ABRIDGED —

READING FRAMEWORK

for the 2017 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

INTRODUCTION

The ability to read well is the cornerstone of a child's education and a prerequisite for a successful life. From an early age, children draw meaning and pleasure from learning the words on a page, giving them a sense of accomplishment. Reading can transport children to places near and far, essentially opening the door to the world. It is an essential skill for all learning—whether studying languages, science, social studies, or math—and one that children carry with them into adulthood. The ability to read critically and analytically is key to effective participation in our nation's democratic society.

NAEP OVERVIEW

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only continuing and nationally representative measure of trends in academic achievement of U.S. elementary and secondary school students in various subjects. For more than four decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance at the national, state, and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. The information NAEP provides about student achievement helps the public, educators, and policymakers understand strengths and weaknesses in student performance and make informed decisions about education.

The National Assessment Governing Board was created by Congress in 1988 to set policy for NAEP. The Board oversees the development and updating of NAEP frameworks that describe the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed in each subject. The NAEP Reading Framework resulted from the work of many individuals and organizations involved in reading and reading education, including researchers, policymakers, educators, and members of the public.

The *NAEP Reading Assessment* is regularly administered to representative samples of students in grades 4, 8, and 12. Through "The Nation's Report Card," NAEP reports how well students perform in reading various texts and responding to those texts by answering selected-response and constructed-response questions. Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and continuing with the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, NAEP has assessed reading in grades 4 and 8 every two years and in grade 12 every four years. The results provide a rich, broad, and deep picture of student reading achievement in the U.S., reported in terms of achievement levels, scale scores, and percentiles. Only academic achievement data and related information are collected about contexts for student learning. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected.

The NAEP Reading Assessment regularly collects achievement information on representative samples of students in grades 4, 8, and 12.

2017 FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The reading framework for the 2017 NAEP describes the types of texts and questions that should be included in the assessment, as well as how the questions should be designed and scored.

The 2017 NAEP Reading Assessment uses the same framework developed for the 2009 assessment, which replaced the framework used from 1992 through 2007. Compared to the previous framework, the 2009 Reading Framework increased the emphasis on informational texts, redefined reading cognitive processes (behaviors and skills), introduced a new systematic assessment of vocabulary knowledge,

and added poetry to grade 4. For a summary of similarities and differences between the two frameworks, see the full framework page 14.

The assessment measures students' reading comprehension and ability to apply vocabulary knowledge by having them read passages in English and answer questions about what they have read. In some cases, the questions deal with facts in the text or vocabulary. In other cases, a complete answer requires a clear analysis or coherent argument supported by evidence from the reading passage. Students respond to both selected-response and constructed-response questions.

CONTENT AND DESIGN

The NAEP Reading Assessment is guided by a definition of reading that reflects scientific research, draws on multiple sources, and conceptualizes reading as an active and complex cognitive process that involves:

- Understanding written text
- Developing and interpreting meaning
- Using meaning as appropriate to the type of text, purpose, and situation

Reading passages in the assessment are selected to be interesting to students nationwide, to represent high-quality literary and informational material, and to be free from bias. In total, the NAEP assessments at grades 4, 8, and 12 are extensive enough to ensure that

results can be reported validly, but no single student participates in the entire assessment.

At grade 4, students spend about half of the assessment time responding to selected-response questions and the other half responding to constructed-response questions. Students in grades 8 and 12 spend a greater amount of time on constructed-response questions.

Starting with the 2017 assessment, students will engage with both selected-response and constructed-response questions in a digital platform.

TYPES OF TEXTS ASSESSED

NAEP assesses reading skills that students use in all subject areas and in their out-of-school and recreational reading. By design, many NAEP passages require interpretive and critical skills.

