast plains of Nebraska, the settlers turned to the challenge of making the land productive. _____ (The land was cultivated by the settlers / They cultivated the land), and they gained access to water and planted crops to sustain their communities. Finally, _____ (farming methods were shared among the settlers / the settlers shared their farming methods) to ensure successful harvests.” 	<p>context is helpful for the following question: “Read this paragraph. ‘(1) The settlers in Nebraska worked hard to build their new homes. (2) They faced many challenges, including harsh weather and limited resources. (3) The strenuous labors undertaken by the settlers were representative of their unwavering determination and resilience. (4) They managed to create strong communities despite the challenges.’ Which sentence shows a switch in tone from the rest of the paragraph?” The correct answer is sentence (3), which has elevated vocabulary and more complex syntax that clearly signals the shift in tone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items that assess using voice, tone, or grammatical mood can follow the second item approach for Developing. However, On Track items should focus on more challenging uses, such as formal and informal tone, and present more nuanced answer options. 	<p>each of the four grammatical moods. The moods should be both labeled and described: Indicative Mood (facts and questions), Subjunctive Mood (hypothetical situations), Conditional Mood (actions that depend on a condition), and Imperative Mood (commands and requests). Sentences in the toolbox might include: “If only the settlers had more resources, they might have had far fewer struggles” (subjunctive), “The settlers would have prepared better for their journey if they had known about the harsh winters ahead” (conditional), etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items that assess using voice, tone, or grammatical mood can follow the second item approach for On Track. However, Advanced items should focus on more challenging uses, such as grammatical mood, and present more nuanced answer options.
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LA.8.W.1.e

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Production of Writing Use a recursive writing process to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the discipline, audience, and/or context.
Standard	LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.
Indicator	LA.8.W.1.e Use appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and clauses.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.1.e asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and clauses. <p>Parallel structure is the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a sentence. It ensures that similar elements within a sentence are presented in a consistent way, making the sentence clearer and easier to read. Parallel structure can occur at the word level, phrase level, or clause level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word level: “The project requires creativity, dedication, and patience.” (Here, the words “creativity,” “dedication,” and “patience” are all abstract nouns, maintaining parallel structure.) Phrase level: “They spent the day hiking in the mountains, swimming in the lake, and relaxing by the campfire.” (Here, the phrases “hiking in the mountains,” “swimming in the lake,” and “relaxing by the campfire” are all verb phrases, each starting with a gerund followed by a prepositional phrase, maintaining parallel structure.) Clause level: “He believes that honesty is important, that hard work pays off, and that kindness matters.” (Here, the clauses “that honesty is important,” “that hard work pays off,” and “that kindness matters” are all dependent clauses, beginning with “that” and following with a subject and predicate, maintaining parallel structure.)
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.1.d) focuses on using a variety of prepositional and appositive phrases in sentences and paragraphs. The Grade 8 standard progresses to using appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and clauses. This progression shows that students are expected to be able to apply their expanding knowledge of grammar to writing tasks.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Identify appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and/or clauses. DOK: 1	Use appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and clauses. DOK: 1–2	Consistently use parallel structure in words, phrases, and clauses. DOK: 1–2
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will identify appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and/or clauses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify parallel structure in words, phrases, and/or clauses. For example, “Which sentence is written using parallel structure?” The answer options for the Developing ALD should consist of four versions of the same sentence. The answer options might be: “The settlers in Nebraska were hardworking, resourceful, and acted with determination,” “The settlers in Nebraska were hardworking, resourceful, and they had determination,” “The settlers in Nebraska were hardworking, resourceful, and determined” (correct answer), etc. 	<p>Students will use appropriate parallel structure in words, phrases, and/or clauses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to use parallel structure in words, phrases, and/or clauses. Students should be presented with a sentence that they will need to complete by choosing the best option for a blank. For example, “The settlers in Nebraska worked tirelessly to build their homes, _____, and to establish their community.” Then the question would ask, “Which phrase should be used in the blank to maintain parallel structure?” The options would include: “cultivating their land,” “to cultivate their land” (correct answer), etc. 	<p>Students will consistently use parallel structure in words, phrases, and clauses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing and On Track, but a Multi-select or technology-enhanced item should be used to assess the consistent application of this skill. In addition, Advanced items should focus on more challenging tasks, such as maintaining parallel structure with clauses. For example, the item might present five sentences: two using parallel structure with clauses and three breaking parallel structure. The stem would ask students to choose the two sentences that maintain parallel structure.

LA.8.W.1.f

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Production of Writing Use a recursive writing process to produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the discipline, audience, and/or context.
Standard	LA.8.W.1 Create grammatically correct multi-paragraph compositions with varied sentence structures.
Indicator	LA.8.W.1.f Identify and revise fragment and run-on sentences and inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.1.f asks students to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and revise fragments Identify and revise run-on sentences Identify and revise inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood <p>A fragment is a group of words that does not form a complete sentence because it is missing a subject, a verb, or a complete thought. For example, “In the middle of the conversation.”</p> <p>A run-on sentence is a sentence in which two or more independent clauses are joined without proper punctuation or conjunctions. For example, “She played the guitar she sang a song.”</p> <p>Inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood are problematic because they can make writing unclear and difficult to follow. An inappropriate shift in verb tense is when a writer changes verb tenses within a sentence or paragraph in a way that confuses the reader. For example, “She is writing a letter and mailed it last week,” where the verb tense shifts from present tense “is writing” to past tense “mailed.” An inappropriate shift in verb number is when the verb does not agree in number with its subject within a sentence or paragraph. For example, “The dogs runs fast,” where the verb “runs” should be “run” to agree with the plural subject “dogs.” An inappropriate shift in verb voice is when the voice of the verb changes within a sentence or paragraph. The voice can be either active or passive. For example, “The author wrote the book, and then the movie adaptation was directed by a famous filmmaker.” An inappropriate shift in verb mood is when the mood of the verb changes within a sentence or paragraph, which can make the writing unclear and inconsistent. The moods include indicative, subjunctive, conditional, and imperative. For example, “If I had known, I will have told you.” (Here, the sentence shifts from the past perfect subjunctive mood “If I had known” to the future perfect indicative mood “I will have told you.” It should be “I would have told you.”)</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.1.e) focuses on identifying and revising fragment and run-on sentences and inappropriate shifts in verb tenses. The Grade 8 standard progresses significantly to include inappropriate shifts in verb number, voice, and mood, which requires greater knowledge of grammar and how to apply it to writing.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Identify fragment and run-on sentences and/or inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood. DOK: 1	Identify and revise fragment and run-on sentences and inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood. DOK: 1–2	Consistently identify and revise fragment and run-on sentences and inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood. DOK: 1–2
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will identify fragments, run-on sentences, or inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, or mood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify fragments, run-on sentences, or inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, or mood. Because context is unnecessary, there is no need to have a stimulus sentence. For example, “Which sentence includes an inappropriate shift in verb tense?” The options would be: A) The settlers in Nebraska built their homes from logs and mud. B) They faced many challenges, including harsh winters and limited supplies. C) The settlers worked together to plant crops and raise livestock. D) They located water sources and are making irrigation systems to support their crops. (correct answer) If the item addresses sentence fragments, all options should be capitalized and punctuated as though they are complete sentences. 	<p>Students will identify and revise fragments, run-on sentences, and/or inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items focused on identification can be similar to the approaches for Developing, but the On Track items can include multiple sentence errors (fragments and run-ons) or multiple verb errors (inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, or mood) in the same item. In addition, the question might simply ask, “Which sentence is written correctly?” Items focused on revision should include a short stimulus with multiple sentence or verb errors, such as, “The settlers in Nebraska was hardworking and faced many challenge.” The question would ask, “Which sentence fixes the errors?” and the correct answer would be, “The settlers in Nebraska were hardworking and faced many challenges.” 	<p>Students will consistently identify and revise fragments, run-on sentences, and/or inappropriate shifts in verb tense, number, voice, and mood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but to assess “consistently,” items should ask students to make multiple revisions. For example, a Multi-select item could ask students to select the revisions that are needed to correct a given error throughout a brief paragraph. “Select the three revisions that would correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense in the passage.” Correct answers would be “Change building to build in sentence 1,” etc. For items assessing identification, Multi-select stems can ask students to select all the fragments or all the run-on sentences.

LA.8.W.3.a

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.3 Write in a variety of literary forms to convey real or imagined experiences or events in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.3.a Engage and orient the reader by establishing a conflict, situation, or observation, introducing a narrator and/or character(s), and establishing and maintaining point(s) of view; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.3.a asks students to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and orient the reader by establishing a conflict, situation, or observation • Introduce a narrator and/or character(s), establishing and maintaining a point of view • Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically <p>In narrative writing, engaging and orienting the reader means capturing the reader’s interest and helping them understand the setting, characters, and context, right from the beginning. A well-developed context introduces readers to the conflict, situation, or observation around which the story will revolve. A conflict is a struggle between opposing forces that drives the plot of the story. It can be internal or external. For example, a protagonist must overcome his fear of failure to achieve his dream. A situation is a set of circumstances or a scenario in which the characters find themselves. It sets the stage for the events of the story. For example, a student prepares for her first day at a new school, feeling both excited and nervous about meeting new friends and teachers. An observation is a remark or statement that provides insight into the characters, setting, or events. It often reflects the narrator’s or a character’s perspective. For example, “The old house at the end of the street always seemed to be watching, waiting for something to happen.”</p> <p>Introducing a narrator and/or characters means giving enough details about who they are and what they are like for the reader to understand their roles in the story. The point of view is the vantage point from which the story is told. It can be first person (using “I” or “we”), second person (using “you”), or third person (using “he,” “she,” “they,” or a character’s name). Establishing and maintaining a point of view means consistently presenting the story from the chosen point of view, ensuring that the pronouns, narrative voice, and focus remain clear and coherent.</p>

