AzM2 | Arizona's Statewide Achievement Assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics

ELA Item Specifications

GRADE 8

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Introduction

The Arizona Statewide Achievement Assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics (AzM2) is Arizona's statewide achievement test. AzM2 assesses the Arizona English Language Arts Standards and Arizona Mathematics Standards adopted by the Arizona State Board of Education in December 2016. AzM2 will inform students, teachers, and parents about preparedness for college and careers upon graduating from high school. AzM2 tests are computer-based, meaning that they can better assess students' critical thinking skills and provide them with opportunities to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the materials. Computer-based testing also allows for the use of a variety of innovative items types.

During the item-development process, all AzM2 items are written in accordance with the Item Specifications and are reviewed and approved by a committee of Arizona educators to confirm alignment and appropriateness for inclusion in the test. AzM2 items are generally representative of Arizona's geographic regions and culturally diverse population. Items are reviewed for the following kinds of bias: gender, racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic. Item reviews also include consideration of issues related to individuals with disabilities. Arizona community members also have an opportunity to review items for issues of potential concern to members of the community at large. Reviewers are asked to consider the variety of cultural, regional, philosophical, political, and religious backgrounds throughout Arizona, and then to determine whether the subject matter will be acceptable to Arizona students, families, and other members of Arizona communities.

This *AzM2 Item Specifications* is a resource document that defines the content and format of the test and test items for item writers and reviewers. Each *Item Specifications* document indicates the alignment of items with the Arizona English Language Arts Standards and Arizona Mathematics Standards. It also serves to provide all stakeholders with information about the scope and function of assessment items. This document can also serve to assist educators to understand how assessment items are developed in alignment with the standards for English language arts and math. These item specifications for AzM2 are intended to provide information regarding standards, item formats and response types. The descriptions of math practices, blueprints, and depth of knowledge in this document are meant to provide an overview of the test. Item specifications are meant for the purposes of assessment, not instruction. They are not intended to be tools for instruction or the basis for curricula. AzM2 has a test blueprint that was developed by Arizona and is different from any other state or consortium test blueprint.

The AzM2 ELA test will have a Writing part and a Reading Part 1 and Part 2 for all grade levels. Each writing test will have one or more passages that relate to a prompt. Students will create a written response to the prompt. Students will not answer comprehension questions about the prompt. The ELA standard-level item specifications provide information about the development of items aligned to the Reading Standards. AzM2 is designed to reflect the importance of using evidence and reading complex texts outlined in the Arizona English Language Arts Standards. Any item specifications that are absent for standards listed in this document may be under development. This document does not endorse the exclusion of the instruction of any grade-level content standards.

Item Development Process

AzM2 items go through a rigorous review before they are operational. When an item is "operational" it means it is used to determine a student's score on the assessment. This is a description of the process every item must go through before it is operational on AzM2.

Passage Development
ADE and AIR generate potential passages for review

Educator Review
Committee of Arizona Teachers reviews passages for content and bias. All approved passages are moved forward.

Item Development
AIR and ADE generate potential items for review

Educator Review
Committee of Arizona Teachers review items for content and bias. All approved items are moved forward.

Parent Review Committee
Arizona parents/community members review items for bias and sensitivity. All approved items move forward.

Field Test
Items are field tested to see how they operate.

Data Review
Field Test items are reviewed for data to ensure they are valid.

Operational
Field Test items which have made it through all stages are now potentially Operational.

Sample tests are available online for the ELA portion of AzM2. For more information view the Guide to the Sample Tests at www.AzM2portal.org.

Test Construction Guidelines

The construction of the AzM2 assessment is guided by the depth and rigor of the Arizona English Language Arts Standards. Items are created to address key components of the standards and assess a range of important skills. The AzM2 Blueprint provides an overview of the distribution of items on the AzM2 according to the standards. Further, the AzM2 blueprint outlines the Depth of Knowledge distribution of items.

Blueprint

The AzM2 blueprints detail specific information in regard to the strands tested at each grade level. The blueprint outlines the percentage of points aligned to each strand.

