

Acknowledgments

The

Contents

Introduction.....1

Section One: Purpose of the Guide Resource for Planning Learning Events to Implement the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools for Kindergarten through Grade Twelve Public Schools.....3

English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve..... 4

Principles and Beliefs Behind the Development of the *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* (2015) 4

Key Themes of English Language Arts/Literacy and English Language Development Instruction..... 5

 Meaning Making 5

 Language Development..... 6

 Effective Expression 6

 Content Knowledge 7

Contents

Section Three: Instruction with Planned Evidence Collection and Feedback Helps Teachers and Students Improve Student Learning21

- Assessment for Learning..... 22
- Steps Toward Creating a More Authentic Assessment..... 22
- Item and Task Types Collect Evidence in New Ways 25
- Accessibility Supports and Accommodations Help All Students Meaningfully Participate 25

Section Four: Using Smarter Balanced Score Reports to Analyze Data and Improve Learning27

- Computer Adaptive Testing: Appropriate Assessment for Each Student.....27
- Practice Tests and Training Tests Available for Teachers, Students, and Parents28
- How Student Performance Is Reported on the Smarter Balanced Assessments28
- Claim Level Achievement—Shows General Student Performance in Content Areas29
- Use Group-Level Data to Identify Trends in Curriculum Strengths and Gaps.....31
- Assessment Target Reports31
- Guiding Questions to Analyze Group-Level Data.....33

Section Five: Conclusion Putting It All Together 34

- Smarter Balanced Resources for Teachers from the Smarter Balanced Digital Library 34
- Formative Assessment Process..... 34
 - Digital Library..... 35
 - Smarter Balanced Web Site 35
 - Council for the Great City Schools Web Site..... 36
 - Common Core State Standards Web Site..... 36
 - WestEd Web Site 37

Introduction

The purpose of the Teacher Guide is to deepen teachers' understanding of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, their alignment with the California Common Core State Standards (CA CCSS), and their intended connection to classroom learning. The information from a wide array of resources and resource sites, including:

- z California Common Core State Standards
- z *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework (ELA/ELD Framework)*
- z Smarter Balanced Test Blueprints
- z Smarter Balanced Practice Test Scoring Guides
- z Smarter Balanced Communication Tools
- z Smarter Balanced Digital Library

The ELA guides are organized by grade span to highlight the changes in expectations as students move through the grade levels. They explain how student skills and knowledge are assessed and reported through collecting and scoring evidence. It also provides examples of the range and types of items that appear on the assessments and the multiple resources that are available to teachers, students, and parents to “de-mystify” the assessments.

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System.

The new Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are different from the previous tests included in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program in several ways including:

- z Designed to measure the expectations embodied in the CA CCSS adopted by the California State Board of Education in August 2010

English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

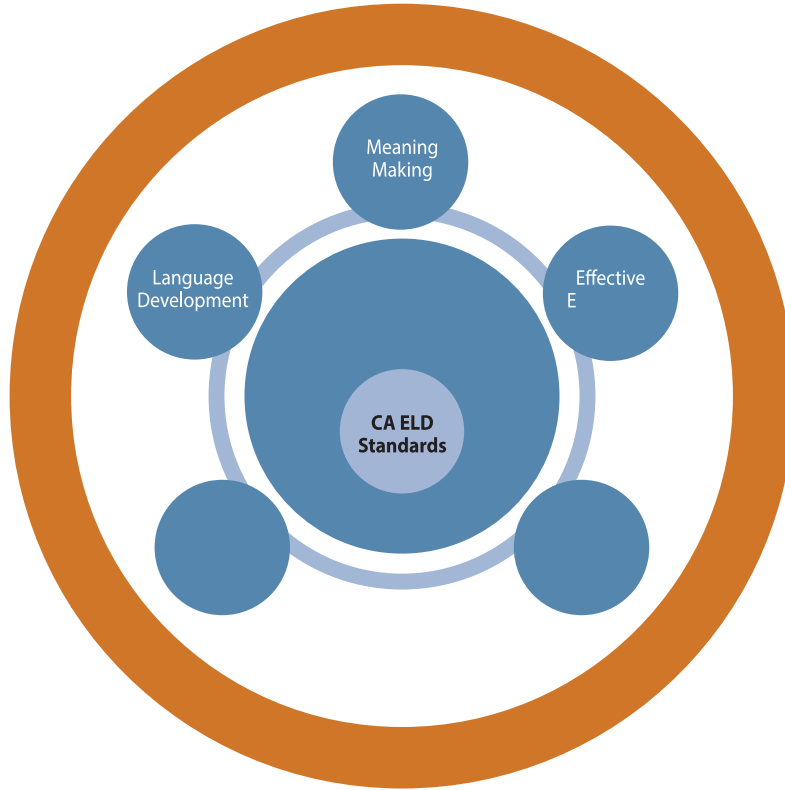
The *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework*. The guidance in this resource is research-based and includes practical examples to help all teachers.