	Finally, organizing an event sequence means arranging the events of the story in a way that makes sense to the reader. This helps the story flow smoothly and ensures that the reader can follow the progression of events naturally.	
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on engaging and orienting the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or character(s), establishing and maintaining a point of view. It also focuses on organizing an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but more specifically defines a context as establishing a conflict, situation, or observation. This progression shows that students are becoming more skilled with how to begin their narrative writing.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Introduce a conflict, situation, or observation and/or a narrator and/or characters and/or point of view. DOK: 2	Engage and orient the reader by establishing a conflict, situation, or observation, introducing a narrator and/or character(s), and establishing and maintaining point(s) of view; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. DOK: 2–3	Skillfully engage and orient the reader by creating a sophisticated conflict, situation, or observation, introducing a narrator and/or character(s), and establishing and maintaining point(s) of view; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will introduce a conflict, situation, or observation and/or a narrator and/or characters and/or point of view. • Stems can ask students to identify which sentence would best establish a context or introduce a conflict, narrator/character(s), or point of view. For example, students read the following excerpt from a story: “_____. One day, she noticed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had	Students will engage and orient the reader by establishing a conflict, situation, or observation, introducing a narrator/character(s), and/or establishing and maintaining a point of view; or students will organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. • Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but the correct answers should be those that best engage and orient the reader. The incorrect answers should establish a conflict, introduce a narrator/character(s), establish and maintain a point of view, or contribute to an event sequence, but do so less effectively or engagingly.	Students will engage and orient the reader by creating a sophisticated conflict, situation, or observation, introducing a narrator/character(s), and/or establishing and maintaining a point of view; or students will organize a compelling event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. • Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track that requires students to add a new sentence to a provided stimulus. However, the

<p>stopped working. Her grandfather looked worried because the crops needed water urgently. Determined to help, Lianna suggested they check the windmill together. After some investigation, they discovered a broken gear that needed replacing. With a little teamwork and a lot of effort, they fixed the windmill, and water flowed to the crops once again, saving the farm.” Then the question might ask, “Which sentence would go in the blank to best introduce Lianna’s point of view in the story?” The key would be something like, “Lianna loved visiting her grandfather’s farm every summer.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce a sentence to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a sentence to add to the story that introduces Lianna and her situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess students’ ability to maintain a point of view, students could be provided with an excerpt and then asked to select a sentence that maintains that point of view. For example: “Read the sentences from a student’s writing. ‘Lianna cherished her annual summer visits to her grandfather’s farm. One sweltering day, she observed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. Her grandfather’s anxious face revealed the urgency of the situation. Upon thorough inspection of the windmill, Lianna and her grandfather identified a broken gear that needed to be replaced. With a little teamwork and a lot of effort, they successfully repaired the windmill, _____.’ Which words should be added to the sentence to maintain the writer’s point of view?” The correct answer would be the option that maintains the point of view, including the third-person pronouns, narrative voice, and focus, such as, “restoring the flow of water to the crops and ultimately saving the farm.” A plausible distractor would be one that shifts from third-person to first-person pronouns and shifts away from the narrative voice or the focus on solving a problem, such as, “exercising our mechanical skills.” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences in response to a question. For example, “Add 1–2 new sentences to the story that show the events that are likely to follow.” 	<p>correct answer for Advanced items needs to be the one that best develops the context through more sophisticated descriptions, more precise details, or a more nuanced point of view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For items assessing the ability to organize a compelling sequence of events, the correct answer should be the sentence that builds suspense or draws the reader in, while incorrect answers would be sentences that fit into the narrative but do not advance the plot in a compelling way. • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce a few sentences in response to a question. For example, “Add 1–3 sentences to the story that show what Lianna will most likely do next.”
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LA.8.W.3.b

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.3 Write in a variety of literary forms to convey real or imagined experiences or events in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.3.b Use literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines) to develop experiences, events, characters, and settings.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.3.b asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines) to develop experiences, events, characters, and settings. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to use various literary techniques in narrative writing. Writers use these techniques to make the experiences, events, characters, and settings in their narratives more vivid and exciting.</p> <p>Dialogue is the conversation between characters in a story. It helps to reveal their personalities, thoughts, and feelings. For example, “Lily’s eyes widened with wonder as she took in the breathtaking view. “This place is amazing,” she murmured, her voice filled with awe. Max smiled, a hint of pride in his expression. “I knew you’d like it,” he replied, his tone warm and reassuring. “There’s a hidden path just beyond those trees that leads to an even more spectacular sight.”</p> <p>Pacing is the speed at which a story unfolds. It can create suspense, excitement, or a sense of calm. For example, “The footsteps echoed louder and louder in the empty hallway, each step sending a jolt of fear through her. She quickened her pace, heart pounding, as the exit sign finally came into view.”</p> <p>Description is the use of detailed language to create vivid images in the reader’s mind. It helps to bring the story’s settings, characters, and events to life. For example, “The ancient library was a labyrinth of towering bookshelves, each crammed with dusty tomes. The air was thick with the scent of aged paper and leather, and the dim light cast eerie shadows on the marble floor.”</p>

	Multiple plot lines are different storylines that run parallel to each other within a narrative. They can intersect and influence each other, adding complexity and depth to the story. For example, as the detective investigated the mysterious disappearance of a museum artifact, a journalist was uncovering secrets about the town’s history. Their discoveries led them to collaborate.	
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on using literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description) to develop characters, events, settings, and conflicts. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but adds multiple plot lines to the list of literary techniques and replaces conflicts with experiences. This progression shows that students are continuing to learn about various literary techniques and apply them to their narrative writing.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Use some literary techniques to develop experiences, events, characters, and/or settings. DOK: 2	Use literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines) to develop experiences, events, characters, and settings. DOK: 2–3	Purposefully use literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines) to develop complex experiences, events, characters, and settings. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will use some literary techniques to develop experiences, events, characters, and/or settings. (Pacing and multiple plot lines should not be assessed since they are more advanced techniques.) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to identify which description or line of dialogue best helps the reader understand an experience, event, character, and/or setting in a story. The options can be descriptive sentences or examples of dialogue.	Students will use literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines) to develop experiences, events, characters, and/or settings. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but the items should ask students to choose between more precise descriptions or make writerly choices about character or plot development. For example, “Which description should be added to the story to show how Lianna feels about repairing the windmill?” The	Students will purposefully use literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines) to develop complex experiences, events, characters, and settings. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track. However, Advanced items should ask students to focus on adding to the complexity of experiences, events, characters, or settings. To assess purposeful use, the answer options might include a range of literary techniques (e.g.,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatively, in a technology-enhanced item, students may be given two options to choose from for each blank, with the correct answer providing a more detailed description. For example, “Lianna loved visiting her grandfather’s farm every summer. One day, she noticed that the _____ (ancient rusty / tall old) windmill, which had pumped water to the crops for many years, had stopped working. Her grandfather looked worried because the crops needed water urgently. Determined to help, Lianna suggested they check the windmill together. After some investigation, they discovered a broken gear that needed replacing. With a little teamwork and a lot of effort, they fixed the windmill, and _____ (cool, fresh / life-restoring) water flowed to the crops once again, saving the farm.” 	<p>correct answer would be: “Joy swept through Lianna like the water now flowing to the fields.” All distractors should be related to the story, but they should be less precise (e.g., “Lianna was very happy to get the problem solved.”) or not in keeping with the character or situation presented in the rest of the stimulus (e.g., “Lianna hoped she would not have to help her grandfather with anything else.”).</p> <p>Instead of description, stems could ask students for a line of dialogue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the use of pacing, items might provide an excerpt and ask, “Which sentences should the writer use next to show a quick pace that creates excitement?” or another student-friendly description of pacing (e.g., to show a slow pace that builds suspense). Answer options would be short or long sentences that clearly show the desired pacing. For example, sentences to show a quick pace might read, “Lianna squeaked suddenly. ‘I found it!’ she cried. ‘It’s this gear!’” while a sentence to show a slow pace could read, “Lianna carefully analyzed each tiny part, one at a time, looking for even the smallest issue.” 	<p>dialogue, pacing, description, multiple plot lines), with students choosing the one that best accomplishes the writing goal given in the stem. For example, stems might present a short stimulus such as the one shown in On Track and ask a question about the use of literary techniques. The correct answer would not be a sentence to include in the writing, but rather a short explanation of how the writer would purposefully use a literary technique. For example, the stem might ask, “Which technique would best develop Lianna’s character?” with the correct answer being, “Another plot line that tells the reader of past events that led Lianna to care about her grandfather’s farm.” Incorrect answers would be techniques that do not accomplish the stated writing goal or develop complex experiences, events, characters, or settings, such as, “Dialogue between Lianna and her grandfather while they are trying to fix the windmill.”</p>
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LA.8.W.3.c