Grades 6-8 Reporting Category	Min.	Max.
Reading Standards for Literature	24%	31%
Reading Standards for Informational Text	30%	38%
Reading for Informational Text	_30%_	_25%_
Listening Comprehension	_0%_	_13%_
Writing and Language	30%	38%
Writing	_17%_	_19%_
Language	_13%_	_19%_

> Listening Standards will only be assessed on the computer-based assessment.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK)

DOK refers to the level of rigor or sophistication of the task in a given item, designed to reflect the complexity of the Arizona English Language Arts Standards. Items at DOK level 1 focus on basic tasks like, correcting grammatical and spelling errors, defining terms, and locating details or facts in texts. Items at DOK level 2 require a greater degree of engagement and cognitive processing than items at DOK 1. They may require students to show relationships or identify examples, use context to identify meaning, identify structures or features of texts, or distinguish between facts and opinions. Items at DOK level 3 feature higher-order cognitive tasks that assess students' capacities to read complex texts and think abstractly. They focus on critical thinking, developing and assessing logical arguments, making inferences, and citing evidence to support claims or conclusions. Finally, items at DOK level 4 require creativity, extensive planning, and/or sophisticated reasoning in the composition and organization of written essays. This information is not intended to provide an in-depth description of DOK, but rather a guide to the application of DOK for AzM2.

Percentage of Points by Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level				
Grade 8	DOK Level 1	DOK Level 2	DOK Level 3	DOK Level 4
	10%–20%	50%–60%	15%–25%	17%–19%

For more information on DOK, please visit www.azed.gov/AzM2.

Item Formats

The AzM2 Assessments are composed of item formats that include traditional multiple-choice response items and technology-enhanced response items (TEI). TEIs are computer-delivered response items that require students to interact with test content to select, construct, and/or support their responses. TEIs are better able to assess a deeper level of understanding.

Currently, there are seven types of TEIs that may appear on the ELA Grade 8 computer based assessment for AzM2:

- Editing Task Choice (ETC)
- Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR)
- Graphic Response Item Display (GRID)
- Hot Text (HT)
- Matching Item (MI)
- Multi-Select (MS)
- Open Response

For paper based assessments (including those for students with an IEP or 504 plan that specifies a paper based accommodation), TEIs will be modified so that they can be scanned and scored electronically or hand-scored.

See the table below for a description of each TEI. Examples of each response item format described may be found in the AzM2 Sample Tests at www.AzM2portal.org.

TEI Type	Description
Editing Task Choice (ETC)	The student clicks a highlighted word or phrase, which reveals a drop-down menu containing options for correcting an error as well as the highlighted word or phrase as it is shown in the sentence to indicate that no correction is needed. The student then selects the correct word or phrase from the drop-down menu. For paper-based assessments, the item is modified so that it can be scanned and scored electronically. The student fills in a circle to indicate the correct word or phrase.
Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR)	**Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format** – The student is directed to answer a "Part A" multiple-choice item based on a passage, and is then asked to provide evidence in support of that answer by completing another "Part B" Multiple Choice item *or* a "Part B" Multi-Select item (see below). **Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format** – The student is directed to answer a "Part A" multiple-choice item based on a passage, and is then asked to provide evidence in support of that answer by completing a "Part B" Selectable Hot Text item (see below).
Graphic Response Item Display (GRID)	The student selects numbers, words, phrases, or images and uses the drag-and-drop feature to place them into a graphic. For paper-based assessments, this item type may be replaced with another item type that assesses the same standard and can be scanned and scored electronically.

Hot Text (HT)	**Selectable Hot Text -** Excerpted sentences from the text are presented in this item type. When the student hovers over certain words, phrases, or sentences, the options highlight. This indicates that the text is selectable ("hot"). The student can then click on an option to select it. For paper-based assessments, a "selectable" hot text item is modified so that it can be scanned and scored electronically. In this version, the student fills in a circle to indicate a selection.
	Drag-and-Drop Hot Text - Certain numbers, words, phrases, or sentences may be designated "draggable" in this item type. When the student hovers over these areas, the text highlights. The student can then click on the option, hold down the mouse button, and drag it to a graphic or other format. For paper-based assessments, drag-and-drop hot text items will be replaced with another item type that assesses the same standard and can be scanned and scored electronically.
Matching Item (MI)	The student checks a box to indicate if information from a column header matches information from a row. For paper-based assessments, this item type may be replaced with another item type that assesses the same standard and can be scanned and scored electronically.
Multi-Select (MS)	The student is directed to select all of the correct answers from among a number of options. These items are different from multiple-choice items, which allow the student to select only one correct answer. These items appear in the online and paper-based assessments.
Open Response	The student uses the keyboard to enter a response into a text field. These items can usually be answered in a sentence or two. For paper-based assessments, this item type may be replaced with another item type that assesses the same standard and can be scanned and scored electronically.
Writing Prompt Items	Writing prompt items may require the student to use features of an online word processor. The student can perform various tasks within the online word processor such as bold text, use bullet points, underline, etc.

