SRI International

Alternate Assessment Design–
English Language Arts

Technical Report 3:

Domain Analysis—Selection of Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Reading for the Development of Design Patterns and Task

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Summary

This report details the process used to select the common core state standards (CCSS) and expectation for which exemplar Design Patterns and Task Templates would be developed for the English Language Arts (AAD-ELA) project. Although the three states involved in the AAD-ELA project had individually developed their own extended content standards in ELA, they had also adopted or had committed to adopting CCSS in ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science (HSS&S). Accordingly, it was decided that the project would design and develop assessment tasks that were linked to the CCSS in ELA and Literacy in HSS&S. To select the sample set of CCSS standards and expectations on which assessment tasks would be based, a four step process and guiding rationales were developed by two individuals with content area expertise. Once a sample of CCSS and expectations had been identified they were recommended to the project partners who made the final selection.

Introduction and Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (IDEA) of 1997 (PL 105-17) required states and districts to develop alternate assessments for those students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) who could not participate in general education assessments (Kleinert, Quenemoen, and Thurlow, 2010). Most states restricted eligibility for their alternate assessments to a small percentage of their students with IEPs (Kearns, Towles-Reeves, Kleinert, and Kleinert, 2009). Generally the cognitive functioning of eligible students was thought to be below that needed for instruction and assessment using the general content and achievement standards and/or assessment formats expected of students who received the general instructional program (Kleinert, Quenemoen et al., 2010; Quenemoen, 2008). These early alternate assessments attempted to measure a mix of functional academics and life skills thought then to be appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities (Quenomoen, 2009; Tindal, 2009). However, the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (PL 107-110) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (PL 108-446) caused many states to rethink the content of their alternate assessments. ESEA required states to develop alternate assessments separately in reading/ELA, mathematics, and science; specified that such assessments were for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD), and allowed states to measure the performance of these students against alternate achievement standards (Rigney, 2009).

As with all new assessments developed under the ESEA, states were required to submit their alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) to the US Department of Education's Peer Review Process for approval. During the initial peer review panels many states' alternate assessments were unable to satisfy the technical requirements of the Peer Review Process and a substantial number of states revised or rebuilt their AA-AAS (Rigney, 2009). In a survey conducted by the GAO (2009) nearly two thirds of the states reported that demonstrating the validity and reliability of their AA-AAS was either moderately or very difficult. Furthermore, although most states met peer review expectations for validity and reliability of their general assessments, as of July 15, 2009, alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards were a factor preventing full approval in 11 out of 12 states (GAO).

To help states develop and implement alternate assessments that were psychometrically sound USDE provided both technical and financial assistance to states (GAO, 2009; Rigney, 2009). For example, the office of Elementary and Secondary Education awarded competitive Enhanced Assessment Grants (EAG) to state consortia to work on developing valid and reliable alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities. SRI and the states of Utah, Idaho, and Florida received an award in the area of mathematics in 2009 (Cameto, Haertal, DeBarger, and Morrison, 2010).The Alternate Assessment Design–Mathematics (AAD-M) project was the first to address systematically the specification of grade-level academic content for alternate assessments of students with significant cognitive disabilities through the application of evidence-centered design (ECD) and the principles of universal design for learning (UDL). In 2010 SRI International and the states of Idaho, Kansas, and Utah were awarded a similar EAG to improve their AA-AAS in English Language Arts (AAD-ELA).

The purpose of the AAD-ELA consortia was to use EDC and UDL to improve states' AA-AAS in ELA. Although the three states involved in the AAD-ELA project had individually developed their own extended content standards in ELA, they had also adopted or had committed to adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science (HSS&S). Accordingly, it was decided that the project would design and develop assessment tasks that were linked to the CCSS in ELA and Literacy in HSS&S. In the following section we provide background information on the development of the CCSS.

Development of the Common Core State Standards

The CCSS were developed as a result of the Common Core State Standards Initiative supported by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. The CCSS were designed to establish clear and consistent goals for learning that prepared children for success in college and work. As of January 2012, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics (Center on Education Policy, 2012).The CCSS for ELA and Literacy in HSS&S consisted of a comprehensive K–5 section and two content area specific sections for grades 6–12, one for ELA and one for history/social studies and science. ELA consisted of four strands, reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language. The reading strand was divided into three parts: informational text, literary text, and foundational skills (foundational skills only K through grade 5). In addition, each strand was divided into topic areas (Table 1).