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.3 Write in a variety of literary forms to convey real or imagined experiences or events in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.3.c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.3.c asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to use techniques such as transitional devices, flashbacks, and foreshadowing to sequence events and signal shifts between characters, events, and settings, making the narrative more cohesive and easier to understand.</p> <p>Common and more sophisticated transitional devices at this grade include: “Meanwhile,” “Shortly after,” “Subsequently,” “Earlier that evening,” “In another part of the city,” “Somewhere else,” “On the horizon,” “Suddenly,” “As the night wore on,” and “Concerning.” Greater variety in words and phrases can be accomplished by making them more specific to the story (e.g., “Shortly after, the stars began to twinkle”; “Earlier that evening, the streets were bustling with activity”; “Somewhere else, in a hidden alleyway”; “Suddenly, a piercing cry shattered the silence”; “Concerning the mysterious disappearance”).</p> <p>In addition to transitional devices, techniques might include brief flashbacks that introduce past events to provide background or context, enriching the narrative. They might also include foreshadowing, or hints of future events that build anticipation and create a cohesive storyline.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on using a variety of transitional words and phrases to signal shifts from one character, time frame, or setting to another. The Grade 8 standard progresses to using a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. This progression, including the replacement of “transitional words” with “techniques,” shows that students are expected to be more skilled in their ability to write narratives.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
<p>Use some techniques to sequence events. DOK: 2</p>	<p>Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. DOK: 2–3</p>	<p>Consistently use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a complex, coherent whole. DOK: 2–3</p>
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will use some techniques to sequence events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify which transitional device best sequences events in a narrative because it signals a shift from one character, event, or setting to another. For example, students read the following sentences: “Lianna loved visiting her grandfather’s farm every summer. _____, she noticed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. Her grandfather looked worried because the crops needed water urgently.” Students are then asked, “Which word or phrase best connects the two sentences in this story?” with the correct answer being “One hot afternoon as Lianna was wandering by the creek,” and the distractors 	<p>Students will use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A technology-enhanced item type can be used to assess a variety of techniques for sequencing events. For example, students can be given a short stimulus with multiple opportunities to choose between options, with each correct answer demonstrating a different technique. For example, “Choose the phrase that best sequences events in the story so that they build on one another. ‘Lianna cherished her annual summer visits to her grandfather’s farm. One sweltering day, she went for a walk down by the creek, _____ (remembering when her grandfather had taught her about the old windmill / splashing happily in the shallow water as she looked for minnows). Suddenly, she realized that the windmill, which 	<p>Students will consistently use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a complex, coherent whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items can be similar to the approach at On Track but should require students to use more sophisticated techniques, such as brief flashbacks or foreshadowing (hints of future events), to create a cohesive storyline. Stems should present students with a more complex stimulus than those used at On Track. To assess consistent use of these techniques, items can use a Multi-select or technology-enhanced format. At this level, students should use entire sentences as transitional devices. Although this increases the reading load, it is still acceptable for advanced eighth-grade students. For example, students might read the following paragraph: “Lianna cherished her annual summer

<p>being other transitional devices that do not show a logical shift in time (e.g., “One morning as Lianna woke up”).</p>	<p>pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. Her grandfather’s anxious face revealed the urgency of the situation. _____ (Determined to help / Standing beside him) Lianna suggested they check the windmill together.” Distractors for On Track items can require a closer analysis of sequencing events so that they build on one another than distractors for Developing.</p>	<p>visits to her grandfather’s farm. _____ . One sweltering day, she observed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. Her grandfather’s anxious face revealed the urgency of the situation. Upon thorough inspection of the windmill, Lianna and her grandfather identified a broken gear that needed to be replaced. _____.” The stem would then ask students to, “Choose the sentences that best sequence events because they hint at future events and move them into the paragraph.” A correct response for the first blank might be, “It had been a hot summer, and Lianna knew that her grandfather was concerned about the crops.” A correct response for the second blank might read, “Lianna realized that fixing this one tiny gear was critical for the survival of the farm.” Incorrect responses might be, “Lianna had a close relationship with her grandfather, and spending time with him was always one of the highlights of the trip,” for the first blank, and “The gear was surprisingly small, but even so, the windmill could not function without it” for the second blank.</p>
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LA.8.W.3.d

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.3 Write in a variety of literary forms to convey real or imagined experiences or events in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.3.d Use precise words and phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and figurative language to establish mood and tone and convey a vivid picture.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.3.d asks students to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use precise words and phrases to establish mood and/or tone and/or convey a vivid picture • Use descriptive/sensory details to establish mood and/or tone and/or convey a vivid picture • Use figurative language to establish mood and/or tone and/or convey a vivid picture <p>Precise words and phrases in narrative writing are specific and clear words that help provide detailed and accurate descriptions.</p> <p>Descriptive details are words that help paint a picture of the story in the reader’s mind. Together, they help make the writing more vivid by providing exact details (e.g., “The ancient oak tree stood tall, its gnarled branches reaching out like twisted fingers.”) rather than vague descriptions (e.g., “The tree was old and felt creepy.”). Sensory details are descriptions that appeal to the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch). They help the reader experience the story more vividly. For example, “The crunch of autumn leaves underfoot echoed through the silent forest, accompanied by the distant call of a lone owl.”</p> <p>Figurative language refers to words and expressions that are different from their literal meanings and are used to create a special effect or feeling in writing. “The city was a sleeping giant, its skyscrapers towering like silent sentinels in the night,” includes a metaphor (was a sleeping giant) and a simile (like silent sentinels), which could be used to create a sense of mystery, grandeur, or the idea of the city being alive. Establishing a mood and tone and conveying a vivid picture refer to the writing goals for using these types of language. A mood is the overall feeling or atmosphere that a piece of writing creates for the reader, such as suspense, joy, or melancholy. A tone is the author’s attitude toward the subject or audience, which can be formal, informal, serious, or playful. A vivid picture is a detailed and clear depiction that allows the reader to visualize the scene, characters, and events as if they were experiencing them firsthand.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on using precise words and phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and figurative language to express personal or narrative voice. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but progresses from expressing personal or narrative voice to establishing mood and tone and conveying a vivid picture. This progression shows that students are expected to be more skilled in their ability to use language to write vivid and compelling narratives.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
Use some words and/or phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and/or figurative language to establish mood and/or tone. DOK: 1–2	Use precise words and phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and figurative language to establish mood and tone and convey a vivid picture. DOK: 1–2	Consistently and effectively use precise words and phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and figurative language to establish sophisticated mood and tone and convey a vivid picture. DOK: 2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will use some words and/or phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and/or figurative language to establish mood and/or tone. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to identify which word/phrase, descriptive/sensory detail, or piece of figurative language best creates a given tone or mood. Because using language to establish a mood/tone or convey a vivid picture depends on the writer’s goals, the stem should specify the writing goal, such as creating a mysterious mood, rather than asking students to identify the mood/tone. For example, students read the following sentences: “Lianna loved visiting her grandfather’s farm	Students will use precise words and phrases, descriptive/sensory details, or figurative language to establish mood and/or tone and/or convey a vivid picture. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but they should require students to distinguish between more general language and precise words and phrases. As with items for Developing, the stem should specify a mood/tone to be achieved by the writing. For example, students read the following sentences: “Lianna loved visiting her grandfather’s farm every summer. One day, she noticed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. Her grandfather looked	Students will consistently and effectively use precise words/phrases, descriptive/sensory details, and/or figurative language to establish sophisticated mood and/or tone and /or convey a vivid picture. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but they should ask students to focus on consistently and effectively using language to establish sophisticated mood or tone. To assess consistent use, items for the Advanced ALD should require students to make writerly choices in more than one sentence, likely through a technology-enhanced item. For example, the stem might read: “Read these sentences from a student’s	

<p>every summer. One day, she noticed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. When her grandfather heard the news, he looked up, _____. The crops needed water urgently.” Students are then asked, “Which phrase best creates a worried mood?” The correct answer would be a word or phrase that uses descriptive language, sensory details, or figurative language that suggests worry, such as “his eyebrows drawing together grimly over his anxious eyes.” Incorrect answers would use general language that does not convey a clear mood or tone, for example, “concerned about what Lianna had told him.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a technology-enhanced item, students may be given a prompt similar to the one above, but with two options to choose from for each of two blanks. • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write one sentence that would create a worried mood in the story.” 	<p>worried because the crops needed water urgently. Lianna looked over the field, _____.” Then students are asked, “Which phrase best creates an uneasy tone in the story?” The correct answer would be the most precise and vivid description, for example, “her heart sinking as the tender, green shoots seemed to almost visibly shrivel in the heat of the sun.” Incorrect answers could use some descriptive/sensory details but should be clearly less precise or vivid than the correct answer, for example, “feeling upset as she watched the hot sun shine on the small, green plants.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 1–2 sentences that would create an uneasy tone in the story.” 	<p>writing. ‘Lianna loved visiting her grandfather’s farm every summer. One day, she noticed that the old windmill, which pumped water to the crops, had stopped working. Her grandfather looked worried because the crops needed water urgently. _____, Lianna suggested they check the windmill together. When they discovered the problem was simply a broken gear that needed replacing, _____.’ What phrases should the student use to create a vivid picture in the reader’s mind?” Correct answers should use creative, unusual, or especially precise figurative or descriptive language, while incorrect answers would be more common, general, or trite phrases. For example, the correct answer for the first blank could read, “Kneeling to brush her fingers over the corn plants, their new leaves as delicate and fragile as silk,” while an incorrect answer could be, “Feeling like a bundle of nerves as she looked out over the fresh, green field.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write two sentences that would create an uneasy tone in the story.”
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LA.8.W.3.e