Stimulus Guidelines

Stimuli comprise a broad category of materials which can be used to measure student knowledge. A stimulus is usually a reading passage or set of reading passages, but can also be accompanied by other sources. Every question is associated with one or more stimuli. Currently, there are three types of stimuli for AzM2: stimuli for reading passages, stimuli for editing tasks, and stimuli for listening.

Every stimulus associated with AzM2 has been approved by a committee of Arizona Educators. Each stimulus has an associated Measurement of Complexity which analyzes its complexity according to the Arizona English Language Arts Standards.

Reading Passage stimuli will consist of one or more text passages. The passages may be informational or literary, and will cover a variety of topics. Passages may be accompanied by multimedia features, including audio presentations, slideshows, or graphical elements. The word count listed below is only a guideline for passage length. Passages can be longer or shorter than the range depending on other measures of text complexity. The complexity of the passages should be appropriate for the grade level of the test-taker.

Acceptable Word Count Ranges by Grade Level	
3	100–700
4	100–900
5	200–1000
6	200–1100
7	300–1100
8	350–1200
9	350–1300
10	350–1350
11	350–1400

Editing Task stimuli will consist of a two- to four-paragraph passage with three to five grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. The first sentence in the passage will not include errors. Students will edit the passage for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. The word(s) or phrases to be edited will be indicated by a highlight in the passage. The correction of each error will be worth 1 point.

Acceptable Word Count Ranges by Grade Band	
Grade Band	Word Count Range
3–5	100–200
6–8	200–250
9–11	250–300

Listening Stimuli will contain two or more components on the same topic: a reading passage or passage set followed by an audio presentation. Stimulus topics range from everyday life to current events, literature, poetry, art, music, physical education, health, mathematics, science, technical subjects, or social studies. The reading component of the stimulus can include informational graphics, tables, charts, or graphs.

Listening Timing		Passage Word Counts	
Grade Level	Minutes	Grade Level	Words
3	0.75–2.0	3	200–250
4	0.75–2.0	4	200–250
5	0.75–2.0	5	250–300
6	0.75–2.0	6	250–300
7	0.75–2.0	7	300–350
8	0.75–2.0	8	300–350
9	0.75–2.0	9	300–350
10	0.75–2.0	10	300–350
11	0.75–2.0	11	300–350

Writing stimuli will include a prompt that has is related to one or more passages. Students will create a written response to the prompt. Students will not answer comprehension questions about the prompt. Scratch paper is permitted on both the CBT and PBT writing tests in order for students to compose a rough draft prior to formulating a "final" copy in the paper booklet or in the word processing area on the computer.

CBT— On the CBT students will have access to one or more passages that relate to a prompt, an electronic version of the Writing Guide and a word processing area to type their "final" response. On the CBT, students will have access to and be able to reference the appropriate Writing Guide.

PBT— On the PBT the students will have access to one or more passages that relate to a prompt, a print copy of the Writing Guide and a "final" copy area to write their response. On paper, the Writing Guide will also appear after the writing prompt and before the final copy area on the PBT. On the PBT, there will be three final copy pages with a line spacing of .375" for grades 3 and 4 (wide ruled) and .3" for grades 5–11 (college ruled).

Arizona English Language Arts Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

8.RL.1– Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

8.RL.2– Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

8.RL.3– Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Craft and Structure

8.RL.4– Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

8.RL.5– Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

8.RL.6– Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

8.RL.7– Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

8.RL.8– (Not applicable to literature)

8.RL.9– Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories or religious works, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

8.RL.10– By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas and poetry, in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 8.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

8.RI.1– Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

8.RI.2– Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

8.RI.3– Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

Craft and Structure

8.RI.4– Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

8.RI.5– Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

8.RI.6– Determine an author's point of view, perspective and purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

8.RI.7– Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

8.RI.8– Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

8.RI.9– Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

8.RI.10– By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend informational texts and nonfiction in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 8.

