



**Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA)  
Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)  
Grade 8**

**Reading – Grade 8**

**Distinguished**

A student performing at the Distinguished performance level for grade 8 Reading consistently reads closely to comprehend and analyze difficult texts across a variety of literary and informational genres. The student consistently cites textual evidence to develop a sophisticated analysis of texts. The student routinely determines themes and central ideas in a variety of texts and accurately analyzes the development and interactions of different elements and ideas. The student effectively analyzes how form, structure and word choice contribute to meaning and how authors develop perspective and purpose in text(s). The student consistently determines the meanings of words and phrases in context, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings. The student skillfully compares approaches an author takes on similar themes and topics and determines how techniques produce different effects that impact the audience.

**Proficient**

A student performing at the Proficient performance level for grade 8 Reading often reads closely to comprehend and analyze different texts across a variety of literary and informational genres. The student often cites textual evidence to develop their analysis of texts. The student usually determines themes and central ideas in texts and analyzes the development and interactions of different elements and ideas. The student is adept at analyzing how form, structure and word choice contribute to meaning and how authors develop perspective and purpose in text(s). The student adequately determines the meanings of words and phrases in context, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings. The student generally compares approaches an author takes on similar themes and topics and determines how techniques produce different effects that impact the audience.

**Apprentice**

A student performing at the Apprentice performance level for grade 8 Reading attempts to read closely to comprehend and analyze different texts across a variety of literary and informational genres. The student cites some textual evidence to support their analysis, but the analysis might be vague, general or contain inaccuracies. The student sometimes demonstrates the ability to determine themes and central ideas in texts and analyze the interactions of different elements and ideas. The student makes an effort to analyze how form, structure and word choice contribute to meaning. The student sometimes determines the meanings of words and phrases in context, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings. The student attempts to compare approaches an author takes on similar themes and topics and determine how techniques produce different effects that impact the audience.

**Novice**

A student performing at the Novice performance level for grade 8 Reading demonstrates minimal ability to read closely and comprehend texts across a variety of literary and informational genres. The student may infrequently cite textual evidence to support an analysis, but the analysis displays minimal understanding or contains numerous inaccuracies. The student shows little understanding of themes and central ideas in texts and is rarely able to analyze the interactions of different elements and ideas. The student ineffectively attempts to analyze how form, structure and word choice contribute to meaning. The student rarely determines the meanings of words and phrases in context, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings. The student is rarely able to compare approaches an author takes on similar themes and topics or determine how techniques produce different effects that impact the audience.

**Mathematics – Grade 8****Distinguished**

A student performing at the Distinguished performance level for grade 8 Mathematics consistently makes sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations. The student routinely demonstrates the ability to flexibly choose among methods and strategies to solve contextual and mathematical problems, understand and explain their approaches and produce accurate answers efficiently. The student effectively interprets mathematical relationships. The student is adept at identifying key features and applying correspondences between multiple representations, such as linear equations, functions, transformations, and Pythagorean Theorem.

**Proficient**

A student performing at the Proficient performance level for grade 8 Mathematics often makes sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations. The student usually demonstrates the ability to flexibly choose among methods and strategies to solve contextual and mathematical problems, understand and explain their approaches and produce accurate answers efficiently. The student generally interprets mathematical relationships. The student is adept at identifying key features and applying correspondences between multiple representations, such as linear equations, functions, transformations, and Pythagorean Theorem.

**Apprentice**

A student performing at the Apprentice performance level for grade 8 Mathematics attempts to make sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations. The student sometimes demonstrates the ability to flexibly choose among methods and strategies to solve contextual and mathematical problems, understand and explain their approaches and produce accurate answers efficiently. The student interprets a few mathematical relationships. The student attempts to identify key features and apply correspondences between multiple representations, such as linear equations, functions, transformations, and Pythagorean Theorem, but the results indicate a lack of clarity or a lack of consistency.

## **Novice**

A student performing at the Novice performance level for grade 8 Mathematics displays little understanding of how to make sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations. The student rarely demonstrates the ability to flexibly choose among methods and strategies to solve contextual and mathematical problems, understand and explain their approaches and produce accurate answers efficiently. The student interprets mathematical relationships ineffectively or inaccurately. The student minimally or inappropriately attempts to identify key features and apply correspondences between multiple representations, such as linear equations, functions, transformations, and Pythagorean Theorem.

