

English Language Arts

Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content Aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards



Grade

8



Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

The Assessment Anchors, as defined by the Eligible Content, are organized into cohesive blueprints, each structured with a common labeling system that can be read like an outline. This framework is organized first by Reporting Category, then by Assessment Anchor, then by Anchor Descriptor, and finally, at the greatest level of detail, by an Eligible Content statement. The common format of this outline is followed across the PSSA.

Here is a description of each level in the labeling system for the PSSA:

Reporting Category

The Assessment Anchors are organized into seven Reporting Categories. The Reporting Categories for Grade 8 are listed below.

- A = Literature Text
- B = Informational Text
- A-K and B-K = Key Ideas and Details
- A-C and B-C = Craft and Structure/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- A-V and B-V = Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- D = Conventions of Standard English
- E = Text-Dependent Analysis

Revised Assessment Anchor Reporting Categories

Reporting Category C=Writing: Assessment Anchors E08.C.1 (Text Types and Purposes) has shifted from the statewide accountability test to the local level. English Language Arts Standard 1.4 Writing continues to be assessed by the ELA PSSA test in reporting categories D=Conventions of Standard English and E=Text-Dependent Analysis.

Assessment Anchor

The Assessment Anchor appears in the shaded bar across the top of each Assessment Anchor table. The Assessment Anchors represent categories of subject matter (skills and concepts) that anchor the content of the PSSA. Each Assessment Anchor is part of a Reporting Category and has one or more Anchor Descriptors unified under and aligned to it.

Anchor Descriptor

Below each Assessment Anchor are one or more specific Anchor Descriptors. The Anchor Descriptor adds a level of specificity to the content covered by the Assessment Anchor. Each Anchor Descriptor is part of an Assessment Anchor and has one or more Eligible Content statements unified under and aligned to it.

Eligible Content

The column to the right of the Anchor Descriptor contains the Eligible Content statements. The Eligible Content is the most specific description of the skills and concepts assessed on the PSSA. This level is considered the assessment limit and helps educators identify the range of the content covered on the PSSA.

Reference

In the space below the Assessment Anchor table is an area that provides additional details about the Eligible Content.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

Dual Reporting for Reporting Categories A and B

The Eligible Content codes in Reading each belong in two Reporting Categories: one based on genre and one based on skills. The matrix below shows this alignment.

Genre	Key Ideas and Details	Craft and Structure/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
	(Key Ideas)	(CSI)	(Vocabulary)
A: Literature Text	A-K.1.1.1	A-C.2.1.1	A-V.4.1.1
	A-K.1.1.2	A-C.2.1.2	A-V.4.1.2
	A-K.1.1.3	A-C.2.1.3	
		A-C.3.1.1	
B: Informational Text	B-K.1.1.1	B-C.2.1.1	B-V.4.1.1
	B-K.1.1.2	B-C.2.1.2	B-V.4.1.2
	B-K.1.1.3	B-C.2.1.3	
		B-C.3.1.1	
		B-C.3.1.2	

Reporting Information for Reporting Categories D and E

Reporting Categories	Descriptors		
	Grammar and Usage	Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling	Conventions
D: Conventions of Standard English (Writing)	D.1.1.1	D.1.2.1	D.2.1.1.1
	D.1.1.2	D.1.2.2	D.2.1.1.2
	D.1.1.3	D.1.2.3	D.2.1.1.3
	D.1.1.4	D.1.2.4	D.2.1.1.4
	D.1.1.5	D.1.2.5	D.2.1.1.5
	D.1.1.6		D.2.1.1.6
	D.1.1.7		
	D.1.1.8		
	D.1.1.9		
	D.1.1.10		
	D.1.1.11		
E: Text Dependent Analysis (Reading/Writing)	Analysis, Reflection, and Research		
	E.1.1.1		
	E.1.1.2		
	E.1.1.3		
	E.1.1.4		
	E.1.1.5		
	E.1.1.6		

E08.A Literature Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.A-K.1 Key Ideas and Details

DESCRIPTOR		ELIGIBLE CONTENT	
E08.A-K.1.1	Demonstrate understanding of key ideas and details in literature.	E08.A-K.1.1.1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
		E08.A-K.1.1.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
		E08.A-K.1.1.3	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story, drama, or poem propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Reference:

- CC.1.3.8.A Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.3.8.B Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
- CC.1.3.8.C Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

E08.A Literature Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.A-C.2 Craft and Structure

DESCRIPTOR

ELIGIBLE CONTENT

E08.A-C.2.1 Demonstrate understanding of craft and structure in literature.