Standards for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

8.SL.2– Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

8.SL.3– Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Standards for Language

Conventions of Standard English

8.L.1– Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
   a. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
   b. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
   c. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
   d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verbals, voice, and mood

8.L.2– Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
   a. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
   b. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
   c. Use correct spelling.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

8.L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
   a. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *precede, recede, and secede*).
   b. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
   c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
   d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase

8.L.5– Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
   a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.
   b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
   c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

8.W.1– Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
   a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
   b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
   c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
   d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
   e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

8.W.2– Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

   a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

   b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

   c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

   d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

   e. Establish and maintain a formal style.

   f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Grade 8 ELA Item Specifications

Reading Literature

AZ.ELA.8.RL.1

Content Standard	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item may ask for evidence that is directly stated in the text or implied. The item may ask for specific and exact quotes, or a summary/description of evidence. The item may require the student to draw inferences from the text. The item should emphasize the importance of citing evidence that provides the strongest support possible.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Select the strongest textual evidence to support an explicit statement from the text. Select the strongest textual evidence to support an inference from the text.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Cites textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly.	Cites textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Cites the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Applies thorough textual evidence to strongly support a deep analysis of the text as well as complex inferences drawn from the text.

AZ.ELA.8.RL.2

Content Standard	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item may ask the student to determine a theme or central idea from a section of the text or from the entire text. The item may refer to themes and central ideas that are explicit or implicit in the text. The item may focus on the use of characters, setting, and plot in the development of the theme or central idea but should not simply ask students to analyze characters, setting, and plot development. Items may ask students to summarize the text.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Determine a theme or central idea of the text, and analyze how it is developed in a particular section of the text or over the course of the text. Analyze how character, setting, or plot contributes to a theme or central idea's development. Summarize the text objectively.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-select • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies a theme or central idea of a text; identifies characters, setting, and plot; provides a list of events from the text.	Identifies a theme or central idea of a text and determines details or events that develop it; explains characters, setting, and plot; provides a simple, objective summary of the text.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Determines a theme or central idea of a text and analyzes its development over the course of a text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provides an objective summary of the text.	Determines two or more themes or central ideas and analyzes their development over the course of a text; evaluates the theme(s) or central idea(s) and the relationship to narrative elements; provides a concise and comprehensive objective summary of the text.

AZ.ELA.8.RL.3

Content Standard	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should focus on specific dialogue or actions that contribute significantly to plot or character development rather than general and overarching questions about a character or plot point. The item may ask the student to identify specific dialogue or actions in the text.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze what a specific line(s) of dialogue or incident from the text reveals about character or plot. Select a line(s) of dialogue or incident from the text that supports an analysis about a plot point or character. Draw a conclusion about character or plot and select a line(s) of dialogue or incident from the text as support	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies specific lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama that propel the action and reveal aspects of the character.	Describes how specific lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action and reveal aspects of the character.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes how specific lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of the character, or provoke a decision.	Analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of an author's use of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama to propel the action, reveal aspects of the character, or provoke a decision.

AZ.ELA.8.RL.4

Content Standard	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should not focus on dictionary word meanings but should focus on how the words and phrases function within the context of the passage. The item should focus on words and phrases that have figurative or allusive meanings central to the meaning of the text rather than isolated, incidental vocabulary. The item may ask about words with discrete context clues in close proximity or words whose meaning is conveyed more implicitly throughout the passage.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Determine the meaning of a word or phrase and/or select other words or phrases in the text that provide clues to the meaning. Analyze the impact of figurative language, an analogy or an allusion from the text on the text's meaning or tone.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies the literal or figurative meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; identifies words that impact meaning and tone.	Distinguishes between literal, figurative, and connotative meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text; determines the effect of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Determines the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyzes the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	Determines the meaning and evaluates the impact of words and phrases, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyzes and evaluates the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

AZ.ELA..8.RL.5

Content Standard	Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should not simply ask the student to describe the structures of the texts, but should focus on the way structure influences meaning and style. The item must be inter-textual, but can focus on one text more than another. The item can refer to the structure of an entire piece or the structure of a particular section.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze how an element of structure found in both texts contributes to each text's meaning. Analyze how the texts' meanings have been influenced or created by structure. Analyze how the structure of each text creates differences or similarities in the texts' meanings	• Grid Item • Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Compares and contrasts the structure of two texts.	Compares and contrasts the structure of two or more texts, describing the connection to their meaning and style.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Compares and contrasts the structure of two or more texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.	Compares and contrasts, then evaluates for effectiveness, the structure of two or more texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to meaning and style.

AZ.ELA.8.RL.6

Content Standard	Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should not simply ask the student to identify points of view, but should focus on how they affect the tone of the text. The item should ask about the interactions of multiple points of view. The item may focus on what the audience knows that the character doesn't know, or what the character knows that the audience doesn't know.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze how different points of view affect the passage or create tone. Select textual evidence to support an inference about how different points of view affect the passage or create tone. Determine a difference between two points of view and analyze how this difference affects the passage or creates tone.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies that differences in the points of view of the characters or the reader affect the meaning of the text.	Describes how differences in the points of view of the characters or the reader contribute to an understanding of the text.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes how differences in the points of view of the characters or the reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor in the text.	Evaluates the impact of differences in the points of view of the characters or the reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) and the effectiveness of creating suspense or humor in the text.