Principles and Beliefs Behind the Development of the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (2015):

- z Schooling should help all students achieve their highest potential.
- z The responsibility for learners' literacy and language development is shared.
- z ELA and English language development (ELD) curricula should be well designed, comprehensive, and integrated.
- z Effective teaching is essential to student success.
- z Motivation and engagement play crucial roles in learning.¹

¹ *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, page 2

Figure 2. Circles of Implementation of ELA and ELD Instruction



and critical reading, writing, and listening are given substantial and explicit attention in every discipline. Among the contributors to meaning making are language, knowledge, motivation, and in the case of reading and writing, the ability to recognize printed words and use the alphabetic code to express ideas.

Language Development

Language is the cornerstone of literacy and learning. It is with and through language that students learn, think, and express information, ideas, perspectives, and questions. The strands of the CA CCSS for ELA—Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Research and Inquiry—all have language at the core, as do the parts of the California ELD Standards—Interacting in Meaningful Ways,

Content Knowledge

Content knowledge is a powerful contributor to comprehension of text and has a



powerful reciprocal relationship with the development of literacy and language. It also supports the ability to write effective opinions/arguments, narratives, and explanatory/informational text; engage in meaningful discussions; and present ideas

and information. It also supports language development, and it is fundamental to learning how English works. Both sets of standards, ELA and ELD, ensure

that students can learn from informational texts and can share their knowledge as writers and speakers.

strides in meaning making, language development, effective expression, and content

Students develop

when they...

Critical thinking

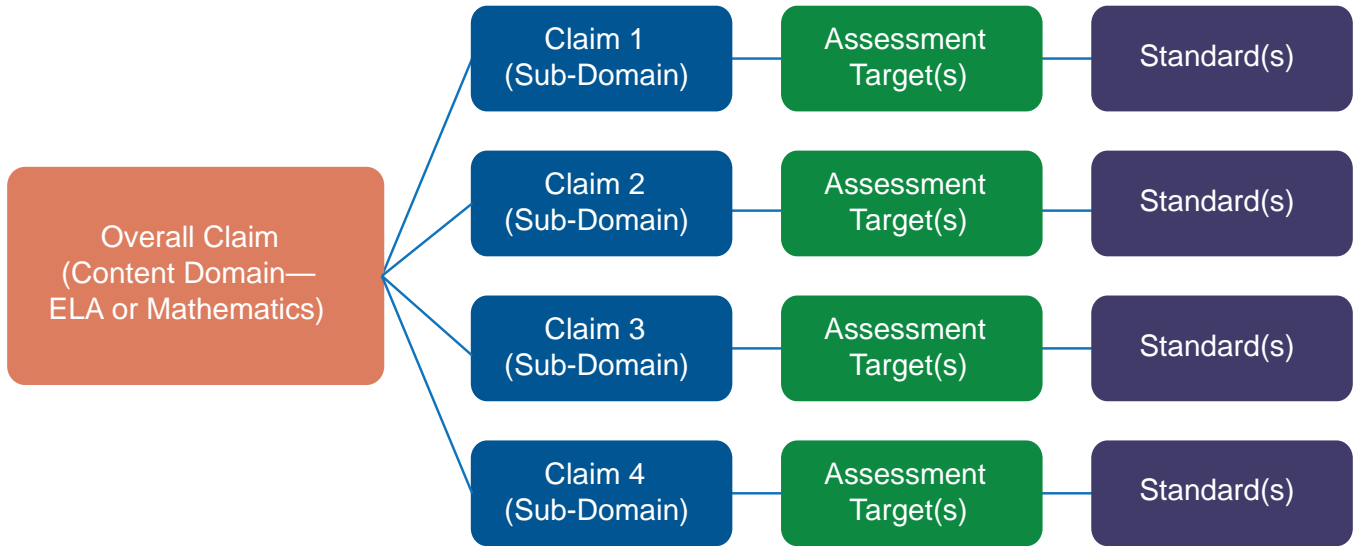
z examine text closely to interpret information