Table 1. ELA Strands and Topic Areas

Strand: Reading informational and literary text	**Strand: Writing**
Topics • Key ideas & details • Craft and structure • Integration of knowledge & ideas • Range of reading & level of text complexity	*Topics* • Text types and purposes • Production & distribution of writing • Research to build and present knowledge • Range of writing
Reading foundational skills	**Strand: Listening and speaking**
Topics • Print concepts (K-1) • Phonological awareness (K-1) • Phonics and word recognition (K-5) • Fluency (K-5)	*Topics* • Comprehension and collaboration • Presentation of knowledge and ideas
Strand: Language	
Topics • Conventions of standard English • Knowledge of language • Vocabulary acquisition and use	

The CCSS for ELA and Literacy in HSS&S were an extension of a prior initiative to develop College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards. Each ELA strand consisted of CCR anchor standards grouped under each strand topic (See Table 2). Both the anchor standards and the strand topics were the same across grade levels. In reading there were ten anchor standards (identical for informational and literary text) and in foundational reading there were four anchor standards. In writing there were ten anchor standards; in speaking and listening there were six anchor standards; and in language there were six anchor standards that were divided across three skill sets. For literacy in HSS&S, the strands followed the same framework as for reading and writing in ELA.

Table 2. Common Core State Standards and Topics

Topic	Reading: Anchor Standards
Key Ideas and Details	1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. 3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
Craft and Structure	4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. 5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. 6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. 8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. 9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
Topic	**Writing: Anchor Standards**
Text Types and Purposes	1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
Production and Distribution of Writing	4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. 5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. 8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Range of Writing	10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Topics	Speaking and Listening: Anchor Standards
Comprehension and Collaboration	1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. 2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. 3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. 5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations. 6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Topics	**Language: Anchor Standards**
Conventions of Standard English	1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. 2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
Knowledge of Language	3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. 5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings. 6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

The anchor standards were further elaborated to define grade level end of year expectations. The end of year expectations provided a cumulative progression intended to prepare students to be college and career ready by the end of high school. To illustrate for grades 3, 4, and 5, figure 1 shows the standards and end of year expectations for Reading (literary text) Anchor Standard 3.

Figure 1. Anchor Standard 3

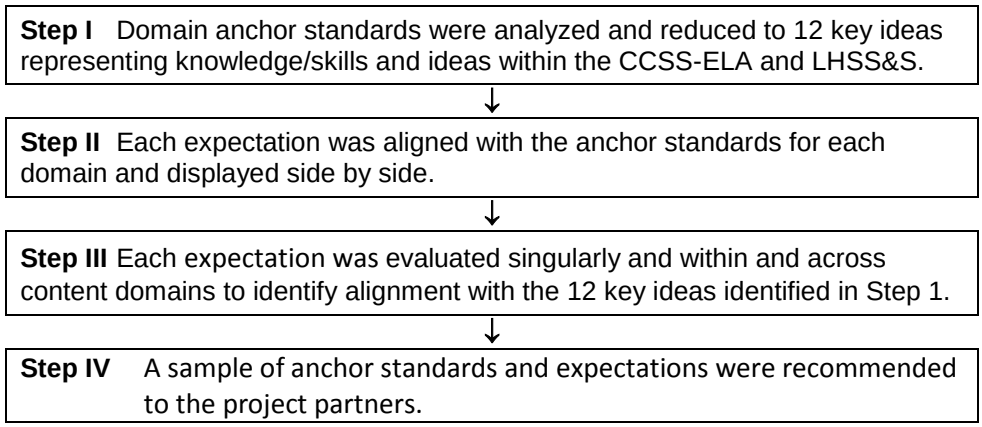
Reading:	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Anchor Standard 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

In the next section we describe the process and rationale employed in selecting the CCSS and end of year expectations that were recommended for inclusion in the AAD-ELA project.

Selection of Exemplar ELA CCSS and Expectations

To select the sample set of CCSS standards and expectations on which assessment tasks would be based, a four step process and guiding rationales were developed by two content area experts. Although the CCSS began in Kindergarten, only standards and expectations from grade 3 through grade 12 were analyzed as states were not required under ESEA to develop assessments for the early elementary grades. An overview of the process use to select standards and expectations to recommend to the project is described in the flow chart illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2. Process for Selecting Standards



A more detailed description of each of the four steps used to select exemplar standards for recommendation to the AAD-ELA project follows.

Step I

During Step I content area experts reviewed the anchor standards for vertical (across grades) and horizontal (within grade) alignment. In reviewing the anchor standards it became apparent there were several concepts covered within and across anchor standards and ELA domains. In an attempt to cover all of these emergent concepts while avoiding redundancy 12 key concepts were identified (figure 3).