E08.A-C.2.1.1 Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

E08.A-C.2.1.2 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts, and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

E08.A-C.2.1.3 Determine how the author uses the meaning of words or phrases, including figurative and connotative meanings, in a text; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Reference:

- CC.1.3.8.D Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- CC.1.3.8.E Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- CC.1.3.8.F Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings and how they shape meaning and tone.

E08.A Literature Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.A-C.3 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

DESCRIPTOR

ELIGIBLE CONTENT

E08.A-C.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of connections within, between, and/or among texts.

E08.A-C.3.1.1 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths and traditional stories, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Note: “Stories” means narration of events told through the text types of stories, dramas, or poems.

Reference:

CC.1.3.8.H Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from traditional works, including describing how the material is rendered new.

E08.A Literature Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.A-V.4 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

DESCRIPTOR

ELIGIBLE CONTENT

E08.A-V.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of vocabulary and figurative language in literature.

E08.A-V.4.1.1 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph, a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *precede*, *recede*, *secede*).

E08.A-V.4.1.2 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
- b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *bullheaded*, *willful*, *firm*, *persistent*, *resolute*).

Reference:

- CC.1.3.8.F Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings, and how they shape meaning and tone.
- CC.1.3.8.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.
- CC.1.3.8.J Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

E08.B Informational Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.B-K.1 Key Ideas and Details

DESCRIPTOR		ELIGIBLE CONTENT	
E08.B-K.1.1	Demonstrate understanding of key ideas and details in informational texts.	E08.B-K.1.1.1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
		E08.B-K.1.1.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
		E08.B-K.1.1.3	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, categories).

Reference:

CC.1.2.8.A Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.8.B Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

CC.1.2.8.C Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.

E08.B Informational Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.B-C.2 Craft and Structure

DESCRIPTOR		ELIGIBLE CONTENT	
E08.B-C.2.1	Demonstrate understanding of craft and structure in informational texts.	E08.B-C.2.1.1	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
		E08.B-C.2.1.2	Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
		E08.B-C.2.1.3	Determine how the author uses the meaning of words or phrases, including figurative, connotative, or technical meanings, in a text; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Reference:

- CC.1.2.8.D Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- CC.1.2.8.E Analyze the structure of the text through evaluation of the author’s use of specific sentences and paragraphs to develop and refine a concept.
- CC.1.2.8.F Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings, and how they shape meaning and tone.

E08.B Informational Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.B-C.3 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

DESCRIPTOR

ELIGIBLE CONTENT

E08.B-C.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of connections within, between, and/or among informational texts.

E08.B-C.3.1.1 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

E08.B-C.3.1.2 Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Reference:

CC.1.2.8.H Evaluate an author’s arguments, reasoning, and specific claims for the soundness of the arguments and the relevance of the evidence.

CC.1.2.8.I Analyze two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

E08.B Informational Text

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.B-V.4 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

DESCRIPTOR

ELIGIBLE CONTENT

E08.B-V.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of vocabulary and figurative language in informational texts.

E08.B-V.4.1.1 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph, a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *precede*, *recede*, *secede*).
- c. Determine the meaning of technical words and phrases used in a text.

E08.B-V.4.1.2 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
- b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *bullheaded*, *willful*, *firm*, *persistent*, *resolute*).

Reference:

- CC.1.2.8.F Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings, and how they shape meaning and tone.
- CC.1.2.8.J Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- CC.1.2.8.K Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.