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.3 Write in a variety of literary forms to convey real or imagined experiences or events in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.3.e Provide a conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the piece.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.3.e asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the piece. <p>A conclusion is the end of a piece of writing and should provide the reader with a sense of closure. In narrative writing, the literary experiences are the central moments that the story focuses on. These experiences are often the most exciting, emotional, or significant part of the narrative, and they are part of the conflict that drives the plot forward. For example, it might be an adventure, a challenge, a discovery, or any other meaningful experience the characters encounter, including observations. An effective conclusion to a narrative is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the piece. Traditional narratives provide a resolution to the conflict, offering a clear and satisfying ending. Non-traditional narratives may leave some aspects of the conflict unresolved. In a reflective conclusion, the main character usually reflects on their experiences, lessons learned, or changes they've undergone, providing a sense of closure and resolution while also inviting the reader to think deeply about the events and themes presented and consider the broader implications of the story.</p> <p>For items that assess this standard, the correct answer should be the option that best concludes the piece of writing. The distractors should be wrong because they fail to conclude the narrative skillfully, not because they are off-topic.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on providing a conclusion that is clearly related to and appropriately reflects on the literary experiences or events. The Grade 8 standard progresses to a conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the piece. This progression suggests that students are expected to write narratives that may be less conventional in their approach, either focusing more on observation than action or leaving some parts of the conflict unresolved.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Provide a brief conclusion that is related to and/or reflects upon what is experienced. DOK: 2	Provide a conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the piece. DOK: 2–3	Provide an effective and well-developed conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the piece. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will provide a brief conclusion that is related to and/or reflects upon what is experienced in a literary piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can provide students with a short stimulus consisting of 3–4 sentences that describe an event or experience. In a Multiple-Choice item with four options, students will be asked, “Which sentence would make the best ending for the story?” Or they might be asked to move the best of the four options into a blank in a Gap Match item. For Developing, the answer options should be brief in nature, such as “Lianna was thrilled she could help her grandfather save the farm.” The correct answer must be related to the experiences or events in the story and provide a sense of closure. It may also be reflective but does not have to be. • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write one sentence that would make a strong ending for the story.” 	<p>Students will provide a conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of a literary piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can follow the approach for Developing, but the answer options for the item should be more sophisticated than the brief ones used for Developing. In addition, the correct answer should be the one that appropriately reflects on the literary experiences or events. This reflection might refer to a theme or lesson learned; it should provide a resolution and a sense of closure but also leave the reader with a parting thought. For example, “Watching the tension drain from her grandfather’s face, Lianna felt proud of her role in making him smile again and ready to face the challenges the rest of the summer might bring.” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 1–2 sentences that would make a strong ending for the story.” 	<p>Students will provide an effective and well-developed conclusion that is clearly related to and reflects upon what is experienced, observed, or left unresolved over the course of the literary piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but the correct answer should be the conclusion that provides the most effective end to the narrative because it is both reflective and well-developed. To accomplish this, the answer options may need to be more than one sentence. For example, “As they watched the water begin to flow into the irrigation lines, Lianna and Grandpa shared a smile. They realized that working together had brought them closer, and both were already thinking of more projects for the summer.” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write two sentences that give the story a strong ending and show what lesson the main character learned.”

LA.8.W.4.a

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.4.a Develop a structure to sequence ideas appropriately; introduce a clear claim where appropriate.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.4.a asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a structure to sequence ideas appropriately • Introduce a clear claim where appropriate. <p>The introduction sets the stage for the rest of the argument by providing context for the reader. First, the writer must introduce a claim clearly. A claim is the writer’s primary argument, which is developed through supporting evidence. Next, the writer must develop a structure, or organizational plan, in which ideas are grouped logically. If the claim is that project-based learning (PBL) has more benefits than computer-based learning (CBL), then each paragraph might focus on a reason that supports the argument. For example, the writer might say that project-based learning increases student engagement, enhances critical thinking skills, and promotes cooperation among peers.</p> <p>For items that assess this standard, the correct answer should be the option that best develops a structure to sequence ideas appropriately or introduces a clear claim where appropriate. The distractors should be wrong because they fail to do so skillfully, not because they are off-topic.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on developing a structure to sequence ideas appropriately and introducing a clear claim where appropriate. The Grade 8 standard is identical, showing that students are expected to continue working on how they begin argumentative texts.
Achievement Level Descriptors	

Developing	On Track	Advanced
<p>Develop a structure to sequence ideas and introduce a claim where appropriate. DOK: 2</p>	<p>Develop a structure to sequence ideas appropriately; introduce a clear claim where appropriate. DOK: 2</p>	<p>Develop a cohesive structure to sequence ideas appropriately; introduce a clear and compelling claim where appropriate. DOK: 2</p>
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will develop a structure to sequence ideas and introduce a claim where appropriate in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems could provide students with a short stimulus of 3–4 sentences that provides an introduction to an argumentative topic and includes a blank where a claim should be added. For example, “Read this paragraph written by a student. ‘A common debate in today’s schools is between project-based learning (PBL) and computer-based learning (CBL). PBL involves hands-on experiences, which are more engaging for students than sitting in front of a screen. Solving real-world problems deepens student understanding. Working together on a project helps students develop critical thinking skills and promotes cooperation. _____.’ Which sentence should the writer use in the blank to introduce a claim?” The correct answer might read, “While CBL has its place in classrooms, the benefits of PBL are far greater.” At Developing, incorrect answers 	<p>Students will develop a structure to sequence ideas appropriately; or students will introduce a clear claim where appropriate in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but the responses should require students to determine which sentence sequences the ideas most appropriately or introduces the claim most clearly. For example, “Read this paragraph written by a student. ‘A common debate in today’s schools is between project-based learning (PBL) and computer-based learning (CBL). PBL involves hands-on experiences, which are more engaging for students than sitting in front of a screen. Solving real-world problems deepens student understanding. _____.’ While CBL has its place in classrooms, the benefits of PBL are far greater.’ 	<p>Students will develop a cohesive structure to sequence ideas appropriately; or students will introduce a clear and compelling claim where appropriate in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the responses should require students to determine which sentence(s) develop the most cohesive structure or introduce the most compelling claim. For example, the stem could say, “A common debate in today’s schools is between project-based learning (PBL) and computer-based learning (CBL). PBL involves hands-on experiences, which are more engaging for students than sitting in front of a screen. Solving real-world problems deepens student understanding. Working together on a project helps students develop critical thinking skills and promotes cooperation. While CBL has its place in classrooms,

<p>should be sentences that address the topic without contributing to the structure, for example, “When my teacher has used PBL, my friends and I have really enjoyed it.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can also ask students to choose the sentence that best sequences ideas. For example, “Read this sentence written by a student. ‘While computer-based learning has its place in classrooms, the benefits of project-based learning are far greater. _____.’ Which sentence should the writer use in the blank to develop a structure for their argument?” The correct answer should preview the structure of the piece, such as stating the reasons that support the claim. A correct answer for this claim might be: “Project-based learning increases student engagement, enhances critical thinking skills, and promotes cooperation among peers.” Again, incorrect answers should be sentences that address the topic, but they should fail to develop a structure and appear out of sequence. • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a sentence that could go in the blank to introduce the claim about the benefits of video games.” 	<p>Which sentence should the writer use in the blank to create a logical sequence of ideas?” The correct response would appropriately sequence ideas, for example, “Additionally, working together on a project helps students develop critical thinking skills and promotes cooperation.” Incorrect responses would be statements that are related to the topic but do not demonstrate an appropriate sequence of ideas. For example, “Some people think that PBL takes too much time away from other important learning,” which does not fit logically into the sequence of ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 1–2 sentences that could go in the blank to develop a cause-effect structure for the argument about the benefits of video games.” 	<p>_____. Which words should the writer add to the blank to provide the clearest and most compelling claim?” The correct answer could be, “the benefits of PBL are not just academic but also address the skills that students will need to succeed in college and adult life.” Incorrect answers would present a claim that does not meaningfully add to the existing claim (e.g., “there’s no way that any student would choose CBL over PBL”) or that does not logically follow from the information presented (e.g., “there is room for all kinds of learning in a classroom full of diverse learners”).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce a few sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 2–3 sentences that could conclude the paragraph to introduce a clear and compelling claim about the benefits of video games.”
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LA.8.W.4.b

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.4.b Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or supporting claims, and develop a structure in which ideas are grouped logically.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.4.b asks students to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce claim(s) • Acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or supporting claims • Develop a structure in which ideas are grouped logically <p>In argumentative writing, writers introduce claims to support their argument. They also acknowledge and distinguish their claims from alternate or supporting claims about the same topic, as well as refute claims that oppose their argument. These are effective ways for writers to demonstrate they have thoroughly considered the issue and have a unique perspective, which in turn strengthens their argument. For example, if a writer’s claim is that “Project-based learning (PBL) increases student engagement,” then a supporting claim might be, “One way that PBL increases student engagement is by giving students a sense of ownership over their own learning.” An alternate claim might be that “PBL promotes cooperation too,” while an opposing claim might be something that supports a markedly different type of learning, such as, “Computer-based learning can adapt to individual student needs.”</p> <p>In argumentative writing, writers also develop a structure in which ideas to support their argument are grouped logically. For example, writers do not group opposing claims because this can confuse the reader and weaken their argument. Instead, they acknowledge and distinguish each alternate or supporting claim, and they refute each opposing claim with a counterclaim. These techniques ensure a clear and persuasive structure.</p> <p>For items that assess this standard, the correct answer should be the option that best introduces a claim, acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from an alternate or supporting claim, or develops a structure that groups ideas logically. The distractors should be wrong because they fail to do so skillfully, not because they are off-topic.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.4.a) focuses on introducing a clear claim where appropriate. The Grade 8 standard progresses to introducing claim(s), acknowledging and distinguishing the claim(s) from alternate or supporting claims, and developing a structure in which ideas are grouped logically. This progression shows some overlap with LA.8.W.4.a in terms of introducing claims and developing a structure. However, this standard (LA.8.W.4.b) focuses more directly on the techniques of argumentative writing, such as making claims and acknowledging and distinguishing those claims from other types of claims to increase the effectiveness and persuasiveness of an argument.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Introduce claim(s) and distinguish them from alternate or supporting claims. DOK: 2	Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or supporting claims, and develop a structure in which ideas are grouped logically. DOK: 2	Effectively introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or supporting claims, and develop a sophisticated structure in which ideas are grouped logically. DOK: 2–3
Possible Item Approaches		
Students will introduce a claim and distinguish it from alternate or supporting claims. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can provide students with a short stimulus consisting of 3–4 sentences that serve as an introductory paragraph. Then students can be asked to select which sentence best introduces a claim. For example, “Read this paragraph written by a student. ‘Project-based learning (PBL) is an approach that engages students in learning through real-world projects and challenges. Students get to work on projects that are meaningful and	Students will introduce a claim, acknowledge and distinguish the claim from alternate or supporting claims, and/or develop a structure in which ideas are grouped logically. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but the responses should require students to acknowledge and distinguish the claim from alternate or supporting claims. For example, students can be given a short stimulus such as, “A common debate in today’s schools is between project-based learning (PBL) and computer-based learning (CBL).	Students will effectively introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or supporting claims, and/or develop a sophisticated structure in which ideas are grouped logically. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but the Advanced items should require students to determine which sentence is the most effective at introducing the claim or acknowledging and distinguishing the claim from an alternate or supporting claim. This can

