On the following pages, we present Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) for iMSSA. These ALDs represent intended interpretations of solid student achievement on the assessments for intended uses of test scores. All activities and decisions in the process of designing, developing, and implementing Cognia Interim Assessments are undertaken to support those intended interpretations and uses.

These assessments target college- and career-readiness content standards in Reading, Writing & Language, and Mathematics. Those standards are based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), similar to many rigorous standards in use across the U.S. and internationally. In turn, the ALDs are aligned with the content standards that are targeted on the assessments; test items are aligned with specific, targeted content standards; and the test forms are assembled as a collection of items that, together, cover a range of content standards and the range of levels of achievement displayed by students on the iMSSA score scales. This approach enables full alignment (Ferrara, 2017), from content standards to ALDs to test items to test forms and to score scales, as indicated in the figure below.

Full alignment of the iMSSA content standards, ALDs, test blueprints,
items, test forms, and score reporting scales.
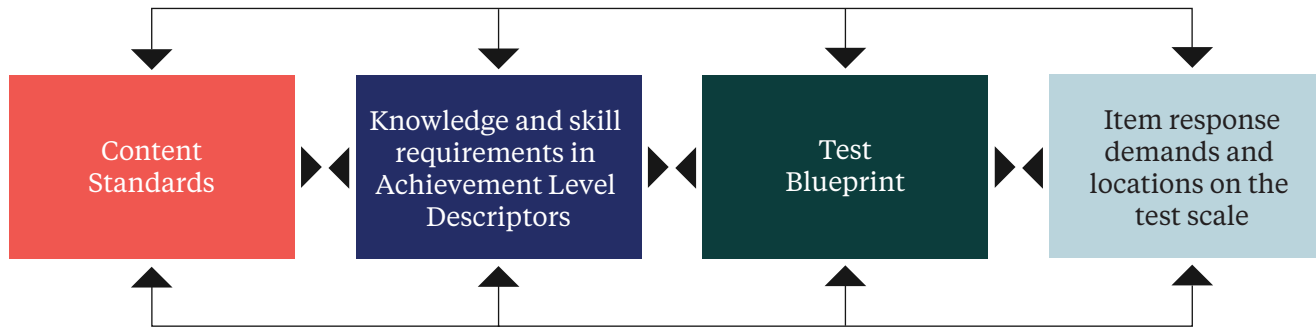
The ALDs describe the knowledge and skills expected from students whose test scores place them solidly in the Near Target or On Target achievement levels.

New Mexico Achievement Level Descriptors

As we begin to define the Achievement Level Descriptors for each grade and content, we first have to define each level.

On Target

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations.

They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards.

Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

The NM-MSSA Text Complexity and Demonstrated Skills statements define specifically what On Target means for each grade and content area.

Near Target

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations.

They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

The NM-MSSA Text Complexity and Demonstrated Skills statements define specifically what Near Target means for each grade and content area.

Needs Support

Students who **Need Support** display **limited mastery** of grade-level expectations.

They display **limited understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

The NM-MSSA Text Complexity and Demonstrated Skills statements **do not define** specifically what Needs Support means for each grade and content area as this category is used to indicate performance that does not meet the requirements for Near Target.

Principles that Guided the Development of ALDs for iMSSA

We began development of the ALDs with the assumption that the grade-level content standards represent what students should know and be able to do at the end of a given grade level. We used prior research on learning, cognition, and development in the subject areas, a variety of resources (e.g., *Living Word*, *Reading Teacher's Book of Lists*), and the teaching experiences of our content experts to define solid achievement at each level.

For example, consider the following grade 6 content cluster and standards for Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in informational passages:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.6.7

Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.6.8

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

RI.6.9

Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

Students' understanding and skill in each of these reading standards could range from simple use of textual information to fairly sophisticated reasoning. The ALDs in the table below illustrate ranges of understanding and use of the standards of this cluster across the Near Target and On Target achievement levels.

