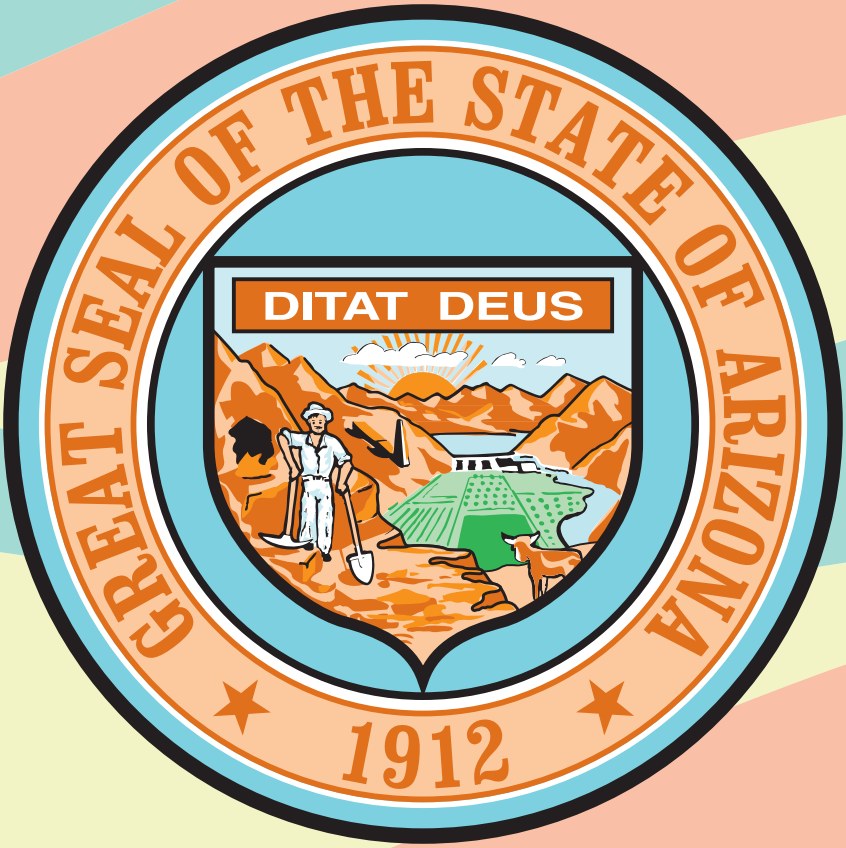


msaa

Multi State Alternate Assessment

# Parent Overview of the MSAA System

# Grade 4

# Parent Overview of the MSAA System: Grade 4

This overview of the MSAA System explains:

- alternate assessment,
- importance of academic instruction,
- possible instructional supports, and
- ways to work with your child's teachers.

## Alternate Assessment

When you receive your child's test results, the report will show your child's score and performance level on the MSAA test. The scores are based on high expectations and these expectations are appropriate for students taking an alternate assessment in this grade. The test was designed using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and has built-in supports:

- reduced passage length in reading,
- pictures and graphics included to help students understand,
- models in reading, writing, and mathematics,
- common geometric shapes and smaller numbers on the mathematics test, and
- option to have the entire test read aloud.

The alternate assessment is designed to work with the way your child communicates. The teachers will provide all the accommodations included in your child's IEP as long as they are consistent with the MSAA System policies.

The MSAA test results, reported in the Individual Student Report, may be used to identify areas for needed improvement as well as areas of strength so that everyone can work together to help your child. Teachers may use this information to guide their teaching so that students learn the knowledge and skills of the grade level academic content with appropriate supports.

Your child's teacher can select and use appropriate NCSC curriculum and instructional resources located at https://wiki.ncscpartners.org. The resources provide the skills taught at each grade, explanation of curriculum, and examples of lesson plans and systematic instruction. Training on each of these resources is available for teachers. See descriptions of the resources on page 1 of the NCSC Wiki site.

## College, Career, and Community Skills

- **Reading and writing** is important to understand books, gather and learn new information, make notes, share thoughts and stories, compare information, read schedules, etc.
- **Mathematics** is important to understand numbers, solve problems, schedule, arrange transportation, manage money, etc.
- **Communication skills** are important to advocate for self, participate in social and educational conversations, express wants and needs, access information, make requests, shop, prepare a meal, etc.
- **Age appropriate social skills** are important to build knowledge and shared experiences with peers in school, the community, and work.
- **Independence and teamwork** are important to build problem-solving skills, understand and follow directions, complete a new task, work with others, and use provided supports.
- **Skills to access support systems** are important to academic instruction, collaborative work with peers, developing independence, requesting assistance, and using appropriate tools (e.g., calculator) to complete a task.