<p>relevant to their lives. Working in groups helps students connect with each other and with academic content. _____.' Which sentence should the writer use in the blank to introduce a claim?" The correct answer might be, "One of the greatest strengths of PBL is that it significantly increases student engagement." To assess whether students can distinguish the main claim from other types of claims, incorrect responses should be supporting claims for the same topic, for example, "One way that PBL increases student engagement is by giving students a sense of ownership over their learning," or opposing claims, such as, "Computer-based learning is an even better approach than PBL because it can adapt to students' needs."</p>	<p>PBL involves hands-on experiences, which are more engaging for students than sitting in front of a screen. Solving real-world problems deepens student understanding. _____.' The stem would then ask students which sentence acknowledges an alternate claim. The correct answer might be, "While some people think the main benefit of PBL is increased cooperation among students, well-designed PBL actually leads to increased and deeper learning," which acknowledges and distinguishes the writer's main claim from an alternate claim. Incorrect responses could be supporting claims (e.g., "When students get to address topics that are meaningful to them, they work harder and concentrate better.") or opposing claims (e.g., "One concern about PBL is that students might not be prepared to take on as much responsibility as this method requires.") that are isolated from the main claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems assessing students' ability to develop a structure in which ideas are grouped logically can be similar to the item approaches for standard LA.8.W.4.a. 	<p>also be accomplished using a Multi-select item where students must identify two sentences that effectively acknowledge and distinguish the claim from an alternate or supporting claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, students can be provided with a short stimulus that includes an ineffective introduction of a claim, and the stem would ask students to select a sentence to replace it. • Items that assess students' ability to develop a sophisticated structure in which ideas are grouped logically can be similar to the approaches for standard LA.8.W.4.a.
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LA.8.W.4.c

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.4.c Explain and cite relevant evidence from multiple credible sources.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.4.c asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain and cite relevant evidence from multiple credible sources in argumentative writing. <p>Relevant evidence may include facts and details (examples, descriptions, explanations) that support the writer’s argument, therefore making it more convincing and credible. For example, “The Buck Institute for Education summarized 20 research studies on project-based learning in elementary and secondary schools and found that it may be more effective than traditional instruction in social studies, science, mathematics, and literacy.” This evidence can be used to support the argument that project-based learning has more benefits than computer-based learning.</p> <p>Credible sources are trustworthy and reliable places where students can find accurate information. These sources are often written by experts in the field and are published by reputable organizations (e.g., academic journals, educational institutes). Using information from credible sources strengthens the writer’s argument because readers can trust that the information is accurate and well-researched.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.4.b) focuses on explaining and citing relevant evidence from multiple credible sources. The Grade 8 standard remains the same, showing that students are continuing to develop their ability to critically assess and effectively use evidence in their argumentative writing.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Use evidence from one or more sources. DOK: 1	Explain and cite relevant evidence from multiple credible sources. DOK: 2–3	Effectively explain and accurately cite the most relevant evidence from multiple credible sources. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will use evidence from one or more sources in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify which source would likely provide the best evidence for a piece of argumentative writing. The topic should be included in the stem (e.g., that project-based learning has more benefits than computer-based learning). The options in this Multiple-Choice or Multi-select item would be several potential sources that may or may not offer credible evidence for an argumentative text on the topic. For example, “Which source most likely contains information that would prove that project-based learning (PBL) is more effective than computer-based learning (CBL)?” The options would be: “an article from the website of a company that creates PBL and CBL curriculum,” “comments from an online forum for users of PBL,” “a newspaper article from 2001 about the future of PBL,” and “a 2020 	<p>Students will explain and cite relevant evidence from two or more credible sources in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing. However, they must use a Multi-select format to ask for two or more pieces of relevant evidence from credible sources. For example, “Read these sentences from a student’s essay about the benefits of project-based learning. ‘A common debate in today’s schools is between project-based learning (PBL) and computer-based learning (CBL). PBL involves hands-on experiences, which are more engaging for students than sitting in front of a screen. Solving real-world problems deepens student understanding.’ Which two sentences should the student add to the essay to provide evidence from two trustworthy sources?” A correct answer would include an explanation of the evidence and a citation of the credible source. Incorrect responses should represent 	<p>Students will effectively explain and accurately cite the most relevant evidence from multiple credible sources in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but the correct responses should demonstrate that they are the most relevant choices because they effectively explain and accurately cite the evidence. This means they should include a clear explanation, a detailed citation, and possibly even a quotation from a credible source. For example, the stem might ask, “Which two sentences should be added to the essay because they provide the best evidence for the argument?” A correct response could be, “One of the most significant findings from a 2020 study of PBL published in <i>Educational Researcher</i> was that ‘this technique improves student engagement by enabling knowledge and information sharing and discussion.’” Finally,

<p><i>Educational Researcher</i> report comparing PBL and CBL” (correct answer).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternately, stems can ask students to identify the most relevant evidence to support a given argument. Answer options would be simulated quotes identified as being from the same or different sources. Distractors would either be from a source identifiable as not credible (e.g., an individual’s social media post, an advertisement) or would be somewhat related in topic but not relevant to the argument described in the stem. 	<p>common student mistakes, such as an explanation without a citation, a direct quotation without an explanation (context) or a citation, or an explanation and a citation of a non-credible source. For example, a correct response could read, “A 2020 report from <i>Educational Researcher</i> found that the positive effects of PBL on student engagement were significant.” Incorrect responses might include: “A popular saying about learning is, ‘Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn,’” or “PBL leads to 36% higher engagement among high school students,” or “When I am given the chance to work on a real-life problem, it is easier to put my phone away and get involved with my schoolwork.”</p>	<p>items for Advanced should focus on more challenging or complex topics that require closer consideration of the explanations, citations, and evidence.</p>
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LA.8.W.4.d

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.4.d Use words, phrases, and key vocabulary to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between the claim(s) and supporting evidence.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.4.d asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use words, phrases and/or key vocabulary to create cohesion and/or clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to use specific words and phrases to clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence in argumentative writing.</p> <p>Writers use transitional words and phrases to create clear and logical connections between ideas, such as between their claims and supporting evidence. Common and more sophisticated transitional words and phrases at this grade might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “additionally,” “as well as,” or “furthermore” to add information “as a result,” “due to,” or “consequently” to show cause/effect “alternatively,” “in contrast,” or “similarly” to compare/contrast “initially,” “subsequently,” or “finally” to sequence ideas “for instance,” “such as,” or “specifically” to give examples “in conclusion,” “ultimately,” or “thus” to conclude <p>Writers also use key vocabulary, or important words and terms that are specific to a topic, to help convey precise meanings. A student writing about the value of project-based learning, for example, might use vocabulary like cooperative learning, experiential education, and interdisciplinary projects.</p> <p>Items that assess this standard should ask students to make writerly decisions in the context of writing. This item should focus only on words, phrases, and key vocabulary.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.4.c) focuses on using words, phrases, and key vocabulary to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence. The Grade 8 standard is identical showing that students can benefit from another year of working on these writing skills.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
Use words, phrases and/or key vocabulary to make connections between claim(s) and supporting evidence. DOK: 1–2	Use words, phrases, and key vocabulary to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence. DOK: 1–2	Consistently use effective words, phrases, and key vocabulary to create cohesion and clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence. DOK: 2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will use words, phrases, and/or key vocabulary to make connections between claims and supporting evidence in argumentative writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to select the word, phrase, or key vocabulary that best connects a claim with its supporting evidence. Students may be provided with a 3–4 sentence stimulus, but this standard can also be approached using a shorter stimulus. For example: “Project-based learning gives students the opportunity to build relationships as they work in teams to solve a problem. _____, computer-based learning can isolate students as they focus on their devices instead	Students will use words, phrases, and/or key vocabulary to create cohesion and/or clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence in argumentative writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but the responses should require students to determine which words or phrases make the strongest connections between claims and supporting evidence (i.e., create cohesion or clarify the relationship). To accomplish this, either the relationships or the answer options should be more complex. For example: “Project-based learning gives students the opportunity to build relationships as they work in	Students will consistently use effective words, phrases, and/or key vocabulary to create cohesion and/or clarify the relationship between claim(s) and supporting evidence in argumentative writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but the correct answers should be the words, phrases, or key vocabulary that are most effective. In addition, the relationships between claims and supporting evidence should be more sophisticated than for On Track items. Finally, to assess consistent use, items for Advanced should require students to make a writerly choice in more than one sentence. This is most effectively	

<p>of on each other.” Students should then be asked, “Which word or phrase best connects the ideas in these sentences?” The options would be: As a result, On the other hand (correct answer), Similarly, To begin with.</p>	<p>teams to solve a problem. _____, a group of students can research different aspects of a problem and come together to share what they learned and brainstorm solutions.” Students should then be asked, “Which word or phrase best connects the ideas in these sentences?” The options would be: By doing so, Consequently, For instance (correct answer), Furthermore.</p>	<p>accomplished with a technology-enhanced item. For example, “Project-based learning (PBL) leads to deeper learning than computer-based learning (CBL). _____, learning is practical, which helps students retain information better. _____, it is best suited for practice with specific skills that do not require in-person communication.” Students would then be asked to move phrases into the blanks that are most effective in supporting the writer’s argument or creating cohesion. A correct answer for the first blank would be, “Because PBL addresses real-life problems,” which leads from the claim into a reason that supports the claim. An incorrect answer would be less cohesive (vague) or less clearly connect the claims and supporting evidence, such as, “As may seem obvious.” The correct answer for the second blank could be, “While CBL has its place in classrooms,” which strengthens the relationship between a claim about the benefits of computer-based learning and an alternate claim about its limitations. An incorrect answer would not draw a clear or logical connection (e.g., “As many people have claimed”).</p>
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LA.8.W.4.e

