

# Parent Overview of the MSAA

GRADE

5



## Parent Overview of the MSAA: Grade 5

This overview of the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) 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 such as:

- 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
- the option to have the entire test read aloud.

The alternate assessment is designed to work with the way your child communicates. Teachers will provide all of the accommodations included in your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) as long as they are consistent with MSAA policies. The MSAA offers a full set of sample items that can be used to practice and become familiar with item types, accessibility features, accommodations, and the online platform. To view the sample items, visit:

[www.msaaassessment.org/sample-items](http://www.msaaassessment.org/sample-items).

The MSAA test results, reported in the Individual Student Report (ISR), 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 MSAA resources located at [www.msaastates.com](http://www.msaastates.com). The resources support skills taught at each grade as well as examples of lesson plans and systematic instruction. Training on each of these resources is available for teachers.

Your child's teacher may have additional resources available through the school. Please talk with your child's teacher for more information on resources used to create lessons.

## College, Career, and Community Skills

- **Reading and writing** are 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 for 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 and is 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 their knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as demonstrate them on the test.

The principles of UDL provide flexible approaches for curriculum and are used throughout the MSAA 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, using 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 UDL at [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org).

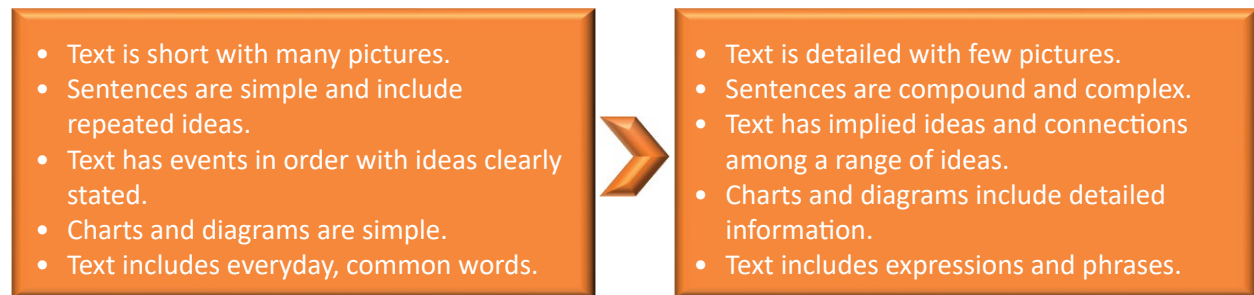
## English Language Arts – Grade 5

By grade 5, the focus of your child’s instruction is on learning from and enjoying reading or listening to text while still providing instruction on learning to read (e.g., matching letters and sounds to read words and recognizing sight words). Your child will:

- read/listen to stories (e.g., *The Black Stallion*), 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 they move to the next grade. The following are a few ways that stories and text become more complex.

### Range of Text Complexity



Instructional activities should be individualized for your child as needed. For example, to teach students how to compare characters, settings, or events in more than one story, the teacher begins by making sure that students understand the concept of compare and contrast. Some students may understand best when the teacher starts by having them compare two classmates, two family members, or home and school settings. Students may do this in a variety of ways such as verbally, with a communication system, or with picture choices. The teacher assists the students to place their comparisons on a compare/contrast graphic organizer. Once the teacher is confident that the students understand the concept, the students compare and contrast characters, settings, or events from two different stories. The students may complete the task verbally, using a communication system, with picture choices, or working with a partner.

Teachers often pair reading and writing together. The teacher reviews the students’ comparison of characters from two similar books. The teacher directs students to write a short story in which characters from each book meet and tell what the characters would say to each other. The teacher reviews how to punctuate dialogue by showing it in one of the stories the class read. Some students may dictate their story to the teacher and show the teacher where to put quotation marks to indicate dialogue. For some students, the teacher provides more context (e.g., the characters want the same book in the library) and sentences to choose from to create the dialogue. Some students may select from sentences written on peel-off strips. Some students may use eye gaze to select the sentences, and some students may use a software program in which they can click and drag the sentence choices to create the dialogue.