The 2017 NAEP Reading Assessment includes two distinct types of texts: literary and informational. Literary texts, such as stories and novels, are characterized by a coherent text structure known as "story grammar." Characters populate each story in major or minor roles, and themes or major ideas are stated or implied. Informational, or expository, texts possess distinct organizational patterns, such as sequence or comparison and contrast, to help readers organize their emerging sense of what the text is trying to say. The nature of texts affects comprehension, and different text types must be read and interpreted using different skills.

The NAEP Reading Assessment also addresses vocabulary, to assess the interpretation of words in the context of a passage. The vocabulary questions function both as a measure of passage comprehension and as a test of specific knowledge of a word's meaning. Vocabulary questions at each grade provide information about students' vocabulary knowledge.

Literary Texts

The 2017 NAEP Reading Assessment presents reading passages from three categories of literary text:

- Fiction
- Literary nonfiction, such as essays, speeches, and autobiographies or biographies
- Poetry

Fiction

Stories categorized as fiction—short stories and novels—typically consist of a setting, a simple or complex plot with a problem to be solved, a problem or conflict that requires characters to face challenges or change as they move toward a resolution, and a reaction that expresses the protagonist's feelings or relates to broader consequences.

Authors may use a variety of literary techniques to enhance their presentation. Several aspects of text structures and features, as well as literary techniques, may be assessed for all grades. These components become increasingly sophisticated as students move through elementary, middle, and high school grades.

Literary techniques by grade:
- **Grade 4:** figurative language such as symbolism, simile, metaphor, diction and word choice, dialogue, and exaggeration
- **Grade 8:** more abstract elements, such as flashback and imagery
- **Grade 12:** dramatic irony, character foils, comic relief, and unconventional use of language

➡

Literary Nonfiction

Works of literary nonfiction such as biographies, essays, and speeches have distinct, varied text structural patterns and features to reflect their purpose and audience. Literary nonfiction is an example of mixed text because it uses literary techniques usually associated with fiction or poetry and also presents information or factual material.

Text types by grade:
- **Grade 4:** autobiographical sketches and personal essays
- **Grade 8:** character sketches, memoirs, and speeches
- **Grade 12:** classical essays

At grade 4, text structures and features in literary nonfiction on NAEP include description, cause and effect, comparison, chronology, point of view, themes and central ideas, and supporting ideas. At grades 8 and 12, these structures and features are increasingly complex.

Examples of literary techniques by grade:
- **Grade 4:** diction and word choice, various ways to introduce characters, exaggeration, and figurative language
- **Grade 8:** voice, tone, imagery, metaphoric language, and irony
- **Grade 12:** denotation and connotation (the explicit and implicit meanings of words, with implicit including the suggestions, associations, and emotional overtones attached to a word)

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"FUN" by Suzanne Britt Jordan is a literary nonfiction text from the eighth-grade Reading Assessment that examines the perceptions and realities of the concept of fun.

1. The author assumes that the people reading her essay

Ⓐ probably had fun going to amusement parks as children

Ⓑ prefer dangerous experiences over fun activities

● may be worried that they are not having enough fun

Ⓓ enjoy discussing the topic of fun

To read the passage, scale score, description of scale score, key/scoring guide, sample responses, and performance data of this question, click here and choose score 286.

Poetry

Poetry is a highly imaginative form of communication in which poets try to compress their thoughts into very few words. Poets use picturesque and evocative words, as well as similes, metaphors, and other devices that convey ideas, emotions, and actions. Poetry often involves a high level of abstraction and requires readers to apply critical thinking skills not required of other types of literary works.

Basic poetry forms by grade:
▹ **Grade 4:** narrative, lyrical, and humorous poems and free verse
▹ **Grade 8:** odes, songs, and epics
▹ **Grade 12:** sonnets and elegies

The complexity in reading tasks increases with grade level. For example, students in grade 12 may be asked to compare thematic treatment in two poems or contrast two poets' choices of literary devices.

Students at grade 4 can be expected to be familiar with simple organizational patterns, such as verse and stanza, along with the basic elements of rhyme scheme, rhythm, mood, and themes and intent.