AZ.ELA.8.RL.7

Content Standard	Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item must ask about the text version and its multimedia counterpart. The item's difficulty may be dependent on the significance and extent of the adaptations departure from the original text. The item may focus on the effectiveness of the adaptation.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze how the director or actors' choices contribute to a similarity or difference in the two texts	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script.	Describes the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, identifying the choices made by the director or actors.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.	Evaluates the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script; critiques the choices made by the director or actors and proposes alternate treatments.

AZ.ELA.8.RL.9

Content Standard	Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories or religious works, including describing how the material is rendered new.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should focus primarily on the modern passage, not on the older text. When focusing on the older text, the item should focus on the connection between the two texts (rather than the older text itself) and pertain to matters of theme, pattern, events, or archetypes, rather than the overall meaning or non-essential information found in the older text. The item can include passages from older texts or simply make reference to them/aspects of them if they are well-known or canonical enough.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze how an archaic element in the modern work impacts meaning. Analyze how an archaic element in the modern work has been rendered new. Analyze how an element in the modern work has been drawn from a myth, traditional story, or religious work.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies a relationship between a modern work of fiction and patterns of events or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works.	Determines how a modern work of fiction draws on explicit themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, describing how the material is rendered new.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, describing how the material is rendered new.	Evaluates how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works; evaluates the impact of the newly rendered material.

Reading Informational Texts

AZ.ELA.8.RI.1

Content Standard	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item may ask for evidence that is directly stated in the text or implied. The item may ask for specific and exact quotes, or a summary/description of evidence. The item may require the student to draw inferences from the text. The item should emphasize the importance of citing evidence that provides the strongest support possible.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Select the strongest textual evidence to support an explicit statement from the text. Select the strongest textual evidence to support an inference from the text.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Cites textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly.	Cites textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Cites the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Applies thorough textual evidence to strongly support a deep analysis of the text as well as complex inferences drawn from the text.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.2

Content Standard	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item may refer to central ideas that are explicit or implicit in the text. The item may ask the student to determine the central idea from a section of the text or from the entire text. The item may focus on how the central idea of the text relates to supporting ideas. Items may ask students to summarize the text.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Determine a central idea and analyze how it develops in a particular section of the text or over the course of the text. Determine a central idea and analyze how a supporting idea from the text contributes to its development. Summarize the text objectively.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies a central idea of a text; provides a list of events or details from the text.	Identifies a central idea of a text and describes its development over the course of a text; provides a simple, objective summary of the text.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Determines a central idea of a text and analyzes its development over the course of a text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provides an objective summary of the text.	Determines and analyzes the central ideas of a text and analyzes their development over the course of a text; evaluates the strength of the supporting ideas; provides a comprehensive objective summary of the text.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.3

Content Standard	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should not ask general or overarching questions about individuals, ideas, or events in the text, but rather should focus on the connections and distinctions between them. The item may ask the student to compare, contrast, or categorize individuals, ideas, or events in the text.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze how a specific individual, idea, or event from the text connects to or is made distinct from another individual, idea, or event. Select textual evidence that supports an analysis about the connection or distinction between individuals, ideas, or events in the text. Determine how the text makes a connection or distinction between individuals, ideas, or events in the text and analyze the effect of this connection or distinction.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies that a text makes explicit connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).	Describes how a text makes explicit connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).	Evaluates how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

AZ.ELA.8.RI.4

Content Standard	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should focus on words and phrases that have figurative, technical, or allusive meanings central to the meaning of the text, and should focus on how the words and phrases function within the context of the text. The item may ask about words with discrete context clues in close proximity or words whose meaning is conveyed more implicitly throughout the text.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Determine the meaning of a word or phrase and/or identify other words or phrases in the text that provide clues to the meaning. Analyze the impact of word choice, analogy, or allusion on the text's meaning or tone. Determine and analyze the impact of word choice, analogy, or allusion on the text's meaning or tone.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies the literal or figurative meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; identifies the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.	Determines the meaning of basic words and phrases as they are used in a text, including common figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; describes the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Determines the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyzes the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	Analyzes the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; evaluates the rhetorical effect of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.5