Figure 3. Key Concepts from the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts

1. *Story grammar*
2. *Ideas represented in text*
3. *Structure of text*
4. *Literacies from different sources*
5. *Foundational skills*
6. *Types of writing*
7. *Research sources*
8. *Writing process*
9. *Taking information*
10. *Sharing information*
11. *Grammar*
12. *Vocabulary*

Following identification of the key concepts the two content experts aligned each anchor standards to the 12 key concepts (Table 3).

Table 3. Alignment of Key Ideas and Anchor Standards

Key Idea	Anchor Standard
1. Story grammar	*Reading 3*: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
2. Ideas represented in text	*Reading 1*: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. *Reading 2*: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. *Reading 4*: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. *Reading 6*: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. *Reading 8*: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. *Reading 9*: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
3. Structure of text	*Reading 5*: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
4. Literacies from different sources	*Reading 7*: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
5. Foundational skills-(Fluency)	*Reading 4:* Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension (Reading Foundations 4)
6. Types of writing	*Writing 1*: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. *Writing 2*: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. *Writing 3*: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
7. Research sources	*Writing 7*: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. *Writing 8*: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. *Writing 9:* Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Key Idea	Anchor Standard
8. Writing process	*Writing 4*: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. *Writing 5*: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. *Writing 6*: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
9. Taking information	*Speaking &Listening 1*: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. *Speaking &Listening 2:* Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. *Speaking &Listening 3:* Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
10. Sharing information	*Speaking &Listening 4*: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience *Speaking &Listening 5*: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations. *Speaking &Listening 6*: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
11. Grammar	*Language 1*: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. *Language 2*: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. *Language 3*: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
12. Vocabulary	*Language 4:* Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. *Language 5:* Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings. *Language 6*: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Step II

During Step II each grade level expectation from the strands of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language were aligned with the anchor standards. The strands, anchor standards, and grade level expectations were entered into an excel database to allow for vertical and horizontal coding, analysis, and evaluation.

Step III

During Step III each anchor standard and grade level expectation was analyzed and evaluated singly and within and across content domains. First, each standard and expectation was analyzed and evaluated based on the following attributes and rationales:

Content of expectation:

- Attributes: target construct, building block for other expectations in the grade span, depth of knowledge (DoK).
- Rationale: These attributes were important as the project could only develop assessments for a sample of end of year expectations). Therefore, the project team wanted to choose standards that represented the full expectation (target construct) for end of year performance as opposed to standards that built towards a larger idea (building blocks). DoK was identified as the project wanted to develop assessment tasks that reflected the same/equivalent/extended expectations for general education students.

Measurability of expectation:

- Attributes: number of elements required (materials, participants, objectives), other (guidance, support, speaking, understanding)
- Rationale: Sample expectations should be easily measurable therefore we evaluated and eliminated expectations that required student to student interaction, interaction with multiple materials, and multiple objectives assessed in one item, etc.

Second, in order to assemble a sample of expectations that reflected the CCSS as a whole, those expectations that were unique were given preference. An expectation was determined unique if it was found to be the only expectation in the grade span that addressed a particular content construct or concept.

Step IV

In the final step, content area experts recommended a sample of anchor standards and grade level expectations that covered the key concepts identified in Step 1 (Table 4). These exemplars included foundational or unique (not repetitive) aspects of the standard, were finitely measurable, and had a manageable grain size. The project then selected specific anchor standards and expectations for which to develop assessment design patterns and tasks that covered not only the range of content but the grade span from grade 3 through high school.

Table 4. Recommended and Selected Anchor Standards and End of Year Expectations

Strand and Anchor Standard	Grade	End of Year Expectation
Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	3	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, explicitly using the text as the basis for the answers. (Literature)
Reading 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3	Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how they contribute to the sequence of events. (Literature)
	7	Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (Literature)
	9/10	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (Literature)
	8	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories). (Informational Text)
Reading 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	4	Explain major differences between poems and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions. Dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text. (Literature)
	7	Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas. (Informational Text)
	9/10	Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter). (Informational Text)

Strand and Anchor Standard	Grade	End of Year Expectation
Reading 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text	11/12	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text. (Informational Text)
Reading 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	4	Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, and interactive elements) and explain how the information contributes to understanding of the text in which it appears. (Informational Text)
	8	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea. (Informational Text)
Writing 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	5	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly
	11/12	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
Writing 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	6	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	5	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
	8	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Writing 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	11/12	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Strand and Anchor Standard	Grade	End of Year Expectation
Writing 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.	3	Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
Speaking and Listening 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally	3	Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
	7	Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
Speaking and Listening 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	11/12	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
Language 5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.	5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
	8	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
	11/12	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings

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