

**THE MASSACHUSETTS ABE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

Revised Reading Strand

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Adult and Community Learning Services

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*Please see **Section 6: References** for a list of standards document that informed the ELA revision.

THE MASSACHUSETTS ABE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK
Revised Reading Strand (2010)

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SECTION 1

Introduction to the ELA Revised Reading Strand (2010)

Background

The purpose of this document is to present the revised 2010 Reading Strand of the **Massachusetts ABE English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Framework**. The standards and benchmarks presented in the previous Reading Strand (2005) were developed by veteran practitioners who brought their experience and knowledge of the current research to the task. A multi-year revision effort was later prompted by requests from instructors for even greater specificity and by the ongoing need to stay up-to-date with the developing research and professional wisdom in the field.

This document is the culmination of work facilitated by an ELA Revision Committee, composed of five practitioners experienced in reading instruction, two representatives from the Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), and two representatives from the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES). Drafts were reviewed by a panel of three reading experts as well as five practitioner focus groups, and this final version incorporates their valuable input.

The primary purpose of the revised Reading Strand is to provide a guide for teachers and programs about what reading skills and strategies to teach and what types of texts to incorporate at various proficiency levels within the Massachusetts ABE system. The goals of the revision were to:

- Help programs plan for reading instruction for adults that covers the full range of knowledge and skills that students need for immediate goals and next steps, including passing the GED tests and succeeding in college, the workplace, and the community¹;
- Provide ways to address next steps or transitions skills in the classroom from the earliest point possible, rather than waiting until higher levels;

¹To guide its activities early in the revision process, the Revision Committee referenced the ACLS Mission Statement, adopted in 1993: "To provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, and better employment, and to reach his/her full potential as a family member, productive worker, and citizen." The Massachusetts Strategic Framework for ABE guided the final revisions, ensuring alignment with state goals (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/sp/>).

- Provide more effective guidance for assessing adult learners both formally and informally, so teachers/learners know where to start, what to teach/learn, and where the gaps are;
- Support teachers and programs in being as intentional and focused as possible in addressing students' needs in the time they are able to attend ABE classes;
- Support consistency in what is taught and learned across programs;
- Honor the expertise of adult educators by making available a document that may be used flexibly;
- Validate what many teachers are already doing.

All persons involved in this revision agreed that it is important to provide teachers and programs with a truly comprehensive resource, a full picture of what students, as adults, need to know and be able to do to succeed in personal, educational, and career goals. ACLS and SABES are committed to providing staff development and technical support to enable practitioners to use the standards effectively in their individual programs and classrooms.

Overview of the Changes

The revised Reading Strand incorporates changes in the following areas:

Word Identification and Decoding. Practitioners familiar with the previous version of the Reading Strand will discover in the revision a greater emphasis on word identification and decoding. Word identification (or word recognition) initiates the process of making meaning from print as the reader identifies a group of letters as a word, pronounces the word internally, and accesses its meaning (Adams, 1990). All of this happens virtually instantaneously for proficient readers – in less than 250 milliseconds or one-fourth of a second (Rayner, 1998). Word identification is so rapid and automatic for these readers that they are able to focus all of their attention on the meaning of what they are reading. But many adult learners in Levels 2-4 and even a few at higher levels have such difficulties with word identification and decoding that their reading is slow, effortful, and inaccurate—seriously undermining their comprehension.

Fluency. New to the revised Reading Strand is guidance about fluency, or the ability to read connected text accurately and with appropriate rate, phrasing, and expression (or, *prosody*). To read fluently, a reader needs to integrate word identification skills, vocabulary, and basic comprehension of short chunks of text (phrases and sentences).

Research suggests that dysfluent reading hinders reading comprehension even for some higher-level readers; therefore, benchmarks have been added at all proficiency levels to encourage teachers to be attentive to this important component of reading.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary, or word meaning, is approached in a more nuanced manner in the revised Reading Strand. Emphasis is placed on what kinds of words students would most benefit from learning at each level. These are presented as *everyday words*, *general (or academic) words*, and *specialized terms (or content-specific words)*. Interpreting idioms and using strategies to determine the meanings of unknown words are also included.

Comprehension Strategies. Comprehension strategies continue to be an important element of the Reading Strand, but examples of strategies are provided that are more closely tied to the research and are applicable to different kinds of texts and reading purposes.

Organizational Patterns. The revised Reading Strand also provides more guidance for helping students recognize how texts differ structurally—for instance, how informational texts often have predictable organizational patterns (e.g., compare/contrast, problem/solution), or how narratives have predictable elements (characters, setting, plot, theme). The growing emphasis on preparing students for transition to college has led to increased attention in the Strand to organizational patterns, or text structures, common in academic texts.

Reading Purposes. Throughout the revised Strand, the role of the reading purpose is emphasized. The standards themselves reference “academic and non-academic purposes,” and the examples provided in the benchmarks reflect the wide variety of reading purposes for which adults in our classrooms need to prepare.

Text Types. The revised Strand provides much more guidance on the variety of texts that adult learners encounter inside and outside the classroom. This variety can range from simple grocery labels to the academic writing encountered in post-secondary education. The revision divides text types into two overarching categories, literary and informational, and presents relevant benchmarks for each.

Text Selection. Finally, the revision to the Reading Strand provides more guidance to teachers and programs about selecting texts for reading instruction. There are certain features of the benchmarks that required this guidance:

- Certain skills in the revised Reading Strand are described with identical benchmark language from level to level. To continue to develop their expertise, though, students will need to apply these skills to reading increasingly lengthy, diverse, and complex texts for a range of purposes.
- Even where the skill demand described in a benchmark does change from level to level (as you will see captured in subtle wording differences across the levels), application of the skill to appropriately challenging text is still assumed and is crucial to fostering continued growth.

Text selection is also important for maintaining motivation and encouraging transfer of learning. Texts used in the classroom should reflect the varied and important contexts in which adults need and want to use their developing reading skills.

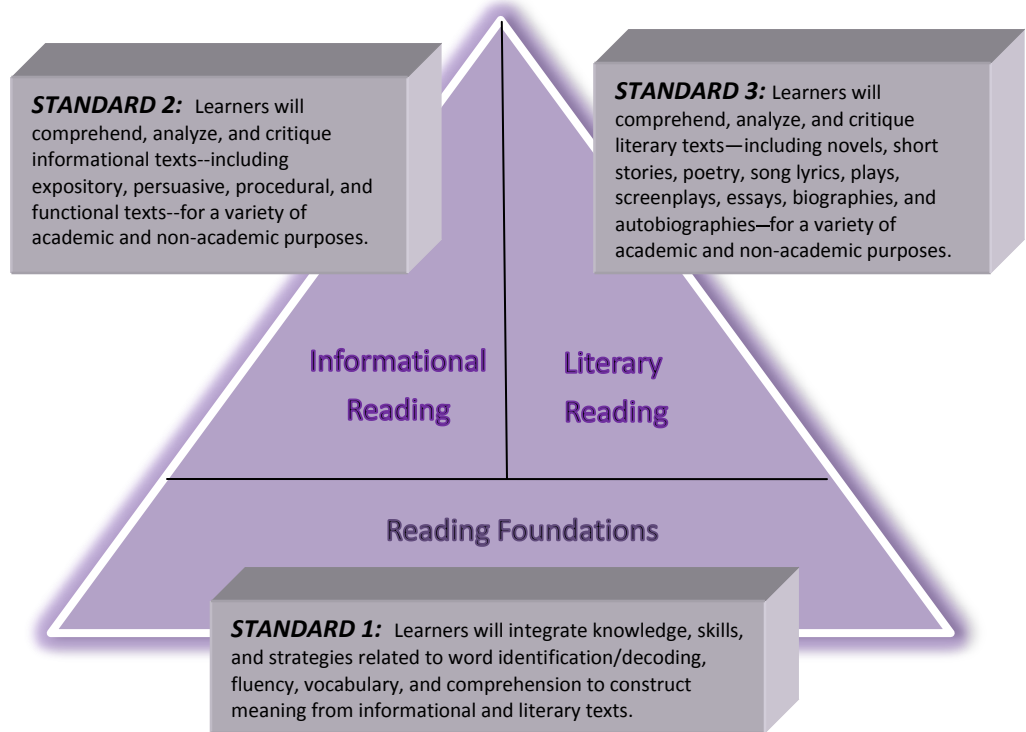
To aid programs in incorporating texts that provide the appropriate amount of challenge and relevance for adult learners, a *Text Selection Guide* has been added in **Section 3**. This section of the curriculum framework addresses the importance of attending to level-appropriate reading purposes, types of text, and text characteristics (including readability) when making decisions about texts to use during reading instruction.

Features of the Revised Standards and Benchmarks

The revised Reading Strand within the ELA Framework comprises three **standards** (Figure 1), which remain the same at all proficiency levels. **Standard 1 (Reading Foundations)** provides an overarching statement about the types of foundational knowledge, skills, and strategies skilled readers use and integrate in order to make sense of all types of written text. The developers drew directly from the research (Kruidenier, 2002; Strucker & Davidson, 2003) to frame this standard, and an overview of this research can be found in **Section 4**.

The remaining two standards, **Standard 2 (Informational Reading)** and **Standard 3 (Literary Reading)** focus on comprehending, analyzing, and critiquing two broad categories of texts: informational and literary. Both standards emphasize the importance of preparing adult learners to read for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.

FIGURE 1 The Revised Reading Standards (2010)



Each of the three standards is complemented by sets of **benchmarks**, which provide concrete information about what students should know and be able to do related to each standard in order to *exit* a particular level. Whereas standards stay the same across levels, benchmarks are level-specific. To help practitioners locate specific benchmarks, the benchmarks have been grouped by certain **topics**, as listed in *Figure 2*.

The three standards have been designed so that they may be easily combined within instructional units. Because Standard 1 focuses on foundational skills, its benchmarks can be “clustered” with those from either Standard 2 or Standard 3 to ensure students can use these skills in meaningful reading activities. For instance, a unit on poetry would draw substantially from the benchmarks in Standard 3 (Literary Reading) but could also draw from the Standard 1 (Reading Foundations) benchmarks to address vocabulary (general descriptive words), fluency (for a performance reading of a favorite poem), and/or comprehension strategies (to identify strategies which work well when reading a poem).

FIGURE 2 Standards and Benchmark Topics

| |
|---|
| STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/ decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.</i> |
| <i>Topics:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Word Identification and DecodingB. FluencyC. VocabularyD. Comprehension Strategies |
| STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> |
| <i>Topics:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Author’s Organization and PurposeB. Locating and Using Information and IdeasC. Reliability and Completeness of InformationD. Synthesis of Ideas |
| STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies, and autobiographies—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> |
| <i>Topics:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Literary StructuresB. Literary Technique / StyleC. Making Connections |

Similarly, a unit in which students research a topic of interest might draw from both Standard 2 (Informational Reading) and Standard 1 (Reading Foundations). This feature of the Strand encourages the integration of the reading benchmarks within content-area instruction related to social studies, science, math, literature, work readiness, citizenship, and/or family literacy. Teachers should use this clustering technique when planning instruction.

Formatting. The Reading Strand has been formatted into two views, both of which are presented in **Section 2**. One view is a cross-level chart which permits the user to track how benchmarks develop from one level to the next (see *Figure 4*). The other view is a one-level format, which presents all the standards and benchmarks for each level in a two- or three-page, at-a-glance, spread (see *Figure 3*). Although practitioners may be drawn to the simplicity of the one-level format, they should also use the cross-level chart to develop a clear picture of the skills and strategies learners should already have learned (in order to address observed gaps) and how to prepare learners for what is coming next.

FIGURE 3 Orientation to the One-Level Views

Level 3 (GLE 4.0–5.9)
Low Intermediate Basic Education
STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...

Standard: Each of the 3 Standards state in broad terms what learners will know and will be able to do as a result of participating in the ABE program. Standards remain the same at each level.

Level Information: The heading provides the:

- MA proficiency level (Level 3)
- NRS level name (Low Intermediate Basic Education)
- Grade-level equivalent ranges as described by the NRS (GLE 4-5.9)

| READING STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.</i> ¹ | |
|--|---|
| A. Word Identification and Decoding ² | <p>R1.3.a Automatically identify common multisyllabic words (e.g., <i>computer; information</i>), common homographs (e.g., <i>record; wind</i>), and abbreviations (e.g., <i>for months; days; classified ads</i>).</p> <p>R1.3.b Apply knowledge of common syllable patterns (e.g., <i>dis-; un-; re-; pre-; -able; -ion</i>), and common syllabications.</p> |
| B. Fluency ² | <p>R1.3.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 5.9 GLE with accuracy and attention to punctuation and phrasing.</p> |
| C. Vocabulary ² | <p>R1.3.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of general vocabulary (e.g., <i>exclaim; primarily</i>), common homophones (e.g., <i>band/banned</i>), and common idioms found in simple texts.</p> <p>R1.3.e Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*apply knowledge of common prefixes, suffixes; use context; use glossary; use electronic or beginner's English dictionary; reference cognates</i>).</p> <p>R1.3.f Use pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading a text (<i>*identify type of text, purpose, and intended audience; preview title and headings; activate prior knowledge; ask self simple questions</i>).</p> <p>R1.3.g Use strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension (<i>*use context; use graphic organizers; use prior knowledge; use text features; highlight/underline answers to questions; adjust pace</i>).</p> |

Benchmark: the specific set of skills or strategies learners need to develop and demonstrate at a particular level in order to meet a more broadly stated standard. Benchmarks describe *exit-level* performance.

Topic: a group of benchmarks describing related skills and/or strategies. Topics remain the same at each level.

*****: indicates instructional priorities related to the benchmark and, therefore, are likely assessment targets.

| READING STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
|---|---|
| A. Author's Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.3.a Determine straightforward expository text structure (e.g., <i>description, cause and effect, compare and contrast</i>).</p> <p>R2.3.b Determine the stated or implied main idea and supporting details in a paragraph (e.g., <i>What details does the author use to support his or her main idea?</i>).</p> |

Benchmark Notation:
R = Reading Strand
2 = the Standard to which the benchmark belongs
.3 = the Level to which the benchmark belongs
.a = where the benchmarks falls in the list of benchmarks for that Standard

e.g.: provides clarifying information about some aspect of the benchmark. Where possible, contextualized examples are given.

FIGURE 4 Orientation to the Cross-Level Chart

Standard: The Standard applies to all levels and so extends across all the columns.

STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): *Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, personal essays, biographies⁹, and autobiographies⁹—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.*

| TOPICS | Level 2 Beginning Basic Education (2.0-3.9 GLE) | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education (4.0-5.9 GLE) | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education (6.0 – 8.9 GLE) | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks² as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> |
| A. Literary Structures (cont'd) | R3.2.c Identify the basic theme when it is stated or clear (e.g., “Friends should stick together”). | R3.3.c Draw conclusions about the basic theme of a literary work, providing evidence (e.g., <i>What does the author think is important about “acceptance”? How do you know?</i>). | R3.4.d Explain how a theme is developed in a literary work (e.g., <i>through specific statements made by characters about specific events among characters</i>). | R3.5.d Explain how a theme is developed in a literary work (e.g., <i>through specific statements made by characters about specific events among characters</i>). | R3.6.d Explain how a theme is developed in a literary work (e.g., <i>through specific statements made by characters about specific events among characters</i>). |
| | R3.2.d Locate and interpret descriptive words and phrases used by an author (<i>*adjectives; adverbs; strong verbs</i>). | R3.3.d Locate and interpret simple descriptive and figurative language used by an author (<i>*language that appeals to the senses; simile</i>). | R3.4.e Identify and interpret literary techniques used by an author (<i>*imagery; simile; metaphor; alliteration; hyperbole; symbolism; puns</i>). | R3.5.e Identify and analyze the literary techniques used by an author and explain their intended effect(s) on the reader (<i>*imagery; symbolism; personification; flashback; foreshadowing</i>). | R3.6.e Identify, analyze, and critique the literary techniques used by an author and explain their intended effect(s) on the reader (<i>*imagery; symbolism; extended metaphor; allusions; dramatic irony</i>). |
| B. Literary Technique / Style | | | R3.4.f Identify the tone/mood (from options) and support with evidence (e.g., <i>the mood is sad, not somber, because the tone is slow and humorous compared to the previous scene</i>). | R3.5.f Describe the overall tone/mood and how it is developed (e.g., <i>through setting/figurative language/line or sentence length/word choice/idiom/dialects</i>). | R3.6.f Critique the author’s style (e.g., <i>in conveying mood/tone effectively; in creating realistic dialogue</i>). |

Benchmarks describing similar skill sets will be aligned across the page. Note the sometimes subtle changes in language to pinpoint how the skill is developing across the levels.

Topics: Topics are the same across all levels, and the placement of the topic name in the left column permits ease in finding particular benchmarks.

Some skills begin to be emphasized at higher levels, as indicated when a row of benchmarks does not have entries at the lower levels.

About the Cross-Level View

The cross-level chart will be of particular benefit to teachers for several reasons. For one, benchmarks describe exit-level performance of *individual students*, who often have strengths in some skill areas and weaknesses in others (e.g., a student may demonstrate Level 4 skills in Word Identification and Decoding but only Level 2 skills in Vocabulary). Therefore, the classroom teacher may need to attend to different levels of benchmarks to make judgments about what an individual student needs, and the cross-level chart is probably the best format for doing so. Another benefit of the cross-level chart is that it tracks how each skill for a specific topic area develops across the levels. This feature supports teachers in “tweaking” instruction in a particular skill to address multiple levels in one classroom. Finally, the cross-level chart may be used by programs to create a seamless continuum of classes across the proficiency levels².

To best understand the cross-level chart, keep in mind how the benchmarks have been constructed across the levels:

- The benchmarks describe similar sets of skills and strategies at all levels. They have been placed in the cross-level view to support practitioners in seeing how related skills and strategies build developmentally across the levels. Thus, related benchmarks show up in similar places across the continuum of levels.
- Although related benchmarks show up in similar places across the levels, they may be notated *differently*. The lettering system **can not** be used to track benchmarks across levels.
- Some skills/strategies show up on the continuum for the first time at higher levels because of their sophistication. Others stop being mentioned altogether at the higher levels because they are either assumed to have been learned at a lower level or they have been subsumed within another benchmark.
- Subtle word differences from one level to the next indicate a noteworthy change in the skill/strategy. Where wording remains the same in several levels, the *e.g.’s* or asterisks (*) will clarify aspects of the application that are different from level to level.

Final Thoughts

As with the other Massachusetts ABE curriculum frameworks, the revised Reading Strand provides standards and benchmarks as tools for teachers, administrators, and professional developers throughout the ABE system. For newer teachers, the Reading Strand offers the guidance they often request about what it is they should teach, related to reading.

²Because of the potential of the cross-level chart to be a primary tool for programs, this view comes first in the curriculum framework; however, the same information is provided in the one-level views.

Experienced teachers will recognize many of the skills they already teach but are also likely to identify additional skills suggested by recent research. The structure of the Strand supports all teachers, both new and experienced, in integrating reading instruction within work, family, community, and academic subject matter and contexts, so that adult learners may develop both the basic skills and the content knowledge they need in the short time they are in ABE programs. For program administrators, the new Reading Strand provides information to consider in structuring classes, materials, assessments, and other supports to enhance standards-based reading instruction within their programs. Finally, the Reading Strand offers ACLS and SABES an opportunity to think anew about professional development and state supports needed in the area of the teaching and learning of reading, and it provides a framework for soliciting practitioner input about strengths and needs. Through the combined efforts of teachers, administrators, and professional developers, the Revised Reading Strand will enhance the ability of the Massachusetts ABE system to support adult learners in the Commonwealth as they develop as readers and as they pursue their “next steps” as adults living in a complex world.

SECTION 2
ELA Revised Reading Strand (2010)
PART 1: Standards and Benchmarks

Overview of the Section

The purpose of this section is to present the reading standards and benchmarks that comprise the Revised Massachusetts ELA Reading Strand (2010), Levels 2-6. As explained in the *Introduction*, the standards and benchmarks are presented in two formats: a **cross-level chart** and **one-level views**. The information presented in each format is the same.

The one-level view may be especially useful for teachers who teach only one or two levels in a class; however, the cross-level chart should be referenced regularly to see which knowledge and skills from earlier levels need to be developed in order to foster ongoing reading development.

NOTE: The footnotes in the cross-level matrix are handled as endnotes in each level of the one-level views.

Massachusetts ABE Reading Standards and Benchmarks (2010)

CROSS-LEVEL CHART
Levels 2-6

Massachusetts ABE Reading Standards and Benchmarks (2010)

STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): *Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.*¹

| TOPICS | Level 2 Beginning Basic Education (2.0—3.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks² as needed, plus...</i> | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education (4.0—5.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education (6.0—8.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education (9.0—10.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education / Bridge to College (11.0—12.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| A. Word Identification and Decoding³ | <p>R1.2.a Automatically identify common one- and two-syllable words (<i>e.g., laugh; airplane; people</i>), high-frequency abbreviations (<i>e.g., Dr.; St.</i>), simple homographs (<i>e.g., read; live</i>), and contractions (<i>e.g., wasn't; wouldn't</i>).</p> <p>R1.2.b Apply knowledge of common syllable patterns/types (<i>*closed; open; vowel-consonant-e; double vowels; consonant-le; r-controlled</i>), high-frequency suffixes (<i>e.g., -es; -ful</i>), and common syllabication rules (<i>*compound words; VC/CV; /Cle; V/CV or VC/V</i>) to decode unfamiliar one- and two-syllable words.</p> | <p>R1.3.a Automatically identify common multisyllabic words (<i>e.g., computer; information</i>), common homographs (<i>e.g., record; wind</i>), and common abbreviations (<i>e.g., for months; days; classified ads</i>).</p> <p>R1.3.b Apply knowledge of common syllable patterns/types, common prefixes and suffixes (<i>e.g., dis-; un-; re-, pre-; -able; -ion</i>), and common syllabication rules to decode unfamiliar words.</p> | <p>R1.4.a Automatically identify most multisyllabic words and abbreviations (<i>e.g., for states; mgr.; dept.; asst.</i>) likely to be found in everyday work and community texts and in intermediate-level academic texts (<i>e.g., company memos; local newspapers; popular magazines and novels</i>).</p> <p>R1.4.b Apply knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, roots (<i>e.g., semi-; quad-; milli-; -ician; -ology; spec; graph</i>), and common syllabication rules to decode unfamiliar words.</p> | <p>R1.5.a Automatically identify most words and abbreviations likely to be found in a range of work and community texts and in secondary-level academic texts (<i>e.g., company policies; Time magazine; classic literature; secondary-level textbooks</i>).</p> <p>R1.5.b Apply decoding skills to unfamiliar words.</p> | <p>R1.6.a Automatically identify most words and abbreviations likely to be found in a range of sophisticated texts (<i>e.g., college freshman textbooks; training manuals; technical trade texts</i>).</p> <p>R1.6.b Apply decoding skills to unfamiliar words.</p> |
| B. Fluency³ | R1.2.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 3.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing. | R1.3.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 5.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing. | R1.4.c Read aloud text written at approximately an 8.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing. | R1.5.c Read text written at approximately a 10.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing. | R1.6.c Read text written at approximately a 12.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing. |

* Items preceded by an asterisk provide further clarification about what should be taught/learned to prepare students to reach the benchmark.

