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UPDATE

- Removal of unit-related excerpts in Sample Test Items Section due to copyright issues

PURPOSE

This document is designed to assist Louisiana educators in understanding the LEAP ELA Guidebooks Innovative Assessments for grades 6, 7, and 8, which are part of the [Innovative Assessment Program](#) (IAP).

Why introduce a new type of assessment?

For many years, the English Language Arts (ELA) assessments taken by students in grades 3-12 across the United States have been of a similar design: they provide excerpts of texts drawn from a wide variety of sources, which students are then required to analyze.

ELA teachers work extremely hard to dive deeply into unit texts with their students, but many also devote valuable instructional time to teaching skills in isolation—believing that by doing so they will better prepare their students for statewide assessments and help their students become better readers. However, there is no strong research to suggest that focusing on such skills exclusively makes students better prepared, either as readers or test takers.

Rather, the more knowledge about the world through history, geography, literature, the sciences, and the arts that students possess, the better they tend to do when analyzing texts they have not seen before. Why? Because every text is about *something in particular*, and thus requires background knowledge to be better understood. This is one reason why students who have been exposed to many cultural experiences and a variety of texts and multi-media often perform better on skills-based ELA assessments; it is not because they may be better at “finding the main

idea,” but because they are far more likely to know the subject matter assumed in any given text. In short, the achievement gap is actually a knowledge gap: students who know more are stronger readers.

The goal of English Language Arts is for all students to read, understand, and express understanding of complex, grade-level texts. Through reading and understanding a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts, students will gain insights into many aspects of our world and have an opportunity to explore human nature and identity. To ensure that all students are able to reach this goal, a teacher must help students build the knowledge and skills necessary to become independent readers and writers and support students throughout the instructional process by using high-quality instructional materials, which for the LEAP ELA Guidebooks Innovative Assessment is the [ELA Guidebooks curriculum](#).

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

The LEAP ELA Guidebooks Innovative Assessment includes features that make it different from existing LEAP 2025 ELA assessments:

- The End-of-Unit assessments ask students to interpret texts and topics they have studied with their teachers as part of the ELA Guidebooks curriculum.
- End-of-Unit assessments are administered throughout the school year in three testing windows (Fall, Winter, and Spring), which provides teachers and schools with the opportunity to administer the assessment soon after a unit of study and to receive information about their students’ performance throughout the year.

End-of-Unit Test Design

- **The first section** draws upon the unit texts students have read and encourages teachers to ensure that students master the language and essential ideas of the texts they study in each unit. Additionally, students are introduced to a new text or pair of texts that are topically or thematically related to the unit. The new text(s) may be either fiction (e.g., short stories, novel and drama excerpts, poems) and/or nonfiction (e.g., informational texts from across the disciplines of science, history, and the arts). The questions in this section include selected-response items based on previously studied ELA Guidebooks unit texts and the new unit-related texts, as well as a constructed-response question that allows students to show their understanding of the new text(s) and how the text(s) connect to the knowledge of the unit.

- **The second section** consists of a single essay question that requires students to use the knowledge they have built from texts in the ELA Guidebooks unit and the new text(s) in Section 1 of the assessment in order to analyze and synthesize concepts across texts. Knowing that the essay question assumes knowledge of the materials in each unit strongly encourages teachers and students to view the unit texts as providing cumulative knowledge. In order to demonstrate synthesis and expression of knowledge across texts, students are asked to include relevant information from three texts in their written responses, including specific evidence from the new text (provided in Section 2) and details from two unit texts.
- **The third section** consists of an ELA passage set that requires students to read and answer questions about a text or pair of texts unrelated to the unit content to demonstrate grade-level reading comprehension skills.

