

## Depth of Knowledge

### Level 1 -

- Requires students to recite or recall of information including fact, formula, or simple procedure.
- May be asked to demonstrate a rote response, use a well-known formula, follow a set procedure (like a recipe), or perform a clearly defined series of steps.

### Level 2 -

- Requires some mental processing beyond a habitual response.
- Requires students to make some decisions on how to approach a task or problem

### Level 3 -

- Requires reasoning, planning, using evidence and in most cases to “explain their thinking.”
- Requires students to go beyond; to explain, to generalize, or connect ideas

### Level 4 -

- Requires some complex reasoning, planning, developing and thinking over an extended period of time.
- May be asked to develop a hypothesis and perform complex analysis

## Reading Depth of Knowledge Descriptions

*Four levels of depth-of-knowledge are used in this analysis. The levels represent a hierarchy based on complexity (rather than difficulty). This difference takes some time to ponder and refine. The hierarchy is based on two main factors: 1) sophistication and complexity, and 2) the likelihood that students at the grade level tested would have received prior instruction or would have had an opportunity to learn the content. Some assessment items have a low depth-of-knowledge level because the knowledge required is commonly known and student with normal instruction at a grade level should have had the opportunity to learn how to routinely perform what is being asked.*

### Reading Level 1

Level 1 requires students to receive or recite facts or to use simple skills or abilities. Oral reading that does not include analysis of the text, as well as basic comprehension of a text, is included.

Items require only a shallow understanding of the text presented and often consist of verbatim recall from text, slight paraphrasing of specific details from

## Reading: Depth of Knowledge Descriptions



the text, or simple understanding of a single word or phrase. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, Level 1 performance are:

- Support ideas by reference to verbatim or only slightly paraphrased details from the text.
- Use a dictionary to find the meanings of words.
- Recognize figurative language in a reading passage.

### Reading Level 2

Level 2 includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response; it requires both comprehension and subsequent processing of text or portions of text. Inter-sentence analysis of inference is required.

Some important concepts are covered, but not in a complex way. Standards and items at this level may include words such as summarize, interpret, infer, classify, organize, collect, display, compare, and determine whether fact or opinion. Literal main ideas are stressed.

A Level 2 assessment item may require students to apply skills and concepts that are covered in Level 1. However, items require closer understanding of text, possibly through the item's paraphrasing of both the question and the answer. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, Level 2 performance are:

- Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words, phrases, and expressions that could otherwise have multiple meanings.
- Predict a logical outcome based on information in a reading selection.
- Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.

### Reading Level 3

Deep knowledge becomes a greater focus at Level 3. Students are encouraged to go beyond the text; however, they are still required to show understanding of the ideas in the text. Students may be encouraged to explain, generalize, or connect ideas.

Standards and items at Level 3 involve reasoning and planning. Students must be able to support their thinking. Items may involve abstract theme identification, inference across an entire passage, or students' application of prior knowledge.

Items may also involve more superficial connections between texts. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, Level 3 performance are:

- Explain or recognize how the author's purpose affects the interpretation of a reading selection.
- Summarize information from multiple sources to address a specific topic.
- Analyze and describe the characteristics of various types of literature.

### Reading Level 4

Higher-order thinking is central and knowledge is deep at Level 4. The standard or assessment item at this level will probably be an extended activity, with extended time provided for completing it.

The extended time period is not a distinguishing factor if the required work is only repetitive and does not require the application of significant conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking. Students take information from at least one passage of a text and are asked to apply this information to a new task.

They may also be asked to develop hypotheses and perform complex analyses of the connections among texts. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, Level 4 performance are:

- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
- Examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources.
- Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.