Section Two: Understanding and Using Smarter Balanced Test Design Principles to Support Classroom Learning Events

This section describes the evidence-centered design of the Smarter Balanced assessments and the hierarchical approach to item development. There are examples of how the test developers and teachers use evidence to accurately assess the learning required by the CA CCSS. Connecting the use of evidence-centered design and

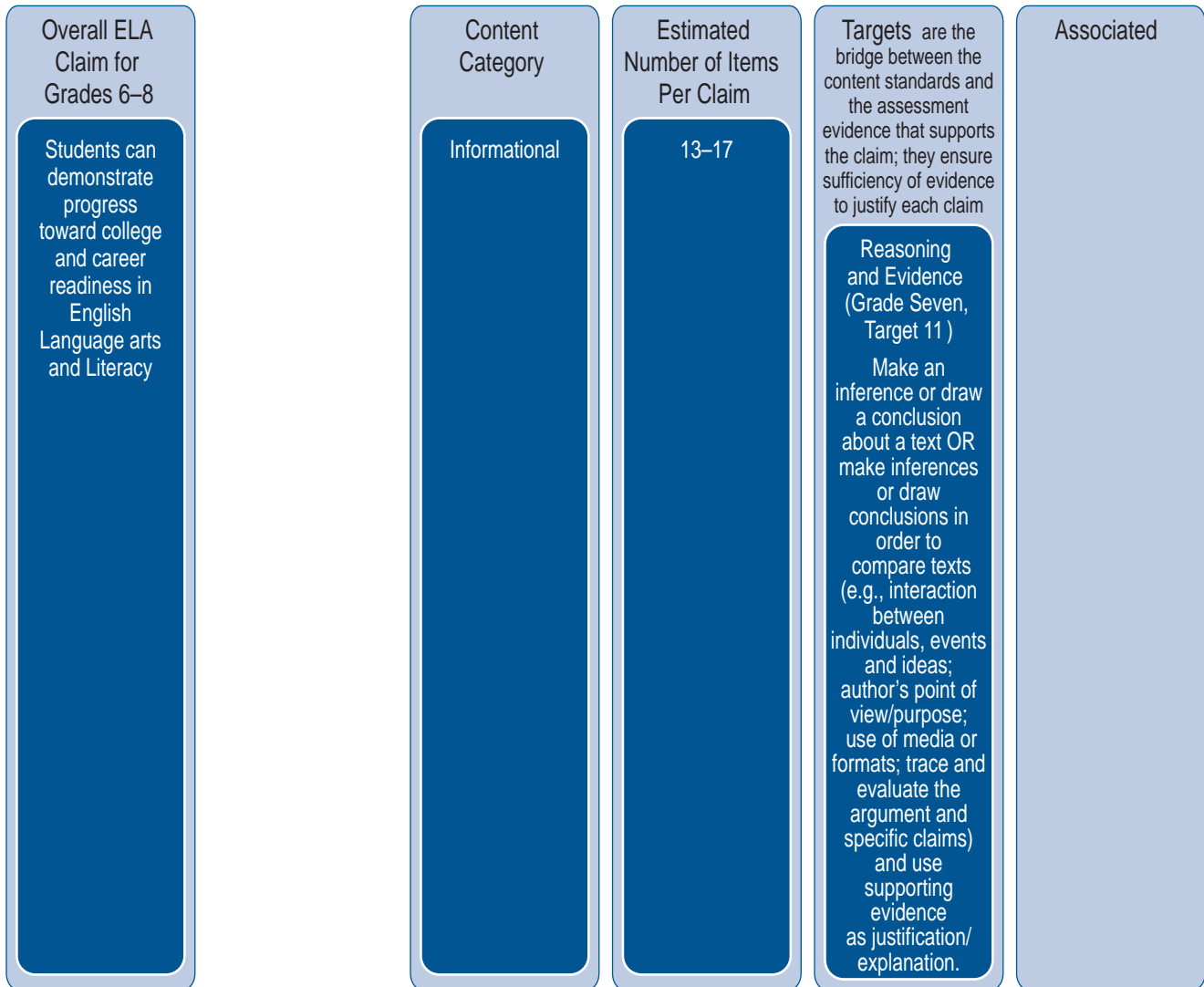
the assessment claims that will be made about the domains. Claims are arguments derived from evidence about college and career readiness; Smarter Balanced claims are statements about what a student knows and is able to do. In the Smarter Balanced