END-OF-UNIT ASSESSMENT DESIGN				
Test Section	Focus of Section	Number/Type of Items	Assessable ELA Student Standards	Testing Time
1	Reading comprehension of unit text(s) and new text(s) related to the unit	10 SR 1 CR	RL/RI standards; vocabulary standards R.4, L.4, L.5	60 minutes
2	Reading comprehension and written expression to show understanding and synthesis of key knowledge built in the unit using information from three texts, including the new text and two unit texts	1 Essay	RL/RI standards; Writing standards 1, 2, 4, and 9; and Language standards 1, 2, and 3	60 minutes
3	Reading comprehension of a text or pair of texts not related to the unit content	7 or 8 SR	RL/RI standards; vocabulary standards R.4, L.4, L.5	20 minutes
SR: Selected-Response—includes evidence-based selected-response (two-part items), multiple-choice, multiple-select, and technology-enhanced items CR: Constructed Response—requires a shorter written response				

REPORTING CATEGORIES

The intent of the LEAP ELA Guidebooks Innovative Assessment is to provide information on student performance after each unit assessment and at the end of the year. Student-level reporting will include (1) performance information on the end-of-unit assessment, provided after each testing window, and (2) a summative achievement level classification that accounts for student performance on all of the unit assessments. The summative report will be provided after the end of the school year. For more information about the end-of-unit reports, see the [IAP Guidance for Score Reports](#) and the [Parent Guide for the IAP Student Reports](#).

CATEGORY	CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	REPORTING INFORMATION
Knowledge of Unit Texts	Students answer questions about the anchor texts they read in class to show their understanding of key knowledge and skills taught in the unit.	Reading Comprehension
Application of Unit Knowledge	Students read a new text(s) related to the unit content and respond to questions and a writing prompt that measures their ability to apply the key knowledge and skills taught in the unit.	Reading Comprehension
Synthesis and Expression of Knowledge Across Texts	Students write an extended response that demonstrates their ability to express their overall understanding of the key knowledge they gained in the unit by developing their ideas with information from the unit texts and a new text.	Reading Comprehension & Written Expression
		Written Knowledge and Use of Language Conventions

Achievement-Level Definitions

The LEAP ELA Guidebooks Assessment uses the same achievement-level definitions as the LEAP 2025 assessments, which briefly describe the expectations for student performance at each of Louisiana’s five achievement levels:

- **Advanced:** Students performing at this level have exceeded college and career readiness expectations and are well prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Mastery:** Students performing at this level have met college and career readiness expectations and are prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Basic:** Students performing at this level have nearly met college and career readiness expectations and may need additional support to be fully prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Approaching Basic:** Students performing at this level have partially met college and career readiness expectations and will need much support to be prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Students performing at this level have not yet met the college and career readiness expectations and will need extensive support to be prepared for the next level of study in this content area

TEST ADMINISTRATION

Administration Schedule and Unit Progression

The testing windows and the units assessed during each window are as follows:

Window	Grade 6 Unit(s)	Grade 7 Unit(s)	Grade 8 Unit(s)
Fall (October 17-October 28)	Hatchet	Giver	Flowers for Algernon
Winter (January 23-February 3)	Jobs <i>or</i> Out of the Dust	Christmas Carol <i>or</i> Written in Bone	Tell-Tale Heart <i>or</i> Call of the Wild
Spring (April 25-May 26)	If Stones Could Speak	Behind the Scenes	Sugar

The school or district test coordinator will communicate the testing schedule. All LEAP ELA Guidebooks Innovative Assessments are timed. No additional time is permitted, except for students who have a documented extended time accommodation (e.g., an IEP).

Scheduling Requirements for Computer-Based Testing

Computer-based testing allows school systems some flexibility in scheduling. However, to reduce incidences of testing irregularities, school systems must do the following:

- Test students across the school at or very close to the same time.
- Complete makeup testing for students immediately upon their return.
- Limit student interaction during breaks between test sections.
- Isolate students who have not completed testing for the day (e.g., students with extended time accommodation).
- Prevent interaction between groups of students taking the same tests at different times within a testing day.
- Require the completion of a section once it is opened (i.e., limiting the reopening of test sections).
- Administer test sections 1, 2, and 3 in the correct order.
- Administer test sections 1 and 2 on the same day.

