

**STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENTS
OF ACADEMIC READINESS
(STAAR)**

**STAAR Reading and Writing
A New Assessment Design
for Grades 3–8**

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STAAR Timeline

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Spring 2011

- Grades 3–8 reading field test embedded in TAKS
- Stand-alone writing field test for grades 4 and 7
- English I—first operational assessment

Spring 2012

- First STAAR assessments—all courses/grades
- No SSI retests for grades 5 and 8
- English I counts toward graduation for first-time 9th graders

New Assessment Design

STAAR Reading and Writing

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- **Based on ELA/R TEKS implemented in fall 2009**
- **Assessment focuses on TEKS determined to be non-negotiable for success in current grade and readiness for next grade**  **Readiness Standards**
- **Other assessed TEKS**  **Supporting Standards**

New Assessment Design

STAAR Reading and Writing

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● Readiness Standards

- Are essential for success in the current grade or course
- Are important for preparedness for the next grade or course
- Support college and career readiness
- Necessitate in-depth instruction
- Address broad and deep concepts, skills, and ideas

New Assessment Design

STAAR Reading and Writing

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- **Readiness Standards**
 - **Encompass 30–40% of the eligible TEKS**
 - **Will make up 60–65% of the assessment**
- **Supporting Standards**
 - **Encompass 60–70% of the eligible TEKS**
 - **Will make up 35–40% of the assessment**

Reading Test Design

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- **Fiction always considered a readiness genre**
- **“Large grain size” student expectations – those that can be applied to any story– considered readiness standards**
- **More specific student expectations that can be applied to only some stories considered supporting standards**

New Assessment Design

STAAR Reading

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- **Example of readiness and supporting standards from Literary Text/Fiction**

Describe the interactions of characters including their relationships and the changes they undergo (Grade 4 Readiness Standard)

Identify whether the narrator or speaker of a story is first or third person (Grade 4 Supporting Standard)

New Assessment Design

STAAR Writing

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- **The two types of writing assessed each year are always considered Readiness Standards**
- **Overarching student expectations for revision/conventions considered readiness; specific revision/conventions skills considered supporting**
- **Use correct punctuation marks (Grade 7 Readiness Standard)**
- **Commas after introductory words, phrases, and clauses (Grade 7 Supporting Standard)**

STAAR Reading Test Design

Grades 3–8

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Genre-based

- **Literary strand: fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama (drama beginning at grade 4)**
- **Informational strand: expository and persuasive (persuasive beginning at grade 5)**
- **Readiness genres: fiction and expository**
- **Supporting genres: literary nonfiction, poetry, drama, and persuasive**
- **Embedded: procedural elements (in informational pieces) and media literacy (in both literary and informational pieces)**

STAAR Reading Test Design

Grades 3–8

Test Length

- **Word count attached to overall test rather than to individual pieces, as in TAKS**
- **Maximum word count increases from grade to grade (approximately 2,700 words at Grade 3 to approximately 4,100 words at Grade 8)**
- **Number of pieces included on a test can vary from year to year, dependent on length (e.g., at grade 5, 3–4 individual selections and one pair)**
- **Different numbers of questions attached to different-length selections**

STAAR Reading Test Design

Grades 3–8

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Selections can be published or commissioned

- **STAAR reading assessments include a combination of published and commissioned selections**

Paired selections can mix strands and genres

- **Paired selections begin at Grade 4**
- **Literary–Literary (e.g., fiction–poetry, literary nonfiction–drama, fiction–literary nonfiction)**
- **Informational–Informational (e.g., expository–expository, expository–persuasive)**
- **Literary–Informational (e.g., fiction–expository, poetry–expository, literary nonfiction–persuasive)**

STAAR Reading Test Design

Grades 3–8

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- **STAAR reading assessments will emphasize students' ability**
 - **to understand how to use text evidence to confirm the validity of their ideas**
 - **to make connections within and across texts (“across texts” begins at grade 4)**
 - **to think critically/inferentially**
 - **to “go beyond” a literal understanding of what they read**

Student Success in Reading and STAAR

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- **Students must be provided in-depth instruction in *all* genres represented by the ELA/R TEKS**
- **Equal weight must be given to fiction and expository genres at all grade levels**
- **Instruction must emphasize critical-thinking skills/inferential thinking rather than isolated skills**

