

## English Language Arts General Performance Level Definitions

Student results on the MCAS tests are reported according to four performance levels: *Warning/Failing*, *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The selected definitions below illustrate the kinds of knowledge and skills students demonstrate on MCAS at each level. Knowledge and skills are cumulative at each level. No definitions are provided for the *Warning/Failing* performance level because student work at this level, by definition, does not meet the criteria of the *Needs Improvement* level. The categories of Composition and Writing Conventions are assessed only on the grades 4, 7, and 10 tests via a writing prompt.

*English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Core Concept:* The goal of an English language arts curriculum is to teach learners how to reason and use language purposefully as they comprehend, construct, and convey meaning.

	<i>Needs Improvement</i> On MCAS, a student at this level:	<i>Proficient</i> On MCAS, a student at this level:	<i>Advanced</i> On MCAS, a student at this level:
<b>Language/ Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates a modest reading vocabulary and partial understanding of word parts and word relationships (e.g., prefixes, roots, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates a solid reading vocabulary and general understanding of word parts and word relationships (e.g., prefixes, roots, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates a comprehensive reading vocabulary and in-depth understanding of word parts and word relationships (e.g., prefixes, roots, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms)</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of concrete ideas, but only partial understanding of abstract or implied ideas, in grade-appropriate texts</li> <li>connects some ideas within texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an understanding of many concrete ideas, and most abstract or implied ideas, in grade-appropriate texts</li> <li>connects ideas within texts and provides supporting evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an in-depth understanding of concrete and abstract ideas and complex meanings in grade-appropriate texts</li> <li>connects complex ideas within texts and provides well-reasoned and well-supported arguments</li> </ul>
<b>Text Elements and Techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows partial understanding of how structure and genre enhance the author’s purpose or theme</li> <li>identifies obvious examples of some techniques authors use (e.g., repetition, exaggeration, and figurative language)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows clear understanding of structure and elements of genre and how they support the author’s purpose or theme</li> <li>identifies more subtle examples of techniques authors use in a variety of grade-appropriate texts (e.g., repetition, exaggeration, and figurative language)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>critically evaluates how structure and elements of genre support the author’s purpose or theme</li> <li>identifies and critically evaluates techniques authors use in a wide variety of texts (e.g., repetition, exaggeration, and figurative language)</li> </ul>

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<b>Composition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes partially organized compositions with modestly developed ideas, some supporting detail, and some demonstration of focus</li> <li>• uses simplistic language and sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes well-organized compositions with logically developed ideas, adequate detail, and clear focus</li> <li>• engages reader’s interest through use of a variety of language choices and sentence structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes well-organized, richly developed compositions with ideas that are clearly expressed and supported by extensive detail</li> <li>• provokes and sustains the reader’s interest through effective and precise language, sentence structure, and vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Writing Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes compositions with partial control of the standard English conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes compositions with solid control of the standard English conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes compositions with sophisticated control of the standard English conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage</li> </ul>