## **Social Studies – Grade 8**

### **Distinguished**

A student performing at the Distinguished level has a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and practices described in the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies, grades 6–8. The student consistently demonstrates advanced insight into civics, economics, geography, and history in global settings related to the development, growth, and expansion of civilizations as well as settings related to the development of the United States from 1600 to 1877. The student is adept in using inquiry practices.

Examples of the knowledge and skills expected of a student performing at the Distinguished level include the ability to:

1. Synthesize complex information about citizenship and/or government
2. Consistently apply micro- and macroeconomic concepts and analyze the impacts of economic choices
3. Apply geographic reasoning to analyze humans' interactions with each other and their environment
4. Critically evaluate factors that influenced historical events
5. Interpret and integrate evidence from multiple complex sources, such as primary and secondary texts, maps, graphs, tables, and images
6. Effectively create and support claims and counterclaims in response to compelling and supporting questions
7. Clearly and effectively construct sophisticated explanations, arguments, and solutions to problems using reasoning, analysis, and multiple perspectives

### **Proficient**

A student performing at the Proficient level has a broad understanding of the concepts and practices described in the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies, grades 6–8. The student demonstrates appropriate insight into civics, economics, geography, and history in global settings related to the development, growth, and expansion of civilizations as well as settings related to the development of the United States from 1600 to 1877. The student shows adequate skills using inquiry practices.

Examples of the knowledge and skills expected of a student performing at the Proficient level include the ability to:

1. Analyze information about citizenship and/or government
2. Often apply micro- and macroeconomic concepts and analyze the impacts of economic choices
3. Use geographic reasoning to describe humans' interactions with each other and their environment
4. Analyze factors that influenced historical events
5. Interpret evidence from complex sources, such as primary and secondary texts, maps, graphs, tables, and images
6. Adequately create and support claims and counterclaims in response to compelling and supporting questions
7. Effectively construct explanations, arguments, and solutions to problems using reasoning, analysis, and multiple perspectives

### **Apprentice**

A student performing at the Apprentice level has a basic understanding of the concepts and practices described in the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies, grades 6–8. The student sometimes demonstrates insight into civics, economics, geography, and history in global settings related to the development, growth, and expansion of civilizations as well as settings related to the development of the United States from 1600 to 1877. The student has moderate skill using inquiry practices.

Examples of the knowledge and skills demonstrated by a student performing at the Apprentice level include the ability to:

1. Explain information about citizenship and/or government
2. Describe micro- and macroeconomic concepts and make economic choices
3. Explain basic geographic concepts and use basic geographic skills
4. Explain factors that influenced historical events
5. Use evidence from simple sources, such as secondary texts, maps, graphs, tables, and images
6. Create and support claims in response to compelling and supporting questions
7. Communicate explanations and arguments using reasoning, analysis, and a single perspective

### **Novice**

A student performing at the Novice level has a beginning understanding of the concepts and practices described in the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies, grades 6–8. The student occasionally demonstrates insight into civics, economics, geography, and history in global settings related to the development, growth, and expansion of civilizations as well as settings related to the development of the United States from 1600 to 1877. The student has

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emerging skills using inquiry practices.

Examples of the knowledge and skills demonstrated by a student performing at the Novice level include the ability to:

1. Recall basic facts about citizenship and/or government
2. Recall simple economic concepts
3. Use basic geographic skills
4. Identify factors that influenced historical events
5. Locate basic information in simple sources, such as secondary texts and maps
6. Create claims in response to compelling and supporting questions
7. Construct explanations with limited reasoning or analysis

## **Editing & Mechanics – Grade 8**

### **Distinguished**

A student performing at the distinguished performance level for grade 8 Editing and Mechanics consistently demonstrates control over the conventions of Standard English as well as appropriate use of word choice, syntax, and punctuation for written expression and to achieve intended effects. The student is adept at determining and clarifying the meaning of words and phrases across interdisciplinary literacy, including figurative language, denotations, and connotations.

### **Proficient**

A student performing at the Proficient performance level for grade 8 Editing and Mechanics often demonstrates control over the conventions of Standard English as well as appropriate use of word choice, syntax, and punctuation for written expression and to achieve intended effects. The student usually determines and clarifies the meaning of words and phrases across interdisciplinary literacy, including figurative language, denotations, and connotations.

### **Apprentice**

A student performing at the Apprentice performance level for grade 8 Editing and Mechanics sometimes demonstrates control over the conventions of Standard English as well as appropriate use of word choice, syntax, and punctuation for written expression and to achieve intended effects. The student attempts to determine and clarify the meaning of words and phrases across interdisciplinary literacy, including figurative language, denotations, and connotations.