¹ See *Section 4* for information about the research behind Standard 1 and implications for teaching.

² Level 1 benchmarks are in development.

³ Placement in the appropriate level for each topic area in Standard 1 should be based on diagnostic assessments.

Massachusetts ABE Reading Standards and Benchmarks (2010)

STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): *Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.*¹

| TOPICS | Level 2 Beginning Basic Education (2.0—3.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks² as needed, plus...</i> | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education (4.0—5.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education (6.0—8.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education (9.0—10.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education / Bridge to College (11.0—12.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| C. Vocabulary ³ | <p>R1.2.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of everyday⁴ words (e.g., <i>belief; daily; emergency</i>) and simple homophones (e.g., <i>blew/blue</i>) likely to be found in simple texts.</p> <p>R1.2.e Identify simple antonyms and synonyms (e.g., <i>big/little; big/large</i>).</p> <p>R1.2.f Use a small set of strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*use context; use glossary; use beginner’s English dictionary; apply knowledge of high-frequency prefixes, suffixes</i>).</p> | <p>R1.3.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of general⁵ words (e.g., <i>conclude; exclaim; primarily</i>), common homophones (e.g., <i>band/banned</i>), and common idioms likely to be found in simple texts.</p> <p>R1.3.e Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*apply knowledge of common prefixes, suffixes; use context; use glossary; use electronic or beginner’s English dictionary; reference cognates</i>).</p> | <p>R1.4.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of general⁵ words (e.g., <i>bewilder; sufficient; instinct</i>), homophones (e.g., <i>principle/principal</i>), and idioms likely to be found in everyday work and community texts and in intermediate-level academic texts.</p> <p>R1.4.e Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of key terms⁶ related to specific subjects (e.g., <i>health; employment; geography; topics of interest</i>).</p> <p>R1.4.f Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*apply knowledge of common roots, affixes; use context; use an electronic or standard dictionary/thesaurus</i>);</p> | <p>R1.5.d Demonstrate an understanding of the denotations and connotations of general⁵ words (e.g., <i>integrity; inexplicable; vagrant vs. homeless; statesman vs. politician</i>), as well as acronyms and idioms, likely to be found in a range of work and community texts and in secondary-level academic texts.</p> <p>R1.5.e Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of a range of terms⁶ related to specific subjects (e.g., <i>GED topics; politics; environment</i>).</p> <p>R1.5.f Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*apply knowledge of a range of roots, affixes; use context; use a college/specialized dictionary</i>).</p> | <p>R1.6.d Demonstrate an understanding of the denotations and connotations of general⁵ words (e.g., <i>pensive vs. thoughtful; enthrall vs. attract</i>), as well as acronyms, abbreviations (e.g., <i>i.e.; ibid.</i>), and idioms, likely to be found in a range of sophisticated texts.</p> <p>R1.6.e Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of a wide range of terms⁶ related to specific subjects (e.g., <i>history; government; science</i>).</p> <p>R1.6.f Use strategies and resources to determine or enhance understanding of the meanings of words (<i>*apply knowledge of a range of roots, affixes; check etymology</i>).</p> |

⁴ “Everyday” words are words common to everyday spoken language (e.g., *ask, baby, walk, smile*). They may also be referred to as “Tier 1” words (Beck McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

⁵ “General” words are words that appear in a wide variety of written texts in all subject matter. They may also be referred to as “Tier 2” words (Beck et al., 2002) or “academic words” (Coxhead, 2000). See the Academic Word List at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>. (Watch out for British spelling.)

⁶ “Terms” are those words specific to a subject area or domain. They may be referred to as “Tier 3” words (Beck, et al., 2002) or “technical vocabulary” (Laufer & Nation, 1999).

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| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| | | | <i>reference cognates).</i> | | |
| D. Comprehension Strategies ³ | <p>R1.2.g Use pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text, purpose, and intended audience; preview title/headings/visuals; ask self, “What is it about? What do I know? What do I want to know?”; make predictions).</i></p> <p>R1.2.h Use strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*paraphrase short sections; pose and answer questions; attend to text features; use alphabetical order; scan for important words/numbers; consider own knowledge and experiences; make/check predictions; adjust pace).</i></p> | <p>R1.3.f Use pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text, purpose, and intended audience; preview title/headings/visuals; note repeated/bolded/italicized words; activate prior knowledge; ask self simple questions; select texts for reading purpose).</i></p> <p>R1.3.g Use strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*paraphrase key ideas or events; pose and answer questions; attend to text features; scan for important information; consider own knowledge and experiences; make/check predictions; use a simple graphic organizer; attend to signal words; highlight/underline answers to questions; adjust pace).</i></p> | <p>R1.4.g Select and apply pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text/genre, purpose, and intended audience; consider prior knowledge; ask self questions; skim first and last sentences/paragraphs; select texts for reading purpose).</i></p> <p>R1.4.h Select, apply, and integrate strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*summarize main ideas and essential details; pose and/or answer literal and inferential questions; attend to text features; skim/scan; use a graphic organizer; attend to signal words; highlight or mark key ideas; compare/contrast with prior knowledge; make notes about reactions, thoughts, questions).</i></p> | <p>R1.5.g Select and apply pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text/genre, purpose, and intended audience; ask or preview questions; skim headings and chapter summary; preview advanced organizers, appendices, sidebars, visuals; select texts for reading purpose).</i></p> <p>R1.5.h Select, apply, and integrate higher-order strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*summarize connections between ideas; pose and/or answer literal and inferential questions; skim/scan; choose and complete appropriate graphic organizer; mark texts; ask, “How does the content impact what I knew before?”; take and organize notes).</i></p> | <p>R1.6.g Select and apply pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text/genre, purpose, and intended audience; ask or preview questions; skim headings and chapter summary; preview advanced organizers, appendices, sidebars, visuals; select texts for reading purpose).</i></p> <p>R1.6.h Select, apply, and integrate higher-order strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*summarize connections between complex ideas; pose and/or answer literal and inferential questions; skim/scan; create a text map; develop a concept map to integrate prior and new knowledge; research other interpretations).</i></p> |

⁷ These strategies are listed to illustrate options, not to imply that all or even most of them should be taught at each level.
Revised Reading Strand for the ABE English Language Arts Curriculum Framework (2010)

Massachusetts ABE Reading Standards and Benchmarks (2010)

STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): *Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts⁸—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.*

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| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| A. Author’s Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.2.a Identify simple sequence and description patterns used by the author.</p> <p>R2.2.b Identify the topic and stated main idea of a paragraph.</p> | <p>R2.3.a Determine straightforward organizational patterns used by the author (<i>*sequence; description; cause and effect</i>).</p> <p>R2.3.b Determine the stated or implied main idea and/or its supporting details, within a paragraph (<i>e.g., What details does the author use to support her main idea that children need discipline?</i>).</p> | <p>R2.4.a Determine and/or critique typical organizational patterns used by the author (<i>*sequence; description; cause and effect; comparison and contrast; problem and solution</i>).</p> <p>R2.4.b Determine the stated or implied main idea within one or more paragraphs and/or how the main idea is supported (<i>e.g., What are the details the author uses to support her main idea that “War is never the answer”?</i>).</p> | <p>R2.5.a Determine and/or critique the typical ways the author organizes information, ideas, or arguments (<i>e.g., the author opens with an emotional appeal, uses a problem/solution pattern in the body, ends with a call to action</i>).</p> <p>R2.5.b Determine different levels/relationships of stated and implied ideas within lengthy text (<i>*author’s overall purpose/central idea; main idea of one or more paragraphs and its supporting details; how the main ideas of different paragraphs/sections are connected to each other</i>).</p> | <p>R2.6.a Determine and/or critique the unique and/or complex ways the author organizes information, ideas, or arguments (<i>e.g., shares an anecdote, uses cause and effect pattern to discuss the issue, uses description to offer several solutions, and closes by returning to the anecdote and proposing a different outcome</i>).</p> <p>R2.6.b Determine different levels/relationships of stated and implied ideas within lengthy or dense text (<i>*author’s overall purpose/central idea; main and supporting details within and across paragraphs and how they are related</i>).</p> |

⁸ Informational Texts are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are listed:
expository texts: informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life);
persuasive texts: editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews;
procedural texts: manuals; directions; operating instructions;
functional texts: forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos.

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| | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks² as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> |
| BENCHMARKS | | | | | |
| B. Locating and Using Information and Ideas | R2.2.c Locate clearly stated facts or details relevant to the purpose for reading (<i>e.g., due date for a bill payment; the departure time of a bus; steps in planting a bulb</i>). | R2.3.c Locate explicit information on simple tables (<i>*a table of contents; index</i>), on a map, or in short text (<i>e.g., find the dosage for a child on a medicine bottle; locate the capital of Afghanistan; find the dates of specific historical events mentioned in a short article</i>). | R2.4.c Locate explicit information on a multi-feature table or graph, on a detailed map, or within multiple paragraphs (<i>e.g., use a layered table of contents; identify from a chart which country produced 360 million barrels of oil in 2005</i>). | R2.5.c Locate explicit information on a complex table, graph, map, or diagram or in multiple or dense paragraphs (<i>e.g., identify on a map which part of the country had both the hottest number of days and the least rain in 2006; determine what the landlord must provide for storm damage</i>). | R2.6.c Locate explicit information on a complex graphic or in lengthy or dense text (<i>e.g., identify on a graph the dollar amount of Mexico’s main export to the U.S. in 2007; find in the chapter the three main arguments offered by opponents of the Vietnam War</i>). |
| | R2.2.d Follow directions provided in a simple diagram or in multiple one-step written commands (<i>e.g., “Please answer every item. Write your answers in the space beside each item. Turn in your form at the desk.”</i>). | R2.3.d Follow directions provided in a diagram or in multi-step written directions with conditional commands (<i>e.g., “Step 2: Insert disc into the opening. If the disc doesn’t start running right away, go to the START menu.”</i>). | R2.4.d Apply a multi-step set of written directions requiring integration of information from text, charts, and/or diagrams (<i>e.g., using written and illustrated directions to put together a pre-fab bookcase</i>). | R2.5.d Apply a complex set of written directions requiring integration of information from text, charts, and/or diagrams (<i>e.g., completing a science experiment; programming a TIVO</i>). | R2.6.d Apply a complex and extended set of written directions requiring integration of information from sophisticated text, charts, and/or diagrams (<i>e.g., completing a tax form</i>). |
| | R2.2.e Make simple inferences, draw basic conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual or visual evidence (<i>e.g., Which bus best fits my schedule?; Does this can of food have ingredients I can’t eat?; Based on this pamphlet, what is the most important thing I can do to have a healthy pregnancy?</i>). | R2.3.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual or visual evidence (<i>e.g., Which of these containers can I recycle, based on the information in a public notice?; According to the article, what impacts the kinds of homes built in different parts of the world?</i>). | R2.4.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual and/or visual evidence (<i>e.g., What does this political cartoon imply about the President, and what features lead to that inference?; Which of these health organizations is best able to address a range of illnesses?</i>). | R2.5.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual and/or visual evidence (<i>e.g., What can I infer about this cartoonist’s view of Iran? Do I agree?; If Step 3 of this process were skipped, what would happen?; What are my rights/obligations in this situation?</i>). | R2.6.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual and/or visual evidence (<i>e.g., Based on what we have just read, we can assume that...; What might be other causes for the findings of the study?</i>). |

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| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| C. Reliability and Completeness of Information | <p>R2.2.f Identify and interpret language and graphics used by the author to influence the reader’s opinions and actions (<i>*facts vs. opinions; language that appeals to the senses; pictures used in ads</i>).</p> | <p>R2.3.f Identify and interpret language and graphics used by the author to influence the reader’s opinions and actions (<i>*facts vs. opinions; imagery; simile; visuals</i>).</p> | <p>R2.4.f Identify and interpret common literary or persuasive techniques used by the author (<i>*facts; opinions; misleading statements; imagery; metaphor; emotional appeal; bandwagon; celebrity testimonial in ad; graphics/visuals</i>).</p> | <p>R2.5.f Identify, interpret, and explain the intended effects of the rhetorical devices, visuals, and/or tone used by the author (<i>*ample evidence vs. hasty generalization; analogy; irony; overstatement/understatement; manipulation of graphs/visuals; logical vs. emotional tone</i>).</p> | <p>R2.6.f Identify, analyze, and critique the rhetorical devices, visuals, and/or tone used by the author (<i>*expert testimony; logical vs. fallacious arguments; analogy; irony; manipulation of graphs/visuals; respectful vs. mocking tone</i>).</p> |
| | <p>R2.2.g Evaluate the overall reliability or completeness of information provided (<i>e.g., What information is missing from the invitation?; Is this flyer relevant to me?; Can I believe this ad?</i>).</p> | <p>R2.3.g Evaluate the overall reliability or completeness of information provided (<i>e.g., Does this classified ad tell me everything I need to know?; What else do I need to know before I join this group?</i>).</p> | <p>R2.4.g Evaluate the overall reliability or completeness of information provided (<i>e.g., What do I know about this author/source and associated biases?; Does this answer all the questions I had about this topic?</i>).</p> | <p>R2.5.g Critique the effectiveness of evidence provided to substantiate the author’s conclusions or generalizations (<i>*author’s background; bias of author/publisher/website; accuracy; completeness</i>).</p> | <p>R2.6.g Critique the effectiveness of evidence provided to substantiate the author’s conclusions or generalizations (<i>*author’s background; bias of author/publisher/website; accuracy; completeness</i>).</p> |
| D. Synthesis of Ideas | <p>R2.2.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., identify three ways the author suggests to save energy in homes; discuss how reptiles and amphibians are different from each other</i>).</p> | <p>R2.3.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., compare and contrast approaches to reducing energy use in the home</i>).</p> | <p>R2.4.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information, ideas, or arguments presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., identify what different sources say about why the U.S. entered WWII; compare and contrast two candidates’ speeches</i>).</p> | <p>R2.5.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information, ideas, or arguments presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., compare and contrast information presented on different news websites about a current event</i>).</p> | <p>R2.6.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information, ideas, and arguments presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., compare and contrast viewpoints on the causes of global warming, analyzing the evidence provided for each view</i>).</p> |

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| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| A. Literary Structures | <p>R3.2.a Identify and describe the main character(s), setting (<i>*time and place</i>), and key major events and their relationship to each other (<i>*order of occurrence; stated cause and effect</i>).</p> <p>R3.2.b Categorize literary works as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama.</p> | <p>R3.3.a Identify and describe the main character(s), setting, and key plot elements (<i>*problem; sequence of events; implied cause and effect; how problem is solved</i>), providing textual evidence.</p> <p>R3.3.b Identify the key conventions of a poem or script and describe their functions (<i>*shape; stanzas; rhyme; cast of characters; dialogue; list of props</i>).</p> | <p>R3.4.a Interpret and analyze character traits and motivations, providing evidence (<i>e.g., What do the character’s reactions indicate about the kind of person she is?</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.b Determine the setting and/or common plot elements evident in a literary work (<i>*conflict; climax; resolution</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.c Identify and explain the author’s use of common poetic or dramatic conventions within a literary work (<i>*stanzas; rhyme; use of capital letters/punctuation in a poem; stage directions; dialogue; scenes</i>).</p> | <p>R3.5.a Interpret and analyze character actions, traits and motivations, providing evidence (<i>e.g., How might you expect the character to act in another situation?; What event marked a change in the character?</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.b Analyze the setting, plot elements, and/or point of view in a story, novel, play, or narrative poem and describe their specific role in the development of the story (<i>e.g., how the setting influences events; the effect of the author’s use of first person; the types of conflict evident in the story</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.c Identify and analyze the author’s use of poetic or dramatic conventions within a literary work (<i>*stanza; rhyme; rhythm; dialogue; monologue; soliloquy; acts</i>).</p> | <p>R3.6.a Analyze characterizations in terms of actions, traits, motivations, and common archetypes (<i>e.g., hero; star-crossed lovers; scapegoat</i>) in outstanding American and/or world literature.</p> <p>R3.6.b Analyze the setting, plot elements, and/or point of view in outstanding American and/or world literature (<i>e.g., moral dilemmas; use of multiple points of view; relationship of events in parallel and sub-plots</i>).</p> <p>R3.6.c With support, identify and analyze conventions within a work which categorize it as a specific sophisticated literary form (<i>*tragedy; satire; allegory; sonnet</i>).</p> |

⁹ Biographies and autobiographies are considered literary texts when the primary purpose for reading is to appreciate the story, not to research details about someone’s life.
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| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| A. Literary Structures (cont'd) | R3.2.c Identify the basic theme when it is stated or clear (e.g., “Friends should stick together”). | R3.3.c Draw conclusions about the basic theme of a literary work, providing evidence (e.g., What does the author think is important about “acceptance”? How do you know?). | R3.4.d Explain how a theme is developed in a literary work (e.g., through specific statements made by the author/specific events/relationships among characters). | R3.5.d Determine the theme of a literary work and explain how it is developed (e.g., through specific events/changes in a character/use of symbols). | R3.6.d Determine one or more themes in a literary work and explain how they are developed (e.g., through symbolism/point of view/conflict). |
| B. Literary Technique / Style | R3.2.d Locate and interpret descriptive words and phrases used by an author (*adjectives; adverbs; strong verbs). | R3.3.d Locate and interpret simple descriptive and figurative language used by an author (*language that appeals to the senses; simile). | R3.4.e Identify and interpret literary techniques used by an author (*imagery; simile; metaphor; alliteration; hyperbole; symbolism; puns). R3.4.f Identify the tone/mood (from options) and support with evidence (e.g., the mood is playful, not somber, because the author makes humorous comparisons). | R3.5.e Identify and analyze the literary techniques used by an author and explain their intended effect(s) on the reader (*imagery; symbolism; personification; flashback; foreshadowing). R3.5.f Describe the overall tone/mood and how it is developed (e.g., through setting/figurative language/line or sentence length/word choice/rhythm/dialects). R3.5.g Identify how the selection of genre shapes how ideas are presented (e.g., compare how a particular theme is developed in a specific autobiography versus in a specific poem). | R3.6.e Identify, analyze, and critique the literary techniques used by an author and explain their intended effect(s) on the reader (*imagery; symbolism; extended metaphor; allusions; dramatic irony). R3.6.f Critique the author’s style (e.g., in conveying mood/tone effectively; in creating realistic dialogue). |

Massachusetts ABE Reading Standards and Benchmarks (2010)

STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): *Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies⁹, and autobiographies⁹—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.*

| TOPICS | Level 2 Beginning Basic Education (2.0-3.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks² as needed, plus...</i> | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education (4.0-5.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education (6.0 – 8.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education (9.0-10.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education / Bridge to College (11.0-12.9 GLE) <i>By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks as needed, plus...</i> |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| | BENCHMARKS | | | | |
| C. Making Connections | <p>R3.2.e Make logical predictions and basic inferences from explicit textual evidence.</p> | <p>R3.3.e Make logical predictions and inferences from explicit and implicit evidence.</p> | <p>R3.4.g Make inferences or draw conclusions related to an author’s purpose/main ideas within a specific section of text (<i>e.g., The author uses this chapter to show how desperate the main character is to prove himself</i>).</p> | <p>R3.5.h Make inferences or draw conclusions related to an author’s purpose/main ideas within a specific section of text (<i>e.g., These paragraphs build suspense</i>).</p> | <p>R3.6.g Make inferences or draw conclusions related to an author’s purpose/main ideas within a specific section of text.</p> |
| | <p>R3.2.f Connect the text with own experience or knowledge of the world (<i>e.g., Do I know anyone like this character?; Could this really happen?</i>).</p> | <p>R3.3.f Connect elements of the text--such as characters, events, or themes--with own experience, knowledge of the world, or other texts (<i>e.g., Does this character remind me of anyone in my life or in another text?; What are some other things I’ve read that had a similar theme?</i>).</p> | <p>R3.4.h Connect elements of the text to own experience and/or knowledge of the world (<i>e.g., How might the character’s actions be different today?; Do I agree with what the author says about war?</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.i Compare and contrast characters, events, or themes within and across literary works.</p> | <p>R3.5.i With support, identify the personal, historical, and/or cultural influences on a literary work (<i>e.g., How do the characters in <u>Huckleberry Finn</u> reflect different attitudes about slavery during the Civil War era?</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.j Compare and contrast characters, relationships, events, and/or themes within and across literary works.</p> <p>R3.5.k With support, compare and contrast the styles of two authors.</p> | <p>R3.6.h Analyze the personal, historical, and/or cultural influences on a literary work (<i>e.g., What evidence do I see that Transcendentalism influenced the writing of this novel?</i>).</p> <p>R3.6.i With support, compare and contrast how characterizations, relationships, events, and/or themes are developed in different literary works.</p> <p>R3.6.j Compare and contrast the styles of two authors.</p> |

**Massachusetts ABE Reading Standards
and Benchmarks (2010)**

**ONE-LEVEL VIEWS
Levels 2-6**

LEVEL 2
BEGINNING BASIC EDUCATION (2.0-3.9 GLE)
Standards and Benchmarks

By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks¹ as needed, plus...

| READING STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.²</i> | |
|---|---|
| A. Word Identification and Decoding ³ | <p>R1.2.a Automatically identify common one- and two-syllable words (e.g., <i>laugh; airplane; people</i>), high-frequency abbreviations (e.g., <i>Dr.; St.</i>), simple homographs (e.g., <i>read; live</i>), and contractions (e.g., <i>wasn't; wouldn't</i>).</p> <p>R1.2.b Apply knowledge of common syllable patterns/types (*closed; open; vowel-consonant-e; double vowels; consonant-le; r-controlled), high-frequency suffixes (e.g., <i>-es; -ful</i>), and common syllabication rules (*compound words; VC/CV; /Cle; V/CV or VC/V) to decode unfamiliar one- and two-syllable words.</p> |
| B. Fluency ³ | <p>R1.2.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 3.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing.</p> |
| C. Vocabulary ³ | <p>R1.2.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of everyday⁴ words (e.g., <i>belief; daily; emergency</i>) and simple homophones (e.g., <i>blew/blue</i>) likely to be found in simple texts.</p> <p>R1.2.e Identify simple antonyms and synonyms (e.g., <i>big/little; big/large</i>).</p> <p>R1.2.f Use a small set of strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (*use context; use glossary; use beginner's English dictionary; apply knowledge of high-frequency prefixes, suffixes).</p> |
| D. Comprehension Strategies ³ | <p>R1.2.g Use pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (*identify type of text, purpose, and intended audience; preview title/headings/visuals; ask self, "What is it about? What do I know? What do I want to know?"; make predictions).</p> <p>R1.2.h Use strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (*paraphrase short sections; pose and answer questions; attend to text features; use alphabetical order; scan for important words/numbers; consider own knowledge and experiences; make/check predictions; adjust pace).</p> |
| READING STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts⁸—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
| A. Author's Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.2.a Identify simple sequence and description patterns used by the author.</p> <p>R2.2.b Identify the topic and stated main idea of a paragraph.</p> |
| B. Locating and Using Information and Ideas | <p>R2.2.c Locate clearly stated facts or details relevant to the purpose for reading (e.g., <i>due date for a bill payment; the departure time of a bus; steps in planting a bulb</i>).</p> <p>R2.2.d Follow directions provided in a simple diagram or in multiple one-step written commands (e.g., <i>"Please answer every item. Write your answers in the space beside each item. Turn in your form at the desk."</i>).</p> |

LEVEL 2
BEGINNING BASIC EDUCATION (2.0-3.9 GLE)
Standards and Benchmarks

| | |
|--|---|
| | R2.2.e Make simple inferences, draw basic conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual or visual evidence (<i>e.g., Which bus best fits my schedule?; Does this can of food have ingredients I can't eat?; Based on this pamphlet, what is the most important thing I can do to have a healthy pregnancy?</i>). |
| C. Reliability and Completeness of Information | R2.2.f Identify and interpret language and graphics used by the author to influence the reader's opinions and actions (<i>*facts vs. opinions; language that appeals to the senses; pictures used in ads</i>). R2.2.g Evaluate the overall reliability or completeness of information provided (<i>e.g., What information is missing from the invitation?; Is this flyer relevant to me?; Can I believe this ad?</i>). |
| D. Synthesis of Ideas | R2.2.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., identify three ways the author suggests to save energy in homes; discuss how reptiles and amphibians are different from each other</i>). |
| READING STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies ⁹ , and autobiographies ⁹ —for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes. | |
| A. Literary Structures | R3.2.a Identify and describe the main character(s), setting (<i>*time and place</i>), and key major events and their relationship to each other (<i>*order of occurrence; stated cause and effect</i>). R3.2.b Categorize literary works as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama. R3.2.c Identify the basic theme when it is stated or clear (<i>e.g., "Friends should stick together"</i>). |
| B. Literary Technique / Style | R3.2.d Locate and interpret descriptive words and phrases used by an author (<i>*adjectives; adverbs; strong verbs</i>). |
| C. Making Connections | R3.2.e Make logical predictions and basic inferences from explicit textual evidence. R3.2.f Connect the text with own experience or knowledge of the world (<i>e.g., Do I know anyone like this character?; Could this really happen?</i>). |

*Items preceded by an asterisk provide further clarification about what should be taught/learned to prepare students to reach the benchmark.

¹ See *Section 4* for information about the research behind Standard 1 and implications for teaching.

² Level 1 benchmarks are in development.

³ Placement in the appropriate level for each topic area in Standard 1 should be based on diagnostic assessments.

⁴ "Everyday" words are words common to everyday spoken language (*e.g., ask, baby, walk, smile*). They may also be referred to as "Tier 1" words (Beck McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

⁵ [not mentioned at this level]

⁶ [not mentioned at this level]

⁷ These strategies are listed to illustrate options, not to imply that all or even most of them should be taught at each level.

⁸ Informational Texts are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are listed:

expository texts: informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person's life);

persuasive texts: editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews;

procedural texts: manuals; directions; operating instructions;

functional texts: forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos.

⁹ Biographies and autobiographies are considered literary texts when the primary purpose for reading is to appreciate the story, not to research details about someone's life.

LEVEL 3
LOW INTERMEDIATE BASIC EDUCATION (4.0-5.9 GLE)
Standards and Benchmarks

By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks¹ as needed, plus...

| READING STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.²</i> | |
|---|--|
| A. Word Identification and Decoding ³ | <p>R1.3.a Automatically identify common multisyllabic words (e.g., <u>computer</u>; <u>information</u>), common homographs (e.g., <u>record</u>; <u>wind</u>), and common abbreviations (e.g., for months; days; classified ads).</p> <p>R1.3.b Apply knowledge of common syllable patterns/types, common prefixes and suffixes (e.g., <u>dis-</u>; <u>un-</u>; <u>re-</u>; <u>pre-</u>; <u>-able</u>; <u>-ion</u>), and common syllabication rules to decode unfamiliar words.</p> |
| B. Fluency ³ | R1.3.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 5.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing. |
| C. Vocabulary ³ | <p>R1.3.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of general⁵ words (e.g., <u>conclude</u>; <u>exclaim</u>; <u>primarily</u>), common homophones (e.g., <u>band/banned</u>), and common idioms likely to be found in simple texts.</p> <p>R1.3.e Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (*apply knowledge of common prefixes, suffixes; use context; use glossary; use electronic or beginner’s English dictionary; reference cognates).</p> |
| D. Comprehension Strategies ³ | <p>R1.3.f Use pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (*identify type of text, purpose, and intended audience; preview title/headings/visuals; note repeated/bolded/italicized words; activate prior knowledge; ask self simple questions; select texts for reading purpose).</p> <p>R1.3.g Use strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (*paraphrase key ideas or events; pose and answer questions; attend to text features; scan for important information; consider own knowledge and experiences; make/check predictions; use a simple graphic organizer; attend to signal words; highlight/underline answers to questions; adjust pace).</p> |
| READING STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts⁸—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
| A. Author’s Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.3.a Determine straightforward organizational patterns used by the author (*sequence; description; cause and effect).</p> <p>R2.3.b Determine the stated or implied main idea and/or its supporting details, within a paragraph (e.g., <i>What details does the author use to support her main idea that children need discipline?</i>).</p> |
| B. Locating and Using Information and Ideas | <p>R2.3.c Locate explicit information on simple tables (*a table of contents; index), on a map, or in short text (e.g., <i>find the dosage for a child on a medicine bottle; locate the capital of Afghanistan; find the dates of specific historical events mentioned in a short article</i>).</p> <p>R2.3.d Follow directions provided in a diagram or in multi-step written directions with conditional commands (e.g., <i>“Step 2: Insert disc into the opening. If the disc doesn’t start running right away, go to the START menu.”</i>).</p> <p>R2.3.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual</p> |

LEVEL 3
LOW INTERMEDIATE BASIC EDUCATION (4.0-5.9 GLE)
Standards and Benchmarks

| | |
|---|---|
| | or visual evidence (e.g., <i>Which of these containers can I recycle, based on the information in a public notice?; According to the article, what impacts the kinds of homes built in different parts of the world?</i>). |
| C. Reliability and Completeness of Information | R2.3.f Identify and interpret language and graphics used by the author to influence the reader’s opinions and actions (<i>*facts vs. opinions; imagery; simile; visuals</i>). R2.3.g Evaluate the overall reliability or completeness of information provided (e.g., <i>Does this classified ad tell me everything I need to know?; What else do I need to know before I join this group?</i>). |
| D. Synthesis of Ideas | R2.3.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information presented in one or more texts (e.g., <i>compare and contrast approaches to reducing energy use in the home</i>). |
| READING STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies⁹, and autobiographies⁹—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
| A. Literary Structures | R3.3.a Identify and describe the main character(s), setting, and key plot elements (<i>*problem; sequence of events; implied cause and effect; how problem is solved</i>), providing textual evidence. R3.3.b Identify the key conventions of a poem or script and describe their functions (<i>*shape; stanzas; rhyme; cast of characters; dialogue; list of props</i>). R3.3.c Draw conclusions about the basic theme of a literary work, providing evidence (e.g., <i>What does the author think is important about “acceptance”? How do you know?</i>). |
| B. Literary Technique / Style | R3.3.d Locate and interpret simple descriptive and figurative language used by an author (<i>*language that appeals to the senses; simile</i>). |
| C. Making Connections | R3.3.e Make logical predictions and inferences from explicit and implicit evidence. R3.3.f Connect elements of the text--such as characters, events, or themes--with own experience, knowledge of the world, or other texts (e.g., <i>Does this character remind me of anyone in my life or in another text?; What are some other things I’ve read that had a similar theme?</i>). |

*Items preceded by an asterisk provide further clarification about what should be taught/learned to prepare students to reach the benchmark.

¹ See Section 4 for information about the research behind Standard 1 and implications for teaching.

² Level 1 benchmarks are in development.

³ Placement in the appropriate level for each topic area in Standard 1 should be based on diagnostic assessments.

⁴ [not mentioned at this level]

⁵ “General” words are words that appear in a wide variety of written texts in all subject matter. They may also be referred to as “Tier 2” words (Beck et al., 2002) or “academic words” (Coxhead, 2000). See the Academic Word List at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>. (Watch out for British spelling.)

⁶ [not mentioned at this level]

⁷ These strategies are listed to illustrate options, not to imply that all or even most of them should be taught at each level.

⁸ Informational Texts are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are listed:

- expository texts: *informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life);*
- persuasive texts: *editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews;*
- procedural texts: *manuals; directions; operating instructions;*
- functional texts: *forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos.*

⁹ Biographies and autobiographies are considered literary texts when the primary purpose for reading is to appreciate the story, not to research details about someone’s life.

LEVEL 4
HIGH INTERMEDIATE BASIC EDUCATION (6.0—8.9 GLE)
 Standards and Benchmarks

By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks¹ as needed, plus...

| READING STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.²</i> | |
|---|--|
| A. Word Identification and Decoding ³ | <p>R1.4.a Automatically identify most multisyllabic words and abbreviations (<i>e.g., for states; <u>mgr.</u>; <u>dept.</u>; <u>asst.</u></i>) likely to be found in everyday work and community texts and in intermediate-level academic texts (<i>e.g., company memos; local newspapers; popular magazines and novels</i>).</p> <p>R1.4.b Apply knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, roots (<i>e.g., <u>semi-</u>; <u>quad-</u>; <u>milli-</u>; <u>-ician</u>; <u>-ology</u>; <u>spec</u>; <u>graph</u></i>), and common syllabication rules to decode unfamiliar words.</p> |
| B. Fluency ³ | <p>R1.4.c Read aloud text written at approximately an 8.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing.</p> |
| C. Vocabulary ³ | <p>R1.4.d Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of general⁵ words (<i>e.g., <u>bewilder</u>; <u>sufficient</u>; <u>instinct</u></i>), homophones (<i>e.g., <u>principle/principal</u></i>), and idioms likely to be found in everyday work and community texts and in intermediate-level academic texts.</p> <p>R1.4.e Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of key terms⁶ related to specific subjects (<i>e.g., health; employment; geography; topics of interest</i>).</p> <p>R1.4.f Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*apply knowledge of common roots, affixes; use context; use an electronic or standard dictionary/thesaurus; reference cognates</i>).</p> |
| D. Comprehension Strategies ³ | <p>R1.4.g Select and apply pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text/genre, purpose, and intended audience; consider prior knowledge; ask self questions; skim first and last sentences/paragraphs; select texts for reading purpose</i>).</p> <p>R1.4.h Select, apply, and integrate strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*summarize main ideas and essential details; pose and/or answer literal and inferential questions; attend to text features; skim/scan; use a graphic organizer; attend to signal words; highlight or mark key ideas; compare/contrast with prior knowledge; make notes about reactions, thoughts, questions</i>).</p> |
| READING STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts⁸—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
| A. Author’s Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.4.a Determine and/or critique typical organizational patterns used by the author (<i>*sequence; description; cause and effect; comparison and contrast; problem and solution</i>).</p> <p>R2.4.b Determine the stated or implied main idea within one or more paragraphs and/or how the main idea is supported (<i>e.g., What are the details the author uses to support her main idea that “War is never the answer”?</i>).</p> |
| B. Locating and Using Information and | <p>R2.4.c Locate explicit information on a multi-feature table or graph, on a detailed map, or within multiple paragraphs (<i>e.g., use a layered table of contents; identify from a chart which country produced 360 million barrels of oil in 2005</i>).</p> |

LEVEL 4
HIGH INTERMEDIATE BASIC EDUCATION (6.0—8.9 GLE)
Standards and Benchmarks

| | |
|--|---|
| Ideas | <p>R2.4.d Apply a multi-step set of written directions requiring integration of information from text, charts, and/or diagrams (<i>e.g., using written and illustrated directions to put together a pre-fab bookcase</i>).</p> <p>R2.4.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual and/or visual evidence (<i>e.g., What does this political cartoon imply about the President, and what features lead to that inference?; Which of these health organizations is best able to address a range of illnesses?</i>).</p> |
| C. Reliability and Completeness of Information | <p>R2.4.f Identify and interpret common literary or persuasive techniques used by the author (<i>*facts; opinions; misleading statements; imagery; metaphor; emotional appeal; bandwagon; celebrity testimonial in ad; graphics/visuals</i>).</p> <p>R2.4.g Evaluate the overall reliability or completeness of information provided (<i>e.g., What do I know about this author/source and associated biases?; Does this answer all the questions I had about this topic?</i>).</p> |
| D. Synthesis of Ideas | <p>R2.4.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information, ideas, or arguments presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., identify what different sources say about why the U.S. entered WWII; compare and contrast two candidates' speeches</i>).</p> |
| <p>READING STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies⁹, and autobiographies⁹—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i></p> | |
| A. Literary Structures | <p>R3.4.a Interpret and analyze character traits and motivations, providing evidence (<i>e.g., What do the character's reactions indicate about the kind of person she is?</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.b Determine the setting and/or common plot elements evident in a literary work (<i>*conflict; climax; resolution</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.c Identify and explain the author's use of common poetic or dramatic conventions within a literary work (<i>*stanzas; rhyme; use of capital letters/punctuation in a poem; stage directions; dialogue; scenes</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.d Explain how a theme is developed in a literary work (<i>e.g., through specific statements made by the author/specific events/relationships among characters</i>).</p> |
| B. Literary Technique / Style | <p>R3.4.e Identify and interpret literary techniques used by an author (<i>*imagery; simile; metaphor; alliteration; hyperbole; symbolism; puns</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.f Identify the tone/ mood (from options) and support with evidence (<i>e.g., the mood is playful, not somber, because the author makes humorous comparisons</i>).</p> |
| C. Making Connections | <p>R3.4.g Make inferences or draw conclusions related to an author's purpose/main ideas within a specific section of text (<i>e.g., The author uses this chapter to show how desperate the main character is to prove himself</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.h Connect elements of the text to own experience and/or knowledge of the world (<i>e.g., How might the character's actions be different today?; Do I agree with what the author says about war?</i>).</p> <p>R3.4.i Compare and contrast characters, events, or themes within and across literary works.</p> |

LEVEL 4

HIGH INTERMEDIATE BASIC EDUCATION (6.0—8.9 GLE)

Standards and Benchmarks

*Items preceded by an asterisk provide further clarification about what should be taught/learned to prepare students to reach the benchmark.

¹ See *Section 4* for information about the research behind Standard 1 and implications for teaching.

² Level 1 benchmarks are in development.

³ Placement in the appropriate level for each topic area in Standard 1 should be based on diagnostic assessments.

⁴ *[not mentioned at this level]*

⁵ “General” words are words that appear in a wide variety of written texts in all subject matter. They may also be referred to as “Tier 2” words (Beck *et al.*, 2002) or “academic words” (Coxhead, 2000). See the Academic Word List at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>. (Watch out for British spelling.)

⁶ “Terms” are those words specific to a subject area or domain. They may be referred to as “Tier 3” words (Beck, *et al.*, 2002) or “technical vocabulary” (Laufer & Nation, 1999).

⁷ These strategies are listed to illustrate options, not to imply that all or even most of them should be taught at each level.

⁸ Informational Texts are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are listed:

expository texts: *informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life);*

persuasive texts: *editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews;*

procedural texts: *manuals; directions; operating instructions;*

functional texts: *forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos.*

⁹ Biographies and autobiographies are considered literary texts when the primary purpose for reading is to appreciate the story, not to research details about someone’s life.

LEVEL 5
LOW ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION (9.0-10.9 GLE)
 Standards and Benchmarks

By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks¹ as needed, plus...

| READING STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.²</i> | |
|---|---|
| A. Word Identification and Decoding ³ | <p>R1.5.a Automatically identify most words and abbreviations likely to be found in a range of work and community texts and in secondary-level academic texts (<i>e.g., company policies; Time magazine; classic literature; secondary-level textbooks</i>).</p> <p>R1.5.b Apply decoding skills to unfamiliar words.</p> |
| B. Fluency ³ | <p>R1.5.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 10.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing.</p> |
| C. Vocabulary ³ | <p>R1.5.d Demonstrate an understanding of the denotations and connotations of general⁵ words (<i>e.g., integrity; inexplicable; vagrant vs. homeless; statesman vs. politician</i>), as well as acronyms and idioms, likely to be found in a range of work and community texts and in secondary-level academic texts.</p> <p>R1.5.e Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of a range of terms⁶ related to specific subjects (<i>e.g., GED topics; politics; environment</i>).</p> <p>R1.5.f Use strategies and resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (<i>*apply knowledge of a range of roots, affixes; use context; use a college/specialized dictionary</i>).</p> |
| D. Comprehension Strategies ³ | <p>R1.5.g Select and apply pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text/genre, purpose, and intended audience; ask or preview questions; skim headings and chapter summary; preview advanced organizers, appendices, sidebars, visuals; select texts for reading purpose</i>).</p> <p>R1.5.h Select, apply, and integrate higher-order strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*summarize connections between ideas; pose and/or answer literal and inferential questions; skim/scan; choose and complete appropriate graphic organizer; mark texts; ask, "How does the content impact what I knew before?"; take and organize notes</i>).</p> |
| READING STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts⁸—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
| A. Author's Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.5.a Determine and/or critique the typical ways the author organizes information, ideas, or arguments (<i>e.g., the author opens with an emotional appeal, uses a problem/solution pattern in the body, ends with a call to action</i>).</p> <p>R2.5.b Determine different levels/relationships of stated and implied ideas within lengthy text (<i>*author's overall purpose/central idea; main idea of one or more paragraphs and its supporting details; how the main ideas of different paragraphs/sections are connected to each other</i>).</p> |
| B. Locating and Using Information and Ideas | <p>R2.5.c Locate explicit information on a complex table, graph, map, or diagram or in multiple or dense paragraphs (<i>e.g., identify on a map which part of the country had both the hottest number of days and the least rain in 2006; determine what the landlord must provide for storm damage</i>).</p> |

LEVEL 5
LOW ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION (9.0-10.9 GLE)
Standards and Benchmarks

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| | <p>R2.5.d Apply a complex set of written directions requiring integration of information from text, charts, and/or diagrams (<i>e.g. completing a science experiment; programming a TIVO</i>).</p> <p>R2.5.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual and/or visual evidence (<i>e.g., What can I infer about this cartoonist’s view of Iran? Do I agree?; If Step 3 of this process were skipped, what would happen?; What are my rights/obligations in this situation?</i>).</p> |
| C. Reliability and Completeness of Information | <p>R2.5.f Identify, interpret, and explain the intended effects of the rhetorical devices, visuals, and/or tone used by the author (<i>*ample evidence vs. hasty generalization; analogy; irony; overstatement/understatement; manipulation of graphs/visuals; logical vs. emotional tone</i>).</p> <p>R2.5.g Critique the effectiveness of evidence provided to substantiate the author’s conclusions or generalizations (<i>*author’s background; bias of author/publisher/website; accuracy; completeness</i>).</p> |
| D. Synthesis of Ideas | <p>R2.5.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information, ideas, or arguments presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., compare and contrast information presented on different news websites about a current event</i>).</p> |
| <p>READING STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies⁹, and autobiographies⁹—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i></p> | |
| A. Literary Structures | <p>R3.5.a Interpret and analyze character actions, traits and motivations, providing evidence (<i>e.g., How might you expect the character to act in another situation?; What event marked a change in the character?</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.b Analyze the setting, plot elements, and/or point of view in a story, novel, play, or narrative poem and describe their specific role in the development of the story (<i>e.g., how the setting influences events; the effect of the author’s use of first person; the types of conflict evident in the story</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.c Identify and analyze the author’s use of poetic or dramatic conventions within a literary work (<i>*stanza; rhyme; rhythm; dialogue; monologue; soliloquy; acts</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.d Determine the theme of a literary work and explain how it is developed (<i>e.g., through specific events/changes in a character/use of symbols</i>).</p> |
| B. Literary Technique / Style | <p>R3.5.e Identify and analyze the literary techniques used by an author and explain their intended effect(s) on the reader (<i>*imagery; symbolism; personification; flashback; foreshadowing</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.f Describe the overall tone/mood and how it is developed (<i>e.g., through setting/figurative language/line or sentence length/word choice/rhythm/dialects</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.g Identify how the selection of genre shapes how ideas are presented (<i>e.g., compare how a particular theme is developed in a specific autobiography versus in a specific poem</i>).</p> |

LEVEL 5
LOW ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION (9.0-10.9 GLE)
 Standards and Benchmarks

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| C. Making Connections | <p>R3.5.h Make inferences or draw conclusions related to an author’s purpose/main ideas within a specific section of text (<i>e.g., These paragraphs build suspense</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.i With support, identify the personal, historical, and/or cultural influences on a literary work (<i>e.g., How do the characters in <u>Huckleberry Finn</u> reflect different attitudes about slavery during the Civil War era?</i>).</p> <p>R3.5.j Compare and contrast characters, relationships, events, and/or themes within and across literary works.</p> <p>R3.5.k With support, compare and contrast the styles of two authors.</p> |
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*Items preceded by an asterisk provide further clarification about what should be taught/learned to prepare students to reach the benchmark.

¹ See *Section 4* for information about the research behind Standard 1 and implications for teaching.

² Level 1 benchmarks are in development.

³ Placement in the appropriate level for each topic area in Standard 1 should be based on diagnostic assessments.

⁴ [*not mentioned at this level*]

⁵ “General” words are words that appear in a wide variety of written texts in all subject matter. They may also be referred to as “Tier 2” words (Beck *et al.*, 2002) or “academic words” (Coxhead, 2000). See the Academic Word List at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>. (Watch out for British spelling.)

⁶ “Terms” are those words specific to a subject area or domain. They may be referred to as “Tier 3” words (Beck, *et al.*, 2002) or “technical vocabulary” (Laufer & Nation, 1999).

⁷ These strategies are listed to illustrate options, not to imply that all or even most of them should be taught at each level.

⁸ Informational Texts are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are listed:

expository texts: *informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life);*

persuasive texts: *editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews;*

procedural texts: *manuals; directions; operating instructions;*

functional texts: *forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos.*

⁹ Biographies and autobiographies are considered literary texts when the primary purpose for reading is to appreciate the story, not to research details about someone’s life.

LEVEL 6
HIGH ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION/BRIDGE TO COLLEGE
(11.0—12.9 GLE)
STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

By the end of the level, learners will demonstrate previous benchmarks¹ as needed, plus...

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| READING STANDARD 1 (READING FOUNDATIONS): <i>Learners will integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.²</i> | |
| A. Word Identification and Decoding ³ | <p>R1.6.a Automatically identify most words and abbreviations likely to be found in a range of sophisticated texts (<i>e.g., college freshman textbooks; training manuals; technical trade texts</i>).</p> <p>R1.6.b Apply decoding skills to unfamiliar words.</p> |
| B. Fluency ³ | <p>R1.6.c Read aloud text written at approximately a 12.9 GLE with accuracy, appropriate rate, and attention to punctuation and phrasing.</p> |
| C. Vocabulary ³ | <p>R1.6.d Demonstrate an understanding of the denotations and connotations of general⁵ words (<i>e.g., pensive vs. thoughtful; enthrall vs. attract</i>), as well as acronyms, abbreviations (<i>e.g., i.e.; ibid.</i>), and idioms, likely to be found in a range of sophisticated texts.</p> <p>R1.6.e Demonstrate an understanding of the meanings of a wide range of terms⁶ related to specific subjects (<i>e.g., history; government; science</i>).</p> <p>R1.6.f Use strategies and resources to determine or enhance understanding of the meanings of words (<i>*apply knowledge of a range of roots, affixes; check etymology</i>).</p> |
| D. Comprehension Strategies ³ | <p>R1.6.g Select and apply pre-reading strategies to determine or refine the purpose for reading (<i>*identify type of text/genre, purpose, and intended audience; ask or preview questions; skim headings and chapter summary; preview advanced organizers, appendices, sidebars, visuals; select texts for reading purpose</i>).</p> <p>R1.6.h Select, apply, and integrate higher-order strategies to monitor and/or enhance comprehension⁷ (<i>*summarize connections between complex ideas; pose and/or answer literal and inferential questions; skim/scan; create a text map; develop a concept map to integrate prior and new knowledge; research other interpretations</i>).</p> |
| READING STANDARD 2 (INFORMATIONAL READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique informational texts⁸—including expository, persuasive, procedural, and functional texts—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i> | |
| A. Author’s Organization and Purpose | <p>R2.6.a Determine and/or critique the unique and/or complex ways the author organizes information, ideas, or arguments (<i>e.g., shares an anecdote, uses cause and effect pattern to discuss the issue, uses description to offer several solutions, and closes by returning to the anecdote and proposing a different outcome</i>).</p> <p>R2.6.b Determine different levels/relationships of stated and implied ideas within lengthy or dense text (<i>*author’s overall purpose/central idea; main and supporting details within and across paragraphs and how they are related</i>).</p> |

LEVEL 6
HIGH ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION/BRIDGE TO COLLEGE
(11.0—12.9 GLE)
STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

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| <p>B. Locating and Using Information and Ideas</p> | <p>R2.6.c Locate explicit information on a complex graphic or in lengthy or dense text (<i>e.g., identify on a graph the dollar amount of Mexico’s main export to the U.S. in 2007; find in the chapter the three main arguments offered by opponents of the Vietnam War</i>).</p> <p>R2.6.d Apply a complex and extended set of written directions requiring integration of information from sophisticated text, charts, and/or diagrams (<i>e.g., completing a tax form</i>).</p> <p>R2.6.e Make inferences, draw conclusions, and/or make decisions, providing textual and/or visual evidence (<i>e.g., Based on what we have just read, we can assume that...; What might be other causes for the findings of the study?</i>).</p> |
| <p>C. Reliability and Completeness of Information</p> | <p>R2.6.f Identify, analyze, and critique the rhetorical devices, visuals, and/or tone used by the author (<i>*expert testimony; logical vs. fallacious arguments; analogy; irony; manipulation of graphs/visuals; respectful vs. mocking tone</i>).</p> <p>R2.6.g Critique the effectiveness of evidence provided to substantiate the author’s conclusions or generalizations (<i>*author’s background; bias of author/publisher/website; accuracy; completeness</i>).</p> |
| <p>D. Synthesis of Ideas</p> | <p>R2.6.h Combine, compare, and/or contrast information, ideas, and arguments presented in one or more texts (<i>e.g., compare and contrast viewpoints on the causes of global warming, analyzing the evidence provided for each view</i>).</p> |
| <p>READING STANDARD 3 (LITERARY READING): <i>Learners will comprehend, analyze, and critique literary texts—including novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies⁹, and autobiographies⁹—for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes.</i></p> | |
| <p>A. Literary Structures</p> | <p>R3.6.a Analyze characterizations in terms of actions, traits, motivations, and common archetypes (<i>e.g., hero; star-crossed lovers; scapegoat</i>) in outstanding American and/or world literature.</p> <p>R3.6.b Analyze the setting, plot elements, and/or point of view in outstanding American and/or world literature (<i>e.g., moral dilemmas; use of multiple points of view; relationship of events in parallel and sub-plots</i>).</p> <p>R3.6.c With support, identify and analyze conventions within a work which categorize it as a specific sophisticated literary form (<i>*tragedy; satire; allegory; sonnet</i>).</p> <p>R3.6.d Determine one or more themes in a literary work and explain how they are developed (<i>e.g., through symbolism/point of view/conflict</i>).</p> |
| <p>B. Literary Technique / Style</p> | <p>R3.6.e Identify, analyze, and critique the literary techniques used by an author and explain their intended effect(s) on the reader (<i>*imagery; symbolism; extended metaphor; allusions; dramatic irony</i>).</p> <p>R3.6.f Critique the author’s style (<i>e.g., in conveying mood/tone effectively; in creating realistic dialogue</i>).</p> |

LEVEL 6
HIGH ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION/BRIDGE TO COLLEGE
(11.0—12.9 GLE)
STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

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| C. Making Connections | <p>R3.6.g Make inferences or draw conclusions related to an author’s purpose/main ideas within a specific section of text.</p> <p>R3.6.h Analyze the personal, historical, and/or cultural influences on a literary work (<i>e.g., What evidence do I see that Transcendentalism influenced the writing of this novel?</i>).</p> <p>R3.6.i With support, compare and contrast how characterizations, relationships, events, and/or themes are developed in different literary works.</p> <p>R3.6.j Compare and contrast the styles of two authors.</p> |
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*Items preceded by an asterisk provide further clarification about what should be taught/learned to prepare students to reach the benchmark.

¹ See *Section 4* for information about the research behind Standard 1 and implications for teaching.

² Level 1 benchmarks are in development.

³ Placement in the appropriate level for each topic area in Standard 1 should be based on diagnostic assessments.

⁴ [not mentioned at this level]

⁵ “General” words are words that appear in a wide variety of written texts in all subject matter. They may also be referred to as “Tier 2” words (Beck *et al.*, 2002) or “academic words” (Coxhead, 2000). See the Academic Word List at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>. (Watch out for British spelling.)

⁶ “Terms” are those words specific to a subject area or domain. They may be referred to as “Tier 3” words (Beck, *et al.*, 2002) or “technical vocabulary” (Laufer & Nation, 1999).

⁷ These strategies are listed to illustrate options, not to imply that all or even most of them should be taught at each level.

⁸ Informational Texts are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are listed:

expository texts: informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life);

persuasive texts: editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews;

procedural texts: manuals; directions; operating instructions;

functional texts: forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos.

⁹ Biographies and autobiographies are considered literary texts when the primary purpose for reading is to appreciate the story, not to research details about someone’s life.

SECTION 3

ELA Revised Reading Strand (2010)

PART 2: Text Selection Guide

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to guide practitioners in selecting texts to support the reading development of adult learners in Levels 2-6. Learners will be required to demonstrate proficiency with the standards and benchmarks using written texts at the appropriate level, so it is important that planning for instruction include consideration of not just the skill to be taught but the text in which the skill will be applied. This consideration is especially important because, although the language in some benchmarks does not change from level to level, learners need to apply the skills described in these benchmarks in increasingly challenging text in order to develop into proficient readers. Students will continue to work on many similar skills as they progress through the levels, but the word structure, vocabulary, content, and presentation/organization of the text should become more complex and challenging. Thus, identification and use of these materials is crucial when planning instruction. This section provides information to support teachers and programs in making thoughtful decisions about texts. The section is divided into the following sub-sections: *Tables* and *Text Samples*.

Tables. The first sub-section provides a series of tables that address *Sample Reading Purposes, Types of Texts, and Text Characteristics*.

- ***TABLE 1: Sample Reading Purposes*** provides examples of adult reading tasks--within academic, personal, family, work, and community contexts—which students exiting a level might be expected to be able to accomplish. These purposes may be used to guide the identification of appropriate reading-related activities within meaningful topics and themes for instruction, but it is not expected that these particular purposes will be addressed in every, or any, class. Rather, teachers are encouraged to use the sample purposes to help them target appropriate reading purposes for the levels they teach, basing final decisions on students’ interests and needs.
- ***TABLE 2: Types of Texts*** responds to teachers’ requests for guidance as they seek a variety of literary and informational texts for the levels they teach. General categories of texts are provided and can be tracked across the levels. This information may be used by teachers and students to ensure that students read a range of text types during instruction—at every level.

- **TABLE 3: Text Characteristics** provides readability ranges—as determined by readability formulas (see **Note** below)—as well as general descriptions of word structure, vocabulary, content, and presentation that characterize written material at specific levels. This information may be used by teachers to ensure that material selected for reading instruction at each level is appropriately challenging.

Text Samples. The second sub-section provides a sampling of literary and informational texts and accompanying discussions of the reading demands of each. Following each passage is a brief analysis of the text in terms of both its readability, as determined by formulas, and analysis of the qualitative features of the text. These discussions are meant to illustrate the professional decision-making process teachers enact daily in the classroom as they choose—or help their students choose—accessible but challenging texts.

An Important Note about Readability and Text Complexity

A term used to refer to the approximate difficulty level of connected text is *readability*. To support educators in matching learners with texts, publishers often provide readability information in grade-level equivalents (often abbreviated GLE or GE). This information can then be compared to students' assessed reading levels as one rough way of ensuring that material is appropriately complex for instructional purposes.

The readability score used by publishers is derived from the application of one or more *readability formulas*, which are based on certain characteristics of the author's writing. By their nature, these formulas need to incorporate aspects that can be measured, so they usually include some combination of the vocabulary found in a text, the number of syllables in the words, the number of words per sentence, and/or the number of sentences in the text. A limitation of readability formulas is that they do not take into consideration the complexity or abstractness of the ideas, which, of course, may affect the difficulty of a text for a particular reader. A reader's prior knowledge of the topic can also play a major role in how easy or difficult the material is to comprehend. For instance, an individual reading a text at a 7.3 GL about a topic that is familiar to her may read with greater accuracy, fluency, and initial comprehension than when reading text at the same level (as determined by a formula) about a topic about which she has very little background knowledge and which involves unfamiliar vocabulary. Practitioners should, of course, consider these other factors when making ultimate decisions about text selection.

Even though readability formulas do not address all the important factors that affect how easy or difficult a text is for a particular reader, they are an essential tool for selecting texts for reading instruction. When students are ready to exit a particular level, they should independently be able to apply the skills described in the benchmarks to texts at the higher end of the grade-level range indicated on the *Text Characteristics* table (e.g., if a student is ready to exit Level 4, he should be able to read material around the 8.9 GL). Using readability information can help practitioners to gradually increase the difficulty of text, as necessary, to prepare students for this exit-level performance.

When the readability information for a text is not provided by the publisher, as in the case of magazine and newspaper articles, novels, or other authentic texts, practitioners may apply the readability formulas themselves to ensure that material is in the appropriate range of difficulty. *However, these formulas need to be applied carefully.* Because formulas differ in what particular aspects of the text are counted and how they are weighted, formulas can vary in their accuracy and validity at different levels of text difficulty. For instance, the Spache Readability Formula works best for materials at the beginning basic level, the Dale-Chall Readability Formula for materials at the low intermediate level and above, and the Fry and Flesch-Kincaid formulas for materials at the high intermediate level and above.

There are several ways to ascertain the readability of text:

- Go to <http://www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/tools/okapi/okapi.php>. This site allows you to type in a 200-word passage and select either the Spache or Dale-Chall formula. (Be sure to select the one that is appropriate for the level you are targeting, as indicated above.) The readability will automatically be calculated.
- Use the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level tool in Microsoft Word to check material at the high intermediate level and above. To activate this tool, make sure “check readability statistics” is checked in the Spelling and Grammar Options. Type (or copy and paste) into a Word document at least 100 words from the text you want to check. Click on “Spelling and Grammar,” and you should automatically see the estimated grade level at the bottom of the list in the pop-up box.
- Use a software program designed to check readability.

For more information about readability and text complexity, consult:

- *Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix A* at http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf. (This document provides a rich discussion on text complexity)
- Dubai, W.H. (2004). *The principles of readability*.

<http://www.impact-information.com/impactinfo/readability02.pdf>

- Mesmer, H.A.E. (2008). *Tools for matching readers to texts: Research-based practices*. New York: Guilford.

Terms Used in This Section

The following tables use terms which may be interpreted differently within another context. Please use the meanings below when reading the tables. (Other definitions are provided in the Glossary.)

common: appearing often

compound sentence: a sentence comprised of two independent clauses, where the clauses are joined by a conjunction (e.g., and, but, yet) or a semicolon that functions as a conjunction, or both (e.g., *She likes to take the subway, but she doesn't like to take the bus. She likes to take the subway; she doesn't like to take the bus.*)

complex sentence: a sentence with at least one dependent clause (e.g., I ate the leftover spaghetti because I forgot to go to the store).

connected text: written material composed of meaningfully linked sentences, as opposed to the kind of text comprising, for instance, a grocery list, chart, or bus schedule.

simple sentence: a sentence composed of only one independent clause and no dependent clauses (e.g., The bus is coming.)

simple text: Texts that are straightforward and uncomplicated in word choice, sentence structure, and format. Simple texts are composed of common words, common sentence structures, and/or a straightforward organizational structure (e.g., a sequential plotline). The use of “simple” does not refer to the ideas presented in the text, which may be rich and engaging at any level.

TABLE 1: Sample Reading Purposes¹

Adult learners exiting each level can read a variety of texts for a variety of academic and non-academic purposes, including the following:

| Level 2 Beginning Basic Education (2.0-3.9 GLE) | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education (4.0-5.9 GLE) | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education (6.0 – 8.9 GLE) | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education (9.0-10.9 GLE) | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education / Bridge to College (11.0-12.9 GLE) |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read simple poems about everyday items to look at things in a new way. • Read short narratives about immigrant experiences in the community and the workplace to compare to own. • Read other students’ writing to compare and contrast positive influences in their lives. • Read aloud a picture book with simple text to entertain a child. • Read greeting cards to choose an appropriate card for a friend. • Read a utility bill to know how much, when, and how to pay. • Read a simple article to learn about ways to influence local government. • Read a questionnaire and the results to explore career interests. • Read a description of entry-level job duties to decide whether to apply. • Read a work order in order to know what to do. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read a simple novel for fun. • Read a play in class to learn about an historical figure. • Read a short story about losing a job to reflect on the ways job loss can affect family relationships. • Read a simple information book to find out about a topic of interest. • Read classified ads for rental housing to compare options and make a decision about which is better for a family. • Read citizenship application procedures to decide whether to pursue citizenship. • Read a brochure from a local agency to find out the services it offers. • Read a <i>News for You</i> article to prepare to share with classmates a change that’s occurring in the world. • Read a handout on changes in the company dress code to know what to wear. • Read a demographic occupational outlook graph in order to consider viable career paths in the local area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read a popular novel to participate in a structured book club. • Read fast food nutrition charts to choose a healthy meal. • Read a brochure from a health clinic to learn about signs of depression and helpful tips for dealing with it. • Read part of a user’s guide to find out how to scan a picture. • Read an article about a local current event to prepare for a class speaker. • Read brief newspaper editorials on opposing sides of a topic to clarify a personal opinion. • Read a chapter in a pre-GED text to build content knowledge for a test. • Read an article about 21st Century Skills, in order to recognize the essential skills that are necessary for workplace and academic success. • Read a workflow diagram and accompanying text in order to figure out what should happen next. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read poetry about certain universal themes to prepare to write own poem. • Read ingredients, directions, and warnings on over-the-counter medicine labels to choose the right product for a sick child. • Read essays and articles on an immigration issue to prepare to write an opinion essay. • Read information about voter eligibility to decide if one is eligible to vote. • Read a chapter in a high school text in order to prepare to make a presentation to the class. • Read essays, vignettes and case studies about workplace culture issues to identify how to find out about and work within the “hidden” system. • Read about effective techniques and strategies for job interviews in order to prepare for an interview simulation. • Read an company handbook to learn how employers evaluate employees. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read a novel from a particular era and identify historical and cultural influences on the writing. • Read multiple information books, journal articles, and Internet sources about an historical event to prepare a research paper on the major causes and outcomes. • Read journal articles that present different views on the same issue to develop a personal position. • Read information about financial aid for higher education to decide whether and how to apply for loans. • Read a dense brochure on workplace medical benefits to choose the best plan. • Read articles, books, websites, and journals to investigate and report on the many facets of a specific attractive occupation • Read a table from the U.S. Bureau of Labor & Statistics to determine the percentage of workers in an occupation who have achieved various levels of education. |

¹ Adapted from the *Rhode Island Adult Education Content Standards: Read With Understanding* and the *Equipped for the Future Read With Understanding Performance Continuum*. This table provides examples of adult reading tasks which students exiting a level might be expected to be able to accomplish within personal, family, work, community, and academic contexts. These purposes may be selected or adapted for instructional use, based on students’ needs/interests.

TABLE 2: Types of Text²

Adult learners exiting each level can read the following types of texts:

| Level 2 Beginning Basic Education (2.0-3.9 GLE) | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education (4.0-5.9 GLE) | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education (6.0 – 8.9 GLE) | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education (9.0-10.9 GLE) | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education / Bridge to College (11.0-12.9 GLE) |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| LITERARY TEXTS³ | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple stories, novels, poems, plays • simple comic strips/books • favorite song lyrics • self-written stories, poems, plays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple novels, biographies, autobiographies, short stories, poetry, and plays • comic strips/books and graphic novels • song lyrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • popular novels, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, essays, poetry, plays, screenplays of popular movies / TV shows | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • novels, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, essays, poetry, and plays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complex novels, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, essays, poetry, and plays • outstanding American and world literature |
| INFORMATIONAL TEXTS⁴ | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short, simple personal and functional texts (e.g., personal notes/letters, labels, greeting cards) • simple checklists, forms, or parts of more complex forms (e.g., work order forms, product checklist, sections of a bill) • some simple tables, graphs, and maps (e.g., work order, child’s report card, map of a familiar area) • high-interest, simple informational texts (e.g., Why vote? What are “green jobs”?) • simple instructions (e.g., for a work task, for a familiar recipe, directions to a residence) • sections of newspapers and simplified magazines • some simple screen texts (e.g., text messages; DVD menus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and simple functional texts (e.g., flyers of upcoming events, ads, recipes, work memos, instructions) • simple forms, tables, graphs, rubrics, diagrams, and maps (e.g., product order forms, fast food menus, nutrition labels, maps of the U.S., TV schedule, evaluation forms/rubrics) • high-interest, simple informational books (e.g., healthy habits, stress relief, workers’ rights) • selected sections of newspapers, magazines, and newsletters • simple screen texts (e.g., computerized cash registers, personal email, video games, simple web pages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everyday functional texts (e.g., health brochures, political ads, product information) • multi-feature forms, tables, graphs, rubrics, diagrams, and maps (e.g., job applications, work flow diagram, Food Pyramid, nutrition charts, road maps) • political cartoons about current events • pre-GED textbooks • common informational books (e.g., self-help, careers, hobbies/interests) • articles/editorials in local newspapers, popular magazines, and workplace/ community newsletters • transcripts of speeches • many types of screen texts (e.g., most web pages, job search sites, electronic encyclopedias, wikis, blogs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some complex functional texts/documents (e.g., simple wills, training manuals, policies) • complex/multi-feature forms, tables, graphs, rubrics, diagrams, and maps (e.g., organizational diagram and flowcharts, census charts, climate maps) • political cartoons • GED/high-school level textbooks (e.g., math word problems; Social Studies workbook) • specialized information books (e.g., related to a research project; occupational research handbooks) • articles/editorials in major newspapers and news magazines (e.g., Time) • transcripts of speeches • a range of screen texts (e.g., web sites, blogs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complex functional texts/ documents (e.g., college syllabus, contracts/ warranties, manuals, policies) • complex/multi-feature forms, tables, graphs, rubrics, diagrams, and maps (e.g., financial aid table, stock market charts/graphs) • political cartoons • college-prep textbooks • specialized information texts (e.g., content-area journals; labor reports) • articles, editorials, and literary criticisms in news, business, and literary magazines • transcripts of speeches • a range of screen texts (e.g., web sites, blogs) |

² Adapted from the Rhode Island Adult Education Content Standards: Read With Understanding.

³ **Literary Texts** include but are not limited to novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, autobiographies, and biographies.

⁴ **Informational Texts** are divided into four categories. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with each are: **expository texts**: informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life); **persuasive texts**: editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews; **procedural texts**: manuals; directions; operating instructions; **functional texts**: forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; e-mails; letters; memos

TABLE 3: Text Characteristics

Text appropriate for instruction at each level may include the following features:

| Level 2 Beginning Basic Education | Level 3 Low Intermediate Basic Education | Level 4 High Intermediate Basic Education | Level 5 Low Adult Secondary Education | Level 6 High Adult Secondary Education / Bridge to College |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Readability: 2.0 – 3.9 GL | Readability: 4.0 – 5.9 GL | Readability: 6.0 - 8.9 GL | Readability: 9.0 – 10.9 GL | Readability: 11.0 – 12.9 GL |
| <p>Word structure: common one- and two-syllable words</p> <p>Vocabulary: meanings of everyday words⁵ (e.g., <i>belief; daily; emergency</i>)</p> <p>Content: everyday or high-interest subject-matter; although the language may be easy to understand, the ideas may be abstract</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – relatively short simple, compound, and complex sentences in short and simple linked paragraphs; expository text uses simple sequence and description patterns – simple and short forms and tables; bulleted lists with clearly marked headings and small chunks of text | <p>Word structure: Common multi-syllabic words</p> <p>Vocabulary: common general⁶ words (e.g., <i>conclude; exclaim; primarily</i>)</p> <p>Content: everyday or high-interest subject-matter; although the language may be easy to understand, the ideas may be abstract</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – short compound and complex sentences in simple, linked paragraphs; expository text uses clear and straightforward organizational patterns (e.g., <i>sequence, description, cause and effect</i>) – simple forms and maps; 2-feature tables; bulleted items | <p>Word structure: Multi-syllabic words</p> <p>Vocabulary: general⁶ words (e.g., <i>bewilder; sufficient; instinct</i>) which may be abstract in meaning and/or have multiple meanings; some specialized terms⁷ related to parenting, health, citizenship, work, and/or academic content</p> <p>Content: high-interest material or specialized subject matter; ideas may be abstract</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – complex sentences with multiple clauses, in linked paragraphs; expository text uses typical organizational patterns (e.g., <i>sequence, description, cause and effect, compare/contrast, problem and solution</i>) – multi-feature graphs, tables, or maps | <p>Word structure: Multi-syllabic words</p> <p>Vocabulary: more advanced general⁶ words which are often abstract and nuanced in meaning (e.g., <i>cumbersome; integrity; inexplicable</i>); specialized terms⁷ common to GED subject matter or the topic of study</p> <p>Content: life themes (as found in literature) or specialized subject matter; ideas are often abstract</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – lengthy, complex sentences in multipart text; expository text may use a combination of organizational patterns – complex, multi-featured graphs, tables, or maps | <p>Word structure: Multi-syllabic words</p> <p>Vocabulary: advanced general⁶ words which are often abstract and nuanced in meaning (e.g., <i>pensive; enthrall</i>); specialized terms⁷ related to literature studies, history, science, mathematics.</p> <p>Content: life themes (as found in literature) or specialized subject matter (e.g., <i>history, science, mathematics</i>); ideas are often abstract and/or complicated</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – lengthy, complex sentences in complex or dense text; expository text may use a combination of organizational patterns – complex, multi-featured graphs, tables, or maps |

⁵ “Everyday” words are words common to everyday spoken language (e.g., *ask, baby, walk, smile*). They may also be referred to as “Tier 1” words (Beck McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

⁶ “General” words are words that appear in a wide variety of written texts in all subject matter. They may also be referred to as “Tier 2” words (Beck et al., 2002) or “academic words” (Coxhead, 2000).

⁷ “Terms” are those words specific to a subject area or domain. They may be referred to as “Tier 3” words (Beck, et al., 2002) or “technical vocabulary” (Laufer & Nation, 1999).

TEXT SAMPLES

The six sample texts on the next pages provide a look into the problem-solving process used by skilled instructors and curriculum developers when selecting texts to use with adult learners. The thought process incorporates information from the previous tables, especially *TABLE 3: Text Characteristics*.

ANALYSIS: *The Ant and the Grasshopper* (script)








| Text Characteristics | Comments |
|----------------------|--|
| Readability Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spache: 3.3 (without the dialogue markers) • Dale-Chall : confirmed it was “4th-grade or below” <p>Both readability formulas place this text within the Level 2 range.</p> |
| Word Structure | The text is composed of mainly one- and two-syllable words, which are easily decodable with phonics knowledge of short-vowel and long-vowel patterns. Many words are repeated at least three times, so once they are known, their repeated presence makes them more accessible (e.g., <u>continue(d)</u> , <u>summer</u> , <u>sunshine</u> , <u>grasshopper</u> , <u>narrator</u>). |
| Vocabulary | The words in this script are to a very large extent everyday words, ones with which native-English speaking adults would likely be familiar. A few exceptions might be <u>basked</u> and <u>meadow</u> . |
| Content | The content would probably feel familiar to many adult students, with themes of balancing work and play and planning ahead being ones they experience in their own lives. |
| Presentation | Most of the sentences are short or contain few clauses. The complexity in this text may be in its script format, with the “Parts” presented at the top, and each speaker’s lines presented separately. |
| Other | The use of simple figurative language (“thick blanket of white”) may present difficulty. |

Conclusion: The review of the text characteristics supports the readability formula’s placement of the script in Level 2. A student exiting Level 2 should be able to read this text independently, but students just entering Level 2 or not yet ready to exit would benefit from this text being used with teacher support. The text lends itself to a Readers’ Theater approach, and could be nice introduction to the format of scripts. The word structures used would support phonics instruction that occurs at this level. Preparing for a Readers’ Theater in small groups would provide an authentic reason for students to apply their newly-forming phonics skills and practice fluency. The text would also be useful for studying basic literary elements (characters, setting, plot, theme), and could be used within a variety of larger units that might appeal to adults (e.g., balance in work and play, time management/planning; individual responsibility vs. taking care of each other).

TEXT SAMPLE #2: *Recycling Plastic* (table)



Recycling Plastic

| Types of Plastic | Products | What They Become |
|---|--|--|
|  | Soda, water and beer bottles; mouthwash bottles; peanut butter containers; salad dressing and vegetable oil containers; etc. | Polar fleece fiber; tote bags; furniture; carpet; paneling; and (sometimes) new plastic containers |
|  | Milk jugs; juice bottles; bleach, detergent and household cleaner bottles; shampoo bottles; some trash and shopping bags; motor oil bottles; cereal box liners; etc. | Detergent bottles; recycling containers; floor tile; drainage pipe; benches; picnic tables; fencing |
|  | Window cleaner and detergent bottles; shampoo bottles; clear food packaging; wire jacketing; medical equipment; siding; windows; piping; etc. | Decks; paneling; mud flaps; roadway gutters; flooring; cables; speed bumps; mats |
|  | Squeezable bottles; bread, dry cleaning and shopping bags; tote bags; carpet; etc. | Trash can liners and cans; compost bins; shipping envelopes; paneling; lumber; floor tile |
|  | Syrup bottles; ketchup bottles; caps; straws; medicine bottles; diapers; etc. | Battery cables; brooms; brushes; auto battery cases; ice scrapers; landscape borders; bicycle racks; rakes; bins |
|  | Disposable plates and cups; meat trays; egg cartons; carry-out containers; aspirin bottles; compact disc cases; etc. | Insulation; light-switch plates; egg cartons; vents; rulers; foam packing; carry-out containers |
|  | 3- and 5-gallon water bottles; 'bullet-proof' materials; sunglasses; DVDs; iPod and computer cases; signs and displays; nylon; etc. | Plastic lumber; custom-made products |

*Adapted from information at: <http://thegogreenblog.com/a-guide-to-recycling-codes-on-plastic-containers/>.

Analysis: *Recycling Plastic* (table)

| Text Characteristics | Comments |
|----------------------|---|
| Readability Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not appropriate to use formulas since the text isn't occurring in sentences. |
| Word Structure | <p>The table consists of many two- and three-syllable words. The context of the table and the fact that many of the terms may be in an adults' oral vocabulary provides an important aid to identifying words which may not be immediately recognizable (e.g., <i>containers</i>, <i>detergent</i>). Many words are also repeated, so once identified, they are more accessible when they are seen again.</p> |
| Vocabulary | <p>The products listed in the table are typically found in the oral vocabulary of a native English speaker (e.g., <i>milk</i>, <i>bottles</i>, <i>furniture</i>). A few terms may not be familiar to individuals who do not have houses or yards (e.g., <i>landscape borders</i>, <i>compost bins</i>); however, knowing what these are is not integral to getting meaning from the table as a whole.</p> |
| Content | <p>In most U.S. communities, recycling is a part of everyday existence. Even if individuals don't participate, they are familiar with the concept and have some background knowledge about it. Many of the products listed on the table are also part of everyday life.</p> |
| Presentation | <p>The table has three features, instead of the two which would more clearly situate the table in Level 3. However, the relationship between the three columns is clear and the content is not complex. The use of semi-colons between the words may be confusing for some.</p> |

Conclusion: A review of the text characteristics of this table places it right at the border between Level 3 and Level 4—in other words, exiting Level 3. Even a high-Level 3 reader might need some orientation to the format of the table, since they are most comfortable at this point with two-feature tables. To stay engaged, Level 3 readers may also need a strong purpose for reading (e.g., to identify products in their home which could be recycled or might have been recycled), perhaps as part of a larger unit on recycling or the environment.

TEXT SAMPLE #3: *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* (novel)

The Memory Keeper's Daughter

A novel by Kim Edwards (2005)

The snow started to fall several hours before her labor began. A few flakes first, the dull gray late-afternoon sky, and then wind-driven swirls and eddies around the edges of their wide front porch. He stood by her side at the window, watching sharp gusts of snow billow, then swirl and drift to the ground. All around the neighborhood, lights came on, and the naked branches of the trees turned white.

After dinner he built a fire, venturing out into the weather for wood he had piled against the garage the previous autumn. The air was bright and cold against his face, and the snow in the driveway was already halfway to his knees. He gathered logs, shaking off their soft white caps and carrying them inside. The kindling in the iron grate caught fire immediately, and he sat for a time on the hearth, cross-legged, adding logs and watching the flames leap, blue-edged and hypnotic. Outside, snow continued to fall quietly through the darkness, as bright and thick as static in the cones of light cast by the streetlights. By the time he rose and looked out the window, their car had become a soft white hill on the edge of the street. Already his footprints in the driveway had filled and disappeared.

....

From THE MEMORY KEEPER'S DAUGHTER by Kim Edwards, copyright © 2005 by Kim Edwards. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

ANALYSIS: *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* (novel)

| Text Characteristic | Comments |
|---------------------|---|
| Readability Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (for excerpt): 7.7 • Dale-Chall (for excerpt): 7-8 <p>Both readability formulas suggest this text would be appropriate for a Level 4 reader. However, a quick check of the “Text Stats” that Amazon.com provides showed that the Flesch-Kincaid for the whole novel is 5.6.</p> |
| Word Structure | In general, the words in the excerpt are highly accessible, with only a few (about 5%) having even three syllables (e.g., <i>carrying</i> , <i>continued</i> , <i>previous</i>). Only one word has more than three syllables (<i>immediately</i>). |
| Vocabulary | Few of the words used in the excerpt could be considered Tier 3, but there are several Tier 2 words which may be unfamiliar to some readers (e.g., <i>eddies</i> , <i>billow</i> , <i>venturing</i> , <i>static</i>). |
| Content | For the most part, the content seems to fall within the realm of everyday living. The excerpt does assume familiarity with snow and some basics of having a fireplace and its associated vocabulary (e.g., <i>kindling</i> , <i>grate</i> , <i>hearth</i>). Other parts of the novel bring in medical terminology, both because one of the characters is a doctor and because one of his children has Down Syndrome. |
| Presentation | The complexity of the novel comes in the author’s style, which incorporates long, descriptive sentences and reliance on a good deal of figurative language. There are also movements across time, which may be difficult to follow. |

Conclusion: Despite the low Flesch-Kincaid result of 5.6 for the novel as a whole, the novel would be appropriate for Level 4 students, especially those in the lower to mid-range of Level 4. This novel might be a good option for a book club, where students could read chapters independently (because most of the vocabulary and language is accessible and learners would be able to follow the “gist” of the story) but then come together to analyze more deeply the story and style as a group. Instruction in general words, or Tier 2 vocabulary, would need to be an integral part of such a unit, since, although the words do not tend to be multi-syllabic, they are sophisticated.

TEXT SAMPLE #4: *Applying for Credit Cards* (brochure)

When applying for credit cards, it's important to shop around. Fees, charges, interest rates and benefits can vary drastically among credit card issuers. And, in some cases, credit cards might seem like great deals until you read the fine print and disclosures. When you're trying to find the credit card that's right for you, look at the:

Annual percentage rate (APR)—The APR is a measure of the cost of credit, expressed as a yearly interest rate. Usually, the lower the APR, the better for you. Be sure to check the fine print to see if your offer has a time limit. Your APR could be much higher after the initial limited offer.

Grace period—This is the time between the date of the credit card purchase and the date the company starts charging you interest.

Annual fees—Many credit card issuers charge an annual fee for giving you credit, typically \$15 to \$55.

Transaction fees and other charges—Most creditors charge a fee if you don't make a payment on time. Other common credit card fees include those for cash advances and going beyond the credit limit. Some credit cards charge a flat fee every month, whether you use your card or not.

Customer service—Customer service is something most people don't consider, or appreciate, until there's a problem. Look for a 24-hour toll-free telephone number.

Other options—Creditors may offer other options for a price, including discounts, rebates and special merchandise offers. If your card is lost or stolen, federal law protects you from owing more than \$50 per card—but only if you report that it was lost or stolen within two days of discovering the loss or theft. Paying for additional protection may not be a good value.

Source: *Getting credit: What you need to know about credit by the Federal Trade Commission* (p. 5): <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre32.pdf>.


ANALYSIS: *Applying for Credit Cards* (brochure)

| Text Characteristic | Comments |
|---------------------|--|
| Readability Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 8.6 • Dale-Chall: 11-12 <p>The Flesch-Kincaid indicates this text would be appropriate for a Level 4 reader, while the Dale-Chall suggests it would be appropriate for a Level 6 reader.</p> |
| Word Structure | In general, the words are accessible, with most words having two- to three-syllables and only five having more than three syllables (<i>drastically, additional, typically, appreciate, discovering</i>). |
| Vocabulary | There are a good number of Tier 3 words or <i>terms</i> , as would be expected in text designed to inform the reader about a specific topic (in this case, applying for a credit card). Also as expected, many words are defined within the text itself, such as <i>annual percentage rate</i> and <i>grace period</i> . However, several terms found in the text require a great deal of prior knowledge and/or the use of strategies and inferencing to discern their meanings: <i>transaction fees, interest rate, cash advances, credit limit, flat fee, special merchandise offers, creditor</i> . Some expressions may also be unfamiliar to some readers, such as <i>a measure of the cost</i> and <i>fine print</i> , as well as general, or Tier 2 words, such as <i>expressed, consider, and drastically</i> . |
| Content | The content is specialized in the sense that it relates to the credit card industry. Credit cards are part of everyday life, but not all consumers are familiar with the vocabulary and details of everyday use. |
| Presentation | The text uses a clear <i>description</i> organizational structure: The last sentence of the first paragraph clearly directs the reader to the main idea (what to look for to find the right credit card), and each point is set off clearly by white bolded print. Only one or two details are provided for each point, keeping the cognitive load manageable. The sentences are not especially long or complex, though there are a few instances of awkward structures, especially for non-native English speakers (e.g., “Usually, the lower the APR, the better for you.”) |
| Other | The reader is addressed directly (“you”), reflecting an informal and personal style. The font is large, and the actual page in the brochure is colorful and inviting. |

Conclusion: The frequent use of credit-card specific language is not typical in everyday speech or print and at least partially explains the Dale-Chall placement at the 11-12 GL. However, the chunks of information provided with each heading and the very focused and informal writing style off-set to some degree the difficult vocabulary demands. Exiting Level 4 readers could probably read this text independently, although oral reading may be initially dysfluent. For students not yet ready to exit Level 4, using this text would be most effective within a larger unit on credit or financial literacy whereby students transfer knowledge of credit-specific terminology to each new reading within the unit. Instruction or practice in using text features to locate relevant information would also be beneficial.

TEXT SAMPLE #5: GED General Information (website)

GED General Information - General Educational Development (GED) Page 1 of 2

 **Mass.gov**
Massachusetts Department of
Elementary & Secondary Education

State Government - State Services

--Select Program Area--

News School/District Profiles School/District Administration Educator Services Assessment/Accountability Family & Community
Special Communities Adult Basic Education Alternative Learning Students & Families

› GED Home
› General Information
› GED Requirements
› GED Test Centers
› Verifying a GED
› Spanish Information
› Applicants with Disabilities
› Funding
› Contact GED Office

Family & Community › Adult Education ›
General Educational Development (GED)®

GED® General Information

The General Educational Development Tests (GED® Tests) can give you the opportunity to earn a high school equivalency diploma. This credential is recognized as a key to employment opportunities, advancement, further education, and financial rewards.

What are the GED® Tests?

The GED® Tests are five tests in the areas of Language Arts - Writing Skills, Language Arts - Reading, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics. The questions in each of these tests require you to use general knowledge and thinking skills. Few questions ask about facts, details, or definitions.

Am I eligible to take the GED® Tests?

You are eligible to take the tests if you are not enrolled in, and have not graduated from, high school, and you need to meet the requirements set by your state, territory, or province, with regard to age, the length of time since you left school, and residency.

What are the GED® Tests like?

With the exception of Language Arts - Writing Skills, which requires you to write an essay, and the Mathematics Test, which has open-ended questions that require that some of the answers be entered on to an Alternative Grid or a Coordinate Plane, all of the questions on the GED® Test are multiple choice with five possible answers given. The questions range in difficulty from easy to hard, and cover a wide range of subjects.

The contents of the tests are as follows:

- **Language Arts -Writing Arts**
Part I (50 questions, 75 minutes)
Part II (essay, 45 minutes) (Total for questions & essay 2 hours)
- **Language Arts, Reading (40 questions, 65 minutes)**
- **Social Studies (50 questions, 70 minutes)**
- **Science (50 Questions, 80 minutes)**
- **Mathematics (50 questions, 90 minutes)**

How should I prepare for the tests?

Many adult education programs sponsored by local school districts, colleges, and even community organizations, provide the instruction you may need for the tests. You can talk to the teachers at these adult education programs, to decide whether you need to study for all of the tests, or if you only need to brush up on your skills in a few areas. In fact, about twenty percent of all GED® test-takers do not formally study for the tests.

However, should you decide that you want to attend a program with GED® test instruction, your next step is to contact the Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline at 1-800-447-8844 to receive information about adult education and GED® preparation programs near you. You may also check the Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) website at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

There is also a television series carried by cable television and most public television stations throughout the country. This television series may provide you with the preparation that you need. Libraries and bookstores also carry GED® study materials.

What should I do next?

Contact the Test Center in your area for specific information and assistance. Refer to our updated web site list for the Test Centers in Massachusetts.

From the *GED General Information* page of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ged/geninfo.html>.

ANALYSIS: GED General Information (website)

| Text Characteristics | Comments |
|----------------------|---|
| Readability Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flesch-Kincaid: 9.8 GLE • Dale-Chall: 1 1-12th GLE <p>The Flesch-Kincaid places the webpage in the Level 5 range; the Dale-Chall places it in Level 6.</p> |
| Word Structure | The webpage has a good number of multi-syllabic words: <i>employment, opportunities, advancement, financial, definitions, eligible, residency.</i> |
| Vocabulary | The webpage has a rather large percentage of general, or Tier 2 words (e.g., <i>credential, recognized, eligible, residency, exception</i>). |
| Content | The topic of the webpage is likely to be of high interest, but is specialized in terms of conveying information about a specific topic (i.e., the GED Tests). |
| Presentation | <p>Although some sentences are short, the majority of them are quite lengthy, packing multiple ideas into one sentence. Here is just one example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>With the exception of Language Arts - Writing Skills, which requires you to write an essay, and the Mathematics Test, which has open-ended questions that require that some of the answers be entered on to an Alternative Grid or a Coordinate Plane, all of the questions on the GED® Test are multiple choice with five possible answers given.</i></p> <p>The organization of the webpage, with its clear headings and sections of focused information, makes the webpage more accessible, despite its dense sentences. The use of a question/answer format and the informality of “I” and “you” also help the reader stay engaged with the text.</p> |

Conclusion: The vocabulary, the content, and the presentation seem appropriate for Level 5, but the long, dense sentences suggest Level 6. Because the organizational aids are so strong and the language is otherwise accessible, a student at the upper end of Level 5 would most likely be able to read this text independently. However, students in the lower end might need some support, especially in “unpacking” dense sentences.

TEXT SAMPLE #6: Walden (book of essays)

An excerpt from
WALDEN,*
by Henry David Thoreau

Economy

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.

I should not obtrude my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made by my townsmen concerning my mode of life, which some would call impertinent, though they do not appear to me at all impertinent, but, considering the circumstances, very natural and pertinent. Some have asked what I got to eat; if I did not feel lonesome; if I was not afraid; and the like. Others have been curious to learn what portion of my income I devoted to charitable purposes; and some, who have large families, how many poor children I maintained. I will therefore ask those of my readers who feel no particular interest in me to pardon me if I undertake to answer some of these questions in this book. In most books, the I, or first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience.

Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me. Perhaps these pages are more particularly addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits.

I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages, who are said to live in New England; something about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not. I have travelled a good deal in Concord; and everywhere, in shops, and offices, and fields, the inhabitants have appeared to me to be doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways. What I have heard of Bramins sitting exposed to four fires and looking in the face of the sun; or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames; or looking at the heavens over their shoulders "until it becomes impossible for them to resume their natural position, while from the twist of the neck nothing but liquids can pass into the stomach"; or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree; or measuring with their bodies, like caterpillars, the breadth of vast empires; or standing on one leg on the tops of pillars—even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness. The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken; for they were only twelve, and had an end; but I could never

*Accessed from the *Project Gutenberg* website: www.gutenberg.org.

ANALYSIS: *Walden* (book of essays)

| Text Characteristics | Comments |
|----------------------|--|
| Readability Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flesch-Kincaid: 7-10 GLE (from various parts of the book) • Dale-Chall : 7-10 GLE (from various parts of the book) <p>The readability formulas place this text in either Level 4 or Level 5.</p> |
| Word Structure | The essays are comprised of mainly multisyllabic words. |
| Vocabulary | The author uses sophisticated vocabulary-- advanced Tier 2 words very distant from those typical of everyday speech and writing (e.g., <i>sojourner</i> , <i>obtrude</i> , <i>impertinent</i> , <i>fain</i> , <i>sonorous</i>). |
| Content | The essays contained in the book explore simple living, but from the point of view of a Transcendentalist. The simple is made complex with abstract understandings being supported by lengthy descriptions of the environment and Thoreau's activity within that environment. The examples often relate to what was going on during the writing of the essays, requiring present-day readers to be familiar with the historical context to follow Thoreau's arguments. The essays also use references with which may not be familiar to individuals who do not read extensively. For example, the Bramins, Hercules, and Iolaus are all referenced in the same paragraph. Other essays pepper in poetry or references to poetry from across a variety of time periods. |
| Presentation | <p>The essays are full of long sentences with complex structures, for instance:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me.</i></p> <p>The organization of the writing throughout the book is elaborate, with the author's purpose embedded and not immediately clear.</p> |

Conclusion: The characteristics of the text call into the question the results of the readability formulas. The abstract and historical content and Thoreau's use of long and complex sentences result in dense reading. Although it is doubtful that even Level 6 students would read this book from cover to cover, reading one or two essays might be relevant within a broader study of the Transcendentalist movement, perhaps including comparisons with more recent calls for "simple living." The close proximity of many Massachusetts adult learners to Walden itself might make the study even more meaningful. A good deal of pre-reading activities are likely to be needed to set up the historical context, and guidance in the strategy of breaking sentences into meaningful phrases and clauses might also be beneficial.

SECTION 4
Standard 1 (Reading Foundations):
Supporting Research and
Implications for Teaching

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The purpose of this section is to provide the research base for Standard 1 and to discuss some implications of Standard 1 for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Levels 2-6* instructors and programs. The revised standard reads:

Standard 1 (Reading Foundations)

Learners integrate knowledge, skills, and strategies related to word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to construct meaning from informational and literary texts.

The Research Basis for Standard 1

The four Reading Foundations topics listed below are derived from research about the reading process and how reading develops:

- *word identification/decoding* (the ability to recognize and pronounce words);
- *fluency* (the ability to read smoothly, accurately, and with expression);
- *vocabulary* (knowledge of word meanings);
- *comprehension strategies* (a range of conscious strategies, from basic to higher-order, that readers use to improve understanding and retention of what they read).

These four topics are important contributors to reading comprehension, which is the ultimate goal and purpose for reading. The National Reading Panel (NRP; 2000) defined reading comprehension as “an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text” (NRP, p. 13). Note that the Revised Standards make a distinction between *reading comprehension* (the goal and purpose for reading) and the Foundation topic of *comprehension*

* Level 1 is in development. Levels 2-6 span grade equivalents (GEs) 2 - 12.9. Grade equivalents (GEs) are referred to throughout this discussion. Their use does not imply that a GE 4 ABE reader is identical to a 4th grade child, because children and adults usually have different patterns of strengths and needs. Although GEs are less precise than scaled scores, they remain useful tools for ABE teachers because GEs are used as the metric for many of the diagnostic reading tests and informal reading inventories available to ABE teachers. In addition, they are employed by many readability formulas, and ABE teachers can use them for selecting reading materials at an appropriate level of readability.

strategies (the conscious strategies employed by readers to improve reading comprehension).

The first three topics (word identification/decoding, fluency, and vocabulary) correspond to the basic building blocks or components of reading. Taken together, these three components account for up to 80% of reading comprehension ability in children and adults (Carver & David, 2001; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990). Yet, proficient readers are seldom aware of the separate components of reading while they are reading. For them the components operate and interact with little conscious effort or even awareness. As a result, during reading it is almost as if the text is “talking to them,” leaving them free to devote all their attention and mental energy to reading comprehension (Adams, 1994; Perfetti, 1985).

But struggling readers, such as many ABE learners, often have difficulties with one or more of these components of reading. They have trouble pronouncing some words (word identification/decoding difficulties). This causes them to read text inaccurately and slowly, with many repetitions and self-corrections, and with little expression (fluency difficulties) (Chall, 1987; Davidson & Strucker, 2002; Read & Ruyter, 1985; Pratt & Brady, 1988; Sabatini, 2002; Strucker & Davidson, 2003). In addition, many struggling readers do not know the meanings of enough words (vocabulary difficulties) to comprehend texts above basic, familiar levels (Chall, 1994; Strucker & Davidson, 2003; Strucker, Yamamoto, & Kirsch, 2007).

As a result of their difficulties with these three components of reading, many ABE learners are forced to use much of their mental energy trying to pronounce words and/or figure out what they mean. This not only makes reading slow and exhausting, it disrupts and undermines their ability to comprehend and interact with what they are reading (Perfetti, 1985; NRP, 2000).

Even some adult learners at the pre-ASE (intermediate) and ASE (secondary) levels may continue to struggle with one or more of these three components of reading to the degree that their comprehension can be impaired (Sabatini, 2002; Strucker & Davidson, 2003). For example, intermediate-level readers who read accurately but very slowly may be able to squeak through the GED, but they will have trouble keeping up with the amount of challenging reading required in community college courses.

To summarize, although the goal of reading instruction is to have learners come to experience reading comprehension as a seamless

process, ABE teachers have found it useful to deconstruct the reading process into its component parts (Chall & Curtis, 1990). To facilitate this, word identification/decoding, fluency, and vocabulary can each be assessed separately. When combined with a learner's score on a silent reading comprehension tests such as the *Massachusetts Adult Proficiencies Test* (MAPT) or *Tests of Adult Basic Education* (TABE), these three components make up a profile of that learner's strengths and needs in reading. Knowing each reader's profile allows teachers to group people with similar profiles in order to deliver instruction that is directly focused on each group's distinctive pattern of strengths and needs.

Important principle: Nearly all ABE readers need to improve in reading comprehension in order to advance to the next level class or prepare for the GED. However, focusing on comprehension alone is unlikely to lead to improvement in comprehension unless and until learners' underlying difficulties with the components of word identification/ decoding, fluency, and vocabulary are addressed.

The importance of assessing learners' strengths and needs in the first three Reading Foundations

ABE learners are a highly diverse group in terms of their age, ethnicity, native languages, educational background, and goals for learning. They are also highly diverse in terms of their strengths and needs in the foundations or components of reading, so it stands to reason that one-size-fits-all instruction is unlikely to be successful.

The Adult Reading Components Study (ARCS; Strucker & Davidson, 2003) found that learners with similar levels of silent reading comprehension showed significant differences in their reading foundation skills. At similar levels of reading comprehension, some learners exhibited striking needs in word identification, while others had adequate word identification but lacked the vocabulary knowledge they needed to understand what they were reading. Although the ARCS administered 11 separate tests, the researchers found that word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and silent reading comprehension were the main contributing factors to the 10 learner profiles (Strucker, Yamamoto, & Kirsch, 2007). This is good news for ABE practitioners because it means that they don't need to administer 11 separate tests to arrive at instructionally relevant diagnostic reading profiles. Assessing the first three Reading Foundations topics in Standard 1, combined with learners' MAPT or TABE scores in silent comprehension will give teachers sufficient information to identify their learners' strengths and needs and determine an appropriate starting place for instruction.

Important point: As the next two case studies demonstrate, learners with identical or similar levels of silent reading comprehension can have very different profiles of strengths and needs, and, as a result, *very different instructional needs*.

Two Case Studies: “Richard” and “Vanessa”

| | Word identification/decoding | Fluency | Vocabulary | Comprehension |
|---------|------------------------------|---------|------------|---------------|
| Richard | 2 GE | 4 GE | 6 GE | 4 GE |
| Vanessa | 4 GE | 5 GE | 4 GE | 4 GE |

Notice that these two ABE learners, “Richard” and “Vanessa,” have identical grade equivalent (GE) 4 scores in TABE silent reading comprehension. As a result they were placed in the same class. However, Vanessa’s word identification/decoding level is two GE’s higher than Richard’s (GE 4 vs. GE 2) and her fluency level is one GE higher (GE 5 vs. GE 4). On the other hand, Richard’s vocabulary level is two GE’s higher than Vanessa’s (GE 6 vs. GE 4).

Vanessa is a native speaker of Spanish with well-developed Spanish literacy ability. She uses her native language decoding skills to pronounce many English words and to read English fluently up to GE 5. Richard is a native speaker of English who was diagnosed with dyslexia when he was a child. He still has difficulty with word identification/decoding and fluency, but since he is a native speaker of English, and he completed high school, his knowledge of vocabulary is 2 GE’s higher Vanessa’s.

Vanessa can pronounce correctly many more English words than are part of her limited English *meaning* vocabulary. To improve her silent reading comprehension, her initial instruction should emphasize improving her knowledge of English vocabulary. Richard knows the meanings of more words than he can identify or decode. To improve his silent reading comprehension, his initial instruction should emphasize improving his word identification/decoding and fluency. Note that these initial emphases focus on the main areas that are holding these two learners back. Over time, Vanessa would probably need some fine-tuning of her English word identification/decoding skills, and both learners will definitely need ongoing vocabulary and comprehension strategies development as their reading grows stronger.

(Adapted from Strucker, 1997)

The case studies of Richard and Vanessa illustrate concretely why it is not sufficient to test learners only in silent reading comprehension. If all we knew about these two learners was that they both scored GE 4 on a test of silent reading comprehension, we might be tempted to teach them exactly alike. That is, we would give them texts between GE 4 and 6, with teacher support as needed, and expect that by the end of the year they would be able to comprehend independently at 5 GE or higher.

Even if this approach were “successful,” taking one chronological year to gain one grade equivalent’s growth in reading would mean that Richard and Vanessa would take a full six years to read at levels that might enable them to pass the GED. When adults are reading at the 4 GE, we must do everything possible to help them achieve accelerated growth rather than merely one-for-one growth.

In the case of Richard, his GE 4 silent reading comprehension represents the upper limit of his skills; he is using his knowledge of vocabulary and his ability to make context guesses as a coping strategy to overcome his 2 GE word identification/decoding ability. Giving him GE 5-6 text would only frustrate him. Richard is not going to make much additional progress until he can decode a greater proportion of the words that are above GE 2.

In the case of Vanessa, GE 4 text is close to her upper limit as well. She can already decode 5th grade text, but her main problem is that her English vocabulary is stalled at a 4 GE level, the level of everyday conversation. Unless she learns the meanings of more of the literate words encountered in print, her comprehension will remain stalled at this conversational level.

In the sections that follow, the topics of word identification/decoding, fluency, and vocabulary will be discussed in greater detail, along with approaches to assessment for each. In the course of the discussion, a few specific tests are mentioned solely for the purpose of illustrating in a general way how these Foundations topics or components can be assessed. The fact that they are mentioned should not be taken as a specific recommendation. In fact, there are many other useful tests of these skills, some of which are listed on the Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles (ASRP) website (Davidson et al., 2009). The fourth Foundations topic, comprehension strategies, is usually assessed with informal assessments, which are discussed in the final section.

Word Identification/Decoding

Since word identification/decoding initiates the reading process, we will begin our discussion there. *Word identification* refers to the ability to pronounce words, quickly and easily – without having to sound them out and without the help of surrounding context. *Decoding* (also called phonics, word analysis, or word attack) refers to using the rules and patterns that govern how letters, syllables, and words are pronounced – e.g., that English vowels have long and short sounds which are usually determined by the position of vowels in words; that there are six basic syllable types; and rules for how certain strings of letters are pronounced (e.g., -ight, -ion, or kn- as in knife), etc.

Decoding facilitates word identification; most beginning readers develop word identification ability by first learning how to sound out or decode words using phonics skills. Repeated encounters with words in simple texts allow beginners to internalize the decoding patterns of English to the point where they come to recognize words quickly and automatically, without having to sound them out each time or without having to rely on guesses based on context. But even proficient readers fall back on decoding skills when they encounter difficult and unfamiliar words, or when they are trying to spell a new word (Adams, 1994).

Many ABE learners such as Richard have great difficulty with basic decoding - linking letters and sounds – because they are reading disabled (Strucker & Davidson, 2003). Direct, systematic, and sequential instruction in phonics (e.g., the Wilson Reading System, Lindamood-Bell, or Orton-Gillingham) is the best approach for these learners when they are in Level 1 Beginning Literacy classes (Kruidenier, 2002; McShane, 2005). But even if they have received this specialized instruction in Level 1 classes or in K-12, most of these learners continue to need systematic teaching and over-learning of new words and syllable patterns as they move up through ABE Levels 2 and 3 and beyond (Bruck, 1992; Pratt & Brady, 1988).

Word identification skills also include the ability to pronounce the many English words that do not lend themselves to phonetic decoding (e.g., one, were, thought). These must be memorized as sight words through repeated practice and exposure, including writing and spelling. Fortunately, most of these non-phonetic words occur with high frequency in English text, so beginning readers get lots of exposure to and practice with them. The *Reading Teacher's Book of Lists* (Fry & Kress, 2006) calls these words “Instant Words” and arranges them in lists by their frequency in English text, starting with the first 100 most common words, the second 100 most common words, etc. The *Dolch Basic Word*

List is another source of sight words that teachers can use for instruction and assessment.

Assessing Word Identification and Decoding

Word identification is quick and easy to assess, usually requiring less than five minutes per learner. Typical tests ask learners to read aloud words from lists, beginning with easier and more common words and extending upward to include more challenging and less common words. On some tests, such as the *Diagnostic Assessments of Reading* (DAR; Roswell, Chall, Curtis, & Kearns, 2005) or the *Quick Adult Reading Inventory* (QARI; Chall, Roswell, Curtis, & Strucker, 2003), there are separate lists for each grade equivalent. If a learner reads seven words correctly out of ten words on the GE 5 list, for example, she or he is said to have mastered GE 5 in word identification on either test. Tests such as the *Wide Range Achievement Test* (WRAT; Jastrak & Jastrak, 1998) or the Letter-Word Identification subtest of the *Woodcock-Johnson Reading Mastery Tests - Revised* (Woodcock, 1998) arrange the words in one continuous list, from easier to more difficult words. On these tests the learner is stopped after making a set number of mistakes in a row, and the total number of words read correctly is translated into a grade equivalent score.

Free resources for assessing word identification/decoding:

The QARI Word Recognition test with directions for administration may be downloaded free of charge from the Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles (ASRP) website:

<http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/resources.htm>

Teachers can determine which sight words need to be taught by asking learners to read words from the *Dolch Basic Word List* or Fry's Instant Word Lists. Both of these lists may also be downloaded free of charge from the ASRP website.

Learners who score below GE 4 in word recognition should be given a decoding assessment, because it is likely they will need to learn or review some of the basic phonics principles. Massachusetts ABE teacher Sylvia Greene (Greene, 1996) designed a quick and easy word analysis test that informs the teacher and the learner exactly which phonics principles have been mastered and which are missing or need to be reviewed.

The *Sylvia Greene's Informal Word Analysis Inventory* is downloadable at no charge on the ASRP website:

<http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/resources.htm>.

Fluency

Fluency refers to the ability to read connected text accurately, at an adequate rate, and with appropriate expression (also known as *prosody*). Although fluency is assessed through oral reading, the assumption is that if a reader is fluent in oral reading, she or he is also fluent when reading silently. Normally-progressing young readers begin to develop fluency during second grade as they become less reliant on sounding out each word and increasingly able to recognize most words instantly. As Chall (1983) put it, at this stage they are starting to become “unglued from print,” meaning they develop the ability to translate the symbols printed on the page into smooth, natural-sounding language. By the end of third grade, most young readers have passed out of the stage of *learning to read* and are ready to begin to *read to learn* (Chall, 1983). They have mastered most of the mechanics of decoding, leaving their minds free to concentrate on what the text says. So, developing fluency isn’t important simply because it enables learners to read faster; fluency is absolutely essential for efficient comprehension (Perfetti, 1985).

Causes of dysfluent reading

Many ABE learners at Standards Levels 2-4 (GE 2.0 to 8.9) are not fluent readers, and even some adult secondary learners are unable to read all but the most basic texts fluently. A major cause of slow, dysfluent reading among ABE learners is that they have trouble decoding words quickly and accurately. Their oral reading is characterized by numerous repetitions, self-corrections, pauses, and wrong guesses about words. There is no question that their reading is effortful and exhausting and certainly not something they enjoy doing. Numerous studies have shown that 60% or more of native English speakers in ABE report trouble learning to read when they were children. For many of them, their difficulties sounding out words and their slow rates have persisted into adulthood. Like Richard, their word recognition lags behind their other component skills (Strucker & Davidson, 2003; Greenberg, Ehri, & Perin, 1997). Because they found reading exhausting and painful, these learners probably didn’t read as much as their peers in school, and their avoidance of reading has continued into adult life (Kirsch, Jungeblatt, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993). As might be expected, it is impossible for anyone to become a fluent reader without practice – i.e., copious reading of meaningful texts (Adams, 1994).

A second cause of dysfluent reading applies primarily to some non-native English speakers in ABE classes. These learners sometimes read English words on lists faster than they read them in meaningful texts. It is likely that they slow down in texts because they want to comprehend what they are reading, but they are have trouble figuring

out the meaning of some English words or some unfamiliar aspects of English grammar (Davidson & Strucker, 2002).

In contrast, native English speakers in ABE are usually able to read words in texts better than words on lists, especially if the texts are about a familiar topic. Familiar contexts help them make guesses about words that they might struggle to read on a list. Slow and barely adequate for familiar topics, this guessing strategy breaks down completely when a reader needs to read about things that are new and unfamiliar, such as the GED content areas of social studies, science, or literature.

Assessing fluency

Fluency can be assessed informally using holistic ratings of how well learners read orally. The Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) teacher education initiative that is focused on ABE GE 4-9 readers uses a four-point scale to rate oral reading fluency. A learner is first given a grade-leveled passage from the DAR Oral Reading subtest, or a short passage from graded texts such as *Challenger* (Murphy, 1985) or *Reading Fluency* (Jamestown Education, 2005) and asked to read it aloud. The teacher rates the learner's fluency according to this four-point scale:

- 3 Smooth reading, with pauses occurring at appropriate points and few (if any) errors or repetitions
- 2 Fairly steady reading, but with some pauses in phrasing occurring sometimes within phrases and some errors or repetitions
- 1 Uneven/choppy reading, with frequent repetitions or lapses in phrasing and sounding out of words or errors
- 0 Labored, word-by-word reading, with continual repetitions or stopping and sounding out of words or errors

Using this scale, the mastery level for fluency is the highest grade level of passage difficulty on which a student is rated a "3," the instructional level for rate and prosody is the highest grade level rated a "2," and the instructional level for accuracy is the highest grade level rated a "1".

Published oral reading measures

Published tests offer more detailed approaches for determining a learner's oral reading accuracy. The Oral Reading subtest of the *Diagnostic Assessments of Reading* (DAR; Roswell et al., 2005) was designed to be administered by counting the exact number of errors a learner makes on graded passages. If a learner makes fewer than the prescribed number of errors for a given passage, she or he is said to have

mastered that passage, and the highest grade equivalent passage with fewer than the prescribed number of miscues is the learner's mastery level in oral reading fluency. The *Gray Oral Reading Test* (GORT; Wiederholt & Bryant, 2001) works similarly.

Informal assessments of reading rate

Reading rate in words-per-minute (WPM) is an important part of fluency. Many ABE readers read so slowly that their comprehension is impaired. To calculate oral reading rate, record the total time in seconds it takes the reader to read the mastered passage, count the number of words read correctly in the passage, then apply this formula:

$$\text{WPM} = \frac{\text{number of words in passage read correctly} \times 60}{\text{number of seconds student took to read the passage}}$$

Example:

If a learner read a 220-word passage in 2 minutes and 30 seconds (150 seconds):

$$\frac{220 \text{ words} \times 60}{150 \text{ seconds}} = 88 \text{ WPM}$$

Reading rate and the role of expression

When it comes to ABE learners, there is no research about what might be optimal reading rates. Nor is there any research on the relationship between reading rate and reading comprehension, which, after all, is what we are primarily concerned with. However, to offer some benchmarks for reference, average college readers are able to read college-level texts orally at 189 wpm (Lewandowski, Cadding, Kleinmann, & Tucker, 2003), and average 5th graders are able to read grade level text orally at about 150 wpm (Hasbrouck & Tyndal, 2005). Reading clinicians who work with ABE learners believe that rates slower than 120-140 wpm adversely affect comprehension for Level 3, 4, and 5 learners. For Level 2 learners, the threshold may be somewhat lower.

For improving comprehension, expression is probably more important than rate alone. ABE learners who read somewhat slowly but with good expression can have better comprehension than those who read faster but with little expression. This makes sense, because the ability to read with expression implies a certain level of understanding of the text. Interestingly, when readers concentrate on improving their oral reading expression, their rates tend to improve a bit as well.

Instruction to improve reading fluency

The best way to improve oral reading fluency is through oral reading practice – repeated reading which a learner may practice by himself, or collaborative oral reading in groups. Some teachers are under the impression that adult learners should never be asked to read aloud in class because they may be embarrassed by their mistakes. But this is usually not the case if learners are given the opportunity to practice their oral reading in small groups with other learners who are at a similar level and with appropriate support from the teacher.

Successful collaborative oral reading usually includes the following practices:

- The texts chosen for practice are at the appropriate level of readability (e.g., 1 GE *above* tested mastery level for improving oral reading accuracy and 1 GE *below* tested mastery level for improving oral reading fluency and rate).
- Wherever possible, the texts lend themselves to oral reading (e.g., short stories, novels, personal narratives, or plays).
- Groups are small enough (4-8 learners at similar levels) so that during a 15-minute practice session each learner gets to read multiple times.
- The teacher lays down clear expectations: that only she will be responsible for providing help and corrections; that each learner will read no more than a few sentences per turn; and that group members should work as a team to support and encourage each other.
- The teacher introduces the day's chapter or selection briefly, she takes the first turn at reading, and she later takes turns reading after every third or fourth learner. This enables the teacher to model fluent expressive reading for the group, and it also helps to move the narrative along.
- The teacher's corrections are brief; when a student mispronounces a word or cannot attempt it, the teacher simply supplies the correct word - she doesn't interrupt the flow to teach a word analysis lesson.
- During the oral reading lesson, the teacher may ask brief check-in questions of a factual nature every page or so (e.g., "What happened to the police car?" Or, "Who stole the payroll?"). However, longer questions that call for analysis, reflection, and discussion should only be asked after the oral reading has been concluded so as not to disrupt the flow of the narrative.

For more about oral reading fluency, see McShane (2005), Chapter 5, and http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Oral_Reading_Rate.htm.

What is readability and why is it important?

Readability is a way to express the level of difficulty of a passage. Teachers need to know the readability of passages selected for instruction in oral reading fluency and silent reading comprehension to avoid giving students texts that are too easy or too difficult to foster growth. Readability is usually expressed as a grade equivalent—e.g., 9.5, which would mean that the passage or text would be accessible to an average ninth grader, or an adult with that level of reading comprehension. With texts for which the readability has been determined by the publisher, teachers can pull the right text off the shelf. But when teachers want to use texts that are not already leveled by the publisher (e.g., novels, newspapers, magazines, Web sites), don't guess about their readability based on print size or your intuition, because readability can fool you! Use a readability formula to establish the readability of any text you might be considering for instruction. Several free readability formulas are available at this location on the ASRP website:

http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Oral_Reading_Rate.htm.

For a more thorough discussion of readability, its uses, and limitations, see **Section 3: Text Selection Guide**, where you will also find additional free resources and references on readability.

Vocabulary

Also called word meaning, vocabulary encompasses two aspects of a reader's knowledge of words, the number of words known (breadth of vocabulary) and how well the words are known (depth of vocabulary) (McKeown & Curtis, 1987). Assessment of ABE learners' vocabulary knowledge (Strucker & Davidson, 2003; Strucker et al., 2007) indicates that compared to other adults in our society, ABE learners average at the 11th percentile (i.e., 89% of the norming population knew more word meanings) on standardized tests of vocabulary and about GE 6 on the *DAR* Word Meaning subtest. Clearly such limited breadth of vocabulary can impose a ceiling on their comprehension.

ABE learners also lack depth of knowledge of some of the words with which they are familiar. Lack of depth of knowledge of word meanings can also severely limit comprehension. In a recent study of ABE intermediate readers (Strucker, Curtis, & Adams, in preparation), a significant percentage of learners defined *decline* as "...when they turn

down your credit card.” Although this colloquial usage is correct as far as it goes, it is so specific and restrictive that it could undermine comprehension. These learners might be seriously misled if they encountered *decline* in a more academic context such as “the *decline* of the Roman Empire.”

Assessing vocabulary

It is imperative to use orally-administered tests of vocabulary with ABE learners. Written vocabulary tests are not reliable or valid because so many ABE learners have difficulties with accurate word identification. With a written test it is impossible to know whether an error has occurred because the learner really didn’t know the meaning of the target word or because he misread the question, the target word itself, or one of the other answer choices.

Vocabulary tests that ask the learner to tell what a word means in his own words are very informative. In addition to providing a GE level for vocabulary (breadth), the learner’s answers can be analyzed for their quality and completeness (depth). Knowing the depth of their learners’ vocabulary knowledge can be important even for teachers of Level 5 and 6 Adult Secondary learners. The texts that they encounter tend to use more academic terms and more elaborated meanings of words they know. And, when they are writing for the GED, in-depth knowledge of the words they wish to use is essential.

The *DAR* (Roswell et al., 2005) Word Meaning subtest and the very similar *Davidson-Bruce Word Meaning Test* use a similar format: the teacher asks the learner, “What does *abundant* mean?”, and the learner’s response is recorded verbatim and scored for correctness. If the learner responds to four out of five of the words at a given GE level correctly, she or he is said to have mastered that level of vocabulary or word meaning. Teachers can also analyze the responses later for their completeness and depth and use this information to inform their vocabulary instruction.

The *Davidson-Bruce Word Meaning Test* may be downloaded free from the ASRP website:

<http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/resources.htm>

The *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)* (Dunn & Dunn, 2007) is another oral vocabulary test. The learner is shown a page with four pictures on it, and the examiner pronounces the target word. The learner then tells which picture – one, two, three, or four - best shows the meaning of the word. The *PPVT* is easy to administer and very reliable.

Although it provides no information on a learner's depth of understanding of known words, the *PPVT* indicates the approximate level of words a learner is likely to understand in the contexts of reading or conversation.

Comprehension strategies

The fourth and final Reading Foundations topic, comprehension strategies, refers to the conscious activities readers undertake to construct meaning from texts, to remember details and ideas, and to make use of text for their own purposes. It differs from the first three topics or components in that it represents a range of activities that the reader undertakes consciously and deliberately, whereas the components of word identification/decoding, fluency, and vocabulary knowledge should operate automatically during reading, with little or no conscious thought.

