

Common Assessment Initiative | Preliminary Assessment Competencies for Reading and English

Reading				
Reading Materials	Authentic text (print materials that occur naturally in the lives of learners outside of their classrooms)	More complex authentic text (print materials that occur naturally in the lives of learners outside of their classrooms)	Expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text	More complex expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text
Acquire and use vocabulary	Demonstrate understanding of words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading authentic texts, and being read to.	Demonstrate understanding of general academic language from authentic business and mass media sources.	Demonstrate understanding of general academic and technical words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.	Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of general academic, technical, and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading and writing at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
Recognize vocabulary appropriate to context	Recognize variations from standard English in an authentic text.	Differentiate between slang, idioms, and standard English in an authentic text.	Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in expository or academic fiction or non-fiction texts.	Analyze the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in expository or academic fiction or non-fiction texts.
Follow instructions	Demonstrate understanding of a basic multistep procedure.	Demonstrate understanding of a multistep procedure.	Demonstrate understanding of a complex multistep procedure.	Demonstrate understanding of a highly complex multistep procedure.
Analyze ideas and events in text	Describe the relationship between a series of events, ideas, concepts, or procedures in an authentic text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.	Explain literal and implied relationships between events, procedures, ideas, or concepts based on specific information in an authentic text, including predicting what will happen next.	Analyze how an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text makes literal and implied connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, allusions, or categories).	Analyze a complex set of literal or implied ideas or sequences of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text.
Determine main and supporting	Determine the main idea of an	Determine the literal and implied main idea of an authentic text and	Determine the literal and implied main idea, theme, or conclusions of	Determine the literal and implied main idea, theme, or conclusions of an expository or

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ideas	authentic text.	how it is supported by key details.	an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text and how it is supported by key details.	academic fiction or non-fiction text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details.
Comprehend and summarize texts	Write a one-sentence summary.	Outline the main idea and key details of an authentic text. Demonstrate comprehension by using a graphic organizer to map content in an authentic text.	Write a paragraph summary of an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text that is separate from personal opinions or judgments.	Write an accurate summary of an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text that includes complex concepts, processes, or information and is free of personal opinions or judgments. Evaluate the accuracy of a summary of an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text.
Determine author's purpose and stance	Identify the main purpose of an authentic text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.	Identify purpose and stance in multiple accounts of the same event or topic in authentic texts.	Determine an author's purpose and stance in an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text and recognize how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. Identify examples from an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text that reveal an author's purpose and stance.	Determine an author's purpose and stance in an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text and analyze how an author advances that purpose and stance and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. Identify and analyze aspects of an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text that reveal an author's tone, purpose, or stance (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts, figurative language).
Analyze author's stance	Identify an author's stance in an authentic text.	Distinguish own stance from that of the author of an authentic text.	Compare the stance of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics in an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text.	Analyze and evaluate the stance of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics in an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
Evaluate text	Identify and differentiate between facts and opinions in an authentic	Identify and differentiate between facts and opinions in authentic text; identify how the author uses	Delineate and evaluate clear arguments and specific claims in an expository or academic fiction or	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text, assessing whether

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	text.	facts to support the conclusion.	nonfiction text; differentiate fact and opinion; follow the line of reasoning to its conclusion.	the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence or bias is introduced.
Analyze the structure of texts	Use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in an authentic text. Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic.	Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in an authentic text.	Analyze how a particular literary or rhetorical element fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas. Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more expository or academic fiction or nonfiction texts.	Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes the points clear, convincing, and engaging.
Research and Response to Reading				
Analyze texts	List the main points of an authentic text.	List the main points of an authentic text and identify the author's conclusion.	Demonstrate the ability to summarize, analyze, and make a simple synthesis between two expository or academic fiction or non-fiction texts.	Conduct purpose-driven research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
Write arguments	Express an opinion about an idea found in an authentic text and give reasons (e.g., agree or disagree with the death penalty in response to a short news item on capital punishment and give reasons based on personal beliefs).	Establish a claim based on details and examples in an authentic text (e.g., list reasons for agreement or disagreement with the death penalty based on a short news item on capital punishment).	Establish a claim and cite evidence from an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text (e.g., state a position on the death penalty based on an academic text on capital punishment and support this stance with evidence).	Establish an original argument with reasons backed by evidence from an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text (e.g., argue for or against the efficacy of the death penalty based on an academic text on capital punishment).
Gather evidence	Locate information in an authentic print or digital source.	Locate and organize information from personal experiences or authentic print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources.	Gather relevant information from personal experience and a print or digital academic source; assess the relevance and reliability of the	Gather relevant information from primary and secondary print and digital academic sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each

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			source; quote the source while avoiding plagiarism.	source; quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
Paraphrase and quote	Recognize a direct quote in an authentic text.	Quote accurately from an authentic text.	Quote accurately from an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text.	Quote and paraphrase appropriately and accurately from an expository or academic fiction or non-fiction text to effectively support a claim.
Vocabulary and Grammar				
Vocabulary Levels	Use standard English words and phrases with few errors that obscure meaning.	Use standard English words and phrases that are appropriate to the topic with few errors that obscure meaning.	Accurately use general academic words and phrases in proper form.	Accurately use general academic words and phrases, sufficient for reading and writing at the college readiness level.
Demonstrate command of English grammar and usage	<p>Demonstrate familiarity with standard English and basic syntax when writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write complete simple sentences • Identify simple, compound, and complex sentences • Employ proper subject/verb agreement • Distinguish between adjective and adverb word forms • Employ proper pronoun agreement 	<p>Demonstrate basic understanding of the general conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write simple and compound sentences • Use phrases and clauses • Identify prepositional phrases • Recognize and correct subject/verb agreement errors in simple sentences • Form and use appropriate verb tenses including progressive, simple present, simple past, and future • Recognize and correct pronoun case errors • Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to, too, two; there, their, they're</i>) 	<p>Demonstrate proficiency with the general conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose among simple and compound sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas • Subordinate phrases and clauses to indicate connections between ideas • Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers • Recognize and correct run-ons and fragments • Recognize and correct subject/verb agreement errors in complex sentences 	<p>Demonstrate command of the general conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use parallel structure • Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations • Use gender-neutral language