E08.D Conventions of Standard English

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.D.1 Conventions of Standard English

DESCRIPTOR		ELIGIBLE CONTENT	
E08.D.1.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage.	E08.D.1.1.1	Explain the function of verbals (i.e., gerunds, participles, and infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
		E08.D.1.1.2	Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
		E08.D.1.1.3	Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
		E08.D.1.1.4	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.*
		E08.D.1.1.5	Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.*
		E08.D.1.1.6	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.*
		E08.D.1.1.7	Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).*
		E08.D.1.1.8	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.*
		E08.D.1.1.9	Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-on sentences.*
		E08.D.1.1.10	Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to, too, two; there, their, they're</i>).*
		E08.D.1.1.11	Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.*

Reference:

Asterisk (*) indicates that the particular Eligible Content appears in all succeeding grades. Eligible Content includes skills and understandings assessed in previous grades.

- CC.1.4.8.F Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.8.L Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.8.R Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

E08.D Conventions of Standard English

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.D.1 Conventions of Standard English

DESCRIPTOR		ELIGIBLE CONTENT	
E08.D.1.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.	E08.D.1.2.1	Use punctuation (i.e., comma, ellipsis, and dash) to indicate a pause or break.
		E08.D.1.2.2	Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
		E08.D.1.2.3	Spell correctly.
		E08.D.1.2.4	Use punctuation (i.e., commas, parentheses, and dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.*
		E08.D.1.2.5	Use punctuation to separate items in a series.*

Reference:

Asterisk (*) indicates that the particular Eligible Content appears in all succeeding grades.

Eligible Content includes skills and understandings assessed in previous grades.

- CC.1.4.8.F Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.8.L Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.8.R Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

E08.D Conventions of Standard English

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.D.2 Knowledge of Language

DESCRIPTOR		ELIGIBLE CONTENT	
E08.D.2.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions.	E08.D.2.1.1	Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action, expressing uncertainty, or describing a state contrary to fact).
		E08.D.2.1.2	Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.*
		E08.D.2.1.3	Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.*
		E08.D.2.1.4	Maintain consistency in style and tone.*
		E08.D.2.1.5	Choose punctuation for effect.*
		E08.D.2.1.6	Choose words and phrases for effect.*

Reference:

Asterisk (*) indicates that the particular Eligible Content appears in all succeeding grades.

Eligible Content includes skills and understandings assessed in previous grades.

CC.1.4.8.E Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.

- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
- Create tone and voice through precise language.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.

CC.1.4.8.K Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.

- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
- Create tone and voice through precise language.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.

CC.1.4.8.Q Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of writing.

- Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects.
- Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
- Create tone and voice through precise language.

E08.E Text-Dependent Analysis

Reporting Category

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR

E08.E.1 Evidence-Based Analysis of Text

DESCRIPTOR	ELIGIBLE CONTENT
<p>E08.E.1.1 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and/or research.</p>	<p>E08.E.1.1.1 Introduce text(s) for the intended audience, state an opinion and/or topic, establish a situation, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</p> <p>E08.E.1.1.2 Develop the analysis using relevant evidence from text(s) to support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences and demonstrating an understanding of the text(s).</p> <p>E08.E.1.1.3 Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</p> <p>E08.E.1.1.4 Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic and/or convey the experience and events.</p> <p>E08.E.1.1.5 Establish and maintain a formal style.</p> <p>E08.E.1.1.6 Provide a concluding section that follows from and supports the analysis presented.</p>

Reference:

Eligible Content includes skills and understandings assessed in previous grades.

- CC.1.4.7.B Identify and introduce the topic clearly, including a preview of what is to follow.
- CC.1.4.8.C Develop and analyze the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples; include graphics and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- CC.1.4.8.D Organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts; provide a concluding statement or section; include formatting when useful to aiding comprehension.
- CC.1.4.8.E Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
 - Create tone and voice through precise language.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style.
- CC.1.4.8.F Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.8.H Introduce and state an opinion on a topic.

E08.E Text-Dependent Analysis**Reporting Category**

- CC.1.4.8.I Acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims and support claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic.
- CC.1.4.8.J Organize the claim(s) with clear reasons and evidence clearly; clarify relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence by using words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion; provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- CC.1.4.8.K Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Use sentences of varying lengths and complexities.
 - Create tone and voice through precise language.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style.
- CC.1.4.8.L Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.8.S Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction.