



**Achievement Level Descriptors
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA)**

**Reading
Grades 3-8 and 10**

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 3

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using context clues to understand meanings of unfamiliar words
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying one event from a story
- **Literature skills** such as making literary connections by using ideas and details from simple text

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using literal and possibly inferential context clues to understand meanings of unfamiliar words
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying supporting details in text
- **Literature skills** such as identifying elements of characterization, plot, and setting in more complex text

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using knowledge of prefixes and suffixes; using basic word structures and context clues to determine meanings of complex and unfamiliar words; identifying and correctly using antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms
- **Comprehension skills** such as generalizing information from the text to infer meaning; understanding main ideas in text; identifying relevant details in text; organizing text sequentially; demonstrating the ability to retell, restate, or summarize information in text in writing and through graphic organizers
- **Literature skills** such as connecting text elements of time, place, setting, changes, characters, and plot in a variety of texts to construct meaning; interpreting the meaning of similes and metaphors in a variety of literary texts; using information from the text to compare and contrast; recognizing patterns of sound

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using inferential context clues and knowledge of word structures to determine meanings of complex and unfamiliar words
- **Comprehension skills** such as accurately summarizing challenging text; inferring, interpreting, and evaluating concepts and elements in challenging text; understanding main ideas in varied and challenging text; understanding relative details in varied and challenging text
- **Literature skills** such as understanding complex literary elements; analyzing text to respond appropriately; making literary connections; interpreting the meaning of similes and metaphors in challenging text

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 4

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using some context clues to determine meanings of words
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying a main idea or detail in simple text; understanding literal text; drawing conclusions; creating simple summary statements
- **Literature skills** such as identifying basic literary elements, like plot and characterization; making basic literary connections

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using explicit context clues and word structure to determine meanings of words
- **Comprehension skills** such as summarizing and paraphrasing by including only partial main ideas and details; identifying a basic cause and effect in more complex text; drawing conclusions; demonstrating literal and inferential understanding; comparing and/or contrasting text; recognizing the events of a sequence
- **Literature skills** such as identifying basic literary elements, like characterization, plot, and setting; identifying similes and metaphors; responding to literature by making basic literary connections; identifying author's purpose

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using a variety of context clues and word structure to determine meanings of words and comprehension of text
- **Comprehension skills** such as summarizing and paraphrasing in fiction and nonfiction text, including main ideas and supporting details; generating and answering literal, inferential, interpretive, and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding; determining cause and effect; drawing conclusions; distinguishing facts from opinions in complex text; providing evidence to support conclusions; comparing and contrasting information; demonstrating sequential order of events
- **Literature skills** such as identifying and responding to literary elements, like rhyme, characterization, plot, and setting; identifying and determining the meanings of similes and metaphors; responding to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections; distinguishing between first-person and third-person point of view in text; identifying author's point of view and purpose

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as using varied context clues and word structure to determine meanings of words in challenging text
- **Comprehension skills** such as summarizing and paraphrasing main ideas and supporting details in challenging text; generating and answering inferential, interpretive, and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding about what is read in challenging text; distinguishing fact from opinion; providing evidence to support conclusions; determining cause and effect; drawing conclusions; comparing and contrasting information on the same topic from single or multiple sources; demonstrating sequential order of events found in challenging text
- **Literature skills** such as identifying and analyzing literary elements, like rhyme, characterization, plot, and setting, in challenging text; identifying and determining the meanings of complex similes and metaphors; identifying and determining the meanings of challenging literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections; distinguishing between first-person and third-person point of view in challenging text; evaluating challenging text to identify author's point of view and purpose

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 5

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the literal meaning of words using direct context clues from text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying literal interpretations of clearly-stated main ideas and/or supporting details in simple text; retelling some events in sequence; providing incomplete summary statements that contain limited representations of the text; identifying directly stated author's purpose; comparing fact to opinion; identifying simplistic character comparisons
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; identifying figurative language and literary devices

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as considering the literal and possibly the implied meaning of words by using direct context clues from text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying literal interpretations of stated main ideas and/or supporting details in more complex text; retelling events in a sequence; providing brief summary statements that contain limited representations of the text; identifying the directly-stated author's purpose; comparing information or direct quotes to decipher fact from opinion; identifying simplistic character comparisons
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; identifying elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; identifying the effects of characters' traits, plot, and resolution of conflict; identifying figurative language directly supported in the text, such as analogies, similes, metaphors, and multi-meaning words; recognizing first-person and third-person point of view; making direct literary connections

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as analyzing word structure and using literal and inferential context clues to grasp meanings of new words or uncommon meanings of known words
- **Comprehension skills** such as interpreting and responding to the text; retelling events in an ordered sequence; making literal inferential conclusions supported with detail in

complex text; comparing and contrasting information; distinguishing information or statements of fact from opinion; determining the author's purpose, point of view, audience, and message