Figure 3. Relationship Among Overall Claims, Sub-Domain Assessment Claims, Assessment Targets and Standards



illustrates how the domain overall claims, sub-domain assessment claims, assessment

**Figure 3a. Anatomy of a Test The Hierarchy of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment
Example English Language Arts Grade Seven**



Connecting the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments to Classroom Learning

The Smarter Connection

What Smarter Balanced resources may a teacher consider in planning learning events for students in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and research?

Grade Seven Range ALD

Claim 1: Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Target 11: Reasoning & Evidence—Use supporting evidence to justify interpretations of information presented or how it is integrated (author’s reasoning; interactions among events, concepts, people, or development of ideas).

- Level 1.** Students should be able to use minimal evidence to justify interpretations regarding two or more central ideas and interactions between individuals, events, and ideas.
- Level 2.** Students should be able to demonstrate partial use of supporting evidence to justify interpretations regarding two or more central ideas and interactions between individuals, events, and ideas; and partially trace and evaluate an argument or specific aspects of a text in which a text’s main ideas and supporting ideas are explicitly and implicitly stated.
- Level 3.** Students should be able to use relevant, supporting evidence to adequately justify interpretations regarding two or more central ideas and interactions between individuals, events, and ideas; and adequately trace and evaluate an argument or specific aspects of a text in which a text’s main ideas and supporting ideas are explicitly and implicitly stated.
- Level 4.** Students should be able to use strong, supporting evidence to thoroughly justify interpretations regarding two or more central ideas and interactions between individuals, events, and ideas; and thoroughly trace and evaluate an argument or specific aspects of a text in which a text’s main ideas and supporting ideas are explicitly and implicitly stated.

6 7 8

Teacher Guide to the Smarter Balanced Assessments

English Language Arts/Literacy

Standards (continued)	RI-9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape

<p>Evidence Required</p>	<p>The student will make an inference about an informational text or texts and identify evidence within the text or texts that support that inference.</p> <p>The student will draw a conclusion about an informational text or texts and identify evidence within the text or texts that support that conclusion.</p>
<p>Allowable Item</p>	<p>Evidence-based Select Response, two-part multiple choice response (EBSR); Hot</p>

Figure 5. Suggested Process to Identify Evidence Requirements From the Smarter Balanced Item Specifications

Step 1: Match the ELA Anchor Standard with the Claim and corresponding Target.

ELA Anchor Standard 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Grade Seven, Claim 1 Reading

Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Grade Seven, Claim 1, Target 11

REASONING & EVIDENCE (Informational Text): Make an inference or draw a conclusion about a text OR make inferences or draw conclusions in order to compare texts (e.g., interaction between individuals, events and ideas; author’s point of view/purpose; use of media or formats; trace and analyze the development of the plot or major characters over the course of the text.)

Step 2: Find the Evidence Statements used to write items for the test for ELA CAT Item 7.11.1. See the Evidence Statement Design Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/> under the heading “Grade 7, Claim 1, Target 11.”

Statements of Required Evidence:

1. The student will make an inference about an informational text or texts and identify evidence within the text or texts that support that inference.
2. The student will draw a conclusion about an informational text or texts and identify evidence within the text or texts that support that conclusion.

Step 3: Become familiar with the question stems used in developing the items so that students also gain familiarity with the vocabulary (e.g., inference”) and phrasing of these stems before the test.



Figure 6: How to Use the Item Specifications and Evidence Statements to Design a Lesson or Activity

Section Three: Instruction with Planned Evidence Collection and Feedback Helps Teachers and Students Improve Student Learning

How can teachers use the Smarter Balanced Tools to enhance the teaching and learning experience?