## Academic Instruction

Changes in our culture, our technology, and our work are happening at a fast pace. There are recognized college, career, and community skills that prepare our children for the world they will live in as adults. This preparation requires instruction that is individualized to meet your child's unique needs, focused on skills to communicate, read, write, use mathematics, and develop work skills.

## Instructional Supports

Teachers have many tools and techniques to teach academic content. Teachers will provide the supports identified in your child's IEP. This should help your child learn the content and improve his or her knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as demonstrate them on the test.

The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provide flexible approaches for curriculum and are used throughout the MSAA System to provide support and accommodations as needed for all children, including your child. Teachers can use these same strategies to support your child in learning. For example, in reading, your child may listen to the story read by someone else and answer questions using a communication system. In mathematics, your child might use counters to help solve problems and follow steps that are provided for calculations instead of having to memorize the steps. Supports will be important as your child is introduced to new content.

Additional examples of supports include providing:

* information presented in different ways (e.g., with pictures, manipulatives, and simplified text),

*access to learning materials in different ways (e.g., listening to a story while using a screen reader or a version enhanced with textures, providing word or picture choices),

*different ways to show what your child has learned (e.g., answering using a switch activated recording, presenting using technology, eye-gaze to select words or pictures to write a story), and

*multiple options to engage your child (e.g., providing choices, using topics of personal interest).

You can find more about Universal Design for Learning at http://www.udlcenter.org.

## English Language Arts – Grade 4

In the primary grades, the focus of your child's instruction is on learning to read (e.g., matching letters and sounds to read words and recognizing sight words) and learning from, and enjoying reading or listening to text read aloud. Your child will:

- read/listen to stories (e.g., *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*), poems, plays and informational texts (e.g., science, geography, history, directions, etc.) that may be adapted,
- produce different types of writing: stories, informational, and persuasive, and
- learn communication skills (e.g., class discussions and presentations).

The complexity of the stories and informational text your child will read or listen to will increase throughout the year and as he or she moves to the next grade. Following are examples of how the stories and text become more complex.

### Range of Text Complexity

- Text is short with many pictures.
- Sentences are simple and include repeated ideas.
- Text has events in order with ideas clearly stated.
- Charts and diagrams are simple.
- Text includes everyday, common words.

- Text is detailed with few pictures.
- Sentences are compound and complex.
- Text has implied ideas and connections among a range of ideas.
- Charts and diagrams include detailed information.
- Text includes expressions and phrases.

Instructional activities should be individualized for your child as needed. For example, to help students find details and examples that help them make inferences, the teacher reads a passage from a familiar story. After reading and listening, the teacher states an inference (e.g., Digger chewed up the shoe) and asks which details from the story suggests that is what happened. The teacher reads the passage, sentence by sentence, with some students and has the students highlight the details that support the inference. For some students, the teacher provides phrases from the passage paired with pictures (e.g., "Digger hid in the corner" and a picture of a dog in a corner) for the students to choose the details.

Teachers often pair reading and writing together. The teacher reads parts of the story again, discussing the descriptive words (e.g., gigantic, bumpy) and transition words (e.g., because, then) found in the story. The teacher presents a picture, such as a dog and a cat looking at each

other, and tells students to write a story to go with the picture. The teacher instructs students to use descriptive and transition words. Some students may use a software program that includes words and pictures to choose as they write the story. Some students may complete sentence starters (e.g., The dog looked at the cat. The cat _____.) using words provided by the teacher to finish the sentence (e.g., purred, ran away, licked the dog, hissed).

## ELA Sample Instructional Activities (text complexity increases in each grade)

### 4th Grade

- Reading new multi-syllable words using foundational skills (e.g., phonics, sight words, and word relationships)
- Learning new words and their meaning from 4th grade stories or informational texts
- Finding details and examples that help make inferences and understand important ideas in stories or informational texts
- Comparing and contrasting the point of view in two different stories
- Comparing and contrasting how the same event can be told differently in separate informational texts
- Using text features (e.g., heading, glossary, photographs) to help find information
- Sharing ideas and information by producing opinion pieces, informational pieces, and stories using precise language and a variety of transitional words (e.g., because)
- Communicating with classmates in discussions