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.4.e Adapt style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.4.e asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt style appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline Adapt tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline <p>Argumentative writing is common practice across varied disciplines (e.g., ELA, math, science, social studies), each with their own norms and conventions, or standards and expectations for the style and tone to be used for a given writing task. For example, a literary analysis in ELA might require a formal tone and the use of textual evidence to support claims about themes or character development. Meanwhile, a proof in math would demand a logical and precise style, focusing on step-by-step reasoning and mathematical accuracy. Additionally, a lab report in science would necessitate a clear and objective tone, emphasizing data collection, analysis, and the scientific method. Finally, a research paper in social studies would require a balanced and informative style, incorporating historical evidence, multiple perspectives, and critical analysis.</p> <p>The intent of this standard is for students to apply their understanding of the writing norms and conventions of various disciplines by adapting style and tone according to the task and discipline.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	There is no specific Grade 7 standard for adapting style and tone. The Grade 8 standard introduces this skill and focuses on adapting style and tone to be appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline. This shows that students are expected to have a greater understanding of discipline-specific argumentative writing and recognize that norms and conventions can vary based on the discipline.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Develop style and/or tone appropriate to the task and/or discipline. DOK: 2	Adapt style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline. DOK: 2	Skillfully adapt style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline. DOK: 2
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will develop style and/or tone appropriate to the task and/or discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess students' ability to adapt to the norms and conventions of a task or discipline, items should provide the discipline along with a short stimulus consisting of 2–4 sentences. Then students can be asked to select which sentence, in a Multiple-Choice item with four options, is written in the style and tone most appropriate for that task or discipline. For example, “Read these sentences from Gustavo’s literary essay. ‘In <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry, the protagonist, a boy named Jonas, discovers complex emotions not allowed in his controlled society. His journey highlights the importance of being free to live a full, unrestricted life.’ Which sentence should Gustavo add next to use the style and tone appropriate for a literary essay?” The correct answer might be, “As Jonas learns more about the past, he begins to question the rules imposed by his 	<p>Students will adapt style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but the On Track items should provide a less common writing task or discipline or a more nuanced style and tone. The distinctions between correct and incorrect answer choices could also be less obvious. Finally, students should be asked to adapt rather than develop the style and tone, as in Developing. For example, “Read these sentences from a speech Blanca will be giving to her classmates. ‘My name is Blanca, and I am excited to be running for student council. I believe that together, we can make our school an even better place for everyone. <u>I promise, I’ve got your back!</u>’ Which sentence should Blanca use instead of the underlined sentence to maintain the style and tone of her speech?” The correct answer might be, “Your ideas 	<p>Students will skillfully adapt style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the task and discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Advanced items, stems should still provide the writing task and discipline but should NOT provide a stimulus, requiring students to identify the appropriate tone and style without relying on the stimulus text for examples. The stem might read, “Kia is writing an autobiography for a class assignment and wants it to be slightly informal and engaging. Which sentences should Kia use to achieve this style and tone?” The correct answer in this case should have a slightly informal and engaging tone and might read, “My love of reading developed early. When I was two, my favorite activity was cornering the family cat to ‘read’ to him from books I had memorized.” Incorrect answers could be too academic, too persuasive, or otherwise inappropriate for the task and discipline. For

<p>community.” Incorrect answers should be sentences that have a clearly inappropriate style or tone, such as being too informal or too formal for the given task. For example, “He completely freaks out about what he’s learning and you have to wonder how he’s going to deal with it,” or “Throughout all the years of literature, those who study literature have found this theme to be meaningful to audiences who read books in this genre.”</p>	<p>are important, and I promise to take them seriously.” Incorrect answers should have a style and tone that is not appropriate for the task (a persuasive speech) or the discipline (politics). They might be too academic, too flowery, too formal, too informal, etc. For example, “If we unite in harmony and love one another, we can weave this school into a beautiful tapestry full of peace and kindness,” or “Furthermore, I shall strive to create a cooperative environment that provides opportunity for all students to thrive academically and socially.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a sentence that Blanca could add to the blank to conclude her speech and maintain her style and tone. 	<p>example, “Upon thorough examination of my formative years, it is evident that literature has had an outsized impact on the development of my character.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, in a Multi-select format, students might be asked to choose two sentences that match the given style and tone.
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LA.8.W.4.f

Content Strand	Writing	
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.	
Standard	LA.8.W.4 Write arguments that develop a perspective with supporting reasons and evidence, organized as appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.	
Indicator	LA.8.W.4.f Provide a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented.	
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.4.f asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to write effective conclusions, or endings to their argumentative writing. An effective conclusion is one that is clearly connected to, follows from, and supports the argument presented. This might be accomplished by summarizing, reinforcing, or reflecting on the key points (i.e., reasons and evidence) that support the argument.</p>	
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard (LA.7.W.4.d) focuses on providing a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented. The Grade 8 standard is nearly the same, but it collapses the concluding statement and section into the broader term “conclusion,” suggesting that students are expected to be more knowledgeable and skilled at writing conclusions to arguments.	
Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Provide a brief conclusion. DOK: 2	Provide a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented. DOK: 2–3	Provide an effective and well-developed conclusion that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		

<p>Students will provide a brief conclusion in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can ask students to select the best conclusion for a stimulus that expresses an argument. Stems should provide students with a short stimulus consisting of 3–4 sentences that develop a position. In a Multiple-Choice item with four options, students will be asked, “Which sentence would be the best conclusion for the writer’s argument?” Answer options at this level should be brief, though generally related to the writer’s argument. The correct answer should provide a sense of closure but should be a general statement rather than a reflective conclusion. For example, a correct answer might be, “It is for these reasons that project-based learning is better than computer-based learning.” The distractors should be related to the topic but not the argument, such as, “If you want to do more project-based learning, there are a variety of free resources available on the Internet.” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences of writing to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a concluding sentence for the essay.” 	<p>Students will provide a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but the stimulus and answer options should be more sophisticated at this level than at the Developing ALD. To assess whether the conclusion both follows from and supports the writer’s argument, students should also be asked to evaluate longer conclusions. • Another approach is to use a technology-enhanced item and ask students to choose the phrases or clauses that best conclude the argument. For example, “In conclusion, project-based learning (PBL) helps students _____ (develop critical thinking skills / have more fun at school) while preparing them for real-world situations. Overall, PBL can _____ (create eager and adaptable lifelong learners / provide many benefits to students and teachers alike).” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences of writing to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 1–2 sentences that would make a strong conclusion for the essay.” 	<p>Students will provide an effective and well-developed conclusion that follows from and supports the argument(s) presented in argumentative writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the stimulus and answer options should be more sophisticated than those in the other ALDs, and the conclusions may be more than one sentence. For example, “Read these sentences from a student’s essay on the benefits of project-based learning. ‘Project-based learning (PBL) not only enhances students’ critical thinking and problem-solving skills but also prepares them for real-world challenges by fostering cooperation and creativity. By engaging in PBL, students become more motivated and invested in their learning journey.’ Which sentence provides the most effective conclusion to the essay?” A correct answer for this stimulus might be: “Embracing PBL in education can lead to more engaged and capable learners, ready to tackle the complexities of the future with confidence.” An incorrect answer for this item might be: “PBL might not work for everyone, but it is still an effective option for most learners.” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce a few sentences of writing to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 2–3 sentences that would make an effective conclusion for the essay.”
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LA.8.W.5.a

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.5 Write informative/ explanatory pieces to clearly convey ideas and information in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.5.a Introduce a topic clearly and provide a specific focus; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories or sections including text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.5.a asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a topic clearly and provide a specific focus • Organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories or sections including text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements <p>The intent of this standard is for students to be able to write a strong introduction that sets the stage for a well-organized piece of writing.</p> <p>A topic is the subject or main idea of a piece of writing, while a general focus provides a structure that guides the content and direction of the writing. A specific focus has the same function but is more narrowly targeted. For example, a general focus would be that elephants have sophisticated methods of communication, while a specific focus would be that elephants can send vibrations through the ground to communicate over long distances.</p> <p>The structure of informative/explanatory writing should organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories or sections to present ideas clearly, such as why elephants communicate, types of elephant communication, comparisons with how other animals communicate, research and discoveries about elephant communication, and challenges and future research. Text features, illustrations, and multimedia elements would be included in this structure since they help organize, highlight, and present important information.</p> <p>For items that assess this standard, the correct answer should provide the strongest introduction or organization for the piece of writing. The distractors should be wrong because they fail to introduce or organize the writing skillfully, not because they are off-topic.</p>

Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on introducing a topic clearly and providing a specific focus, grouping information logically and including text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but progresses to organizing ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories or sections including text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements. This progression makes the introduction and organization for the piece of writing more distinct, showing that students are expected to be more skilled at writing introductions and organizing the information presented in informative/explanatory texts.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and/or information. DOK: 2	Introduce a topic clearly and provide a specific focus ; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories or sections including text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements. DOK: 2	Skillfully introduce a topic clearly and provide a specific focus; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories or sections including sophisticated text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements. DOK: 2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will introduce a topic or organize ideas, concepts, or information in explanatory writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can provide a writing scenario and stimulus missing an introductory statement and then ask students to identify which sentence best introduces the topic.Stems may also provide a short stimulus related to the topic and provide a blank where students have an opportunity to organize ideas, concepts, or information. All options would be about the topic, with the correct answer being the one most clearly related to the information in	Students will introduce a topic clearly and/or provide a specific focus; or students will organize ideas, concepts, and/or information into broader categories or sections including text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements in informative/explanatory writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems that assess introducing a topic can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but the items for On Track could have a Part B that asks students to identify a sentence that provides a specific focus for the writing or a text feature that could be used to build on the introductory sentence. For example, Part A might explain that a student is writing an online informational report about how elephants	Students will skillfully introduce a topic clearly and/or provide a specific focus; or students will organize ideas, concepts, and/or information into broader categories or sections including sophisticated text features, illustrations, and/or multimedia elements in informative/explanatory writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the stimulus and answer options should be more sophisticated. Also, students should be asked to make more nuanced decisions	