Near Target	On Target
Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of a text.	Integrate visual and print information to develop a more complete understanding of a topic or issue.
Describe how specific evidence is used to support an author's claims in an informational text.	Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the claims that are supported by reasons and evidence.
Compare and contrast an author's presentation of ideas, events, and characters within a text.	Compare and contrast two authors' presentations of ideas, events, and characters across texts.
Compare and contrast two different treatments of the same themes and topics.	Identify similarities and differences between texts in different forms or genres that are about the same topic.

In the ALDs above, we used verbs and adjectives to define item demands and levels of student knowledge and skill for the Near Target and On Target levels of achievement. We did this because the level of demand in a test item depends upon the way understanding and skills are assessed. For example, it is easier for students to identify a correct response than to produce it.

In some cases, a content standard might not be represented in both achievement levels. These instances are purposeful and represent cases where components of a standard do not lend themselves to both levels.

Finally, we considered whether the entire breadth of a content standard represents an on-grade-level expectation or whether certain components represent different levels of achievement. For example, the statement in the box below presents a skill related to grade 5 literature standard 6:

> RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

For this standard, we expect students to describe how points of view influence events. A prerequisite skill for this standard is the ability to identify an author's point of view, which is an expectation at the Near Target level. Being able to fully analyze the effects of point of view on how authors might describe events is more challenging and nuanced than just an analysis of points of view. Therefore, we decided that the ability to compare and contrast two points of view is an expectation at the On Target level.

Near Target	On Target
Identify an author's point of view on an issue.	Compare and contrast two authors' points of view on an issue.

With these guidelines in mind, our content experts drafted each ALD.

ALDs Development Process

After Cognia content experts developed an initial draft of the ALDs, we reexamined the progression of knowledge and skills across achievement levels within the same grade and across grade levels. Our goal was to ensure that achievement growth is evident within and across grade levels for each achievement level so that

- across grade levels, the Near Target ALD in grade 4 suggests a higher level of achievement than the Near Target level in grade 3 and a lower level of achievement than the Near Target level in grade 5 and so forth across grades 5 through 8 and for the On Target level.
- within grade levels, the Near Target ALD represents a lower level of achievement than the On Target ALD.

This overarching review ensures that recognizable and meaningful achievement growth is defined both within and across grade levels.

ALDs and Assessment Programs that Target the Common Core State Standards

To support assessment programs that have adopted the Common Core State Standards or similar standards, we compared the Cognia ALDs with the ALDs for frequently used assessments that target these standards. The focus was on consistency between our ALDs and ALDs from these Common Core assessment programs. Based on that comparison, we refined the Cognia ALDs.

The Cognia ALDs for each grade level are organized into two parts. The first part is a descriptive summary of the overall achievement of students at a given achievement level. The second part lists the more specific definitions of the sub-objectives in the overall descriptions.

Achievement Level Descriptors

Grade 3 Reading Achievement Level Descriptors

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards. Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

Grade	Near Target	On Target
Grade 3	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, third graders at the Near Target level can read and comprehend main ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 3 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can identify and describe information that is explicitly presented in the text. They can determine meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides a definition. They comprehend the meaning or purpose of text features (e.g., boldfaced terms, headings). They can identify information that supports descriptions and analyses.	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, third graders at the On Target level can read and comprehend themes and central ideas and details in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 3–4 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can make simple inferences and interpretations. They can describe the purpose of structural features of informational text and the literary elements of literary texts. They can determine meaning of unfamiliar words if the context provides explicit information about the word or phrase or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar components (e.g., compound words, familiar root with familiar affixes). They use text features (e.g., headings, graphics) to support their comprehension of text. They can identify an author's message. They can identify information that supports descriptions and analyses.

