



# Achievement Level Descriptors for High School Science

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**Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors**

The Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) 2.0 is the state's alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) for those students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general statewide assessment program, even with maximum allowable accommodations.

The GAA 2.0 is designed to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are provided access to the state academic content standards and given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the essential knowledge, concepts, and skills inherent in the standards. To that end, the GAA 2.0 assesses students' understanding of the state's alternate academic content standards, or *Extended Content Standards*, which align to the grade-level content standards. Alignment refers to the connection of the skill through which students will demonstrate what they know and can do, to the content standard expectations for general education students in a given grade. Students with significant cognitive disabilities may need to learn these skills differently, in smaller segments, with fewer identified components, at a slower pace, and/or learn skills that would provide access to the standard. The *Extended Content Standards* allow students to show learning of concepts and constructs within a grade-level standard, but at reduced levels of complexity.

The following four achievement levels generally describe students' understanding of the essential knowledge and skills outlined in Georgia's Extended Content Standards.

**Level 1:** Students at this level demonstrate a **limited** understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia's alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and **may need substantial academic support** as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.

**Level 2:** Students at this level demonstrate a **partial** understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia's alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and **may need frequent academic support** as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.

**Level 3:** Students at this level demonstrate an **adequate** understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia's alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and **may need occasional academic support** as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.

**Level 4:** Students at this level demonstrate a **thorough** understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia's alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and **may need limited academic support** as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.

More detailed and content-specific concepts and skills are provided for each grade and content area in the **Achievement Level Descriptors** (ALDs). ALDs are narrative descriptions of the knowledge and skills expected at each of the four achievement levels, based on the *Extended Content Standards*. The ALDs were developed for each grade level and content area by committees of Georgia educators.

**ALDs show a progression of knowledge and skills** for which students must demonstrate competency across the achievement levels. It is important to understand that a student should demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills within his/her achievement level as well as all content and skills in any achievement levels that precede his/her own, if any. For example, a Level 3 learner should also possess the knowledge and skills of a Level 2 learner and a Level 1 learner.

Policy ALDs				
Standards	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<p>Students at this level demonstrate a <b>limited</b> understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia’s alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and <b>may need substantial academic support</b> as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.</p>	<p>Students at this level demonstrate a <b>partial</b> understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia’s alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and <b>may need frequent academic support</b> as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.</p>	<p>Students at this level demonstrate an <b>adequate</b> understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia’s alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and <b>may need occasional academic support</b> as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.</p>	<p>Students at this level demonstrate a <b>thorough</b> understanding of the knowledge and skills specified in Georgia’s alternate academic content standards. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on essential knowledge and skills and <b>may need limited academic support</b> as they transition to the next grade/course, inclusive postsecondary education, or competitive integrated employment.</p>

**Range ALDs**

**Students explain or use models to demonstrate the role of cellular structures in maintaining homeostasis, the relationship between structure and function within a cell, and the cycling of matter through photosynthesis and respiration.**

<p>SB1a SB1d SB1e</p>	<p>Identify a statement which describes the interaction between two cell structures or organelles.</p>	<p>Identify statements which describe the interaction between two or more cell structures or organelles in maintaining homeostasis.</p> <p>Identify steps needed to determine the role of one type of cellular transport (e.g., active, passive, and osmosis) in maintaining homeostasis.</p> <p>Use a model to identify a question to explain a role of photosynthesis or respiration within a living thing.</p>	<p>Develop statements which describe the interaction between two or more cell structures and organelles in maintaining homeostasis.</p> <p>Sequence steps needed to identify the role of one type of cellular transport (e.g., active, passive, and osmosis) in maintaining homeostasis.</p> <p>Identify a question about the functions or sub-processes of photosynthesis or respiration within a living thing.</p>	<p>Using a model, develop two or more steps needed to identify the role of types of cellular transport (e.g., active, passive, and osmosis) in maintaining homeostasis.</p> <p>Identify a question to explain the roles of photosynthesis and respiration in the cycling of matter and flow of energy within a living thing.</p>
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**Students use models to explain common ancestry and differences across groups of organisms.**

<p>SB4b SB4c</p>		<p>Identify a pattern of common ancestry used in a model to show a relationship among a major group of organisms.</p> <p>Identify a statement from given evidence which describes similarities in the characteristics of viruses and organisms.</p> <p>Identify a statement from given evidence which describes differences in the characteristics of viruses and organisms.</p>	<p>Identify the data used to develop a model that shows patterns of common ancestry among major groups of organisms.</p> <p>Develop a statement from given evidence which supports similarities in the characteristics of viruses and organisms.</p> <p>Develop a statement from given evidence which supports differences in the characteristics of viruses and organisms.</p>	<p>Compare models based on patterns of common ancestry to determine the model developed from data sets.</p> <p>Identify evidence needed to support similarities in the characteristics of viruses and organisms.</p> <p>Identify evidence needed to support differences in the characteristics of viruses and organisms.</p>
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<b>Students describe the interrelationships between organisms and the environment within an ecosystem.</b>				
<p>SB5b SB5d SB5e</p>	<p>Use a model to identify the flow of energy within an ecosystem.</p> <p>Use a model to identify the flow of energy in a simple energy pyramid.</p>	<p>Use a model to create a food web with given components to show flow of energy within an ecosystem.</p> <p>Identify multiple components needed to design a solution to reduce the impact of a given human activity on the environment.</p> <p>Identify a solution for a given human activity from a number of possible solutions.</p> <p>Identify statements which predict an organism’s ability to survive within changing environmental limits.</p>	<p>Develop a model of an energy pyramid with given items showing quantity of energy use through a series of more/less decisions.</p> <p>Given specific components, develop a model of a food web to show the flow of energy within an ecosystem.</p> <p>Connect an aspect of the impact of a given human activity on the environment with a possible solution.</p> <p>Develop a statement which predicts an organism’s ability to survive within changing environmental limits.</p>	<p>Develop a model of an energy pyramid with given items showing quantity of energy used from most to least.</p> <p>Design a basic solution which reduces the impact of a given human activity on the environment.</p> <p>Develop two or more statements which predict an organism’s ability to survive within changing environmental limits.</p> <p>Design a basic solution which reduces the impact of a given human activity on the environment.</p>