<p>the adjacent sentence(s) or that most clearly builds on the information given. For a stimulus on the topic of elephant communication, the question might ask, “Which sentence, if placed in the blank, best groups related information?” The correct answer would be a sentence about elephants’ ability to send vibrations through the ground, which is the specific focus of the writing. Incorrect answers would be related to the general topic of elephants but not the specific focus of the writing, such as sentences describing the family structures of elephants or how elephants protect their young by encircling them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a sentence that could go in the blank to introduce the topic of the essay.” 	<p>communicate and ask students to select the best introductory sentence, with the correct answer being “Communication between elephants is surprisingly complex and sophisticated.” The stem for Part B would then ask, “Which sentence should come next to provide a specific focus for the report?” with the correct answer being, “One of the most interesting ways that elephants communicate is by sending vibrations through the ground.” Or Part B could ask which multimedia element would best follow the introductory sentence to build on the idea, with the correct answer being the one that best shows the sophistication of elephant communication, such as an infographic of the different means of communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems that assess grouping information into broader categories or sections could provide students with a short stimulus that introduces the topic and provides a general focus. Then students would be asked, “Which two subheadings could be used to organize information in the rest of the report?” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 1-2 sentences that could go in the blank to introduce and provide the focus of the essay.” 	<p>about which multimedia elements most effectively support the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce a few sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 2–3 sentences that could come next to set up a clear focus and organizational structure of the essay.”
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LA.8.W.5.b

Content Strand	Writing		
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.		
Standard	LA.8.W.5 Write informative/ explanatory pieces to clearly convey ideas and information in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.		
Indicator	LA.8.W.5.b Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information and examples.		
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.5.b asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information and examples. <p>A topic is the subject or main idea of a piece of writing. The intent of this standard is for students to develop their informative/explanatory writing with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information and examples that are relevant to the topic. This helps writers build knowledge about a topic and helps them focus their writing on the most important information.</p> <p>For items that assess this standard, the correct answer should be the option or options that best develop the topic with information and examples relevant to the topic. The distractors should be wrong because they fail to do so skillfully, not because they are off-topic.</p>		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on developing a topic with information (e.g., facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, examples) that is related to the topic. The Grade 8 standard is nearly the same but adds the word “relevant,” suggesting that students are becoming more discerning when deciding what information and examples to include in their informative/explanatory texts.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing		On Track	Advanced

<p>Identify or develop some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information and examples. DOK: 2</p>	<p>Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information and examples. DOK: 2</p>	<p>Thoroughly develop the topic with the most relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other sophisticated information and examples. DOK: 2</p>
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will identify or develop some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information or examples related to the topic of an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to identify relevant information based on a particular topic. For example, students could be presented with a short article about how elephants communicate over long distances and asked, “What information could be added to the article to develop the topic?” The options could be one relevant fact, definition, concrete detail, quotation, or other information or examples, and three irrelevant ones. The correct answer(s) should be related to the topic and the focus of writing (e.g., “Elephants communicate through low-pitched vibrations which travel through the ground.”), while incorrect answers should be generally related to the topic but not relevant to the focus (e.g. “Physical touch is another way that elephants communicate.”). Incorrect answers can also be sentences that would not be appropriate to the genre, such as personal opinions (e.g., “Elephants’ ability to communicate in many ways is remarkable.”), unanswered questions, (e.g., “Elephants may have other ways to communicate that people have not yet discovered.”), etc. A Multi-select item could include two correct answers that are relevant to the topic. 	<p>Students will develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other information or examples related to the topic of an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can provide students with a writing scenario and short stimulus and then ask students to choose sentences or approaches that could be used to develop the topic, distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information or approaches. For example, students could be given a stimulus that reads, “Elephants have developed a way to communicate using vibrations that travel through the ground. By producing extremely low-pitched sounds, they can send messages to other elephants miles away.” The question would be, “Which information best develops this topic?” The options could be one relevant fact, definition, concrete detail, quotation, or other information or examples, and three irrelevant ones. Choices for On Track items should require more careful scrutiny than for Developing. A Multi-select item could include two correct answers that are both related to the topic. 	<p>Students will thoroughly develop the topic with the most relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and/or other sophisticated information and examples related to the topic of an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to choose from a provided list of information, selecting the 2–3 pieces of information that are most relevant to the topic, and thus the most important to include. This could be done with a Multi-select item or with a technology-enhanced item that asks students to move the most relevant information into a blank or blanks in a provided stimulus.

LA.8.W.5.c

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.5 Write informative/ explanatory pieces to clearly convey ideas and information in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
Indicator	LA.8.W.5.c Use appropriate transitions and domain-specific vocabulary to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.5.c asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts • Use domain-specific vocabulary to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts <p>Appropriate transitions refer to words or phrases that guide the reader from one idea to the next, showing how the ideas are related. Words like “initially,” “afterward,” and “eventually” help show the order of events. Words and phrases like “as a result,” “therefore,” and “consequently” help show a cause-effect relationship. And words and phrases like “Additionally,” “For instance,” and “To illustrate” help show that an example/explanation or another example/explanation will follow.</p> <p>Domain-specific vocabulary refers to important words or terms that are specific to a domain (e.g., science), and therefore convey precise and accurate meanings about a topic. For example, domain-specific vocabulary related to elephant communication might include infrasound waves, vocalizations, acoustic signals, herd dynamics, social bonds, frequency modulation, behavioral cues, etc. Academic words and phrases, which are commonly used across several domains, may also be used as long as their meaning is specific to the chosen domain. For example, academic words and phrases with domain-specific meanings related to elephant communication might include behavior, environment, observe, coordinate, send/receive messages, signal, and response.</p>

	Both appropriate transitions and domain-specific vocabulary can be used to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts in informational or explanatory writing. For example, “Elephants use a variety of <u>vocalizations</u> , or sounds they produce, to communicate with each other. <u>For instance</u> , they may trumpet to signal excitement or distress. <u>Additionally</u> , they use low-frequency rumbles to convey more complex messages over long distances. <u>As a result</u> of these vocalizations, elephants can coordinate activities and maintain <u>social bonds</u> , or relationships, within the herd.”		
	Items that assess this standard should ask students to make writerly decisions in the context of writing and should focus only on appropriate transitions or domain-specific vocabulary.		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on using appropriate transitions and key vocabulary to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. The Grade 8 standard remains nearly the same but progresses from using “key vocabulary” to “domain-specific vocabulary,” indicating that students are becoming more skilled in their ability to use language to connect and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts in informative/explanatory writing.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
Use some transitions and/or domain-specific vocabulary to make connections between ideas and concepts. DOK: 1–2	Use appropriate transitions and domain-specific vocabulary to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. DOK: 1–2	Consistently use a variety of sophisticated transitions and domain-specific vocabulary to clarify relationships among complex ideas and concepts. DOK: 1–2	
Possible Item Approaches			
Students will use some transitions or domain-specific vocabulary to make connections between ideas and concepts in an informative/explanatory text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can ask students to select the transition that best connects ideas and concepts. Students could be provided with a 3–4 sentence stimulus about an informational	Students will use appropriate transitions and domain-specific vocabulary to clarify relationships among ideas and/or concepts in an informative/explanatory text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems that assess using appropriate transitions and	Students will consistently use a variety of sophisticated transitions and domain-specific vocabulary to clarify relationships among complex ideas and concepts in an informative/explanatory text. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the	

<p>topic. For example, the last two sentences in a short stimulus about elephant communication might be: “Elephants have developed a way to communicate using vibrations that travel through the ground. _____, elephants are able to alert each other to danger and even plan their movements.” Then students would be asked, “Which word best connects the ideas in this sentence?” And the options would be: “By doing so” (correct answer), “Eventually,” “In fact,” “To illustrate.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatively, stems can ask students to use key vocabulary to connect ideas and concepts. For example, a similar stimulus about elephant communication could include this sentence: “By doing so, elephants are able to alert each other to danger and even _____ their movements.” Again, the question would be, “Which word best connects the ideas in this sentence?” And the options would be: “calculate,” “coordinate” (correct answer), “maintain,” “prevent.” In this example, the answer options are all academic words that have domain-specific meanings. The correct answer “coordinate” implies that elephants can organize their actions and move in a unified manner. This meaning is specific to the domain of animal behavior and communication, where coordination is essential for survival and social interaction. 	<p>domain-specific vocabulary can be similar to the item approaches for Developing, but the On Track items should focus on clarifying relationships among ideas and concepts. In addition, the items should include more advanced transitions and/or domain-specific vocabulary. Finally, students can be asked to complete multiple blanks, either in a Multiple-Choice format or through a technology-enhanced item. For example, a Hot Text item might look like this: “Elephants use a variety of _____ (instruments / vocalizations), such as trumpets, roars, and rumbles, to send messages within their herds. _____ (As a result / For instance), a trumpet might signal excitement or alert others to danger.”</p>	<p>answer options should include more sophisticated transitions and/or domain-specific vocabulary, and the stimuli should include even more complex ideas and concepts. To assess the “consistent” part of the ALD, items for Advanced should require students to select sophisticated transitions and/or domain-specific vocabulary in multiple sentences. For example, “Elephants have developed an extraordinary way to communicate using vibrations that travel through the ground. _____ (By producing / In place of) low-pitched noises known as _____ (infrasound waves / verbal signals), they can send messages to other elephants miles away. This helps them coordinate movements, alert each other to danger, and maintain _____ (friendships / social bonds) within their herd.”</p>
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LA.8.W.5.d

