



**Achievement Level Descriptors**  
**for**  
**Grade 3 English Language Arts**

Georgia Department of Education  
September 2015  
All Rights Reserved

### Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors

With the implementation of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, Georgia educators have developed four achievement levels to describe student mastery and command of the knowledge and skills outlined in Georgia’s content standards. Most students have at least some knowledge of the content described in the content standards; however, achievement levels succinctly describe how much mastery a student has. Achievement levels give meaning and context to scale scores by describing the knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to achieve each level.

The four achievement levels on Georgia Milestones are *Beginning Learner*, *Developing Learner*, *Proficient Learner*, and *Distinguished Learner*. The general meaning of each of the four levels is provided below:

**Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***need substantial academic support*** to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

**Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***need additional academic support*** to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

**Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***are prepared*** for the next grade level or course and are on track for college and career readiness.

**Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***are well prepared*** for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for college and career readiness.

More detailed and content-specific concepts and skills are provided for each grade, content area, and course in the **Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)**. ALDs are narrative descriptions of the knowledge and skills expected at each of the four achievement levels and were developed for each grade level, content area, and course by committees of Georgia educators in March 2015 and July 2015. The ALDs are based on the state-adopted content standards.

**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 Proficient Learner should also possess the knowledge and skills of a Developing Learner *and* a Beginning Learner.

ALD	Standard	Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
<b>Policy</b>		<b>Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills</b> necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students need substantial academic support to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i> .	<b>Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills</b> necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students need additional academic support to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i> .	<b>Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills</b> necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students are prepared for the next grade level or course and are on track for <i>college and career readiness</i> .	<b>Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills</b> necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students are well prepared for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for <i>college and career readiness</i> .
<b>Range</b>		A student who achieves at the <b>Beginning Learner</b> level tends to read and comprehend informational texts and literature that do not meet the demands of grade level texts that would signal this student is on track for college and career readiness and requires substantial instructional support to improve reading skills.	A student who achieves at the <b>Developing Learner</b> level tends to read and comprehend informational texts and literature of low-to-moderate complexity and sometimes struggles to meet the demands of grade level texts that would signal this student is on track for college and career readiness and requires some instructional support to enhance reading skills.	A student who achieves at the <b>Proficient Learner</b> level reads and comprehends informational texts and literature of moderate-to-high complexity and is meeting the demands of grade level texts that signal this student is on track for college and career readiness.	A student who achieves at the <b>Distinguished Learner</b> level reads and comprehends informational texts and literature of high complexity and is meeting and often exceeding the demands of grade level texts that clearly signal this student is on track for college and career readiness.
	3.RL.1	Answers simple questions to demonstrate understanding of texts.	Answers questions to demonstrate understanding of texts, referring to texts as the basis for answers.	Asks and answers questions to demonstrate understanding of texts, referring explicitly to texts as the basis for answers.	Asks and answers complex questions to demonstrate understanding of texts, referring explicitly to texts as the basis for answers.
	3.RL.2	Recounts stories by identifying details and identifies explicitly stated central messages, lessons, or morals.	Recounts stories by identifying key details and determines simple central messages, lessons, or morals.	Recounts stories by identifying key details in sequential order and determines central messages, lessons, or morals and explains how they are conveyed through key details.	Recounts stories by explaining key details in sequential order and determines implicitly stated central messages, lessons, or morals and explains how they are conveyed

					through key details.
	3.RL.3	Identifies fundamental components of characters in stories and explains how these features contribute to stories.	Describes fundamental components of characters in stories and explains how these components contribute to stories.	Describes characters in stories and explains how their actions contribute to sequence of events in stories.	Describes intricate components of complex characters in stories and explains how their actions contribute to complex sequences of events in stories.
	3.RL.4	Uses easily found, explicitly stated evidence to determine the meanings of simple words and phrases.	Uses explicitly stated evidence to determine the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in texts, identifying literal and nonliteral language.	Determines the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in texts, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.	Determines the meanings of sophisticated words and phrases as they are used in texts, distinguishing literal from complex nonliteral language.
	3.RL.5	Refers to basic elements of stories, dramas, and poems when writing about texts, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza, and identifies how one part builds on an earlier section.	Refers to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing about texts, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza, and describes how one part builds on an earlier section.	Refers to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing about texts, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza, and describes how each successive part builds on earlier sections.	Refers to detailed parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing about texts, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza, and describes how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
	3.RL.6	Identifies clearly stated points of view of narrators or characters.	Distinguishes readers' points of view from clearly stated points of view of narrators or characters.	Distinguishes readers' points of view from points of view of narrators or characters and explains what makes the points of view distinct or similar.	Distinguishes readers' points of view from implied points of view of narrators or characters and explains what makes the points of view distinct or similar.
	3.RL.7	Identifies how specific aspects of texts' simple illustrations show elements of stories.	Infers how specific aspects of texts' simple illustrations show elements of stories.	Explains how specific aspects of texts' illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by words in stories (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of characters or settings).	Explains how specific aspects of texts' detailed illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by words in stories (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of characters or settings).
	3.RL.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	3.RL.9	Identifies simple and directly stated themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).	Describes directly stated themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).	Compares and contrasts themes, settings, and plots written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).	Compares and contrasts very complex, implicit themes, settings, and plots written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).
	3.RI.1	Answers simple questions to demonstrate understanding of	Answers questions to demonstrate understanding,	Asks and answers questions to demonstrate understanding of	Asks and answers complex questions to demonstrate