At grades 8 and 12, increasingly complex poetic organizational patterns and elements are included, along with application of figurative language, rhetorical devices, and complex poetry arrangements. Students also are expected to understand the use of "white space" as a structural feature of poetry.

➡ See framework page 21.

Informational Texts

The informational texts are classified into three broad categories:

- Exposition
- Argumentation and persuasive text
- Procedural text and documents

Exposition

Expository text presents information, provides explanations and definitions, and compares and contrasts. Textbooks, news articles, and informational trade books are examples of expository text. The primary goals of expository text for school-age readers are to communicate information and to advance learning.

Forms that may be assessed by grade:

- **Grade 4:** informational trade books, textbook passages, news and feature articles, and encyclopedia entries
- **Grade 8:** expository text genres include historical documents, various grade-appropriate essays, and research reports
- **Grade 12:** more complex essay formats, such as political, social, historical, or scientific essays that primarily communicate information

The major organizing structures of exposition are description, sequence, cause and effect, problem and solution, and comparison and contrast. Exposition may also include lists as a structural component, presenting lists of descriptions, causes, problems, solutions, and views within other structures. The framework lists sequence, point of view, topics or central ideas, and supporting ideas and evidence at grade 4. At grades 8 and 12, the structural organization and elements are assessed at increasingly complex levels and with increasingly sophisticated texts.

SAMPLE QUESTION

"Little Great White" by Pamela S. Turner is an expository text from the fourth-grade *2013 Mathematics and Reading Assessment* that describes how scientists care for a white shark in captivity.

> 2. Based on the article, is it a good idea to keep white sharks in captivity?
>
> Explain your answer using information from the article.

To read the passage, scale score, description of scale score, key/scoring guide, sample responses, and performance data of this question, click here and choose the first score 251.

Argumentation and persuasive text

Argumentation seeks to influence readers through appeals that direct them to specific goals or try to win them over to specific beliefs. Authors of persuasive writing must establish the author's credibility and authority. Examples of persuasive text are political speeches, editorials, and advertisements.

Argumentation and persuasive texts by grade:

▹ **Grade 4:** informational trade books that argue a position or persuade the reader to adopt a point of view, journals, speeches, and simple persuasive essays

▹ **Grade 8:** letters to the editor and editorials, and argumentative and grade-appropriate persuasive essays

▹ **Grade 12:** various types of essays, including political and social commentary essays, historical accounts, and position papers such as persuasive brochures and advertisements

The differences between exposition and argumentation and persuasive text lie not in the structural organization, but rather in the way the texts are elaborated through the use of contrasting viewpoints, shaping of arguments, appeals to emotions, and other manipulations of text and language. The organizational structures at all levels are the same as in exposition: description, sequence, cause and effect, problem and solution, and comparison and contrast. They are represented in grades 8 and 12 with increasing complexity.

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Procedural text and documents

Procedural text conveys directions for accomplishing a task. The text may be primarily prose arranged to show specific steps towards accomplishing a goal or it may combine both textual and graphic elements to communicate with the user. Examples include manuals and product support materials. Documents use text sparingly and minimize the continuous prose readers must process to gain the information they need. Examples include documents and charts.

At grades 4 and 8, procedural text and documents are embedded in or supplementary to continuous text; such text is not included as stand-alone text. At grade 4, some examples of procedural text and documents embedded in text include directions, a map, a timeline, a graph, a table, and a chart. At grade 8, some examples include a recipe and a schedule. At grade 12, stand-alone material is introduced. Some examples include an application, a manual, product support material, and a contract.

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COGNITIVE TARGETS

Questions on the NAEP Reading Assessment have been developed to assess students' comprehension of literary and informational text. The term cognitive targets refers to the mental processes or kinds of thinking that underlie reading comprehension.

Locate and Recall

The first cognitive behaviors are *locate and recall*. As students locate or recall information in the text, they may identify clearly stated main ideas or supporting details, or they may find essential elements of a story, such as characters, time, or setting. Their process in answering questions often involves matching information given in the question to literal information in the text.