- **Literature skills** such as explaining the relationships among elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; applying figurative language and literary devices as they add to the meaning of a text; recognizing analogies, similes, metaphors, and multi-meaning words; distinguishing first-person and third-person point of view; responding to literature while supporting reactions by making direct literary connections

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as analyzing word structure and using inferred context clues to understand new words or uncommon meanings of known words.
- **Comprehension skills** such as representing deep comprehension by interpreting, evaluating, and responding to challenging text; making inferences and drawing conclusions by creating a clear statement containing essential ideas supported with critically selected details; retelling events in an ordered sequence; distinguishing accurate statements or quotes from opinion; comparing and contrasting information; critically reading and evaluating to determine the author's purpose, point of view, audience, and message
- **Literature skills** such as analyzing and explaining the relationships among elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; analyzing how figurative language and literary devices contribute to the meaning of a text; explaining analogies, similes, metaphors, and multi-meaning words; demonstrating the effect of the speaker; recognizing the difference of first-person and third-person point of view; responding to literature while supporting reactions by making discerning literary connections

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 6

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the literal meaning of words using direct context clues from text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying literal interpretations of clearly-stated main ideas and/or supporting details in simple text; retelling some events in sequence; providing incomplete summary statements that contain limited representations of the text; identifying directly stated author's purpose; comparing fact to opinion; identifying simplistic character comparisons
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; identifying figurative language and literary devices

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as considering the literal and possibly the implied meaning of words by using direct context clues from text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying literal interpretations of stated main ideas and/or supporting details in more complex text; retelling events in a sequence; providing brief summary statements that contain limited representations of the text; identifying the directly-stated author's purpose; comparing information or direct quotes to decipher fact from opinion; identifying simplistic character comparisons
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; identifying elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; identifying the effects of characters' traits, plot, and resolution of conflict; identifying figurative language directly supported in the text, such as analogies, similes, metaphors, and multi-meaning words; recognizing first-person and third-person point of view; making direct literary connections

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as analyzing word structure and using literal and inferential context clues to grasp meanings of new words or uncommon meanings of known words
- **Comprehension skills** such as interpreting and responding to the text; retelling events in an ordered sequence; making literal inferential conclusions supported with detail in

complex text; comparing and contrasting information; distinguishing information or statements of fact from opinion; determining the author's purpose, point of view, audience, and message

- **Literature skills** such as explaining the relationships among elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; applying figurative language and literary devices as they add to the meaning of a text; recognizing analogies, similes, metaphors, and multi-meaning words; distinguishing first-person and third-person point of view; responding to literature while supporting reactions by making direct literary connections

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as analyzing word structure and using inferred context clues to understand new words or uncommon meanings of known words.
- **Comprehension skills** such as representing deep comprehension by interpreting, evaluating, and responding to challenging text; making inferences and drawing conclusions by creating a clear statement containing essential ideas supported with critically selected details; retelling events in an ordered sequence; distinguishing accurate statements or quotes from opinion; comparing and contrasting information; critically reading and evaluating to determine the author's purpose, point of view, audience, and message
- **Literature skills** such as analyzing and explaining the relationships among elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; analyzing how figurative language and literary devices contribute to the meaning of a text; explaining analogies, similes, metaphors, and multi-meaning words; demonstrating the effect of the speaker; recognizing the difference of first-person and third-person point of view; responding to literature while supporting reactions by making discerning literary connections

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 7

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the literal meaning of words using direct context clues from text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying the literal interpretation of clearly-stated main ideas and/or supporting details in simple text; providing incomplete summary statements that contain limited representations of the text; identifying a directly-stated author's purpose; comparing direct quotes to choose fact from opinion; identifying simplistic character comparisons
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; identifying simple figurative language, such as metaphors, that are heavily supported in the text

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as considering the literal and possibly the implied meaning of words by using direct context clues from text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying the literal interpretation of stated main ideas and/or supporting details in more complex text; providing brief summary statements that contain limited representations of the text; identifying a directly-stated author's purpose; comparing direct quotes to decipher fact from opinion; identifying simplistic character comparisons
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; identifying elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; identifying the effects of characters' traits, plot, and resolution of conflict; identifying figurative language directly supported in the text, such as analogies, similes, and metaphors; recognizing first-person and third-person point of view; making direct literary connections

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as analyzing word structure and using literal and inferential context clues to grasp the meanings of new words or uncommon meanings of known words
- **Comprehension skills** such as interpreting and responding to the text; making inferences and drawing conclusions containing ideas supported with details;

distinguishing statements of fact from opinion; determining the author's purpose, point of view, audience, and message

- **Literature skills** such as explaining the relationships among elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; understanding the effects of characters' traits on the plot and the resolution of the conflict; applying figurative language and literary devices as they add to the meaning of a text; recognizing analogies, similes, and metaphors; demonstrating the effect of speakers; recognizing the difference of first-person and third-person point of view; responding to literature while supporting reactions by making direct literary connections