### 5th Grade Preview

- Learning the meaning of new words and multiple meaning words (e.g., mold), from reading 5th grade stories or informational texts
- Identifying the theme and finding details and examples to understand important ideas in stories or informational texts and that support inferences and conclusions
- Comparing and contrasting characters, setting, events in a story
- Comparing and contrasting information in two texts (e.g., two articles about turtles)
- Summarizing a story or informational text including the important ideas and details
- Understanding how authors use their point of view to describe things and to provide evidence to support the point of view
- Understanding and using information presented visually, orally, or in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, etc.
- Sharing ideas and information by producing opinion pieces using words to link reasons to the opinion, informational pieces using multiple sources of information, and stories using dialogue between characters
- Communicating with classmates in discussions and making presentations

## Mathematics – Grade 4

In the primary grades, the focus in mathematics is on learning about numbers, solving problems, studying two- and three-dimensional shapes, and getting information from graphs. All of these learning activities that you can expect your child to be involved in might be individualized for your child. This allows the skills to be taught, practiced, and learned so that

our child can make progress more easily. Here is a mathematics example that shows how individualization might work.

The teacher gives the students a shape sorting activity using angles that are acute, right, and obtuse. Students are given cut out shapes with the angle to measure specified. Students sort the shapes by whether the angles they measured are acute, right, or obtuse. Some students may sort shapes with angles using the full degree ranges of acute and obtuse angles; some students may sort shapes with angles that are more clearly acute or obtuse (e.g., acute angles of less than 45 degrees and obtuse angles of more than 135 degrees). Some students may sort angles that are acute, right and obtuse; some students may sort either acute or obtuse and right angles.

## Mathematics Sample Instructional Activities

### 4th Grade

- Learning about numbers by rounding to any place (i.e., ones, tens, hundreds, thousands), and reading, writing, and comparing decimals to tenths or hundredths
- Using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to solve problems with whole numbers
- Adding and subtracting fractions with denominators that are the same (e.g., 1/4 + 3/4)
- Working with shapes by identifying and classifying them using angles and their names (e.g., right angles) and lines (e.g., parallel and perpendicular lines)
- Using measurement to solve problems involving mass of objects, determining length, using formulas to calculate area and perimeter of rectangles, and converting measurements (e.g., 2 feet = 24 inches)
- Making, describing, and extending patterns
- Collecting, organizing, and explaining data in picture graphs, line graphs, and bar graphs

### 5th Grade Preview

- Determining place value to the thousandths, using decimals to the thousandths
- Writing numerical expressions involving only whole numbers and one or more operational symbols
- Using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to solve problems
- Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions
- Solve 1-step problems using decimals
- Identifying properties of shapes (e.g., parallel perpendicular lines)
- Graphing points on grids and finding points on *x*- and *y*-axes; comparing information in graphs
- Calculating volume of 3-dimensional rectangular shapes; converting measurements (e.g., 3 feet = 1 yard)
- Making and describing number patterns
- Determining if multiplying by a number will increase or decrease the answer
- Organizing and describing data and data patterns using bar graphs, picture graphs, and line plots

## Families Working with Teachers

Children learn well when teachers and families work together. You can help your child learn when you and his or her teachers share information with each other. You can share how your child learns best and what his or her interests are. It is also important to provide your child with learning activities suggested by the teachers. To do this, you should find out what your child's instruction looks like and what your child is expected to learn and do. For example, the activity might be to read and answer questions about a story. The teacher might say that the most important part is for your child to answer the questions, which he or she can do after listening to the story instead of reading it alone. Likewise, writing might include the way your child communicates his or her thoughts and ideas. This might be using the computer, assistive technology, or dictation instead of using a pencil and paper.

### NCSC Curriculum and Instructional Resources for Teachers and Parents

- Content Modules (explanation of grade level content)
- Instructional Families (skills for each grade)
- Curriculum Resource Guide (examples for teaching grade level content)
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Units (model universally designed lesson plans)
- Instructional Resource Guide (instructional strategies)
- Systematic Activities for Scripted Systematic Instruction (samples of intensive instruction: LASSIs for language arts and MASSIs for mathematics)

To see examples of what these supports look like and how teachers may use these supports, go to the NCSC Resources- https://wiki.ncscpartners.org. Parents can use the resources on this site to help increase their child's knowledge and skills. The site includes a "Parent Tips and Tools" section that can help parents use the resource materials. These resources help teachers and parents know what content to teach in each grade, suggestions and models for how to teach specific content, and how the content relates to the real world. Working closely with your child's teacher and these resources helps your child to develop college, career, and community skills.

## Summary

As everyone works together to support your child's learning of the college, career, and community skills, the MSAA System provides guidance on the appropriate content and supports. Teachers and families working together will make individualize instruction meaningful and will help your child develop those skills. As you read through this overview and look at your child's test report, please contact your child's teacher if you need more information.

## NOTES

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