



**Achievement Level Descriptors**  
**for**  
**Economics**

Georgia Department of Education  
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## 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.

| <b>POLICY ALDs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>Beginning Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Developing Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Proficient Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Distinguished Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><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>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><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>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><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>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><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>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>RANGE ALDs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Beginning Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Developing Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Proficient Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Distinguished Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>A student who achieves at the <b>Beginning Learner</b> level demonstrates minimal command of the course standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• define scarcity;</li> <li>• identify rational decision making;</li> <li>• define specialization;</li> <li>• identify that government has a role in the economy;</li> <li>• list the three types of economic systems;</li> <li>• identify productivity, economic growth, and standard of living;</li> <li>• define the circular flow of goods and services;</li> <li>• identify law of demand and law of supply;</li> <li>• identify different types of businesses;</li> <li>• identify factors that cause a change in demand and a change in supply;</li> <li>• define fiscal policy;</li> </ul> | <p>A student who achieves at the <b>Developing Learner</b> level demonstrates partial command of the course standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the four types of productive resources (land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship);</li> <li>• identify how an individual or business specializes;</li> <li>• recognize a graph of a production possibilities curve;</li> <li>• explain how a determinant shifts a curve;</li> <li>• identify the three basic economic questions;</li> <li>• identify the three types of economic systems (command, market, mixed);</li> <li>• identify the roles of the government in a market economy;</li> <li>• identify an example of a public good, property rights, or market failure;</li> <li>• describe productivity, economic</li> </ul> | <p>A student who achieves at the <b>Proficient Learner</b> level demonstrates proficiency of the course standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify ways in which productive resources are allocated and define opportunity cost;</li> <li>• describe the three types of economic systems (command, market, mixed);</li> <li>• identify a production possibilities curve to explain the tradeoffs between two options;</li> <li>• define marginal cost and marginal benefit;</li> <li>• describe how individuals and/or businesses are better off when they specialize;</li> <li>• identify an example of government regulation of an individual or business;</li> <li>• use a graph of a supply and demand curve to show how equilibrium</li> </ul> | <p>A student who achieves at the <b>Distinguished Learner</b> level demonstrates advanced proficiency of the course standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use an example to explain the opportunity cost of choosing one alternative over another;</li> <li>• describe why one should engage in behavior when the marginal benefit exceeds the marginal cost, but not if marginal cost exceeds marginal benefit;</li> <li>• use a production possibilities curve or other example to explain how both parties gain from trade when each specializes;</li> <li>• evaluate how each type of economic system addresses the three economic questions;</li> <li>• use an example to explain how government regulation impacts both businesses and individuals;</li> </ul> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• define aggregate supply and aggregate demand;</li> <li>• identify unemployment;</li> <li>• identify the five barriers to trade;</li> <li>• define exchange rate;</li> <li>• define absolute and comparative advantage;</li> <li>• identify examples of positive and negative incentives;</li> <li>• identify the types of financial institutions;</li> <li>• identify the factors that influence an individual's credit score;</li> <li>• identify types of insurance;</li> <li>• identify types of taxation; and</li> <li>• identify ways in which a worker can improve his/her earnings.</li> </ul> | <p>growth, and standard of living;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the flow of goods and services between individuals and businesses on a circular flow diagram;</li> <li>• describe how buyers and sellers interact in a market;</li> <li>• label supply and demand on a graph;</li> <li>• identify sole proprietorship, partnership, and corporation as types of business organization;</li> <li>• identify the different types of unemployment;</li> <li>• describe the structure of the Federal Reserve system;</li> <li>• identify that government sets fiscal policy;</li> <li>• list the ways in which the government controls fiscal policy;</li> <li>• identify EU, NAFTA, and ASEAN as examples of trading blocs;</li> <li>• identify tariffs, quotas, embargoes, standards, and subsidies as examples of trade barriers;</li> <li>• identify that most trade takes place because of comparative advantage;</li> <li>• explain why currency exchange happens;</li> <li>• identify savings/financial options;</li> <li>• define services offered by financial institutions;</li> <li>• describe why a consumer prefers to have a savings account that pays compound interest rather than simple interest;</li> <li>• define types of insurance and why people buy insurance;</li> <li>• define types of taxation; and</li> </ul> | <p>price and quantity are determined in a market;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe how prices act as an incentive in a market economy;</li> <li>• give examples of investment in equipment, education, and technology;</li> <li>• use a graph to show how a change in a given factor affects supply and/or demand curve(s);</li> <li>• use a circular flow diagram to describe how money flows between individuals, businesses, and the government in exchange for goods and services and resources;</li> <li>• identify the different types of market structures: pure competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition, and oligopoly;</li> <li>• identify the means by which economic activity is measured;</li> <li>• describe how a change in monetary policy affects the interest rate;</li> <li>• list the tools used by the Federal Reserve to implement monetary policy;</li> <li>• identify examples of fiscal policy;</li> <li>• describe how a change in fiscal policy affects consumer spending;</li> <li>• differentiate between absolute and comparative advantage;</li> <li>• describe the costs and benefits of free trade;</li> <li>• use an exchange rate table to determine the price of one currency in terms of another currency;</li> <li>• describe how individuals select one option over another for financial</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain how a change in demand and/or supply affect(s) equilibrium price and quantity;</li> <li>• describe how an increase in investment leads to an increase in economic growth;</li> <li>• explain why investment in equipment, education, and technology leads to economic growth;</li> <li>• use graphs to describe how price controls create shortages or surpluses;</li> <li>• identify price elasticity of demand and supply by recognizing factors that influence the elasticity of demand and supply for a product;</li> <li>• compare and contrast the different types of market structures: pure competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition, and oligopoly;</li> <li>• use a diagram of a business cycle to determine the various phases and explain how decisions by businesses, consumers, and the government impact the business cycle;</li> <li>• illustrate the means by which economic activity is measured;</li> <li>• describe how a change in monetary policy impacts prices, unemployment, and economic growth;</li> <li>• describe why individuals/countries trade with each other based on comparative advantage;</li> <li>• compare and contrast the arguments for and against free</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use charts and/or tables to describe the relationship between education and earnings.</li> </ul> | <p>planning;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify groups that benefit and those that lose from unanticipated inflation;</li> <li>• identify examples of progressive, regressive, and proportional taxes;</li> <li>• describe why a sales tax is a regressive tax;</li> <li>• describe why some people such as professional athletes and performers (singers/actors) receive high earnings;</li> <li>• explain why people buy insurance; and</li> <li>• describe the costs and benefits of using different credit options.</li> </ul> | <p>trade;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe how a change in exchange rates impacts monetary and fiscal policy;</li> <li>• describe how to develop a savings/financial plan;</li> <li>• describe the relationship between risk and rate of return as applied to stocks, bonds, and mutual funds;</li> <li>• describe how a change in monetary policy and fiscal policy changes consumers' saving and spending;</li> <li>• describe why the interest rate charged by financial institutions differs from the interest rate paid by financial institutions to depositors;</li> <li>• describe why financial institutions charge different interest rates on different types of loans;</li> <li>• describe how the degree of shared liability, amount of deductibles, and the amount of insured protection desired impact premiums; and</li> <li>• describe how education/training and skill development impact the supply and/or demand for workers.</li> </ul> |
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