One of the many challenges for teachers in planning effective learning events for during daily instruction using the formative assessment process, after a unit of instruction on a key topic using interim assessments, and at the end of the year with summative assessments provides a balanced view of the student’s learning progress. The classroom during the school year.

The *ELA/ELD Framework* emphasizes the integrated nature of ELA and content literacy through reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. No standard or content

area should be taught in isolation. Students respond to high quality reading texts through speaking and writing.

In contrast, source materials for a writing task are associated with reading levels one grade level below the student’s grade level so that barriers to student understanding of the content of the sources are minimized.

The Smarter Connection

To accurately measure student progress in reading, Smarter Balanced assessments evaluate the student response based on evidence of a deep understanding of the reading standards, not the structure or writing attributes of the student’s response. Reading passages meet the grade level *ELA/ELD Framework* and *CCSS*.

Students are evaluated on the organization/purpose, evidence/elaboration, and conventions of their writing. Full descriptions of the source materials and approach to source materials to evaluate reading, writing, listening, and research are provided in the Design Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/> under

Assessment for Learning

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With teacher input, performance assessment tasks and innovative item types were developed that encouraged students to use critical thinking to solve problems. In ELA,



Figure 7. Side by Side Comparison of the ELA/ELD Framework and Smarter Balanced Test Design in Grade Seven

Grade Seven Classroom Learning: Making Meaning	Grade Seven Smarter Balanced Assessments: Making Meaning
<p>New to grades six through eight in the Reading evidence, argumentation, and integration and analysis of multiple sources and perspectives emerge in meaning making.</p>	<p>Test question developers analyze reading passages that are qualitatively and quantitatively appropriate for grade seven students. There is a 45/55 proportion of literary and informational text. Each student reads one long literary passage and several long and short informational passages.</p>
<p>In grade seven, teachers continue to teach and have students practice various reading comprehension strategies to help students make meaning. Teacher think alouds continue to be useful by modeling for students how the teacher sorts through his or her understandings and sources of confusion when reading a text.</p> <p>Students in grade seven are expected to write objective summaries of what they read—a task more complex.</p>	<p>The questions focus on challenging explicit and implicit meanings and the evidence that relates to each. They look for examples of structure and language that contribute to the author’s purpose and develop questions around these examples. The four to six questions for each reading passage dig deeper to test the student’s understanding and critical thinking.</p> <p>Each student is asked write a short essay to summarize the central idea and supporting evidence of the text or to evaluate the effectiveness of the author’s claim and the quality of the supporting evidence.</p>
<p>meaning making as students produce clear and coherent texts to convey ideas and information and as they engage in research and demonstrate understanding of the subject under investigation.</p>	<p>The performance task includes a description of the audience and purpose for writing the task as well as informational reading selections for students to learn about the topic. Students analyze the reading selections for the credibility of the sources and the quality of the evidence for the writing task.</p>
<p><i>ELA/ELD Framework</i></p> <p>Chapter 6, pg. 513 Grade six through eight, pg. 582–583, grade seven</p>	<p>Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Blueprints, ELA, Grades six through eight as of 2/9/2015 can be accessed on the Smarter Balanced Web Development and Design Web page at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/ under the Summative Test Blueprints tab.</p>

Item and Task Types Collect Evidence in New Ways

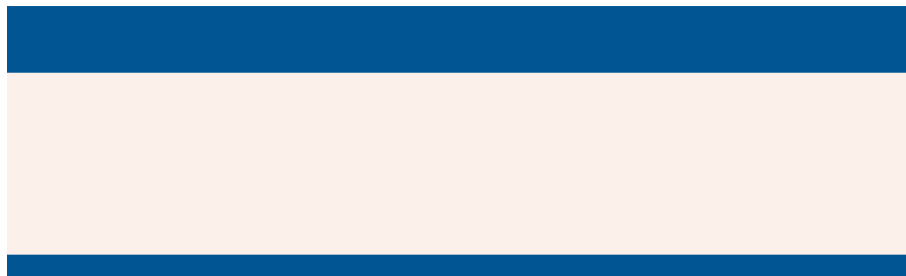
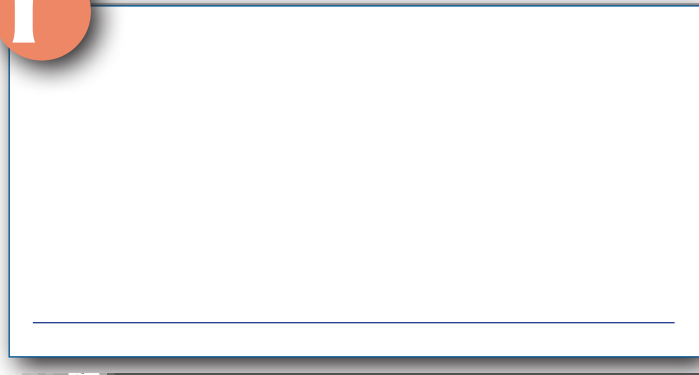
The Smarter Connection