➡ See framework page 37.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Theodore Roosevelt's 1905 inaugural address is an informational text from the 12th-grade *2013 Mathematics and Reading Assessment.*

> 3. Roosevelt emphasizes "responsibility" and "duty" throughout his address. According to Roosevelt, why should the nation take responsibility? What are two responsibilities or duties that Roosevelt believed were important?

To read the passage, scale score, description of scale score, key/scoring guide, sample responses, and performance data of this question, click here and choose score 358.

Integrate and Interpret

The next set of reading behaviors refers to what readers do as they *integrate* new information into their initial sense of what a passage says, often *interpreting* what they read in the process. When readers integrate and interpret, they compare and contrast information or character actions, examine how one portion of text relates to another, or consider alternatives to what is presented. This aspect of reading is critical to comprehension and can be considered the stage in which readers really move beyond the discrete information, ideas, details, themes, and so forth presented in text and extend their initial impressions by processing information logically and completely.

In applying these behaviors, readers invariably think across large portions of text, across the text as a whole, or even across multiple texts. They relate textual information to knowledge from other sources, such as their previous content learning, or to internalized criteria and logic. Thus, readers might ask themselves whether a text makes sense to them based on their own experiences or what they have read in other sources. Readers may apply what they know to what they are reading—for example, determining a real-world application of suggestions in a text on bicycle safety.

They also apply information gained from reading—for example, in following instructions for repairing a bicycle or reading a map to locate bike routes.

➡ See framework page 37.

SAMPLE QUESTION

4. On page 2, the article says that Craig Greshaw thinks that "knowing about computers goes beyond surfing the Web." What does Greshaw mean by this? Explain your answer using information from the article.

To read the passage, scale score, description of scale score, key/scoring guide, sample responses, and performance data of this question, click here and choose score 308.

Critique and Evaluate

The final set of reading behaviors, *critique* and *evaluate*, requires readers to stand back from what they read and view the text objectively. The focus remains on the text itself, but the reader's purpose is to consider the text critically by assessing it from numerous perspectives and synthesizing it with other texts and other experiences. Assessment questions may ask students to evaluate the quality of the text, to determine what is most significant in a passage, or to judge the effectiveness of specific textual features to accomplish the purpose of the text (e.g., the effectiveness of details selected to support a persuasive argument). Questions might ask for the likelihood that an event could have taken place, the plausibility of an argument, or the adequacy of an explanation for an event. Questions can ask students to focus at the level of language choices (e.g., nuances expressed in a metaphor) or at the broader level of the entire text (e.g., evaluating the effectiveness of an author's craft to accomplish his or her overall goals).

To answer these questions, students draw on what they know about text, language, and the ways authors manipulate language and ideas to achieve their goals.

➡ See framework page 38.

SAMPLE QUESTION

5. Does the author present a convincing argument that recycling is the best solution to the problem of e-waste? Explain why or why not.
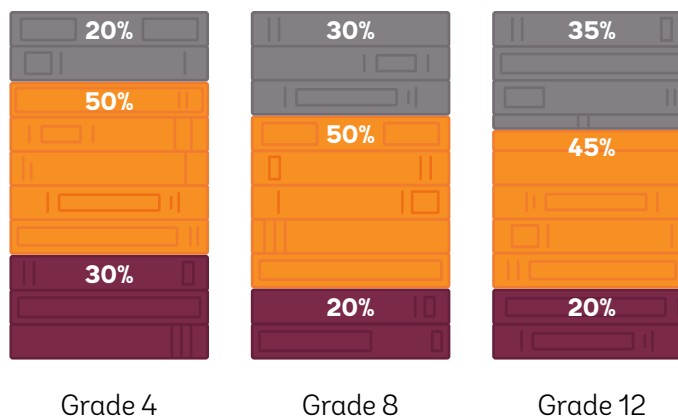
To read the passage, scale score, description of scale score, key/scoring guide, sample responses, and performance data of this question, click here and choose score 351.

