PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

About the Reading Assessment Anchors

Introduction

This is a brief introduction to the Reading Assessment Anchors. For more information on the Assessment Anchors and how they were developed, please read the *General Introduction* provided on the website and the *Frequently Asked Questions.*

How the Assessment Anchors Connect to the Standards

The PA Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening are:

1.1 Learning to Read Independently
1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature
1.4 Types of Writing
1.5 Quality of Writing
1.6 Speaking and Listening
1.7 Characteristics and Function of the English Language
1.8 Research

In the past, the Reading PSSA assessed standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7 and 1.8 in Grades 5, 8 and 11. The Writing PSSA assessed standards 1.4 and 1.5. Speaking and Listening have always been assessed through local assessments. *Because of the shift to create a clearer and more focused test using the Assessment Anchors, the 2005 PSSA will only assess the first three reading standards.* Learning to read independently and critically, and the ability to analyze and interpret are at the heart of what students must be able to do to be good readers in today's society. Standards 1.7 and 1.8 are not specific to reading and for the most part these standards are better assessed at the district level.

How the Assessment Anchors Are Organized
Instead of having five reporting categories, the Assessment Anchors will have two:

Reporting Category	Standard
A. Comprehension and Reading Skills	1.1 (Learning to Read Independently) and 1.2 (Reading Critically in All Content Areas)
B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fiction and Nonfiction Text	1.1 (Learning to Read Independently) and 1.2 (Reading Critically in All Content Areas) and 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature)

Important Patterns
There are additional patterns within each Reporting Category. Each Reporting Category includes some basic elements that are consistent across all of the grade levels.

A. Comprehension and Reading Skills
Comprehension and Reading Skills have two basic elements:

- A.1 Fiction
- A.2 Nonfiction

B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fiction and Nonfiction Text
Interpretation and Analysis of Fiction and Nonfiction Text has three basic elements:

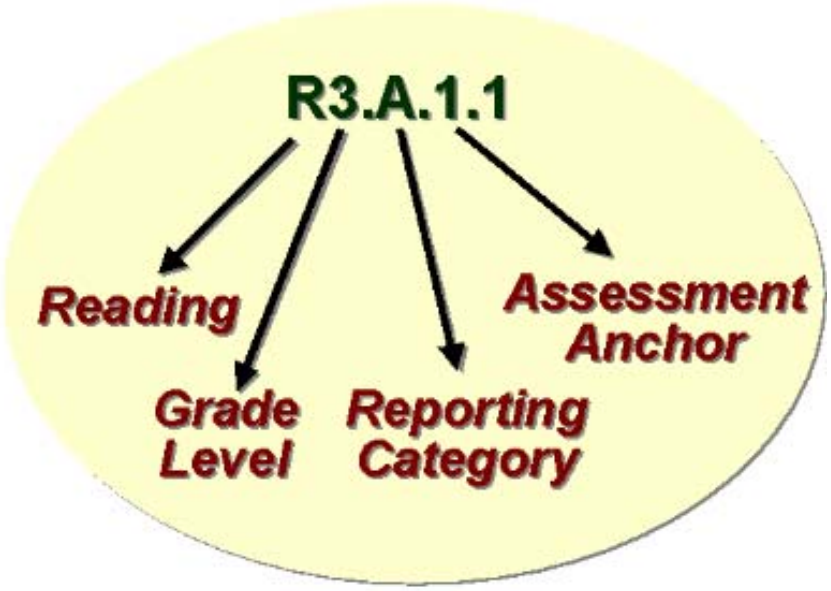
- B.1 Components within text **or** components within and across texts
- B.2 Literary Devices
- B.3 Concepts and Organization of Nonfiction Text

The Anchors generally target the same comprehension skills from Grades 3 through 8 and 11, although the depth of knowledge required to comprehend the text grows in complexity over the years. In addition, the expectation is that the level of texts themselves will grow in complexity.

How to Read the Assessment Anchors

The Reading Assessment Anchors begin with "R" to distinguish them from the Mathematics Assessment Anchors, which begin with "M". The number after the "R" in the label is the grade level (e.g., R3 would be Reading at third grade). The second letter in the labeling system is the Reporting Category (A or B). The same reporting categories continue across all Grades 3 through 8 and 11. The final number in the label is the actual Assessment Anchor (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.). Essentially, you read the Assessment Anchors like an outline, with the Assessment Anchor shaded across the top of the page and more specific details underneath.

For example, R3.A.1.1 is a Reading Assessment Anchor (R stands for Reading) at 3rd grade (3). The A indicates that this Anchor is in the Comprehension and Reading Skills Reporting Category and the 1.1 means that it is the first Assessment Anchor in that Reporting Category. (*See below*)



NOTE: Below each specific descriptor of the Assessment Anchor is a reference in italics. This reference relates to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and helps you crosswalk the Anchors to the Standards.

Eligible Content and Sample Items
Two other important features appear in this document:

Eligible Content. The column on the right-hand side of the page underneath each Assessment Anchor is the Eligible Content. This is often known as the "assessment limits" and helps teachers identify how deeply they need to cover an Anchor and/or the range of the content they should teach to best prepare their students for the PSSA. Not all of the Eligible Content is assessed on the PSSA, but it shows the range of knowledge drawn upon to design the test.

Sample Items. For sample items please see the Item Bank currently on the web page and the Item Samplers, soon to be on the web page and distributed to districts via CD.

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Overview of Reading Assessment Anchors

GRADE 3

R3.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R3.A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R3.A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R3.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R3.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R3.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R3.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text

GRADE 4

R4.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R4A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R4A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R4.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R4.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R4.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R4.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text

GRADE 5

R5.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R5.A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R5.A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R5.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R5.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R5.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R5.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text

GRADE 6

R6.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R6.A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R6.A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R6.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R6.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R6.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R6.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text

GRADE 7

R7.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R7.A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R7.A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R7.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R7.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R7.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R7.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text

GRADE 8

R8.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R8.A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R8.A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R8.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R8.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R8.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R8.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text

GRADE 11

R11.A. Comprehension and Reading Skills

- R11.A.1 Understand Fiction Appropriate to Grade level
- R11.A.2 Understand Nonfiction Appropriate to Grade Level

R11.B. Interpretation and Analysis of Fictional and Nonfictional Text

- R11.B.1 Understand Components Within and Between Texts
- R11.B.2 Understand Literary Devices in Fictional and Nonfictional Text
- R11.B.3 Understand Concepts and Organization of Nonfictional Text