Reading—Grade 3

Focus	Near Target	On Target
	At these achievement levels, students can:	
Key Ideas and Details	• Respond to questions (who, what, where, when, why, and how) to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	• Identify explicit information from a text to support descriptions and analyses.
	• Repeat familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.	• Comprehend familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.
	• Identify the central ideas or events in a text.	• Describe the central ideas or events in a text.
	• Identify the connection between central aspects of an informational text (events, ideas, concepts, etc.).	• Describe the relationship between central aspects of an informational text (events, ideas, concepts, etc.).
	• Identify the cause or effect of an event or outcome in an informational text.	• Describe the cause or effect of an event or outcome in an informational text.
	• Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.	• Describe key aspects of characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings).
Craft and Structure	• Identify the meaning of academic terms and unfamiliar vocabulary when meaning/definition is explicitly provided within the text.	• Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above-grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in the text.
	• Identify basic text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, etc.) in an informational text.	• Describe the purpose of text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks).
	• Identify the purpose of key structural elements in literary texts (beginning, conclusion).	• Identify parts of literary texts (chapter, scene, stanza).
	• State their own point of view on an issue related to a text.	• Identify an author's point of view on an issue when explicitly presented.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	• Comprehend visual information in texts.	• Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of text.
	• Identify reasons that support specific points the author makes in an informational text.	• Describe straightforward connections between particular sentences, paragraphs, and an author's central message or claim in an informational text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).
	• Identify similarities in the primary points in two informational texts on the same topic.	• Compare the primary points and key details in two informational texts.
	• Identify similarities in the ideas from two or more versions of the same story.	• Compare the primary ideas or familiar themes, settings, or plots when presented explicitly in two texts.

Reading—Grade 3		
Focus	**Near Target**	**On Target**
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	• Determine meaning of words using sentence meaning and/or images.	• Use clues from text and images to determine meaning of words.
	• Determine the meaning of words based on the meaning of known words and simple affixes (ex. agree, agreeable).	• Determine the meaning of antonyms based on the meaning of known words and known affixes (ex. form, deform; agree, disagree).
	• Use the meaning of a root word to determine the literal meaning of a simple form of a word (ex. builder, building).	• Use the meaning of a familiar abstract root word to determine the literal meaning of a more complex form of a word (ex. worthy and worthless).
	• Determine the literal meaning of words in texts using context (ex. take steps [physical act of walking]).	• Identify literal or non-literal meaning of words in texts using context (ex. take steps [physical act of walking] and take steps [begin a course of action]).
	• Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are pretty or tall).	• Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).

Grade 4 Reading Achievement Level Descriptors

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards. Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

Grade	Near Target	On Target
Grade 4	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, fourth graders at the Near Target level can read and comprehend low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 4 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can make simple inferences and can do analyses of text that is organized in a predictable way. They can determine meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides meaning or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar components. They comprehend the meaning of text features (e.g., headings, graphics). They can identify information that supports a simple inference.	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, fourth graders at the On Target level can read and comprehend themes and central ideas and details in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 4–5 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can make simple inferences and interpretations. They can identify and describe the structural features of informational text and the literary elements of literary texts. They can determine meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides meaning or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar or interpretable components. They use text features (e.g., headings, graphics) to support their comprehension of text. They can analyze two authors' strategies and perspectives when presenting information about the same topic. They can identify information that supports simple inferences and interpretations.

Reading—Grade 4

Focus	Near Target	On Target
	At these achievement levels, students can:	
Key Ideas and Details	• Identify explicit information from a text to support simple descriptions and analyses.	• Use specific information from texts to support their ideas, descriptions and simple analyses, interpretations, and inferences.
	• Comprehend familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.	• Identify and describe familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.
	• Identify a statement that accurately summarizes the main ideas or events in a text.	• Summarize the central ideas in informational text; include main events and characters in summaries of literary texts.
	• Identify accurate descriptions of explicitly presented text components (events, procedures, ideas) in an informational text.	• Explain central aspects of an informational text (procedures, ideas, concepts, etc.) in some detail.
	• Describe the cause or effect of an event or outcome in an informational text.	• Explain the cause/effect relationships in an informational text.
	• Describe key aspects of characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings).	• Describe main characters, key events, and settings in a literary text using explicitly stated details in the text.
Craft and Structure	• Identify the meaning of academic terms and unfamiliar vocabulary when meaning/definition is explicitly provided within the text.	• Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above-grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in the text.
	• Identify the primary structure of informational text (sequence of events, chronology, comparison, etc.) when provided with headings and/or presented in charts.	• Identify and describe the structural features of informational text (sequence of events, chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) and literary text (plot, dialogue, characterization, setting, literary devices, rhythm) when the features are presented in a straightforward manner.
	• Identify features of a literary text (characters, plot, dialogue, setting, rhyme).	• Describe the plot of a literary text and how the parts build on and support each other.
	• Identify an author's point of view on an issue when explicitly presented.	• Contrast two authors' points of view on a simple issue.

Reading—Grade 4		
Focus	**Near Target**	**On Target**
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	• Comprehend visual information in texts.	• Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of text.
	• Identify an author's claim in an informational text.	• Identify how evidence is used to support an author's claim(s) in an informational text.
	• Identify topics or ideas presented by two authors or in two informational texts.	• Compare, contrast, or integrate ideas from two or more informational texts to make a claim (interpretation, inference, conclusion).
	• Describe the primary ideas or familiar themes when presented explicitly in two texts.	• Compare two different treatments of the same themes and topics.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	• Determine meaning of words using sentence meaning and/or images.	• Use clues from text to determine meaning of above-grade-level words.
	• Determine the meaning of words based on the meaning of familiar known words and simple affixes (ex. agree, agreeable).	• Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., telephone, telegraph, television).
	• Use the meaning of a familiar root word to determine the literal meaning of a simple form of a word (ex. builder, building).	• Use the meaning of a root word to determine the literal meaning of a more complex form of a word (ex. worthy and worthless).
	• Identify the meaning of simple similes and idioms.	• Recognize and explain the meaning of simple similes (e.g., as pretty as a picture) and idioms in context.
	• Identify the antonym of a familiar word.	• Determine the meaning of a word by using its antonym (understand, misunderstand).

Grade 5 Reading Achievement Level Descriptors

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards. Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

Grade	Near Target	On Target
Grade 5	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, fifth graders at the Near Target level can read and comprehend familiar themes and central ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can make simple inferences and interpretations. They can identify the structural features of informational text and describe the literary elements of literary texts. They can determine meaning of unfamiliar words if the context explicitly provides meaning or if the vocabulary is made up of familiar or interpretable components. They use text features (e.g., headings, graphics) to support their comprehension of text. They can compare the ideas in two texts about the same topic. They can identify information that supports simple inferences, descriptions, and analyses.	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, fifth graders at the On Target level can read and comprehend familiar themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5–6 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can interpret and draw expected conclusions from texts. They can identify and describe the structural elements of informational text and use them to support their comprehension of ideas in texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine meaning of above-grade-level vocabulary and unfamiliar academic terms. They can compare and contrast authors' points of view on an issue and identify the evidence authors use to support a claim. They can use explicit textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Key Ideas and Details	• Identify explicit information from the text to support descriptions and simple inferences.	• Identify accurate quotations from texts to support their ideas, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences.
	• Identify and describe familiar themes and explicitly stated main ideas.	• Connect details in a text to a familiar theme and/or an explicitly stated main idea of the text.
	• Summarize the central ideas or events in a text.	• Identify and describe important ideas in an informational text; include events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text.
	• Describe central aspects of an informational text (procedures, ideas, concepts, etc.) in some detail.	• Explain the basic relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts mainly using information that is explicitly stated in an informational text.
	• Describe main characters, key events, and setting in a literary text.	• Compare and contrast two or more characters, key events, or settings in a literary text.
Craft and Structure	• Identify the meaning of academic terms and unfamiliar vocabulary when meaning/definition is explicitly provided within the text.	• Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above-grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in a text.
	• Identify the structure of informational text (chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) when the structure is presented in a straightforward manner.	• Describe the structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two informational texts.
	• Describe the basic plot of a literary text.	• Identify and describe the structural elements of a literary text (e.g., conflict, resolution, time sequence, narration).
	• Identify an author's point of view on an issue.	• Compare and contrast two authors' points of view on an issue.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	• Comprehend visual and multimedia elements in texts.	• Use visual and multimedia elements to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of text.
	• Identify an author's stated reasons for a straightforward claim in an informational text.	• Explain how specific evidence is used to support an author's claims in an informational text.
	• Compare or contrast the primary idea or familiar theme presented in two informational texts.	• Compare, contrast, or integrate ideas from two or more informational texts to make a claim (interpretation, inference, conclusion).
	• Identify the same or similar themes and topics presented in two texts.	• Compare and contrast two different treatments of the same themes and topics.

Reading—Grade 5

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	• Use clues from text to determine meaning of unfamiliar terms.	• Use text structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., compare or contrast).
	• Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., telephone, telegraph, television).	• Use familiar Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., autograph, photograph, telegraph).
	• Use context to identify the meaning of common idioms and similes.	• Use context to determine the meaning of metaphors.
	• Use context to determine the meaning of antonyms.	• Use explicitly defined synonyms and antonyms to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Grade 6 Reading Achievement Level Descriptors

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards. Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

Grade	Near Target	On Target
Grade 6	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, sixth graders at the Near Target level can read and comprehend familiar themes and explicitly stated central ideas and details, and literary elements in low and moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 5–6 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can interpret and draw expected conclusions from texts. They can identify and describe the structural elements of informational text and use them to support their comprehension of ideas in texts. They can use contextual information, familiar word parts, and other simple strategies to determine meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and academic terms. They can compare and contrast ideas within a text. They can use explicit textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, sixth graders at the On Target level can read and comprehend implicit themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 6–7 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can analyze the interrelationships among textual features and literary elements. They can use text features and graphic elements to support their comprehension of texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language, above-grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can analyze an author's claims, arguments, and evidence. They can compare two authors' presentations of themes and ideas based on structure, key ideas and details, and point of view. They can use a variety of explicit and inferred textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Key Ideas and Details	• Identify accurate quotations from texts to support their ideas, descriptions, analyses, interpretations, and inferences.	• Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
	• Connect details in a text to a familiar theme and/or an explicitly stated main idea of the text.	• Identify the theme(s) and/or main idea(s) of a text; identify details in a text that help convey an implicit theme or main idea.
	• Identify important ideas in a summary of an informational text; include events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text.	• Identify nuanced ideas in a summary of an informational text; identify and describe important events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text.
	• Identify and describe key individuals, events, and ideas in an informational text.	• Identify important ways that key individuals, events, and ideas are explained in an informational text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
	• Compare and contrast two or more characters, key events, or settings in a literary text.	• Identify why particular key events are important in the plot of a story or drama, as well as how the characters respond to these key events.
Craft and Structure	• Infer the meaning of unfamiliar academic terms and above-grade-level vocabulary by drawing upon explicitly stated information in a text.	• Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of an unfamiliar word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text.
	• Describe the structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts or information in two informational texts.	• Identify how a particular sentence, paragraph, or section fits into the overall structure of an informational text.
	• Identify and describe the overall structure of a literary text.	• Identify how a particular sentence, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a literary text.
	• Determine an author's or narrator's point of view in a text.	• Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text.
		• Identify details in a literary text that develop the point of view of the narrator or speaker.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	• Use visual information to strengthen their comprehension and interpretations of a text.	• Integrate visual and print information to develop a more complete understanding of a topic or issue.
	• Describe how specific evidence is used to support an author's claims in an informational text.	• Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the claims that are supported by reasons and evidence.
	• Compare and contrast an author's presentation of ideas, events, and characters within a text.	• Compare and contrast two authors' presentations of ideas, events, and characters across texts.
	• Compare and contrast two different treatments of the same themes and topics.	• Identify similarities and differences between texts in different forms or genres that are about the same topic.

Reading—Grade 6		
Focus	**Near Target**	**On Target**
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	• Use text structure to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., compare or contrast: Marta decided she liked the glasslike quality of the lake better than the turbulence of the rushing river.).	• Use overall meaning of a sentence or sentences to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
	• Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., autograph, photograph, telegraph).	• Use Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform).
	• Use context to understand the meaning of idioms.	• Use context to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors.
	• Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., object: category: The persimmon tree dropped fruit on the roof, inviting raccoons and opossums to a feast. compound word: firearms, anchorperson, brainstorm).	• Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., part-whole relationship: I thought I knew what happened during the race; but then I had an afterthought that changed my mind.).
		• Use context to determine the meaning of a familiar multi-meaning word (e.g., I woke up to find a dusting of snow on the ground. Maria had reservations about whether she wanted to go on the field trip.).

Grade 7 Reading Achievement Level Descriptors

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards. Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

Grade	Near Target	On Target
Grade 7	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, seventh graders at the Near Target level can read and comprehend themes, central ideas and details, and literary elements in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 6–7 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can identify the interrelationships among textual features and literary elements. They can use text features and graphic elements to support their comprehension of texts. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of above-grade-level words and unfamiliar academic terms. They can determine an author's point of view and identify textual information that supports her/his point of view. They can compare two authors' presentations of themes and ideas based on structure, key ideas and details, and point of view. They can use specific textual information to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, seventh graders at the On Target level can read and comprehend two or more implicit themes or central ideas in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 7–8 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can analyze the importance of and interdependencies among elements of literary and informational texts. They can describe how text features and graphic elements contribute to the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language, above-grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can identify an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and how the author distinguishes her/his position from others. They can analyze how authors emphasize different strategies to create distinct presentations of the same story or topic. They can use specific evidence from more than one text to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Key Ideas and Details	• Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text.	• Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text.
	• Identify the theme(s) and/or main idea(s) of a text; identify details in a text that help convey an implicit theme or main idea.	• Identify two or more themes or central ideas of a text; explain ways that a theme or central idea is conveyed in different parts of a text.
	• Identify nuanced ideas in a summary of an informational text; identify and describe important events, characters, and settings in a summary of a literary text.	• Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas through the inclusion of key details from the text.
	• Identify how key events and ideas are explained in an informational text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).	• Identify ways that individuals, events, and ideas affect one another in an informational text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
	• Identify why particular key events are important in the plot of a story or drama, as well as how the characters respond to these key events.	• Identify ways that elements of a story or drama affect one another (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
Craft and Structure	• Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of an unfamiliar word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text.	• Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone.
	• Identify how a particular sentence, paragraph, or section fits into the overall structure of an informational text.	• Describe the structure of an informational text; explain how the major sections contribute to the development of ideas in the text.
	• Identify how a particular sentence, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a drama or poem.	• Describe the overall form or structure of a drama or poem.
	• Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text.	• Identify ways an author of an informational text distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
	• Identify details in a literary text that develop the point of view of the characters or narrator.	• Explain how an author develops the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text.

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	• Integrate visual and print information to develop a more complete understanding of a text or subject.	• Identify the effects of techniques unique to audio, video, staged, or multimedia versions of a text (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).
	• Identify the argument and specific claims in an informational text, identifying the claims that are supported by reasons and evidence.	• Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, explaining why the evidence is sufficient to support particular claims.
	• Compare and contrast two authors' presentation of events.	• Identify instances when two or more authors writing about the same topic emphasize different evidence or present different interpretations of facts.
	• Identify similarities and differences between texts in different forms or genres that are about the same topic.	• Describe similarities and differences between a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	• Use overall meaning of a paragraph or document to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.	• Use overall meaning of a sentence to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
	• Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform).	• Use grade-level Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., append, depend, impend, pendant, pendulum).
	• Use context to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors.	• Interpret literary figures of speech in context.
	• Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., part-whole relationship: I thought I knew what happened during the race; but then I had an afterthought that changed my mind.).	• Use relationships between words to better understand unfamiliar words and phrases (e.g., synonym/antonym: *inflation/deflation*).
	• Use context to determine the meaning of a familiar multi-meaning word (e.g., I woke up to find a dusting of snow on the ground. Maria had reservations about whether she wanted to go on the field trip.).	• Use context to determine the different connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., Mark thought he was being *economical* when he made a gift for his brother, but his brother thought he was being *stingy*.).

Grade 8 Reading Achievement Level Descriptors

Students who are **On Target** display **mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **satisfactory understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness standards. Some students who are On Target display **superior** mastery of grade-level expectations and understanding and use of college- and career-readiness standards.