The new Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments elicit greater, more precise evidence of a student’s knowledge, reasoning, and understanding.

California’s previous state tests relied almost exclusively on multiple-choice questions, which are easy to score, but somewhat limited in their ability to assess higher-order thinking skills.

Item types and tasks include, but are not limited to:

z



Section Four: Using Smarter Balanced Score Reports to Analyze Data and Improve Learning

The third step in the feedback loop is to analyze the student data trends to evaluate the learning that has occurred by the students. Teachers compare the curriculum intended for learning by students with the curriculum actually learned as evidenced by the results on multiple measures, including the Smarter Balanced assessments. Teachers look at multiple sources of data, including individual results and class data to understand the “big picture” of student learning.

For Smarter Balanced results, each student’s score is placed on a continuous scale that is able to show growth from year to year. With class-level data, teachers may identify strengths and gaps of understanding in the content areas which can lead to adjustments in the teaching and learning cycle.

The Smarter Connection

What do the results on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (summative and interim) indicate about student strengths and needs?

The Smarter Balanced assessments are designed to assess student learning at a point in time, using technology to eliminate accessibility barriers and maximize the opportunity for students to show what they know. The computer adaptive software is a critical design element that allows students to demonstrate their positive evidence of knowledge that leads to an accurate score for each student.

Computer Adaptive Testing: Appropriate Assessment for Each Student

Computer adaptive testing (CAT) is a type of assessment that adjusts the difficulty of questions on the basis of student responses. For example, a student who answers a question correctly will receive a subsequent question that is more challenging, while an incorrect answer will generate a less challenging question. This approach represents a more accurate way to evaluate student achievement and measure progress over time.



Practice Tests and Training Tests Available for Teachers, Students, and Parents

Teachers are able to use sample student responses and the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests for students within the grade span. Once teachers have reviewed the sample responses, they can use the practice tests with their students.

Overall Score and Achievement Level Shows Student Performance on the Difficulty Scale

Students receive an overall scale score for ELA. The score falls along a continuous vertical scale (from approximately 2,000 to 3,000) that increases across grade levels. Based on this score, a student is determined to be at one of four achievement levels.

Figure 10 shows the range of scale scores for Grade 7 ELA, which is between 2,258 and 2,745 hundred points:



Within that range, there are four distinct achievement levels, as shown in Figure 10:

Figure 10. Grade Seven ELA Scale Scores and Achievement Levels

Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
2,258–2,478	2,479–2,551	2,225–2,648	2,649–2,745

Because the test is computer adaptive, students who consistently answer correctly will be steered toward items at the higher end of the continuum, allowing for the opportunity to achieve at the Standard Exceeded level. Those who consistently answer incorrectly will be steered toward the lower end, possibly resulting in the Standard Not Met level.

The Smarter Connection

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment results help teachers develop lines of inquiry to improve the curriculum, enhance the teaching and learning cycle, and make learning more meaningful to students.

standards. If groups of students, on average, have not met or nearly met the standards, then teachers may consider the types of learning events, practice, and opportunities available for students to apply those deep understandings.

Claim Level Achievement—Shows General Student Performance in Content Areas

The test reports will also highlight a student's performance on each claim for ELA.

used in the interpretations of these claim results. It is recommended that other evidence be considered along with the claim level as decisions are made about curriculum and instruction.





Use Group-Level Data to Identify Trends in Curriculum Strengths and Gaps

At the end of the school year it is time to take stock of the successes in student learning. The tight alignment of the Smarter Balanced assessments to the *ELA/ELD Framework* makes the assessment results a valuable resource to begin an inquiry, a thoughtful deliberate discussion about how we can maximize the appropriate use of these results. The questions on page 33 can help guide a discussion of what the results show about student and group performance and the implications for building on student strengths and meeting student needs with curriculum resources.

