Pennsylvania Department of Education
Grade 6 Reading
Performance Level Descriptors

Below Basic
A student scoring at the below basic level demonstrates competency with below grade-level text only and requires extensive support to comprehend and interpret fiction and nonfiction.

Basic
A student scoring at the basic level generally utilizes some reading strategies to comprehend grade-level appropriate fiction and nonfiction:

- Differentiates among word meanings, including synonyms and antonyms, using context clues and/or word parts
- Identifies details in support of a conclusion
- Identifies stated or implied main idea and relevant details
- Attempts to summarize text and/or to make within or among text-to-text connections
- Identifies purpose of text (e.g., narrative) and features of text (e.g., headings), including content appropriate to subsections
- Describes specific text elements and simple organizational patterns (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast, cause/effect)
- Identifies simple figurative language (e.g., personification, simile), literary elements (e.g., character) and recognizes point of view
- Locates factual statements and explicitly stated opinions in nonfiction
- Understands the use of exaggeration (bias) in nonfiction
- Identifies the proper sequence of steps in a list of directions
- Identifies and describes the purpose of graphics and charts

Proficient
A student scoring at the proficient level routinely utilizes a variety of reading strategies to comprehend and interpret grade-level appropriate fiction and nonfiction:

- Applies a variety of strategies to determine meanings of words, including synonyms and antonyms, using context clues and word parts
- Makes inferences, draws conclusions, and generalizes, using textual support
- Identifies stated and implied main ideas and relevant details
- Summarizes text and makes within and among text-to-text connections
- Identifies and interprets purpose of text (narrative, informational, poetic, persuasive, biographical)
- Identifies and interprets literary elements (characterization, setting, plot, theme) and point of view
- Identifies and explains figurative language (personification, simile, alliteration, metaphor)
- Identifies and interprets fact and opinion in nonfiction
- Describes how the author uses exaggeration (bias) in nonfiction
- Identifies and interprets organizational patterns of texts (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast)
- Compares and explains the sequence of steps in a list of directions
- Interprets and explains graphics, charts, and headings

Advanced
A student scoring at the advanced level consistently utilizes sophisticated strategies to comprehend and interpret complex fiction and nonfiction:

- Identifies shades of meaning in words, using context as support
- Makes inferences, draws conclusions, generalizes, and analyzes textual support
- Effectively summarizes all ideas within text
- Analyzes themes
- Analyzes purpose of text (e.g., narrative, informational)
- Describes and explains connections within and among texts
- Analyzes the relationships among text elements, organizational patterns (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast), and purpose of text (e.g., narrative)
- Explains the effectiveness of author’s use of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor), literary elements (e.g., character), and point of view
- Identifies, explains, and analyzes textual evidence in support of arguments in nonfiction
- Describes the sequence of steps in a list of directions
- Analyzes the use of graphics, charts, and headings