In discussing comprehension strategies, it is helpful to separate them into basic strategies and higher-order strategies. Basic strategies usually call for one step or one activity on the part of the reader, such as previewing the title, headings, or visuals prior to reading, or asking, "What's my purpose for reading this?" They can often be taught relatively quickly. Some of these strategies involve using text features such as headings, captions, boldface, italics, etc. Although they are used by readers at all levels, these strategies usually need to be taught to those in Levels 2 (GE 2 - 3.9) and 3 (GE 4 - 5.9), because these learners have generally had less exposure to and experience with reading a variety of materials.

What Standard 1 refers to as "higher-order strategies" are more complex. They usually involve multiple steps or activities, and they usually take more practice to learn. Higher-order strategies include *pre-reading strategies*, such as previewing chapter summaries, advanced organizers, or appendices, and *monitoring and enhancement strategies*, such as summarizing the connections between ideas, choosing an appropriate graphic organizer, highlighting, and taking and organizing notes. Some of these higher-order strategies overlap with the study skills that learners will need to pass the GED or to succeed in post-secondary education settings. Consequently, they usually play a more prominent role for learners in Level 4 (GE 6 – 8 .9), and their importance continues to grow for those in Levels 5 (GE 9 - 10.9) and 6 (GE 11 – 12.9).

Both basic and higher-order comprehension strategies have been shown to be beneficial for adult learners (Kruidenier, 2002; McShane, 2005), but several points should be emphasized:

- While basic comprehension strategies are helpful for any reader, higher-order comprehension strategies can only produce maximum benefits if the reader possesses adequate word identification/decoding skills to pronounce the words correctly, read them fluently, and knows what they mean. Neither basic nor higher-order comprehension strategies are designed to work as substitutes for decoding ability and vocabulary knowledge. Comprehension strategies are important foundational tools for gaining meaning from texts, but teaching comprehension strategies should not take the place of teaching word identification/decoding, fluency, and vocabulary to those learners who have limited skills in those components.
- Second, related to the first point, the more complex higher-order comprehension strategies usually play a proportionally smaller instructional role in Levels 2 and 3 than they do in Levels 4, 5, and 6. This is because learners at higher levels tend to be strong enough in the other reading components to gain the maximum benefit from higher-order strategies.
- Third, when introducing a new strategy, use texts that are a bit below the learners' tested silent comprehension levels, and, if possible, texts that are well-suited to the application of the strategy being taught. Thus, to introduce summarizing and paraphrasing strategies to learners whose silent comprehension is at GE 6 – 8, use texts at GE 4 – 5, and choose a text or two where the author has been kind enough to provide easy-to-recognize topic sentences in the first paragraph and/or concluding paragraphs that neatly summarize his points. At Level 2, oral texts may even be used, since most learners at this level usually have stronger listening comprehension than they do reading comprehension. When first introducing summarizing strategies to learners at those levels, teachers may want to ask learners to practice giving oral summaries of texts that are read to them before introducing summarizing of texts that they read themselves.
- Fourth, research suggests that a few higher-order strategies taught well work better than attempting to provide learners with a plethora of strategies (Pressley, 2002). Although the Revised Standards mention many comprehension strategies to illustrate various approaches, this emphatically does not mean that all of those mentioned at a given level must or should be taught. Given the limited class time available to most adult learners, to attempt to do so would leave too little time for strengthening Level 2 – 4 learners' much-needed word identification/decoding, fluency, or vocabulary. In addition, and of concern for learners at all levels, it would leave too little time for actual reading. Remember, the

ultimate goal of strategy instruction is not for learners to become proficient at many strategies, but to become better at reading comprehension – the main goal and purpose for reading.

Assessing learners’ knowledge of comprehension strategies

A *think-aloud* exercise can be used to gauge a learner’s knowledge of and use of strategies and to model and teach effective strategies to the learner. Working one-on-one, the teacher selects a brief passage that is at or only slightly above the learner’s tested level of reading comprehension. The teacher reads a paragraph from the passage aloud, stopping occasionally to make observations about the strategies she is using. These might be basic strategies such as focusing on the title or subheadings and asking herself what she expects the passage to discuss. She might also include more complex strategies such as self-monitoring (“Did I understand this sentence?”), summarizing, paraphrasing, etc. Then, with support from the teacher, the learner reads the next passage. At first, the teacher may have to cue the strategy for the learner by asking appropriate questions, similar to the ones she asked herself. Think-aloud can be a very effective means of assessing and improving strategy use, but works best in one-on-one situations.

Amy Trawick (personal communication, December 22, 2009) suggests two other informal techniques that can be used to assess learners’ use of comprehension strategies. The first is to ask learners to reflect on strategy-related questions during class and to record their reflections in a learning journal. For example, if students are engaged in reading that extends over several classes, such as reading a novel or doing independent reading related to a research project, they might be asked at the end of each class or at the end of the project to respond to a few simple questions about their use of strategies. For example:

- What was your purpose for reading (today)? What was your plan for meeting that purpose?
- Did you have any problems with your reading? What strategies did you use to try to solve them?
- Did you use any strategies covered in previous lessons? How did they work for you?

Teachers don’t need to ask more than one or two of these questions at a time and can vary which ones are asked. Learners’ responses to the questions can be written in their regular daily learning journals. Reading them can provide the teacher with information on an on-going basis about how students are using strategies and what challenges they are facing.

Another technique for assessing learners' use of strategies is to employ a survey. Students at Level 3 and above can be asked to read a simple list of strategies and use a Likert scale (see box below) to rate how often they employ each strategy. A survey of this sort might be used when students first enter a program, but it may provide limited insights unless they are already familiar with the concept of *strategies* and/or they tend to be aware of what they are doing and thinking when they read. However, even at this point, teachers can make good use of the survey as a discussion starter with learners to introduce the topic of strategies and outline what techniques they will be learning as part of the class. Once they have been part of a class for a while and have engaged in lessons, discussions, and reflections about comprehension strategies, students can be asked to complete surveys periodically (no more than once every two months), and teachers can use the surveys to determine which strategies learners are using and which ones need to be reviewed or taught.

Sample Comprehension Strategies Survey Question

A Likert scale question about comprehension strategy use might look like this:

Before reading an article or chapter, I look at the title and ask myself what I already know about the topic.

Check one: (4)___ (3)___ (2)___ (1)___

Rating Scale:

4 - I do this whenever I read.

3 - I use this strategy most of the time.

2 - I use this strategy some of the time.

1 - I rarely or never do this.

Concluding Thoughts

It is important to bear in mind that the Reading Fundamentals in Standard 1 – word identification/decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies -- are not ends in themselves. Practitioners should use diagnostic assessments of the fundamentals to plan instruction for individuals and groups who have similar patterns of strengths and needs; however, instructional time spent working on the fundamentals should always be balanced with ample opportunities for learners to read informational texts (Standard 2) and literary texts (Standard 3) at appropriate levels. The fundamentals can make powerful contributions to reading improvement, but only when learners are challenged to integrate and consolidate them through the reading of meaningful texts.

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SECTION 5

Glossary

Academic words Also called *general words* or *Tier 2 words*, these are sophisticated words which are used across a range of written texts to define common concepts. They are often more precise and complex synonyms for everyday words. Because general words identify common concepts, these words can be used across a variety of academic disciplines (math, science, social studies, and literature). Examples of academic words are: *unique*, *alternate*, *convenient*, *influence*, *minimum*. In the sentence *Plants require abundant light for the process of photosynthesis*, *photosynthesis* is a science term that is usually explained in the text or by the teacher. *Abundant* is an academic word and is usually not explained by the text or the teacher. However, if the meaning of *abundant* is not known, the sentence cannot be understood. Because ABE and ASE learners have often not read across a wide range of texts, their knowledge of many of these academic words tends to be fuzzy or non-existent. These words are important building blocks of comprehension, so learners' lack of familiarity with them can seriously weaken their comprehension. Free lists of common academic words can be downloaded from: <http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com/id17.htm>. (See **General words; Tier 2 words; Terms.**)

Adapted texts Texts that have been modified from their original form for students reading at lower proficiency levels. The format, vocabulary, grammatical forms, and/or sentence structure of authentic texts can be adapted. (See **Simplified texts; Authentic texts.**)

Affix A word part that is either attached to the beginning (prefixes) or to the end (suffixes) of a *base* or *root word*. The word *unhelpful* has two affixes, a prefix (*un-*) and a suffix (*-ful*). Affixes also include plural *-s/-es*, verb endings that indicate person (*she says*) and tense (*he washed*), and word endings that denote the part of speech, such as *creation* (noun) or *quickly* (adverb). (See **Base word; Root; Prefix; Suffix.**)

Alliteration The repetition of consonant sounds in a string of words (e.g., *bold as brass*; "*Love's Labour's Lost*").

Alphabets The set of skills and abilities that enable readers to turn letter combinations into spoken words. Alphabets includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics or word analysis ability, and rapid word recognition.

ARCS (The Adult Reading Components Study) A project of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) that assessed the reading of 676 ABE learners using 11 reading components. The project grouped the learners into 10 instructionally-relevant profiles based on their patterns of strengths and needs in reading. See http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/About_ASRP_Profiles.htm.

Assisted Oral Reading Reading support given by a teacher or tutor to a learner by helping with word recognition or by reading orally along with the learner. Paired reading with a partner, choral reading, and guided oral reading with a group are forms of assisted oral reading.

Authentic texts Written texts which are typically found outside a classroom setting and have not been modified or simplified for instructional use (e.g., newspaper articles, pamphlets, flyers, novels). (See **Adapted materials**; **Simplified materials**.)

Automaticity Performance of a skill with little or no conscious attention to its execution. Automaticity of word identification and decoding allows the reader to devote mental energy and conscious attention to comprehension.

Background knowledge, Background information Knowledge that the reader already possesses when he or she approaches a reading task. Background knowledge refers to knowledge about the world and basic school-based knowledge related to social studies, science, mathematics, and literature. From the author's standpoint, background knowledge is the knowledge of concepts, facts, and word meanings that the reader is assumed to have and therefore is not explained or elaborated.

Base word A whole word to which prefixes and/or suffixes have been added. Unlike a root, a base word can stand alone as a word (e.g., *insupportable*; *information*). (See **Root**; **Prefix**; **Suffix**.)

Benchmarks Key sets of skills learners need to develop and demonstrate at a particular level in order to meet the more broadly-stated content standards. They reference specific proficiency levels in terms that are concrete and observable, and they serve as checkpoints to monitor learner's progress toward meeting a Standard.

Blend (See **Consonant blend**.)

Central idea The governing idea or argument in lengthy text.

Characterization How an author conveys information about a character and, thus, “develops” the character. An author can develop characters by describing their appearance; presenting their actions, thoughts, and speech; and showing the reactions of others to the characters.

Chunking Assigning meaning to phrases and short clauses (chunks of language) so that they can be held in working memory and associated with previous and subsequent chunks of language to construct the meaning of a long sentence, paragraph, or text. In speech or oral reading, chunking means pronouncing groups of words together as phrases (e.g., *to the store; nightly newscast*).

Cognates Words in two languages that have the same meanings and are spelled identically or similarly. Examples of Spanish/English cognates are: *area/area; indicación/indication; realidad/reality; creativo(a)/creative*. (See **False cognates**.)

Common Appearing often (but less often than something that is high-frequency). (See **High-frequency**.)

Community texts Written material typically found outside the classroom and workplace, including newspapers, magazines, flyers, popular novels, school letters, etc. (See **Work texts**.)

Complex sentence A sentence with at least one dependent clause (e.g., *I ate the leftover spaghetti because I forgot to go to the store*). (See **Compound sentence; Dependent clause; Simple sentence**.)

Components of reading The sets of sub-skills related to reading, often categorized as print/alphabetic skills and meaning skills. Components usually discussed in terms of reading instruction include at least word recognition, word analysis, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. For a review of the research related to these components, see the report by the Reading Research Working Group at http://www.nifl.gov/publications/pdf/adult_ed_02.pdf. The Adult Reading Components Study (ARCS) assessed an expanded set of components, and information related to its findings can be found at http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/About_ASRP_Profiles.htm (See **ARCS**.)

Compound sentence A sentence composed of two independent clauses, where the clauses are joined by either a conjunction (e.g., *and, but, yet*), a semicolon that functions as a conjunction, or both (e.g., *She likes to take the subway, but she doesn't like to take the bus. She likes to take the subway; she doesn't like to take the bus*). (See **Complex sentence; Independent clause; Simple sentence**.)

Compound word A word composed of two words joined together (e.g., *campfire*, *whiteboard*, *paperclip*).

Comprehension strategies The conscious activities readers undertake to construct meaning from texts, to remember details and ideas, and to make use of text for their own purposes. (See **Strategy**.)

Conflict In a narrative, conflict refers to a type of problem the main character faces and must overcome for the story to be resolved. There are two main types of conflict: external (e.g., individual vs. individual/group, individual vs. society, individual vs. nature) and internal (individual vs. self).

Connected text Written material composed of meaningfully linked sentences, as opposed to the kind of text comprising, for instance, a grocery list, chart, or bus schedule.

Connotation An implied meaning or emotion associated with a particular word or phrase. Connotations relate not to a word's actual meaning, or denotation, but rather to the ideas or qualities that are implied by that word.

Consonant blend A regularly-occurring string of two or three consonants in which all the letter sounds are pronounced in rapid succession (e.g., *blue*, *strong*). A consonant blend can occur at the beginning or end of a syllable or word.

Content words Those words (e.g., nouns, verbs, or adjectives) that are stressed within a sentence because they carry the most meaning. (See **Function words**.)

Context clues Information found in the material that helps decide the meaning or pronunciation of a word or phrase. Readers can maintain surface reading comprehension and fluency by using context clues to determine the meanings of unknown words. Generally, though, one has to know the meanings of more than 95% of the surrounding words to make accurate predictions about the meaning of an unfamiliar one. Whereas proficient readers routinely use context clues for figuring out the *meanings* of unfamiliar words, they only use context clues for *pronunciation* (word recognition) when the pronunciation is dependent on the way the word is used (e.g., *bear*, *read*). However, struggling readers are often forced to use context clues to make guesses about the pronunciations of words to compensate for their weaknesses in word recognition and decoding.

Convention (literary) A defining feature of a type of literary work, such as the use of a chorus in Greek tragedy or a moral in a fable.

Conventions of print Basic information about how text in a particular language is presented. For English text, the conventions include left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality, pagination, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphs, headings, chapters, etc.

Criterion-referenced test (CRT) A test that measures performance in terms of clearly- defined content developed by experts. The knowledge or skills required for each part of the test is clearly specified. Examples of CRTs are: MCAS, Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Tests (MAPT), Teacher Licensure Tests in Massachusetts, and the Driver’s License Test.

Critique To make judgments about a text in terms of its accuracy, completeness, clarity, and/or style.

Decoding Applying knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, syllable patterns/types, syllabication rules, and/or knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes in order to determine the pronunciation of an unfamiliar word. (See **Word analysis**.)

Denotation The precise or literal meaning of a word, without the feelings or suggestions that the word may imply. It is the opposite of *connotation*. (See **Connotation**.)

Dependent clause Part of a sentence that contains a subject and a predicate but is an incomplete thought and thus cannot stand alone as a complete sentence (e.g., He goes to the dentist **when he has a toothache**). (See **Independent clause**; **Complex sentence**; **Compound sentence**.)

Diagnostic assessment in reading Tests in the components of reading (e.g., word recognition, word analysis, fluency, oral vocabulary, and comprehension) to determine a learner’s pattern of strengths and needs in order to guide instruction.

Digraph Two letters that represent one speech sound or phoneme. There are consonant digraphs (e.g., chop; thin) and vowel digraphs (e.g., food; boat).

Diphthong Two vowels pronounced as a “glide” from one sound to another (e.g. noise; sound).

Dolch Word List A list of high-frequency, mostly non-phonetic words (e.g., *once*, *was*, *two*) that beginning readers must learn to recognize quickly, or “on sight.” A free copy of the list is available at: http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/PF_Basic_Words.htm.

Dysfluency Lack of fluency in oral reading; i.e., slow, choppy, effortful reading with many repetitions and self-corrections.

Dyslexia The most common form of Learning Disabilities, dyslexia is estimated to comprise 80 percent of all learning disorders. The primary characteristics involve difficulties mastering and using the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, it is the severe difficulties with reading and spelling that most clearly identify dyslexia. While poor reading skills are certainly the most devastating effect, dyslexia is actually a syndrome of language disabilities that can affect listening skills, oral and written expression, verbal memory, and other related learning abilities. Dyslexia is associated with weaknesses in three kinds of information processing: 1) problems with detecting phonemes and how they combine to form words; 2) slower than normal language processing; and 3) problems detecting, understanding, and remembering information arranged sequentially. There is a great deal of variability in the manifestation of dyslexia from person to person. (See **Over-learning.**) [Taken verbatim from Quinn and Oddleifson, 2008, pp. 20, 28.]

ELL English Language Learner; a non-native speaker of English.

Everyday texts Texts which adults are likely to encounter regularly in the community and in the workplace. These include newspapers, magazines, forms, personal and business letters, manuals, etc. (See **Community texts; Work texts.**)

Everyday words Words heard in everyday spoken language (e.g., *ask*, *baby*, *walk*, *smile*). Because these words are so often used in conversation, they rarely need to be explained or defined to native English speakers when they encounter the words in written text. (See **Tier I words.**)

Explicit Instruction An instructional approach in which “the teacher presents content clearly and directly, providing step-by-step directions and modeling, followed by guided practice with feedback, independent practice, and frequent reviews. Similar structured approaches may be called direct instruction, active teaching, or expository teaching” (McShane, 2005, p. 155).

Expository texts In this document, a sub-category of *informational texts*. Expository texts present and explain facts, ideas, and other information about a topic. Examples include informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life); etc. (See **Functional texts**; **Informational texts**; **Persuasive texts**; **Procedural texts**.)

Expressive vocabulary One’s vocabulary that is available to be used when speaking or writing. It is usually tested by asking “What does (word) mean?” or by showing a person a picture of an object or an activity and asking, “What is this?” (See **Receptive vocabulary**.)

False cognates Words that are similar or the same in form as words in another language but have a different meaning (e.g., The English word embarrassed and the Spanish word embarazada are similar in form but the meaning of embarazada (pregnant) is not similar to the meaning of embarrassed.) (See **Cognates**.)

Figurative language Language that communicates ideas beyond the ordinary or literal meaning of the words (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification).

Fluency The ability to read connected text accurately, at an adequate rate, and with appropriate expression or prosody. Poor fluency usually hinders comprehension.

Function words Words that mainly express a relationship between the grammatical elements of a sentence. Function words include articles, auxiliary verbs, personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, demonstrative adjectives, prepositions, and conjunctions. Function words make up 65% or more of all written material. (See **Content words**.)

Functional texts In this document, a sub-category of *informational texts*. Functional texts are used to accomplish concrete daily tasks. Examples include: forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; emails; letters; memos; etc. (See **Expository texts**; **Informational texts**; **Persuasive texts**; **Procedural texts**.)

GE or GLE (Grade Equivalent or Grade Level Equivalent) A test score that is converted from a raw score, such as ‘total number correct,’ to a numerical level that corresponds with a K-12 school grade level. GE / GLE scores are estimates determined by test publishers using different procedures, so they should only be viewed as estimates. GE or GLE is

also used to report the readability levels of written texts when certain formulas are followed.

GED (General Educational Development) The test of General Educational Development, commonly known as "the GED," is a battery of five tests developed and distributed by the GED Testing Service in Washington DC. Each year nearly 800,000 people take the GED tests worldwide. A person in Massachusetts passing the GED battery with the requisite scores earns a "Massachusetts High School Equivalency Credential," which is accepted by 98% of the colleges and universities in the United States, and by 96% of the employers, as exactly equivalent to a High School Diploma.

General words Also called *academic words* or *Tier 2 words*, these are sophisticated words which are used across a range of written texts to define common concepts. They are often more precise and complex synonyms for everyday words. Because general words identify common concepts, these words can be used across a variety of academic disciplines (math, science, social studies, and literature). Examples of general words are: unique, alternate, convenient, influence, minimum. In the sentence Plants require abundant light for the process of photosynthesis, photosynthesis is a science term that is usually explained in the text or by the teacher. Abundant is a general word and is usually not explained by the text or the teacher. However, if the meaning of abundant is not known, the sentence cannot be understood. Because ABE and ASE learners have often not read across a wide range of texts, their knowledge of many of these general words tends to be fuzzy or non-existent. These words are important building blocks of comprehension, so learners' lack of familiarity with them can seriously weaken their comprehension. Free lists of common academic words can be downloaded from:

<http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com/id17.htm>. (See **Academic words; Tier 2 words**.)

Genre A broad literary category. The main literary genres are fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Each genre conforms to specific expected forms or conventions and distinctive formats. Knowing the genre (and thus what to expect) can aid comprehension.

Gist An overall or generalized understanding of a text. A reader can construct a general meaning and understand what is happening even if she can't understand every phrase or sentence.

Graphic organizers Visual devices used to organize information so it can be more easily represented, recalled, or understood (e.g., word webs, Venn diagrams, T-charts). (See **K-W-L Chart**; **Text map**.)

High-frequency Words or word parts (e.g., syllable/word patterns, prefixes, suffixes) that appear frequently in all printed material. High-frequency words include a large number of function words (the articles *a*, *the*), auxiliary verbs (*was*, *were*), pronouns (*they*, *them*), possessive adjectives (*his*, *our*), prepositions (*to*, *up*, *under*), conjunctions (*and*, *but*), and common nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Many high-frequency words are not phonetically regular, so it is helpful for beginning readers to learn to recognize them quickly as sight words. An example of a frequency-based word list is “Instant Words” in Fry’s *Reading Teacher’s Book of Lists*, available free at: http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/PF_Instant_Words.htm. The similar Dolch Basic Word List is also available free at: http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/PF_Basic_Words.htm. (See **Common**; **Sight words**; **Function words**.)

Homographs Words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently (e.g., *lead* as a heavy metal vs. *lead* meaning “to conduct”).

Homonyms Words that are often spelled the same and sound the same when spoken, but have different meanings (e.g., *bat*, referring to a baseball bat or a *bat* which flies at night).

Homophones Words that are pronounced the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings (e.g., *bare/bear*; *principal/principle*).

Hyperbole An intentional exaggeration or overstatement that a writer uses for emphasis or comic effect (e.g., *Michael **exploded** when he saw the damage to his car.*).

Idiom A phrase or expression that is common to the language and means something different from what the words actually say (e.g., *over his head* means “doesn’t understand”).

Independent clause A group of words which contain a subject and a predicate and can stand alone as a simple sentence (e.g., ***The coast will be hit by a storm this weekend. He goes to the dentist when he has a toothache.***) (See **Dependent clause**; **Simple sentence**.)

Infer To draw conclusions that are implied by the author but are not explicit in what is written; sometimes referred to as *reading between the lines*.

Inflection A change in the form of a word (usually by adding a suffix, such as *-ed*, *-er*) to indicate a change in its grammatical function (e.g., number, person, or tense).