		texts.	referring to texts as the basis for answers.	texts, referring explicitly to texts as the basis for answers.	understanding of texts, referring explicitly to texts as the basis for answers.
	3.RI.2	Identifies explicitly stated main ideas of texts and identifies details that support main ideas.	Determines simple main ideas of texts and identifies key details that support main ideas.	Determines main ideas of texts and recounts key details and explains how they support main ideas.	Determines implicitly stated main ideas of texts and recounts key details and explains how they support main ideas.
	3.RI.3	Identifies historical events, scientific ideas, or some steps in technical procedures in texts, using language that attempts to address time or sequence.	Identifies simple relationships between historical events, scientific ideas, or steps in technical procedures in texts, using limited language that pertains to time, sequence, and/or cause/effect.	Describes relationships between series of historical events, scientific ideas, or steps in technical procedures in texts, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.	Describes and analyzes complicated relationships between series of historical events, scientific ideas, or steps in technical procedures in texts, using specific and academic language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
	3.RI.4	Uses easily found, explicitly stated evidence to determine the meanings of simple academic and domain-specific words and phrases as used in texts relevant to grade 3 topics or subject areas.	Uses explicitly stated evidence to determine the meanings of simple academic and domain-specific words and phrases as used in texts relevant to grade 3 topics or subject areas.	Determines the meanings of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as used in texts relevant to grade 3 topics or subject areas.	Determines the meanings of sophisticated academic and domain-specific words and phrases as used in texts relevant to grade 3 topics or subject areas.
	3.RI.5	Uses simple text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information directly stated in texts.	Uses simple text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic.	Uses text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic effectively.	Uses complex text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to analyze information relevant to a given topic effectively.
	3.RI.6	Identifies directly stated points of view of authors of texts.	Distinguishes readers' points of view from clearly stated points of view of authors of texts.	Distinguishes readers' points of view from points of view of authors of texts and explains what makes these points of view distinct or similar.	Distinguishes readers' points of view from indirectly stated points of view of authors of texts and explains what makes these points of view distinct or similar.
	3.RI.7	Uses information gained from simple illustrations and direct statements within texts to demonstrate understanding of texts.	Uses information gained from simple illustrations and basic inferences within texts to demonstrate understanding of texts.	Uses information gained from simple illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in texts to demonstrate understanding of texts (e.g.,	Uses information gained from elaborate illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and advanced inferences to demonstrate understanding of

				where, when, why, how key events occur).	texts.
	3.RI.8	Identifies basic connections between particular sentences (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third).	Identifies logical connections between particular sentences and paragraphs in texts (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third).	Describes logical connections between particular sentences and paragraphs in texts (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third).	Describes intricate connections between particular sentences and paragraphs in texts (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third) using textual evidence.
	3.RI.9	Identifies the most important points and key details presented in one text.	Describes the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.	Compares and contrasts the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.	Compares and contrasts the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic and provides evidence from texts to support the comparisons.
	3.W.1	Writes opinion pieces that show little or no organization, lack introductions or conclusions, and provide few or irrelevant reasons to support stated opinions.	Writes opinion pieces that show loose organization, include simple introductions and conclusions, and provide both relevant and irrelevant reasons to support stated opinions.	Writes opinion pieces that show clear organization, include introductions, provide relevant reasons that support stated opinions, use linking words and phrases, and include concluding statements.	Writes engaging multi-paragraph opinion pieces that show clear organization, include effective introductions, provide relevant reasons that effectively support stated opinions, use linking words and phrases, and include effective concluding statements.
	3.W.2	Writes informative/explanatory pieces that show little or no organization, lack introductions or conclusions, and provide few or irrelevant details to support topics.	Writes informative/explanatory pieces that show loose organization, include simple introductions or conclusions, and provide both relevant and irrelevant details to support topics.	Writes informative/explanatory pieces that show clear organization, include introductions, provide relevant details to support topics, use linking words and phrases, and include concluding statements.	Writes engaging multi-paragraph informative/explanatory pieces that show clear organization, include effective introductions, provide relevant details that effectively support topics, use linking words and phrases, and include effective concluding statements.
	3.W.3	Writes narrative pieces that show little or no organization, show little or no establishment of situations, narrators, and/or characters, provide little sense of closure, and include few	Writes narrative pieces that show loose organization, show simple establishment of situations, narrators, and/or characters, provide some sense of closure, and include some	Writes narrative pieces that show clear organization, show establishment of situations, narrators, and/or characters, provide a sense of closure, and include appropriate techniques	Writes engaging narrative pieces that show clear organization, show effective establishment of situations, narrators, and/or characters, provide a strong sense of