Content Standard	Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item may focus on a single sentence or the paragraph as a whole. The item should not simply ask the student to describe the structure of the paragraph, but should focus on the impact and importance of the structure. The item may focus on organizational structures like cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, or chronology.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze how a paragraph's structure develops or impacts the meaning of the paragraph or the meaning of the entire text. Analyze how a paragraph's structure develops and/or refines a key concept in the text	• Grid Item • Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies the structure of a specific paragraph in a text; describes the role of particular sentences in creating that structure.	Describes the structure of a specific paragraph in a text and describes its effect on a text; describes the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.	Evaluates the effect of the structure of a specific paragraph in a text and its role in the text as a whole, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.6

Content Standard	Determine an author's point of view, perspective and purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item may ask about how the author develops a point of view or purpose in the text. The item may ask about one or more viewpoints. The item may ask about how the author responds to conflicting evidence or alternate points of view.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Select textual evidence to support an inference about how the author develops a viewpoint or handles conflicting information. Determine the author's point of view or purpose and analyze how he/she acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies an author's point of view, perspective, and purpose in a text; identifies examples where the author acknowledges or responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	Identifies an author's point of view, perspective, and purpose in a text and describes how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Determines an author's point of view, perspective, and purpose in a text and analyzes how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	Analyzes an author's point of view, perspective, and purpose in a text and evaluates the effect of how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.7

Content Standard	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item must ask about two or more mediums, but may focus on one more than another. The item should not ask general or overarching questions about the different mediums, but should focus on their advantages or disadvantages. The item should rely on multiple stimuli that use alternative mediums.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Evaluate one or more advantage and/or disadvantage of using different mediums to present a topic or idea.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies differences or similarities in the presentation of a particular topic or idea as presented in different media (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia).	Compares and contrasts the use of different media (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) in presenting a particular topic or idea.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of using different media (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.	Evaluates and critiques the use of different media (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea, providing specific evidence as support.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.8

Content Standard	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should not ask the student to simply identify the argument or claims in the text. The item may ask the student to trace or evaluate the argument or claims in a section of the text or throughout the whole text. The item may focus on evaluating how effective, persuasive, or biased an argument or claim is. The item may focus on evaluating how relevant, sufficient, or accurate the evidence is, or how credible the sources are, for an argument or claim. The item may focus on irrelevant or inappropriate evidence.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Select textual evidence to delineate or evaluate an explicit argument, claim, or piece of evidence in the text. Delineate and/or evaluate an explicit argument or claim in the text and determine whether reasoning is sound and/or evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the argument or claim.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies the argument or specific claims in a text, describing the reasoning and evidence used to support the argument or claims.	Describes the argument and specific claims in a text, discussing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Delineates and evaluates the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognizes when irrelevant evidence is introduced.	Synthesizes the argument and specific claims in a text, citing specific language to evaluate whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognizes irrelevant evidence and proves its irrelevancy.

AZ.ELA.8.RI.9

Content Standard	Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	The item should ask about both texts, but may focus on one more than the other. The item should focus on key information, evidence, and facts. The item should focus on the differences between the two texts, rather than the similarities.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Contrast the ways in which the authors provide information, use facts, or interpret details. Analyze how the texts provide conflicting information by identifying where they disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, and identifies where the texts disagree.	Describes a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, and identifies where the texts disagree on matters of fact.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Analyzes a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, and identifies where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.	Analyzes and evaluates a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic, and identifies where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation, evaluating the strength or reliability of each.

Listening

AZ.ELA.8.SL.2

Content Standard	Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
Stimuli Type	Listening Stimuli
Content Limits	Items may ask students to analyze the purpose of information presented in audio or visual form. Students may also be asked to evaluate the motivations and reasons underpinning the presentation of the stimulus.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Analyze the purpose of information presented in audio or visual form. Evaluate the motivations of the speaker or author in presenting information in audio or visual form.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally).	Determines the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and describes the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
Proficient	**Highly Proficient**
Analyzes the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluates the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.	Analyzes and evaluates the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) to critique the motives and evaluate the impact of the presentation.