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and use verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) • Form and use modal auxiliaries and appropriate verb tenses including progressive, present, past, and perfect tenses • Use the appropriate order of multiple adjectives (e.g., opinion, size, color, texture, material) • Correct shifts in pronoun number and case as well as unclear pronoun reference • Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>except, accept; then, than</i>) • Demonstrate an awareness of gender-neutral language 	
Demonstrate command of mechanics and conventions	Demonstrate the basic conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing a simple sentence.	Demonstrate basic understanding of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing essays.	Demonstrate proficiency with the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing essays.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing essays.
Choose words effectively	Use standard English words and phrases with few errors that obscure meaning.	Choose conventional language that adequately expresses ideas, recognizing and reducing wordiness.	Choose language that effectively expresses ideas, recognizing and eliminating wordiness.	Choose language that effectively expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness.
Determine meaning of words and phrases using context	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases in authentic texts, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a 	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases in authentic print and digital sources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or 	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases in an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or 	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words, homophones, and phrases in an expository or academic fiction or nonfiction text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of patterns of word changes that indicate different

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	<p>word or phrase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word (e.g., happy/unhappy, tell/retell) Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., addition, additional) Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words (e.g., birdhouse, lighthouse, housefly; bookshelf, notebook, bookmark) 	<p>paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>Use common affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>pro-</i> and <i>anti-</i>).</p>	<p>paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>Use common affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>precede</i>, <i>recede</i>, <i>secede</i>).</p>	<p>meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>analyze</i>, <i>analysis</i>, <i>analytical</i>; <i>advocate</i>, <i>advocacy</i>) and apply knowledge of roots and affixes.</p>
Determine meaning of words using reference tools	<p>Choose the appropriate definition among multiple definitions in a dictionary of common words with clear differences between meanings.</p>	<p>Choose the appropriate definition among multiple definitions in a dictionary of words with clear differences between meanings.</p>	<p>Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning or part of speech of a word or phrase (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses).</p> <p>Choose the appropriate definition among multiple definitions in a dictionary of words with nuanced differences in meaning.</p>	<p>Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses, or discipline-specific references), both print and digital, determine or clarify a word's precise meaning, part of speech, or etymology.</p> <p>Choose the appropriate definition among multiple definitions in a dictionary of academic words with nuanced differences in meaning.</p>
Writing				
Writing Tasks	<p>Write short, topic-based assignments with a main idea.</p>	<p>Write short, topic-based papers with a main idea.</p>	<p>Write coherent essays and paragraphs, about course readings and/or other subjects.</p>	<p>Write essays including argumentation that integrate and synthesize course readings and are clearly focused, fully developed, and logically organized.</p>

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Write informative or explanatory texts	Write simple, assignment-driven informative or explanatory paragraphs or short papers that examine a topic and convey ideas.	Write assignment-driven informative or explanatory paragraphs or short essays that examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.	Write informative or explanatory texts to examine a topic and adequately convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.	Write informative or explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content, including narration, explanation, and process analysis.
Respond to a timed writing prompt	Respond to a timed writing prompt.	Develop a plan and write a complete response to a timed prompt.	Strategize and execute a plan in response to a timed writing prompt.	Effectively strategize and execute a plan that responds thoroughly to a timed writing prompt.
State a main idea	State a simple topic.	State a specific main idea.	Create a developed, specific main idea that is relevant to the assignment and supportable.	Create a fully developed, specific central claim that is relevant to the assignment, arguable, and defensible.
Support a main idea with details	Group information related to a topic.	Use details to support a main idea; differentiate between examples and general statements.	Develop the main idea with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.	Develop the central claim and build to a logical conclusion with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to communicate clearly to the audience.
Support a main idea with evidence	Identify appropriate personal experiences, examples, or details relevant to the topic.	Use appropriate personal experiences, examples, or a text as evidence.	Draw evidence from a variety of texts to support a main idea.	Draw relevant evidence from a variety of texts to support analysis, reflection, and argument.

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Organize writing	Introduce a topic and organize a paragraph by grouping examples and making connections between ideas.	Introduce a topic and organize a paragraph that captures ideas, concepts, and information and that communicates basic relationships by using a topic sentence and details that support the central idea.	Introduce a topic and organize an essay that captures ideas, concepts, and information and communicates logical relationships by using topic sentences and paragraphs to support the central idea. Introduce a topic clearly and organize ideas, concepts, and information using a designated rhetorical mode.	Introduce a topic and organize an essay that captures complex ideas, concepts, and information and communicates logical relationships by effectively arranging topic sentences and paragraphs to support the central claim. Refine, qualify, and amplify the thesis, and determine and use the appropriate rhetorical mode.
Write for specific purposes and audiences	Produce writing that demonstrates a basic awareness of purpose and audience.	Produce writing that demonstrates understanding of how purpose and audience affect writing.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are adequate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; establish and maintain an academic voice.
Vary sentences structure	Recognize and imitate basic sentence models.	Differentiate and use a variety of sentence types.	Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader interest, and style.	Vary syntax for effect, consulting references for guidance as needed.
Edit writing	Develop and strengthen writing by responding to comments on the writing.	Develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach in response to comments on the writing.	Develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed in response to global comments on the writing.	Develop and strengthen writing independently by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and writing type.