		techniques to develop experiences/events.	techniques to develop experiences/events.	to develop experiences/events.	closure, and include appropriate and effective techniques to develop experiences/events.
	3.W.4	Produces writing with guidance and support from adults in which development and organization are inadequate for tasks and purposes.	Produces writing with guidance and support from adults in which development and organization are incomplete for tasks and purposes.	With guidance and support from adults, produces writing in which development and organization are appropriate for tasks and purposes.	With guidance and support from adults, produces effective writing in which development and organization are effective and appropriate for tasks and purposes.
	3.W.5	With guidance and support from adults, strengthens writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	With guidance and support from adults, develops and strengthens writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develops and strengthens writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develops and strengthens writing to an advanced level by planning, revising, and editing.
	3.W.6	With guidance and support from adults, uses technology to produce writing projects.	With guidance and support from adults, uses technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact with others.	With guidance and support from adults, uses technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.	With guidance and support from adults, uses technology to produce and publish complex writing at an advanced level as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
	3.W.7	Conducts simple, short research projects.	Conducts simple, short research projects that build limited knowledge about topics.	Conducts short research projects that build knowledge about topics.	Conducts complex, short research projects that build extensive knowledge about topics.
	3.W.8	Gathers information from sources, providing evidence that is irrelevant or sorted incorrectly into provided categories.	Gathers information from sources, providing some evidence that is sorted incompletely into provided categories.	Gathers information from print and digital sources, takes brief notes on sources, and sorts relevant evidence into provided categories.	Gathers the most relevant information from print and digital sources, effectively takes notes on sources, and efficiently sorts relevant evidence into provided categories.
	3.L.1	Uses conventions of Standard English grammar and usage in simple sentences.	Uses conventions of Standard English grammar and usage in simple and compound sentences, including the use of common nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctions.	Demonstrates command of simple, compound, and complex sentences, including the use of regular and irregular plural nouns, abstract nouns, simple, regular, and irregular verbs, coordinating and subordinating	Demonstrates strong, sophisticated command of grammar in simple, compound, and complex sentences, including the use of regular and irregular plural nouns, abstract nouns, simple, regular, and

				conjunctions, comparative and superlative adverbs, and subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.	irregular verbs, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, comparative and superlative adverbs, and subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
	3.L.2	Capitalizes some simpler words in titles, uses some commas in addresses, and spells some high-frequency words correctly.	Uses conventions of Standard English capitalization in titles and commas in addresses, spells high-frequency words correctly, and uses common spelling patterns when writing unknown words.	Demonstrates a command of Standard English capitalization in titles, commas in addresses, commas and quotation marks in dialogue, and the use of possessives; spells high-frequency words correctly; uses spelling patterns in writing unknown words; and applies spelling generalizations when adding suffixes.	Demonstrates a strong, sophisticated command of Standard English capitalization conventions in titles, commas in addresses, commas and quotation marks in dialogue, and the use of possessives; spells most words correctly; and uses spelling patterns when writing unknown words and when adding suffixes, including the use of intricate spelling patterns and irregularly spelled words.
	3.L.3	Chooses words and/or phrases when writing without apparent care regarding effect.	Chooses words and/or phrases for effect when writing and identifies the differences between spoken and written English.	Chooses words and phrases for effect when writing and applies the differences between spoken and written English.	Chooses precise words and phrases for effect to enhance the message of the writing and applies the differences between spoken and written English.
	3.L.4	Determines the meaning of unknown words using nearby context clues.	Determines the meanings of simple multiple-meaning words using sentence-level context clues and determines the meaning of unknown words using morphemic analysis and/or reference materials.	Determines the meanings of unknown and multiple-meaning words using sentence-level context clues, morphemic analysis, and/or reference materials.	Determines the meanings of sophisticated unknown and multiple-meaning words using sentence-level and paragraph-level context clues, morphemic analysis, and/or reference materials.
	3.L.5	Interprets simple word relationships and nuances in word meanings and identifies real-life connections between words and their uses.	Interprets simple word relationships and nuances in word meanings, identifies the literal meanings of words and phrases in context, and identifies real-life connections	Interprets word relationships and nuances in word meanings, distinguishes literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context, identifies real-world	Interprets sophisticated word relationships and subtle nuances in word meanings, distinguishes literal and nonliteral meanings of complex words and phrases in context,

			between words and their uses.	connections between words and their uses, and distinguishes shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty.	identifies complex real-world connections between words and their uses, and distinguishes subtle shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty.
	3.L.6	Uses some simple grade-appropriate general academic words and phrases.	Uses simple grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal simple spatial and temporal relationships.	Uses grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.	Uses sophisticated grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal subtle spatial and temporal relationships.