➡ Test Yourself: Visit the NAEP Questions Tool.

COGNITIVE **TARGETS**

mix by grade level

- Critique and Evaluate
- Integrate and Interpret
- Locate and Recall

Grade 4
- 20%
- 50%
- 30%

Grade 8
- 30%
- 50%
- 20%

Grade 12
- 35%
- 45%
- 20%

ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

Since 1990, the National Assessment Governing Board has used student achievement levels for reporting results on NAEP assessments. The achievement levels represent an informed judgment of "how good is good enough" in the various subjects assessed. Generic policy definitions for achievement at the *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* levels describe in very general terms what students at each grade level should know and be able to do on the assessment. Reading achievement levels specific to *The NAEP Reading Framework* were developed to elaborate on the generic definitions.

Preliminary achievement-level descriptors were developed for the assessment as a whole and for the vocabulary component of the assessment. These preliminary achievement levels were used to guide question development and initial stages of standard-setting. The preliminary achievement-level descriptions were refined as a result of the achievement-level-setting process. For more information regarding what fourth, eighth, and 12th grade students should know and be able to do at each achievement level, see framework page 43.

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	POLICY DEFINITION
Basic	This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.
Proficient	This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.
Advanced	This level signifies superior performance.

➡ For more information about the achievement levels, visit https://www.nagb.gov/content/nagb/assets/documents/naep/achievement-level-one-pager-4.6.pdf.

REPORTING NAEP RESULTS

The primary vehicle for reporting NAEP reading results is the NAEP Reading Report Card issued after each assessment administration. The report provides detailed information on the assessments, the students who participated, and the assessment results. Results are disaggregated by specific groups and are also presented for states that participate in the NAEP state assessment. Among the focal groups are males and females, students from various racial/ethnic backgrounds, and students who took the assessment with and without accommodations.

The NAEP Reading Assessment results are reported in terms of average scores for groups of students on the NAEP 0–500 scale and as percentages of students who attain each of the three achievement levels (*Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*). Information is also provided about students who score below Basic. These students are not necessarily nonreaders; many can complete some tasks on the assessment but are not able to attain the minimum score required for Basic.

The 2017 results will continue to use a 0–500 cross-grade scale. Use of such a scale affirms that reading is a developmental process and that students' reading skills mature throughout their school years as they read increasingly diverse and sophisticated texts. The 2017 NAEP Reading Report Card will report trends in student reading performance from 1992 to 2017. *The 2017 Reading Assessment* results are based on nationally representative samples of 148,800 fourth graders from 7,830 schools and 141,800 eighth graders from 6,500 schools.

Item Maps

NAEP item maps are tools that help readers understand student performance. Item maps help to illustrate what students know and can do in NAEP subject areas by positioning descriptions of individual assessment items at different scores along the NAEP scale at each grade level.

For each assessment, example questions are "mapped" onto the NAEP scale for that subject—with more difficult questions at the top of the map and easier questions at the lower part of the

map. The item descriptions used in NAEP item maps focus on the knowledge and skills needed to respond successfully to the assessment item. For multiple-choice items, the description indicates the knowledge or skill demonstrated by selection of the correct option. See page 8 for an example of a multiple-choice item. For constructed-response items, the description takes into account the knowledge or skill specified by the different levels of scoring criteria for that item. See page 9 for an example of a constructed-response item.

The location of the questions on the map indicates that students with that score had a high probability of answering the question correctly. Each item map contains the following:

- **A scale specific to the subject.** Reading scale ranges from 0-500, depending on the subject.
- **Scale scores from a given assessment.** These represent the scores for students who were likely to answer a question correctly or to give a complete response. Constructed-response questions for which students could earn partial credit may appear on the map multiple times, once for each level of credit. Constructed-response items are marked with CR on the map.
- **Descriptions** indicating what students need to know or do to answer the question correctly.
- **Content classifications** that refer to the specific skill area of the subject being assessed; for example, in mathematics, the content classification might be algebra or measurement.
- **Achievement level cut scores** that show whether the student is performing at a *Basic*, *Proficient*, or *Advanced* level.