Content Strand	Writing		
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.		
Standard	LA.8.W.5 Write informative/ explanatory pieces to clearly convey ideas and information in which the development and structure are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.		
Indicator	LA.8.W.5.d Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation(s).		
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.5.d asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a concluding statement that follows from the information or explanation(s)• Provide a concluding section that follows from the information or explanation(s) <p>A concluding statement is a single sentence that ends a piece of writing. A concluding section is a longer end to a piece of writing, which builds over multiple sentences. The intent of this standard is for students to write effective conclusions in informative/explanatory writing. An effective conclusion is one that naturally follows from the information or explanation(s) in the piece of writing and is clearly connected to the key ideas and/or purpose for writing. This can be accomplished through summarizing, reflecting on, or extending the information or explanation(s) presented.</p> <p>For items that assess this standard, the correct answer should be the option that best concludes the piece of writing. The distractors should be wrong because they fail to conclude the text skillfully, not because they are off-topic.</p>		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on providing a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation(s). The Grade 8 standard is identical, suggesting that students are continuing to develop the skill of writing effective conclusions for informative/explanatory writing.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing		On Track	Advanced

Provide a concluding statement or section. DOK: 2	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation(s). DOK: 2–3	Provide an effective and well-developed concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation(s). DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will provide a concluding statement or section in an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can ask students to select a concluding sentence for a stimulus that informs or explains. Stems should provide students with a short stimulus consisting of 3–4 sentences that develop the topic. In a Multiple-Choice item with four options, students will be asked, “Which sentence would be the best conclusion for the topic?” At this level, the correct answer does not need to be an option that follows from the information or explanation(s); it need only be a statement that provides some sense of closure. For example, a correct response could be, “Elephants have an amazing ability to communicate over long distances,” while an incorrect option might be, “Elephants also communicate using physical touch and body language.” • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a concluding sentence for the passage.” 	<p>Students will provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation(s) in an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing, but the best concluding statement/section should be the one that most effectively follows from the information or explanation(s) in the 3–4 sentence stimulus provided in the stem. For example, a correct answer might be: “Elephants’ unique ways of communicating through sounds, vibrations, and body language show just how amazing and intelligent these gentle giants truly are.” Incorrect answers for this ALD might provide some sense of closure but not follow from the information in the stimulus. • This standard can also be assessed with constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write 1–2 sentences that would make a strong conclusion for the passage.” 	<p>Students will provide an effective and well-developed concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation(s) in an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track, but the correct answer should be the option that is the most effective or well-developed, meaning it reiterates the key ideas and/or encourages readers to think about the broader implications of the topic. For example, a correct answer might be: “Elephants’ unique methods of communication, encompassing sounds, vibrations, and body language, underscore their remarkable intelligence and social complexity, allowing them to forge strong bonds and coordinate activities across vast distances.” • This standard can also be assessed through constructed response items, where students produce 1–2 sentences to add to a given writing sample. For example, “Write a two-sentence conclusion for the passage that summarizes the main ideas and explains the importance of the topic.”

LA.8.W.6.a

Content Strand	Writing
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.
Standard	LA.8.W.6 Gather and use credible evidence from multiple trustworthy sources and assess its relevance in answering the research question(s).
Indicator	LA.8.W.6.a Integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data and conclusions while avoiding plagiarism.
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.6.a asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data while avoiding plagiarism • Integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing conclusions while avoiding plagiarism <p>The intent of this standard is for students to learn how to paraphrase or quote evidence from sources, such as books, periodicals, reference materials, or online sources, so that they can integrate the evidence into their writing.</p> <p>Evidence refers to any details that students might use to support their ideas in writing. Quoting means to put an excerpt from the source material in quotation marks and properly credit the source. Paraphrasing means to take material from a source and put it in your own words while maintaining the original meaning. Data is factual information, such as statistics, research findings, or details from studies, which can be used to support an argument or point in writing. Conclusions are the interpretations or judgments that people make after analyzing data (evidence), often summarizing the findings and implications. To integrate evidence into writing, students must first evaluate how well the information supports their ideas and then incorporate it smoothly into the text.</p>
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on integrating evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data and conclusions while avoiding plagiarism. The Grade 8 standard remains the same, suggesting that students are continuing to work on effectively incorporating research into their writing.

Achievement Level Descriptors		
Developing	On Track	Advanced
Integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data. DOK: 2	Integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data and conclusions while avoiding plagiarism. DOK: 2–3	Integrate evidence into writing by consistently and skillfully quoting or paraphrasing data and conclusions while avoiding plagiarism. DOK: 3
Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data in an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems should present a short stimulus from a book or other source. For example, this might read, “The Amazon Rainforest spans multiple countries in South America, but the majority of it is located in Brazil. The impacts of deforestation extend beyond local areas because forests absorb carbon dioxide. When forests are cleared, the stored carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere.” The stem should also provide a draft piece of student writing with a blank to show where the paraphrased/quoted information from the source should go. For example: “Martin has written these sentences. ‘Deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest is a big problem that hurts our planet. Every year, large parts of the Amazon are cut down for farming, logging, and building cities. 	<p>Students will integrate evidence into writing by quoting or paraphrasing data and conclusions while avoiding plagiarism in an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for Developing but should require students to integrate conclusions as well as data and/or require students to select one or more sentences that quote or paraphrase the source while avoiding plagiarism. For example, the stimulus might read, “Martin found this information on the website for the government of Brazil: The Amazon Rainforest spans multiple countries in South America, but the majority of it is located in Brazil. The impacts of deforestation extend beyond local areas because forests absorb carbon dioxide. When forests are cleared, the stored carbon dioxide 	<p>Students will integrate evidence into writing by consistently and skillfully quoting or paraphrasing data and conclusions while avoiding plagiarism in an informative/explanatory text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approaches for On Track, but the items for Advanced should include more sophisticated stimuli, which will increase the challenge of determining which sentences best support the idea in the text. The sentences from the source material should also be more sophisticated and/or nuanced to increase the challenge of retaining meaning while avoiding plagiarism. Finally, to assess the “consistent” part of the ALD, items for Advanced should include multiple blanks in the sample student writing and ask students to select sentences that best support ideas in the stimulus while avoiding

<p>_____.' Based on the book, which sentence should Martin write next to support his idea?" The correct answer should be the sentence that is best paraphrased and integrated into the writing. For example, "This clearing of rainforest results in an increase in carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere." Incorrect answers will be paraphrased or quoted but not well integrated, or they may be an incomplete representation of the source material. For example, "Rainforests are important for many reasons."</p>	<p>is released into the atmosphere." As in Developing, the stem should then provide a draft piece of student writing including a blank. For example, "Read these sentences from Martin's report. 'Deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest is a big problem that hurts our planet. Every year, large parts of the Amazon are cut down for farming, logging, and building cities. _____.' Which sentence should Martin write next to include evidence from the book without plagiarizing it?" The correct answer would be data or conclusions from the source that are appropriately paraphrased/quoted and cited. For example, "According to the government of Brazil, one of the key environmental concerns with deforestation is that it sends more carbon dioxide into Earth's atmosphere." The distractors could be copied word for word from the source without citing it, plagiarized by making only minor changes in wording, and/or not be well integrated into the writing.</p>	<p>plagiarism. One of the blank spaces could address integration of data, as shown in the On Track ALD, while the other could address integration of conclusions.</p>
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LA.8.W.6.c

Content Strand	Writing		
Anchor Standard	Modes of Writing Write in a variety of modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.		
Standard	LA.8.W.6 Gather and use credible evidence from multiple trustworthy sources and assess its relevance in answering the research question(s).		
Indicator	LA.8.W.6.c Select and use appropriate note-taking formats to collect and organize information.		
Central Aspects to Be Measured	<p>An item that fully measures LA.8.W.6.c asks students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select and use appropriate note-taking formats to collect and organize information. <p>The intent of this standard is for students to be able to gather information for their writing in a logical and systematic way. A note-taking format is a structured method for recording information, such as an outline, chart, or graphic organizer. These aids help writers be more effective in collecting and organizing information for their writing.</p>		
Progression from Previous Grade	The Grade 7 standard focuses on selecting and using appropriate note-taking formats to collect and organize information. The Grade 8 standard is identical, showing that students can benefit from working on these writing skills for another year.		
Achievement Level Descriptors			
Developing	On Track	Advanced	
Select and/or use some note-taking formats to collect and/or organize information. DOK: 2	Select and use appropriate note-taking formats to collect and organize information. DOK: 2	Skillfully select and use note-taking formats to collect and logically organize complex information. DOK: 2	

Possible Item Approaches		
<p>Students will select and/or use some note-taking formats to collect and/or organize information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can ask students to select the best note-taking format for a given writing purpose. With this approach, note-taking formats should be clearly defined in either the stem or the answer choices. Then students would be asked, “Which note-taking format would be best for creating a presentation about how elephants communicate?” The correct answer would be, “an outline, because it organizes information into main topics and subtopics.” Alternatively, stems can ask students to fill in the blank in a partially completed note-taking format, such as a missing topic, subtopic, or detail in an outline. Note that this task focuses only on the organization part of the ALD, as the collecting information part is already done for students. 	<p>Students will select and use appropriate note-taking formats to collect and organize information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the second item approach for Developing, but they should involve reading a short stimulus and then completing multiple blanks in a partially completed note-taking format (e.g., a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting two forms of elephant communication). Using a Gap Match item type, students could be asked to move details from the toolbox to the blanks in the chart. This task would focus on the part of the ALD about using appropriate note-taking formats to organize information, as selecting the note-taking format and collecting the information has already been done for students. 	<p>Students will skillfully select and use note-taking formats to collect and logically organize complex information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems can be similar to the item approach for On Track. However, the note-taking formats used in Advanced items should be more sophisticated than in the other ALDs (e.g., chart, diagram, outline, timeline). Additionally, the toolbox should include details that will not be used in the provided note-taking format, so students must make decisions about how to logically organize complex information. For example, the stem area would provide a partially completed chart with columns for different categories of information about elephant communication (e.g., types of communication, purposes for communication, contexts of communication, comparison to communication in other animals). Students would then be asked to complete the chart with the note(s) that most logically fit each category.