AZ.ELA.8.SL.3

Content Standard	Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
Stimuli Type	Listening Stimuli
Content Limits	The item may ask students to trace the argument or specific claims made by a speaker in sections of the stimulus or throughout the whole stimulus. The item may focus on evaluating how relevant and/or sufficient the reasoning and evidence is. The item may focus on identifying irrelevant or inappropriate evidence. The item should not ask the student to simply identify the argument or claims made by the speaker.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Select evidence to trace an argument or claim in the stimulus. The item writer may or may not provide the argument to be traced. Determine which claims in a stimulus are supported by reasoning or evidence. Determine whether evidence is sufficient and relevant to the claim. Identify when irrelevant or inappropriate evidence is provided.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Identifies a speaker's argument and specific claims.	Explains a speaker's argument and specific claims, identifying whether the reasoning is sound.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Delineates a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.	Traces and analyzes the argument and specific claims of a speaker, citing specific examples to evaluate whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognizes irrelevant evidence and proves its irrelevancy.

Language

AZ.ELA.8.L.1

Content Standard	Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. a. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. b. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. c. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verbals, voice, and mood.
Stimuli Type	Editing Task
Content Limits	Items may ask the student to evaluate and correct errors which focus on grammar and usage. Items should assess on-grade-level errors; however, once a Language Standard is introduced, grade-appropriate items may be written to assess continued mastery of standard conventions of English.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Apply rules of standard English grammar and usage.	• Editing Task Choice

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Demonstrates basic understanding of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking: a. recognizes the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. b. inconsistently forms and uses verbs in the active and passive voice. c. inconsistently forms and uses verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. d. recognizes inappropriate shifts in verbals, voice, and mood.	Demonstrates understanding of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking: a. describes the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. b. forms and uses verbs in the active and passive voice. c. generally forms and uses verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. d. recognizes and occasionally corrects inappropriate shifts in verbals, voice, and mood.

Proficient	Highly Proficient
Demonstrates command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking: a. explains the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. b. forms and uses verbs in the active and passive voice. c. forms and uses verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. d. recognizes and corrects inappropriate shifts in verbals, voice, and mood.	Demonstrates strong command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking: a. explains the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and evaluates their function in particular sentences. b. intentionally forms and uses verbs in the active and passive voice to achieve a desired style. c. strategically forms and uses verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. d. analyzes and corrects inappropriate shifts in verbals, voice, and mood.

AZ.ELA.8.L.2

Content Standard	Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
	    a. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
	    b. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
	    c. Use correct spelling.

Stimuli Type	Editing Task
Content Limits	Items may ask the student to evaluate and correct errors which focus on punctuation and spelling. Items should assess on-grade-level errors; however, once a Language Standard is introduced, grade-appropriate items may be written to assess continued mastery of standard conventions of English.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Apply rules of standard English punctuation and spelling.	• Editing Task Choice

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient

Demonstrates awareness of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing:
    a.   inconsistently uses punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
    b.   inconsistently uses an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
    c.   spells below-grade-level words correctly.
	Demonstrates basic understanding of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing:
	    a. generally uses punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
	    b. uses an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
	    c. spells most grade-level words correctly.

Proficient	**Highly Proficient**

Demonstrates command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing:
    a.   uses punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
    b.   uses an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
    c.   spells grade-level words correctly.
	Demonstrates strong and purposeful command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing:
	    a. judiciously uses punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
	    b. uses an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
	    c. spells unfamiliar and above-grade level words correctly.

AZ.ELA.8.L.4

Content Standard	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. a. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, and secede). b. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	Items may ask students to use contextual clues or Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine the meaning of a word. Items should not exclusively ask the student to determine the meanings of basic, everyday words and phrases that commonly appear in spoken language.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Determine the meaning of a word using common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes or roots. Determine the meaning of words or phrases by using context clues that are either explicitly or implicitly stated in the text.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Inconsistently determines or clarifies the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases, using at least one strategy: a. uses context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. uses common, below-grade Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word. c. consults general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. d. verifies the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.	Generally determines or clarifies the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases, using one or more strategies: a. uses context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. uses common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). c. consults general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. d. verifies the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.
Proficient	**Highly Proficient**
Determines or clarifies the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies: a. uses context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. uses common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). c. consults general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. d. verifies the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.	Authoritatively determines or clarifies the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies: a. uses context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. b. uses common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede). c. consults general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech. d. verifies the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.