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

### Grade 5

- Learning the meaning of new words and multiple-meaning words (e.g., mold) from reading fifth-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, or 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 in different formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally
- 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

### Grade 6 Preview

- Learning the meaning of multiple-meaning words (e.g., tackle) and figurative language (e.g., busy as a bee) from reading sixth-grade stories or informational texts
- Using details from a story or informational text to explain what the text clearly states or implies
- Comparing the big idea(s) and information of two stories (e.g., both themes are “making friends takes work”)
- Summarizing a story or informational text without including any personal opinions
- Understanding how an author’s point of view affects how the reader understands a story and how an author uses evidence to try to convince the reader of a claim in an informational text
- Sharing ideas and information by producing persuasive pieces that include reasons and evidence, informational pieces using a conclusion that summarizes the information, and stories that use words and phrases to signal time (e.g., yesterday)
- Communicating with classmates in discussions; understanding others’ views

## Mathematics – Grade 5

In grade 5, the focus in mathematics is on learning about numbers including place value and decimals; solving problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; determining the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and calculating volume; and getting information from different types of 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 your child can make progress more easily. Here is a mathematics example that shows how individualization might work.

The teacher teaches place value by assigning students to groups of four to play a place value game. The students have templates where they can record their games. The template has a decimal and three spaces to the right of the decimal representing tenths, hundredths, and thousandths. The first student decides what place value the next student will work on: some students may say the place value, some students may point to a space, and some students may use a voice output device to make their selection. The next student rolls a numbered cube: some students may roll the numbered cube and some students may use a cube-rolling application on the computer. The student counts the number rolled on the cube and puts that number in the correct place value space: some students may write the numeral, some students may say the number and a friend may write it for them, some students may make tally marks, and some students may place the correct number of counters in the space.

## Mathematics Sample Instructional Activities

### Grade 5

- 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
- Solving one-step problems using decimals
- Identifying properties of shapes (e.g., parallel and perpendicular lines)
- Graphing points on grids and finding points on x- and y-axes; comparing information in graphs
- Calculating volume of three-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

### Grade 6 Preview

- Using number lines to locate and compare positive and negative numbers
- Locating positive and negative numbers on a coordinate grid
- Solving word problems by adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers up to three digits
- Solving word problems with fractions and decimals
- Writing and solving expressions and equations with variables and parentheses; writing and solving expressions with exponents; solving linear equations
- Understanding unit rate (e.g., 4 tickets cost \$20, so each ticket costs \$5)
- Calculating areas of four-sided shapes and triangles; making decisions about when to use formulas for perimeter, area, and volume
- Planning for, collecting, and organizing data on line plots, graphs, histograms, and dot plots
- Describing data using mean, median, and range

## Families Working with Teachers

Children learn well when teachers and families work together. You can help your child learn when you and their teachers share information with each other. You can share how your child learns best and what their interests are. It is also important to provide your child with learning activities suggested by their 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 they can do after listening to the story instead of reading it alone. Likewise, writing might include the way your child communicates their thoughts and ideas. This might be by using the computer, assistive technology, or dictation instead of using a pencil and paper.

For more information, please visit [www.msaastates.com](http://www.msaastates.com) and click on the "Resources for Families" tab on the left side of the page. Parents can use resources on this site to help increase their child's knowledge and skills. The site includes a link to "Parent Tips and Tools" that can help parents use the resource materials. These resources help teachers and parents know what content to teach in each grade. They also provide 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 provides guidance on the appropriate content and supports. Teachers and families working together will make individualized instruction meaningful and will help your child develop those skills. As you read through this overview and look at your child's ISR, please contact your child's teacher if you need more information.

### MSAA Resources for Teachers and Parents

- Content Modules (explanation of grade-level content)
- Instructional Families (skills for each grade)
- Curriculum Resource Guides (examples for teaching grade-level content)
- 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)

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