Informational texts One of the two major types of text addressed in this document. Informational texts include four categories of texts:

expository texts: informational books; information-based magazine, newspaper, or Internet articles; brochures and pamphlets; tables; charts; graphs; biographies and autobiographies (when used primarily to learn details of a person’s life); etc.

persuasive texts: editorials; letters to the editor; political cartoons; essays; speeches; ads; book/movie/product reviews; etc.

procedural texts: manuals; directions; operating instructions; etc.

functional texts: forms; work orders; applications; maps; signs; schedules; menus; invitations; posters; classified ads; labels; catalogs; legal agreements; emails; letters; memos; etc.

(See **Literary texts**; **Expository texts**; **Functional texts**; **Persuasive texts**; **Procedural texts**.)

K-W-L Chart A graphic organizer that helps learners to draw on what they know, focus on what they want to learn, and identify what they learned. To create a K-W-L Chart, learners draw three columns. In the first column, they write what they already **K**now about a topic. In the second column, they write questions related to what they **W**ant to learn. In the third column, they write what they **L**earned. K-W-L charts can be completed as a class with the teacher, in small groups, or independently. (See **Graphic organizers**.)

Key words Words that carry significant meaning in a text, as opposed to words that may have a grammatical function and whose meaning may not be crucial for comprehension. This term also refers to the words used by Orton-Gillingham and Wilson reading systems to illustrate and practice the letter name / letter sound associations. They are usually written on flash cards and practiced orally.

L1 A learner’s first or native language.

Lexicon In general, all the vocabulary contained in a language; in reading, it can also refer to all the words an individual knows

Literary elements Refers to the organizational structure of a narrative and includes characters, setting, plot (including conflict), point of view, and theme.

Literary techniques Tools authors use to enrich their writing. Literary techniques include such things as use of figurative language, imagery, alliteration, foreshadowing, flashback, irony, etc.

Literary texts One of the two major types of text addressed in this document, it refers to text written primarily to be enjoyed or appreciated rather than to explain or to persuade. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with this major type of text are novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, plays, screenplays, essays, biographies, and autobiographies. (See **Informational texts**.)

Metacognition Thinking about one's own thinking or learning process. Metacognition refers to higher-order thinking that involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive in nature. Because metacognition plays a critical role in managing one's lifelong learning, adult students need to have opportunities to plan, monitor, and reflect upon their learning in the classroom.

Modeling In a teaching context, showing others how to do something by demonstrating it while students observe.

Mood The feeling intentionally evoked in the reader by the writing. Mood is distinct from *tone*, in which the focus is on the author's attitude toward the subject. (See **Tone**.)

Moral dilemma A situation involving an apparent conflict between competing ethical principles whereby the decision to adhere to one ethical principle results in the transgression of another.

NCSALL National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (www.ncsall.net).

NIFL National Institute for Literacy (www.nifl.gov).

NRS (National Reporting System) An outcome-based reporting system for the state-administered, federally-funded adult education program. The NRS requires programs to report student progress through Educational Functioning Levels, which form the basis for the proficiency levels described in the Reading Strand of the ELA Curriculum Framework. For more information, go to <http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations>.

Narrative texts Written material which presents a story, including characters, setting, and plot. Common narrative texts include short stories, novels, plays/scripts, and narrative poems.

Norm-Referenced Tests (NRTs) Tests that measure a student’s performance in relation to the performance of one or more specific reference (or norm) groups of students who took the same test. For example, a student who scores at the 60th percentile on a math subtest has scored higher than 60% of the students in the norm group. Examples of NRTs are the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT).

Onset The initial consonant sound in a one-syllable word. For instance, in the word *tame*, /t/ is the onset and /-ame/ is the rime. The word *aim* doesn’t have an onset, only a rime. (See **Rime**.)

Over-learning Extra repetition and practice of a skill to produce automaticity. For example, reading disabled learners may need to over-learn phonics principles and sight words to the point of automaticity. (See **Automaticity**.)

Paraphrase A restatement of written text into one’s own words, usually to clarify the original thought. For instance, *When were you born?* can be paraphrased as *What is your date of birth?*

Persuasive techniques Ways in which authors try to convince a reader to believe or act in a certain way. Common persuasive techniques include logic, emotional appeals, bandwagon (e.g., “everyone is doing it”), citing celebrities or authorities, etc.

Persuasive texts In this document, a sub-category of *informational texts*. Persuasive texts are texts written to influence or change a reader’s thoughts, beliefs, or actions through a moral or logical argument (rather than force)¹. Text types commonly (but not exclusively) associated with

¹ Derived from the University of British Columbia Writing Centre, Vancouver, BC’s materials on the web, <http://www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/workshop/tools/argument.htm>, and from “Crafting Effective Persuasive Arguments,” webpage from the Conflict Research Consortium, University of

persuasive texts are newspaper editorials, essays, commentaries, political campaign literature and speeches, requests for charitable donations, advertisements, retail catalogs, etc. (See **Expository texts; Functional texts; Informational texts; Procedural texts.**)

Phoneme The smallest unit of sound in spoken language that leads to a difference in meaning (e.g., the /p/ sound in pit and the /b/ sound in bit differentiate words with different meanings).

Phonemic awareness The awareness that speech is made up of a sequence of sounds; the ability to distinguish, identify, and manipulate the separable sounds in words (e.g., “How many sounds do you hear in the word /cat/?” or “What is the second sound in /cat/?”). (See **Phonological awareness.**)

Phonics Letter-sound relationships and the related skills used in analyzing words into phonemes or larger units and blending them to form recognizable words (e.g., the str- pattern and the -ing pattern in string and the sounds they represent). *Phonics* is also the term used to describe reading instruction that explicitly teaches sound-symbol correspondences.

Phonological Awareness A more encompassing term than *phonemic awareness*, it refers to all levels of the speech sound system, including word boundaries, stress patterns, syllables, onset-rime units, and phonemes. (See **Phonemic awareness.**)

Point of view The perspective or “angle” from which an account or story is told. When analyzing fiction, common terms to describe point of view include:

- *first person* - the story is told from the perspective of one of the characters, using first person pronouns such as I, we;
- *third person omniscient* - an all-knowing author talks about all the characters in third person (he, her) and reveals their thoughts and feelings as well as their actions;
- *third person omniscient limited* - the author talks about all the main characters in third person but only shares the thoughts and feelings of one or two.

Prefix A word part that is added to the beginning of a word that changes the meaning of the word (e.g., unhappy).

Prior knowledge (See **Background knowledge.**)

Colorado, <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/usepersn.htm>, both retrieved 12/9/09.

Procedural texts In this document, a sub-category of *informational texts*. Procedural texts describe how to accomplish a task and, therefore, they overlap with certain kinds of expository texts. They are mentioned as a separate category to emphasize the important role they play in the lives of adults. Examples include manuals, directions, operating instructions, steps in an experiment, etc. (See **Expository texts**; **Informational texts**; **Functional texts**; **Persuasive texts**).

Productive skills Speaking and writing. (See **Receptive skills**.)

Proficiency levels Points along a continuum which mark what students know and can do in relation to the Standard, as described by Benchmarks. Proficiency levels are not to be confused with a program's class design levels. Programs should use proficiency levels, though, to closely crosswalk with their program class design levels. (See **Standard**; **Benchmark**.)

Pronoun referent A personal pronoun, possessive pronoun, demonstrative pronoun, definite article, etc., which refers back to a noun (called the *antecedent*). A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number and gender (e.g., *That's April. She works at my company.*)

Prosody Reading with appropriate phrasing and intonation, without hesitations, repetitions, or choppiness.

Readability and readability formulas Readability is an estimate of the difficulty of a text, usually expressed in grade-level equivalents (GLEs) or grade equivalents (GEs). Readability is calculated by applying a readability formula to a sample of a text. Most readability formulas take into account average sentence length and average word length in a text. Some formulas also factor in the relative rarity of the words used in the text. Four common readability formulas can be accessed on the ASRP website at http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Oral_Reading_Rate.htm. The following website enables you to copy and paste text directly into a program which determines the readability level of the text: <http://www.interventioncentral.org/htmldocs/tools/okapi/okapi.php>.

Receptive skills Reading and listening. (See **Productive skills**.)

Receptive vocabulary Vocabulary one knows when the words are heard or read. Receptive vocabulary is assessed by giving an individual a choice of pictures or definitions (e.g., the word *sawing* is pronounced by the examiner, and the learner points to a picture of someone sawing wood.) (See **Expressive vocabulary**.)

Reliability of tests The degree to which test scores are stable and consistent. A test is reliable if a person or group of persons would get nearly the same results if they took any form of the test, were given the test at different times and locations, or were given the test by different administrators and scorers.

Retelling A strategy used by readers to check their own comprehension. The reader stops after reading a section of text and repeats what was read, usually using a mix of his or her own words and those from the text. Retelling can also be used as an assessment technique to determine if a reader has comprehended the text.

Rhetorical devices Techniques available within a culture to develop an argument. Rhetorical devices common in the United States include (but are not limited to) appealing to logic, using descriptive and figurative language, employing repetition of words and phrases, and making fallacious arguments (e.g., demonizing the enemy, making overstatements or understatement, appealing to emotions, using celebrity testimonials or making other appeals to authority, etc).

Rime In a one-syllable word, everything after the initial consonant sound, or onset. In the word *tame*, /-ame/ is the rime, and /t/ is the onset. (See **Onset**; **Word families**.)

Root, Root word The part of a word which indicates its origin and holds the core meaning of the word. Although roots often do not stand on their own as words (e.g., *spec*, *script*), prefixes and suffixes can be added to them to form words that can (e.g., *inspection*, *manuscript*). (See **Base word**.)

Scaffolding Temporary support from a teacher or situation that enables learners to take on and understand new material and tasks they are not quite ready to do independently (e.g., engaging learners in pre-reading activities, using graphic organizers, providing definitions of key vocabulary, teacher modeling of an activity, providing multiple resources).

Scan To quickly search a text for some particular piece of information (e.g., looking quickly through a newspaper article for a name). (See **Skim**.)

Screen Text Text that appears on technological devices, such as DVD menus, video games, web sites, electronic encyclopedias, etc.

Sequencing words Signal words that help learners comprehend or relate the order in which events occur (e.g., *first, then, finally, next, at this point, later, afterwards*).

Setting The time and place in which a story occurs. Consideration of setting includes not only descriptions of the time and place but also the effects these have on the character (e.g., a woman in the upper echelon of society in Victorian England), the plot (e.g., what forensic techniques were available during the era in which a murder mystery is set), and the theme (e.g., themes of belonging vs. exclusion during the Civil Rights Era in the U.S.).

Sight words Words that a reader is able to read quickly without having to sound out. Also, high-frequency, non-phonetic words that beginning readers must learn to recognize as wholes, e.g., *once, were, was, etc.* (See **Dolch Word List; High-frequency**)

Signal words Words or phrases that “signal” the organizing structure of a text. Signal words indicate continuation (*and, in addition*), change of direction (*however, but, nevertheless*), sequence (*first, before, next*), etc. They are also referred to as *transition words* because they clearly link sentences, subjects, or other parts of the text. Download a free copy of Edward Fry’s Signal words from:

http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/PF_Signal_Words.htm

Simple sentence A sentence composed of only one independent clause and no dependent clauses (e.g., *The bus is coming.*) (See **Complex sentence; Compound sentence; Dependent clause; Independent clause.**)

Simple texts Texts that are straightforward and uncomplicated in word choice, sentence structure, and format. Simple texts are composed of common words, common sentence structures, and/or a straightforward organizational structure (e.g., a sequential plotline). The use of “simple” does not refer to the ideas presented in the text, which may be rich and engaging at any level.

Simplified texts Texts that are specially written for classroom use but have the style and format of authentic texts. The words in the texts are controlled for the decoding and word recognition skills of students and often have everyday words and simple sentence structures. (See **Adapted texts; Authentic texts.**)

Skim To quickly run one’s eyes over a text to get its gist (e.g., someone might skim to determine if an article is about a crime or about an accident). (See **Scan.**)

Sophisticated texts Written material which utilizes complex organizational structures and high-level vocabulary.

Standard Statements that articulate what learners should know and be able to do within a specific content area. Standards reflect the knowledge and skills of an academic discipline, and reflect what the stakeholders of educational systems recognize as essential to be taught and learned. The standards provide a clear outline of content and skills so that programs can develop and align curriculum, instruction, and assessments.

Strand In this document, a strand is a cluster of learning standards in a content area, organized around a central idea, concept, or theme. For instance, the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework includes a Reading Strand, a Writing Strand, an Oral Communications Strand, and a Critical Thinking Strand.

Strategy The metacognitive and cognitive activities the reader intentionally employs to construct meaning during reading. Metacognitive strategies include, for instance, considering purpose for reading and monitoring comprehension. Cognitive strategies to support these might be, respectively, self-questioning prior to reading (e.g., *Why did the author choose this title? What happens next to the man in the photo?*) and trying to answer these questions during and after reading.

Stress (See **Syllable stress**; **Word stress**.)

Suffix A word part that is added to the ending of a root or base word and establishes the part of speech of that word (e.g., *-ion* added to assert, a verb, creates the word assertion, a noun). (See **Affix**; **Root**).

Syllabication, Syllabification Dividing words into syllables in order to pronounce them (e.g. ex/press). Once a word is divided into syllables, knowledge of syllable patterns/types can be used to determine how to pronounce the individual syllables, which can then be blended together to say the whole word. Common syllabication rules include: 1) divide between the two words forming a compound word (e.g., camp/fire); 2) divide between two consonants (CC) that occur in the middle of a word (VC/CV; pic/nic); 3) divide before the consonant that precedes the *-le* at the end of a word (/Cle; a/ble); and 4) divide before a single consonant in the middle of the word and give the long vowel sound to the vowel that precedes it (V/CV; re/port). If the word doesn't sound like a known word, divide the word after the consonant and give the preceding vowel its short sound (VC/V; cab/in). (See **Syllable patterns**; **Syllable types**.)

Syllable A word or part of a word that contains one vowel sound.

Syllable patterns Common arrangements of vowels and consonants within syllables. These include: the consonant-vowel-consonant pattern (CVC), the vowel-consonant-e pattern (VCe), the consonant-vowel pattern (CV), the consonant-le pattern (C-le), and the vowel-r pattern (Vr). *Syllable patterns* may also refer to *word patterns/families* (e.g., -an, -op, -it) when they appear in multisyllabic words. (See **Syllable types**; **Word patterns**; **Word families**.)

Syllable stress The degree of force with which a syllable is uttered. Syllables can be stressed or unstressed in varying degrees. Stress is an important component of pronunciation and contributes to meaning and to intelligibility (e.g. /*re cord*'/, meaning “to store information” and /*rec ord*/, meaning “an account”). Stress also affects vowel pronunciation; vowels that occur in unstressed syllables are usually pronounced with the schwa (/uh/) sound.

Syllable types Names given to syllables based on the arrangement of the vowels and consonants within them. The six main syllable types are: 1) closed (CVC), 2) silent-e (VCe), 3) open (CV), 4) vowel teams, 5) r-controlled (Vr), and 6) consonant-le (C-le). *Syllable types* may sometimes be used interchangeably with *syllable patterns*. (See **Syllable patterns**.)

Technical vocabulary A term used by Laufer & Nation (1999) to refer to words which capture important concepts within a specific discipline (e.g., photosynthesis in biology; oligarchy in social studies; simile in literature studies; exponent in mathematics). Also called *terms* or *Tier 3 words*, they usually have only one meaning. In Informational texts, Tier 3 words often carry the meaning of the text. (See **Terms**; **Tier 3 words**.)

Terms Words which capture important concepts within a specific discipline (e.g., photosynthesis in biology; oligarchy in social studies; simile in literature studies; exponent in mathematics). Also called *technical vocabulary* or *Tier 3 words*, they usually have only one meaning. In Informational texts, Tier 3 words often carry the meaning of the text. (See **Technical vocabulary**; **Tier 3 words**.)

Text features Visible aids authors insert into the text to support readers in following the intended meaning. Text features include the title, headings, sub-headings, captions, margin notes, footnotes, etc.

Text map A diagram developed and drawn by a reader to help him or her see the different levels or connections of ideas presented in a text. Whereas a graphic organizer tends to be a visual device which can be

applied to a number of texts (e.g., a Venn diagram), a text map follows no set format, is unique to the particular text, and is often used to track the ideas in sophisticated texts. (See **Graphic organizers**.)

Text structure The semantic and syntactic organizational arrangements used to present written information. The purpose of the written communication determines the arrangement of the information presented in the text, and each text structure type is characterized by word cues (or, *signal words*) and text elements that support the text purpose. For example, narrative text structure tells a story and includes a plot sequence, characters, and settings. Descriptive essays illustrate a concept and include sentences that list characteristics of the concept and often make use of adjectival clauses and examples. (See **Signal words**.)

Tier 1 words A term proposed by Beck et al. (2002) to refer to *everyday words*, or those that are heard in everyday spoken language (e.g., ask, baby, walk, smile). Because these words are so often used in conversation, they rarely need to be explained or defined to native English speakers when they encounter the words in written text. (See **Everyday words**; **Tier 2 words**; **Tier 3 words**.)

Tier 2 words A term proposed by Beck et al. (2002) to refer to sophisticated words used across a range of written texts to define common concepts. They are often more precise and complex synonyms for everyday words. Because Tier 2 words identify common concepts, these words can be used across a variety of academic disciplines (math, science, social studies, and literature). Examples of Tier 2 words are: unique, alternate, convenient, influence, minimum. In the sentence Plants require abundant light for the process of photosynthesis, photosynthesis is a science term (*Tier 3*) that is usually explained in the text or by the teacher. Abundant is a Tier 2 word and is usually not explained by the text or the teacher. However, if the meaning of abundant is not known, the sentence cannot be understood. Because ABE and ASE learners have often not read across a wide range of texts, their knowledge of many of these Tier 2 words tends to be fuzzy or non-existent. Also called *academic words* or *general words*, these are important building blocks of comprehension, so learners' lack of familiarity with them can seriously weaken their comprehension. Free lists of common Tier 2 words can be downloaded from: <http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com/id17.htm> . (See **Academic words**; **General words**; **Tier 1 words**; **Tier 3 words**.)

Tier 3 words A term proposed by Beck et al. (2002) to refer to words which capture important concepts within a specific discipline (e.g., photosynthesis in biology; oligarchy in social studies; simile in literature

studies; *exponent* in mathematics). Also called *terms* or *technical vocabulary*, they usually have only one meaning. In Informational texts, Tier 3 words often carry the meaning of the text. (See **Technical vocabulary; Terms; Tier 1 words; Tier 2 words.**)

Tone An expression of the attitude of a writer toward a subject. Unlike *mood*, which is intended to shape the emotional response of the reader, tone reflects the feelings of the author. The tone of the author can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, playful, ironic, bitter, objective, etc. (See **Mood; Voice.**)

Topic In this document, a category of skills or strategies related to a Standard. Topics remain the same at each level and are listed in the far left column of the cross-level table of benchmarks. The purpose of the topics is to aid practitioners in finding benchmarks and tracking them across the various levels.

Transition words (See **Signal words.**)

Validity of Tests The extent to which a test measures what it claims to measure and the appropriateness with which test results are used and interpreted.

Vocabulary All the words for which an individual associates meanings. Vocabulary instruction should address the total number of word meanings known (breadth of vocabulary), the level of understanding of known words (depth of vocabulary), and how to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words (strategies).

Voice A writer’s unique use of language that allows a reader to perceive a human personality in the writing. The elements of style that determine a writer’s voice include sentence structure, word choice, and tone. (See **Tone.**)

“With support” In this document, used to indicate that teacher guidance, assistance, and/or supervision is expected for students to demonstrate the skills or strategies contained in a benchmark.

Word analysis Applying knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, syllable patterns/types, syllabication rules, and/or knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes in order to determine the pronunciation of an unfamiliar word. (See **Decoding.**)

Word analysis /phonics assessments Tests which assess a reader’s knowledge of various aspects of phonics knowledge. They are most often

lists of phonetically-regular pseudowords (e.g., splink, blesk) or low-frequency words made up of the phonic elements being assessed. Download a free word analysis assessment using low-frequency real words from: http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/PF_SG_All_Docs.htm

Word families Words with the same *rime* (e.g., fame, game, lame, name, same). Practice with word families helps readers to attend to and quickly recognize syllable patterns when reading. *Word families* can also refer to words linked by derivation or etymology (e.g. doubt, doubtful, doubtless, dubious) or to words which belong to a semantic group (e.g. bean, squash, carrot belong to the semantic group, *vegetables*); a syntactical group (e.g. walk, run, jump belong to the syntactic group, *verbs*); or a functional group (e.g. hello, hi, good morning belong to the functional group, *greetings*). (See **Rime**.)

Word identification The ability to see a word in print and pronounce it accurately and quickly without having to sound it out. “Accurate pronunciation” includes variations that are the result of regional and foreign accents. Also known as *word recognition*.

Word order The correct order of subject, verb, adjectives, and other parts of speech in an utterance or sentence. Word order often follows set rules (e.g., a blue book instead of a book blue). Word order in a sentence can affect meaning (e.g., in the sentence, The Red Sox beat the Yankees, the first word indicates the doer of the action, while the sixth indicates the recipient of the action.) Word order can also provide clues for the meaning of a word (e.g., In the sentence The jeft is on the floor, the reader or listener can surmise that the nonsense word, jeft, is a noun because it comes after the article, the, and before a verb.)

Word patterns Sometimes called *rimes*, word patterns are frequently-occurring letter arrangements which are the basis for one-syllable rhyming words, or *word families* (e.g., the *-an* pattern is found in ban, fan, man, pan, ran, bran, van). (See **Rime**.)

Word recognition (See **Word identification**.)

Word sorts A technique used in reading and vocabulary instruction in which learners group words that are similarly pronounced (e.g., same first sound, same last sound) or words that are semantically related (e.g., food items, medical words, or words that describe).

Work texts Written materials typically found in the workplace, including signs, forms, flyers, posters, memos, emails, handbooks, user’s guides, training and policy manuals, reports, etc. (See **Community texts**.)

SECTION 6

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The following sets of existing content/learning standards and standards resources informed the work of the ELA Revision Team:

Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse
<http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov>

American Diploma Project Benchmarks
<http://www.achieve.org/ADPBenchmarks>

Arizona Adult Education Content Standards (2006)
<http://www.ade.az.gov/adult-ed/Documents/AEStandards/Adopted/AZAStandards-2006Rev.pdf>

Common Core State Standards (March 2010 Draft)
Final version is available at: <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

Equipped for the Future Read with Understanding Curriculum Framework (2006)
http://www.sde.state.ok.us/Programs/LifelongLearn/pdf/Use_Reading.pdf

Equipped for the Future Read with Understanding Performance Continuum
http://eff.cls.utk.edu/assessment/arc_library.htm

Maine Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction (2007)
<http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/pei/index.html>

Reading Framework for the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (2008) <http://www.nagb.org/publications/frameworks.htm>

Rhode Island Adult Education Content Standards: Read with Understanding (2007)
http://www.ric.edu/aepdc/priority_aecs.php

Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (2008)
<http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=EADF962E-0E3E-DA80-BAAD2496062F3CD8>

Washington Read with Understanding Curriculum Framework for ABE Students (2009) http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/wa_abe_reading_cf_2009.pdf