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as analyzing word structure and using inferred context clues to understand new words or uncommon meanings of known words
- **Comprehension skills** such as representing deep comprehension by interpreting, evaluating, and responding to the text; making inferences and drawing conclusions by creating a clear statement containing essential ideas supported with critically selected details; distinguishing analogous statements of fact from opinion; critically reading and evaluating to determine the author's purpose, point of view, audience, and message
- **Literature skills** such as analyzing and explaining the relationships among elements of fiction, including setting, character, plot, conflict/resolution, theme, and tone; examining the effects of characters' traits on the plot and the resolution of the conflict; analyzing how figurative language and literary devices contribute to the meaning of a text; explaining analogies, similes, and metaphors; demonstrating the effect of speakers; recognizing the difference of first-person and third-person point of view; responding to literature while supporting reactions by making discerning literary connections

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 8

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the meaning of words using context clues from immediate text
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying a stated main idea and supporting details in simple text; making inferences based on explicit information in simple text
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing or identifying character traits; giving evidence about those traits; making simple literary connections

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the meaning of words using context clues from immediate text; recognizing multiple-meaning words
- **Comprehension skills** such as summarizing and paraphrasing a stated or implied main idea; identifying relevant details and facts from more complex text; making inferences and drawing conclusions based on explicit or implied information in more complex text; identifying the author's purpose; recognizing more complex text that compares and contrasts
- **Literature skills** such as examining character development, motivation, or emotion based on explicit content; identifying literary connections; examining figurative language and literary devices in text

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the meaning of words using context clues from text; recognizing and interpreting multiple-meaning words
- **Comprehension skills** such as summarizing and paraphrasing an implied main idea; inferring author's purpose or audience; identifying and evaluating main idea and relevant details from complex text; making inferences and drawing conclusions based on explicit or implied information; distinguishing fact from opinion; recognizing text that compares and contrasts
- **Literature skills** such as analyzing character development, motivation, or emotion in text; analyzing figurative language, literary devices, the effects of sound and form, analogies, similes, and metaphors; making relevant literary connections

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as deriving the meaning of words using context clues from challenging text; determining and interpreting meaning of multiple-meaning words implied in challenging text
- **Comprehension skills** such as summarizing and paraphrasing an implied main idea or theme in challenging text; inferring the author's purpose, attitude, or audience; determining and evaluating main idea and relevant details from challenging text; making inferences and drawing conclusions based on implied information; distinguishing and paraphrasing relevant facts and details, including sequence of events
- **Literature skills** such as analyzing and synthesizing character development, motivation, or emotion in challenging text; analyzing and synthesizing figurative language, literary devices, the effects of sound and form, analogies, similes, and metaphors; making significant literary connections

Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) MCA-II Reading, Grade 10

DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading succeed at few of the most fundamental reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate inconsistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as making limited use of context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words
- **Comprehension skills** such as gathering general ideas of the meaning of text; understanding limited supporting details; making simple inferences and conclusions; identifying the author's purpose
- **Literature skills** such as understanding how some literary connections and techniques contribute to meaning of text; recognizing comparisons in literature; identifying the author's style; identifying literary elements

PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading partially meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate frequently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as determining the meaning of unfamiliar words based on explicit context clues and knowledge of word structures
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying author's purpose, perspective, and evidence; minimally summarizing or paraphrasing text; drawing conclusions and making limited inferences from explicit details; recognizing main ideas and supporting details; recognizing the appropriateness of sources
- **Literature skills** such as recognizing author's purpose and choices; recognizing basic literary elements and devices in fiction and nonfiction; responding to the text for purposes of evaluation; responding to the text using meaning and details to make literary connections; recognizing basic characteristics of poetry

MEETS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading meet the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students can demonstrate consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as determining the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context clues and word parts, such as prefixes, suffixes, syllabication, or root words; interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary when context is inferred
- **Comprehension skills** such as identifying and summarizing a main idea; recognizing supporting details; identifying author's purpose; evaluating source credibility and recognizing bias; making inferences and drawing conclusions; evaluating the best argument based on context
- **Literature skills** such as understanding basic elements of figurative language, such as imagery, symbolism, tone, irony, and satire, as it relates to the meaning of the text;

making accurate judgments about the effect of the author's word choice, tone, point of view, style, and literary elements; recognizing and understanding how basic elements of literature are used within the text; synthesizing information from the entire text and then making connections and conclusions; evaluating text from critical perspectives

EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS

Students at this level of reading exceed the reading skills of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Some of the skills these students demonstrate very consistently include the following:

- **Vocabulary expansion skills** such as determining the meaning of unfamiliar, content-specific vocabulary within challenging text
- **Comprehension skills** such as synthesizing information to gain varied levels of understanding within a single text; drawing critical and analytical inferences and conclusions from implied information; evaluating and critiquing the credibility of sources; identifying and explaining the development of a logical argument
- **Literature skills** such as analyzing and interpreting figurative language, such as imagery, symbolism, tone, irony, and satire; judging the effectiveness of the author's use of literary elements; evaluating from critical perspectives in challenging text; recognizing relationships among structure, style, and content to make literary connections