Students who are **Near Target** display **partial mastery** of grade-level expectations. They display **partial understanding and use** of college- and career-readiness knowledge and skills.

Grade	Near Target	On Target
Grade 8	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, eighth graders at the Near Target level can read and comprehend themes and central ideas in low to moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 7–8 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can analyze the importance of cause-effect relationships among elements of literary and informational texts. They can describe how text features and graphic elements contribute to the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative language and unfamiliar words. They can identify an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning and evaluate whether the evidence and reasoning are sufficient. They can analyze how authors emphasize different strategies to create distinct presentations of the same story or topic. They can cite specific evidence from more than one text to support inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.	**Text Complexity:** By the end of year, eighth graders at the On Target level can read and comprehend two or more implicit themes or central ideas in moderately complex literary and informational texts in the grade 8–9 text complexity band. **Demonstrated Skills:** They can analyze the importance of causal relationships among elements of a literary or informational text. They can describe how literary elements, text features, graphic elements, and language choices drive the development of ideas. They can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of figurative and idiomatic language, above-grade-level words, and unfamiliar academic terms. They can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's claims, arguments, evidence, and reasoning. They can compare and contrast how authors emphasize different information and strategies to create conflicting representations of the same theme or topic. They can use specific evidence from more than one source that strongly supports inferences, interpretations, and conclusions.

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Key Ideas and Details	• Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text.	• Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from and interpretations of the text.
	• Identify two or more themes or central ideas of a text; explain ways that a theme or central idea is conveyed in different parts of a text.	• Identify the themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text.
	• Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas through the inclusion of key details from the text.	• Provide an objective summary of a text that conveys the themes or central ideas by explicitly connecting them to key details in the text.
	• Identify ways that individuals, events, and ideas affect one another in an informational text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).	• Describe connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events in an informational text (e.g., those made through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
	• Identify ways that elements of a story or drama affect one another (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).	• Identify and explain important lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama that propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
Craft and Structure	• Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone.	• Infer the literal, figurative, connotative, or technical meaning of a word or phrase by drawing upon information in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning or tone, including analogies.
	• Describe the structure of an informational text; explain how the major sections contribute to the development of ideas in the text.	• Explain the structure of a specific paragraph in an informational text, including the role of particular sentences in developing a key concept.
	• Describe the overall form or structure of a literary text.	• Explain important similarities and differences between the structures of two literary texts.
	• Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text; explain how an author develops the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text.	• Describe conflicting evidence or viewpoints in an informational text.
		• Describe an effect of differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., dramatic irony).

Focus	Near Target	On Target
At these achievement levels, students can:		
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	• Identify the effect(s) of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.	• Describe the effect(s) of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
	• Trace the argument and specific claims in an informational text, explaining why the evidence is sufficient to support particular claims.	• Delineate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
	• Identify instances when two or more authors writing about the same topic emphasize different evidence or advance different interpretations of facts.	• Describe instances when two or more informational texts provide conflicting information on the same topic; identify where two texts disagree on matters of fact.
	• Identify familiar themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional texts.	• Explain ways that a modern work of fiction draws on familiar themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional texts.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	• Use overall meaning of a paragraph or document to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.	• Use overall meaning of a sentence and/or paragraph to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
	• Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., companion, company, comparison; conform, formation, formula, reform).	• Use grade-level Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., append, depend, impend, pendant, pendulum).
	• Use context to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors.	• Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, verbal irony) in context.
	• Use relationships between words to better understand words and phrases (e.g., part-whole relationship: I thought I knew what happened during the race; but then I had an afterthought that changed my mind.).	• Use relationships between words to better understand unfamiliar words and phrases (e.g., synonym/antonym: *inflation/deflation*).
	• Use context to determine the meaning of a familiar multi-meaning word (e.g., I woke up to find a dusting of snow on the ground. Maria had reservations about whether she wanted to go on the field trip.).	• Use context to determine the different connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., Mark thought he was being *economical* when he made a gift for his brother, but his brother thought he was being *stingy*.).