### **Novice**

A student performing at the Novice performance level for grade 8 Editing and Mechanics minimally or ineffectively demonstrates control over the conventions of Standard English as well as appropriate use of word choice, syntax, and punctuation for written expression and to achieve intended effects. The student rarely determines and clarifies the meaning of words and phrases across interdisciplinary literacy, including figurative language, denotations, and connotations.

## **On-Demand Writing – Grade 8**

### **Distinguished**

A student performing at the distinguished performance level for grade 8 Writing skillfully composes an argumentative piece using resources to support claims and provide valid reasoning and relevant evidence. The student effectively demonstrates clarity and coherence by providing clear, credible, and coherent claims and thoroughly addressing all demands of the prompt. The student skillfully and thoroughly provides counterclaims with carefully selected evidence. The student thoroughly supports claims with logical reasons and carefully selected, relevant evidence that strengthens the argument; provides thorough and effective explanations of evidence and ideas; and includes varied reasoning thoughtfully linking evidence to claims. The student accurately and skillfully uses a minimum of two provided sources to support claims and consistently and thoroughly cites evidence by quoting, and/or paraphrasing details, examples, and ideas. The student builds and maintains sophisticated structure to develop the argument; skillfully organizes claims, counterclaims, evidence and reasoning to strengthen the argument; consistently uses a variety of transitions and varied sentence structure; and provides a thorough conclusion. Student consistently demonstrates use of language and conventions by creating a sophisticated formal tone or voice, effectively using varied word choice, and skillfully using the conventions of Standard English with few minor errors that do not interfere with understanding the writing.

### **Proficient**

A student performing at the Proficient performance level for grade 8 Writing effectively composes an argumentative piece using resources to support claims and provide valid reasoning and relevant evidence. The student demonstrates clarity and coherence by providing clear and coherent claims and addressing all demands of the prompt. The student acknowledges, distinguishes, counters, and refutes opposing claims. The student supports claims with logical reasons and relevant evidence, providing logical explanations of evidence and ideas and reasoning that clearly links evidence to support claims. The student accurately and effectively uses a minimum of two provided sources to support claims and effectively cites evidence by quoting and/or paraphrasing details, examples, and ideas. The student includes a clear structure to develop the argument, including logically organized claims, counterclaims, evidence, and reasoning; effective transitions; and a logical conclusion. The student demonstrates use of language and conventions by creating a formal tone or voice, effectively using appropriate words choice and conventions of Standard English with minor errors that do not interfere with understanding of the writing.

### **Apprentice**

A student performing at the Apprentice performance level for grade 8 Writing attempts to compose an argumentative piece using resources to support claims and provide valid reasoning and relevant evidence. The student attempts clarity and coherence by making general claims to address some of the demands of the prompt. The student attempts to acknowledge, counter, and refute opposing claims. The student uses a minimum of two provided sources to attempt to support the claims and inconsistently cites evidence by attempting to quote and/or paraphrase

details, examples, and ideas. The student attempts organization and structure with some lapses and uses simple and infrequent transitions and a basic conclusion. The student attempts to use language and conventions with weak formal tone or voice and word choice. The student makes frequent errors in using conventions of Standard English which interfere with understanding the writing.

### **Novice**

A student performing at the Novice performance level for grade 8 Writing ineffectively composes an argumentative piece using resources to support claims and provide valid reasoning and relevant evidence. The student is unable to demonstrate clarity and coherence due to unclear claims and missing all demands of the prompt. The student includes ineffective or no attempt to acknowledge, counter, or refute opposing claims. The student includes minimal or no purposeful support of claims; incomplete, inaccurate, and/or irrelevant explanations of evidence and ideas; and minimal or unrelated reasoning. The student uses one or none of the provided sources or ineffectively uses a minimum of two provided sources to support the claims; cites little or no evidence; and includes little or no quotes and/or paraphrasing of details, examples, and ideas. The student includes minimal or no organization, structure, transitions, or conclusion. The student is unable to use language and conventions effectively, including lack of appropriate formal tone or voice and simple or inappropriate word choice. The student makes significant errors in conventions of Standard English which interfere with understanding of the writing.

**Combined Writing Performance Level – Grade 8**

		On Demand Writing			
		N	A	P	D
Editing and Mechanics	D	A	P	P	D
	P	A	A	P	D
	A	N	A	P	P
	N	N	A	A	P