Writing Test Design

Grade 4

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- **Assessment split evenly over two days**
 - **Day 1–First half of multiple-choice questions and 1 prompt**
 - **Day 2–Second half of multiple-choice questions and 1 prompt**
- **Multiple-choice questions embedded for grade 4; abbreviated stand-alone field test for grade 4 every three years to try out prompts**

Writing Test Design

Grade 7

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- **Assessment split evenly over two days**
 - **Day 1—All the multiple-choice questions and first composition**
 - **Day 2—Second and third compositions**
- **Field tests for both multiple-choice and compositions embedded for grade 7**

Revision and Editing

Grades 4 and 7 and High School

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- **Revision and editing assessed separately, with increased focus on revision as students become more experienced and skilled writers**
- **For Grade 4, 32% of multiple-choice score from revision (9 items) and 68% of score from editing (19 items)**
- **For Grade 7, 40% of multiple-choice score from revision (16 items) and 60% of score from editing (24 items)**
- **For English I, II, and III, 50% of multiple-choice score from revision (15 items) and 50% of score from editing (15 items)**

Revision and Editing

Grades 4 and 7

- **Revision is focused on effectiveness, i.e., strengthening/improving various aspects of a piece of writing: the introduction and conclusion, organization/progression, development, word choice, and sentences**
- **Editing is focused on correctness (conventions): capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence boundaries (fragments and run-ons)**

Revision and Editing

Grades 4 and 7

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Example of Grade 4 revision stem:

David would like to improve his story by adding a strong concluding sentence after sentence 28. Which of these would be the BEST sentence to add?

Example of Grade 7 revision stem:

The transition between the third paragraph (sentences 13–19) and the fourth paragraph (sentences 20–25) is abrupt. Which sentence could Veronica add before sentence 20 to help with this transition?

Composition

Grade 4

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- **Students will write two one-page compositions addressing different types of writing.**
 - **Personal Narrative: Write about important personal experiences (TEKS–17A)**
 - **Expository: Create brief compositions that establish a central idea in a topic sentence, contain a concluding statement, and include supporting sentences with simple facts, details, and explanations (TEKS–18 A and i, ii, and iii)**

Composition

Grade 7

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- **Students will write two one-page compositions addressing different types of writing.**
- **Personal Narrative with extension: Write a personal narrative that has a clearly defined focus and communicates the importance of or reasons for actions and/or consequences (TEKS–16A)**
- **Expository: Write a multi-paragraph essay to convey information about a topic (TEKS –17A; additional information is contained in 17A i–v)**

Writing Prompts

Grades 4 and 7

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- **Most personal narrative prompts appear with a photograph**
- **At grade 7, personal narrative prompts clearly incorporate the “extension” aspect (e.g., why the experience was important)**
- **Expository prompts contain a stimulus and are scaffolded: Read, Think, Write, Be Sure to–**

STAAR Writing Rubrics

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- **A rubric is being developed for each writing type, but three overarching aspects of writing are addressed in all rubrics:**
 - **Organization/Progression**
 - **Development of Ideas**
 - **Use of Language/Conventions**

Writing Rubrics Overview: Common Elements

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- **Organization/Progression**
 - the degree to which form or structure is appropriate to the purpose and demands of the prompt
 - the degree to which the writer establishes and sustains focus (affecting unity and coherence of piece)
 - the degree to which the writer controls progression with transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections and establishes the relationships among ideas

Writing Rubrics Overview: Common Elements

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- **Development of Ideas**
 - the degree to which details/examples are specific and well chosen
 - the degree to which (1) the piece is thoughtful and engaging and (2) the writer demonstrates an understanding of the task

Writing Rubrics Overview: Common Elements

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- **Use of Language/Conventions**
 - the degree to which word choice is thoughtful and appropriate to form, purpose, and tone
 - the degree to which sentences are purposeful, varied, and controlled
 - the degree to which the writer demonstrates a command of conventions so that the writing is fluent and clear

TEA STAAR Resources

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Currently available at

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/>

- **General information about STAAR—e.g., the overall assessment design and attributes**
- **Assessed curriculum (includes reporting categories and readiness/supporting standard designations for each SE)**
- **Test blueprints**
- **Test design schematics**

On the way in fall 2011:

- **Educator guides—including sample selections and items**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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