Assessment Target Reports

Assessment Target Reports are a new resource for administrators and teachers. These reports show the relative performance of groups of students on assessment targets within a claim area. The reports show how a group of students performed on a target compared to the overall performance on the test. ELA is intended to be learned as an integrated skill set. Assessment Target Reports provide a clear picture of students' time-on-task and their opportunities for mastery throughout the year in each target area, teachers are able to compare the intended learning of groups of students with the evidence of learning on the Smarter Balanced assessments.

The following chart lists the icons used to show the relative performance of students on the target versus the whole test.

Icon	Target Level	Description
	Better than Performance on the test as a whole	This target is a relative strength. The group of students performed better on items from this target than they did on the rest of the test as a whole.
	Similar to performance on the test as a whole	This target is neither a relative strength nor a relative weakness. The group of students performed about as well on items from this target as they did on the rest of the test as a whole.
	Worse than performance on the test as a whole	This target is a relative weakness. The group of students did not perform as well on items from this target as they did on the rest of the test as a whole.
	Q} • ~, &ã^} cAQ} ~ [! { æcã [}	Not enough information is available to determine whether this target is a relative strength or weakness.

The Assessment Target Report is generated for groups of students and is not available for individual students. Assessment targets for which there are at least 10 items available in the Smarter Balanced item pool are included on the Assessment Target Report.

These Assessment Target Reports may help validate other evidence of deep understanding collected during classroom instruction. A data-inquiry process using this target group-level data can be helpful at the classroom level, grade level, school level and districtwide to understand the successes and needs of students. Remember that these target results are relative to the total test score; therefore, recognizing the overall achievement level will be important in considering instructional strategies that address strengths or weaknesses.

Guiding Questions to Analyze Group-Level Data⁵

- z What is the trend for this group of students related to being “on track” for college readiness? (Overall scores)
- z What is the range of overall performance for my class or other groups of students? (Overall scores)
- z Which claims appear to be areas of strength for my students? (Claim Achievement Levels)
- z Which claims might be areas of need? (Claim Achievement Levels)
- z Which targets show a variance from the whole test performance? (Assessment Target Report)
- z Which curriculum resources might help me address student needs for the css student 79 -2 Td p

Section Five: Conclusion Putting It All Together

As teachers build their understanding of the intent of the standards and the relative quality of the evidence of student understanding, they increase their capacity to make adjustments in daily classroom learning events to help students move forward to meet and exceed expectations.

The Smarter Connection

Information from the Smarter Balanced assessments because of the tight alignment of the design of the assessments to the

evidence of student understanding. As teachers interpret this evidence, instruction may be adjusted to optimize learning. Learning is accomplished when students demonstrate and apply the knowledge and skills of the standards. Students take an active role in their learning by using rubrics for self-assessment and peer assessment. Students collaborate with teachers to plan next steps to move up the learning progression and apply what they know to new situations to solve real-world problems.

Using the formative assessment process in conjunction with the Smarter Balanced resources, tools, and results, can maximize the use of assessments and assessment data in the teaching and learning cycle.

Below are additional Smarter Balanced resources that can support and enhance teaching and learning.

Digital Library

- z Assessment Literacy Module: Understanding the Formative Assessment Process
<https://www.smarterbalancedlibrary.org/content/understanding-formative-assessment-process>



z Smarter Balanced Scoring Guide for Grades 3, 6, and 11: English/Language Arts Performance Task Full-Write Baseline Sets

Located on the Smarter Balanced Development and Design Web page at [http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/Performance Task Full-Write Baseline Sets](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/Performance%20Task%20Full-Write%20Baseline%20Sets)

Located on the Smarter Balanced Development and Design Web page at

WestEd Web Site

z WestEd Web Site

z Located on the WestEd Research-based tools, resources, and services Web page at <http://raisingthebar.wested.org>

z Raising the Bar on Instruction

Located on the WestEd Research-based tools, resources, and services Web page at <http://raisingthebar.wested.org>

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

z Information about the CAASPP System of assessments is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>

z Access to the Formative Assessment in Action Video Series is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/diglib.asp>

z The Digital Library Professional Development Series is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/instructlearning.asp>