Descriptions for items that have been released to the public are hyperlinked. These items are not used in future assessments. For some subjects and years, no items were released and so no item descriptors are linked.

For more information about how to read the map, score levels, content classification, and student group performance, visit https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/itemmaps and choose *Read more about item mapping.*

For reading, there are two content classifications, literary and informational. Literary is classified with the icon ●. Informational is classified with the icon ■.

The graphic on the following page shows example scores and the descriptions indicating skills or knowledge students need to have to correctly answer the questions in the eighth-grade 2013 Reading Assessment. Scores from the eighth-grade 2013 Reading Assessment are categorized into different levels: **0–242:** Below Basic, **243–280:** Basic, **281–322:** Proficient, **323–500:** Advanced.

Ten assessment items in this item map are hyperlinked to further details about the item.

Item Map for NAEP Reading Grade 8

ADVANCED	**500**	■ 388	Explain relation between specific paragraph and author's main point – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
		■ 372	Evaluate persuasive power of parts of a passage and compare with text support – Critique/Evaluate (CR)
		● 348	Evaluate effectiveness of plot device in a short story – Critique/Evaluate (CR)
		● 335	Interpret poetic language to explain idea – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
	323		
PROFICIENT	**322**	■ 322	Explain relationship between a text feature and the rest of the passage – Critique/Evaluate (CR)
		● 314	Synthesize across story to provide theme and support with text – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
		● 309	Interpret poetic language and explain – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
		● 307	Infer story character's feelings to provide a description – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
		■ 307	Recognize main purpose of expository passage – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
	281		
BASIC	**280**	● 276	Provide an example from the story that reflects the theme – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
		● 274	Recognize relevant detail embedded in a story – Locate/Recall (MC)
		■ 262	Use information from expository passage to support evaluation of a description – Critique/Evaluate (CR)
		■ 259	Recognize relevant detail from an expository passage – Locate/Recall (MC)
	243		
	242	● 239	Recognize main way author presents information about a biographical character – Critique/Evaluate (CR)
		● 238	Evaluate and recognize primary importance of a character to the story – Critique/Evaluate (CR)
		■ 208	Recognize meaning of descriptive word used in an expository passage – Integrate/Interpret (CR)
	0		

➡ Visit https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/itemmaps to view the full version of item maps

At any given score point, 65 percent of the students (for a constructed-response question), 74 percent of the students (for a four-option multiple-choice question) or 72 percent of the students (for a five-option multiple-choice question) answered that question successfully. For constructed-response questions, responses could be completely or partially correct and therefore a question can map to several points on the scale.

For example, a four-option multiple-choice item in the 2013 NAEP Reading Assessment that maps at 307 on the scale would indicate that eighth-grade students with a score of 307 have a 74 percent chance of answering this item correctly. In other words, out of a sample of 100 students who scored 307, 74 would be expected to have answered this question correctly.

CONCLUSION

The Governing Board would like to thank the hundreds of individuals and organizations whose time and talents contributed to this reading framework. The Board believes the framework provides a rich and accurate measure of the reading comprehension and analytical skills that students need for their schooling and for their future adult lives. Development of these reading skills is the responsibility of all teachers—not only English teachers but also teachers across the curriculum—and also involves the expectations of parents and society.

The Board hopes that this reading framework will serve not only as the foundation for how well students should read, but also as a catalyst to improve reading achievement for the benefit of students themselves and for our nation.

➡ To access the full *2017 NAEP Reading Framework*, please visit https://www.nagb.gov/content/nagb/assets/documents/publications/frameworks/reading/2017-reading-framework.pdf

The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, nonpartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

For more information on the National Assessment Governing Board, please visit **www.nagb.gov** or call us at **202-357-6938**.