AZ.ELA.8.L.5

Content Standard	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
Stimuli Type	Reading Passage
Content Limits	Items may ask students to interpret figures of speech in the context of the text. Items may ask students to relate words to one another. Items may ask students to distinguish the connotations of words with similar meanings. Items should not exclusively ask the student to determine the meanings of basic, everyday words and phrases that commonly appear in spoken language.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. Use relationships, such as cause and effect or part and whole, between specific words to help interpret their meaning Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar definitions.	• Evidence-based Selected Response (Multiple Choice/Multiple Select Format & Multiple Choice/Hot Text Format) • Hot Text • Multiple Choice • Multi-Select • Open Response

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Demonstrates limited understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings: a. identifies figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. b. uses the relationship between particular basic words to better understand each of the words. c. generally distinguishes among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).	Demonstrates basic understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings: a. interprets figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. b. uses the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. c. distinguishes among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
Proficient	**Highly Proficient**
Demonstrates understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings: a. interprets figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. b. uses the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. c. distinguishes among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).	Demonstrates deep understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings: a. interprets figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context. b. uses the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words. c. distinguishes and evaluates the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

Writing

AZ.ELA.8.W.1

Content Standard	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
	   a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
	   b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
	   c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
	   d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
	   e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Stimuli Type	Reading Passages (may be informational, argumentative, or literary)
Content Limits	Items may ask the student to read multiple passages associated with a single topic and respond to a writing prompt in which they will use evidence from the sources to support an argumentative essay.

Task Demand	Common Item Formats

Directions Templates
 	
Write an argumentative essay about . . . . Use information from the passages in your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can
     • read the passages;
     • plan your response;
     • write your response; and
     • revise and edit your response.
Be sure to
     • include a claim;
     • address counterclaims;
     • use evidence from multiple sources; and
     • avoid overly relying on one source.
Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.
	• Writing Prompt

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Writes arguments to support claims with reasons and evidence: a. introduces claim(s), states opposing claims, and organizes reasons and evidence. b. supports claims with extratextual evidence, demonstrating a basic understanding of the topic or text. c. uses transition words to link claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. d. attempts to establish a formal style. e. provides a concluding statement or section.	Writes arguments to support claims with reasons and relevant evidence: a. introduces claim(s), states alternate or opposing claims, and organizes the reasons and evidence logically. b. supports claims with reasoning and evidence, using sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. c. uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. d. establishes a formal style. e. provides a concluding statement or section that supports the argument presented.
Proficient	**Highly Proficient**
Writes arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence: a. introduces claim(s), acknowledges and distinguishes the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organizes the reasons and evidence logically. b. supports claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. c. uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. d. establishes and maintains a formal style. e. provides a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.	Writes arguments to support claims with clear reasons and analysis of relevant evidence: a. introduces claims; acknowledges and distinguishes the claims from alternate or opposing claims, evaluating their validity; and organizes the reasons and evidence logically. b. supports claims with a clear position based on logical reasoning and relevant evidence using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating a deep understanding of the topic or text. c. uses a variety of words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. d. establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone that enhances the argument. e. provides a compelling concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

AZ.ELA.8.W.2

Content Standard	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. e. Establish and maintain a formal style. f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
Stimuli Type	Reading Passages (may be informational, argumentative, or literary)
Content Limits	Items may ask the student to read multiple passages associated with a single topic and respond to a writing prompt in which they will use evidence from the sources to support their informative essay

Task Demand	Common Item Formats
Directions Templates Write an informative essay about . . . . Use information from the passages in your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can • read the passages; • plan your response; • write your response; and • revise and edit your response. Be sure to • use evidence from multiple sources; and • avoid overly relying on one source. Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.	• Writing Prompt

Performance Level Descriptors

Minimally Proficient	Partially Proficient
Writes informative/explanatory text to describe a topic through the selection and organization of content: a. introduces a topic; attempts an organization of ideas, concepts, and information. b. summarizes the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. c. uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion. d. uses topic-appropriate language and vocabulary to inform. e. attempts a formal style. f. provides a concluding statement or section.	Writes informative/explanatory texts to explain a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection and organization of content: a. introduces a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories. b. develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. c. uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. d. uses topic-appropriate language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. e. establishes a formal style. f. provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
Proficient	**Highly Proficient**
Writes informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content: a. introduces a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; includes formatting (e.g., headings) and graphics (e.g., charts, tables), when useful to aid comprehension. b. develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. c. uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. d. uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. e. establishes and maintains a formal style. f. provides a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.	Writes informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information with a strongly-developed focus through the selection, organization, and analysis of highly relevant content: a. introduces a complex topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; includes formatting (e.g., headings) and graphics (e.g., charts, tables) when useful to enhance comprehension. b. develops and analyzes the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic. c. effectively uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. d. uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. e. establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the conventions of the discipline in which he or she is writing. f. provides a compelling concluding statement or section that follows from, supports, and extends the information or explanation presented.