Online Tools Training

All students should work through the [Online Tools Training](#) (OTT) to practice using the online tools so that they are well prepared to navigate the online testing system. The OTT can be accessed at <https://adamexam.com/tester> by using one of the two codes: **OTTELA**, for students without a Text-to-Speech (TTS) accommodation, or **OTTELATTS**, for students with a TTS accommodation.

Permitted Testing Materials

Students will only be permitted to have school-issued scratch paper and pencils. No other materials are allowed. Students will **not** be permitted to use copies of unit texts, dictionaries, or thesauruses during the assessment.

Item Types

Descriptions of the various item types on the LEAP ELA Guidebooks Assessment follow:

- **Multiple Choice (MC):** Students select the correct response from among four answer choices. The MC items are worth one point and students cannot earn partial credit.
- **Multiple Select (MS):** This item type is a one-part item that asks students to choose two answer options. The MS items are worth two points, and students can earn partial credit (1 point).
- **Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR):** This item type consists of two parts; part A asks students to show their understanding of a text, and part B asks students to identify evidence to support that understanding. The EBSR items are worth two points, and students can earn partial credit (1 point) if they answer only part A correctly. Students do not receive any credit if they answer only part B correctly.
- **Technology Enhanced (TE):** This item type uses technology to capture student comprehension of texts. Each TE item is worth two points, and students can earn partial credit (1 point). For a summary of the different kinds of TE items and where to find examples of each type, refer to [LEAP 2025 Technology-Enhanced Item Types](#). To practice responding to a TE item, see the [Online Tools Training](#).
- **Constructed Response (CR):** This item appears at the end of Section 1 and asks students to respond to a question in writing. As this response is not as in-depth as an essay, it is scored for reading comprehension only and not for writing. This item type is worth up to four points. An item-specific version of the [General Rubric for Constructed-Response Items](#) is used to score these items.
- **Essay Prompt:** This item type appears in Section 2 of the assessment and asks students to create an extended and complete written response showing their understanding and synthesis of the key knowledge of the unit and unit texts. Students support their response with information they recall from the unit texts and evidence from the new text that appears in Section 1 and Section 2. See the [End of Unit Essay Rubric](#) for information on the different dimensions assessed.

Scoring Rubrics

General Rubric for Constructed-Response Items

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
4	The response includes a thorough and accurate explanation or analysis, supported by relevant and specific evidence from the text(s).
3	The response includes an accurate and mostly complete explanation or analysis, supported by relevant but often general evidence from the text(s).
2	The response is a partial explanation or analysis, includes limited evidence from the text(s) and may include misinterpretations.
1	The response is minimal , with little or no evidence from the text(s), and may include misinterpretations; <i>or</i> the response relates minimally to the task.
0	The response is blank, incorrect, irrelevant, or contains insufficient information to demonstrate comprehension.

Rubric for End-of-Unit Essay

CONSTRUCT	SCORE POINT 4	SCORE POINT 3	SCORE POINT 2	SCORE POINT 1	SCORE POINT 0
READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates full comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and inferentially by providing an accurate analysis; ● addresses the prompt and provides effective and comprehensive development of the claim or topic that is consistently appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; ● uses clear reasoning supported with relevant references to ideas and information from the unit texts and a new text to develop claim or topic; ● is effectively organized with clear and coherent writing; ● establishes and maintains an effective style. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a mostly accurate analysis; ● addresses the prompt and provides mostly effective development of the claim or topic that is mostly appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; ● uses mostly clear reasoning supported with relevant references to ideas and information from the unit texts and a new text to develop claim or topic; ● is organized with mostly clear and coherent writing; ● establishes and maintains a mostly effective style. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates basic comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a generally accurate analysis; ● addresses the prompt and provides some development of the claim or topic that is somewhat appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; ● uses some reasoning and references to ideas and information from the unit texts and a new text to develop claim or topic; ● demonstrates some organization with somewhat coherent writing; ● style is somewhat effective. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates limited comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a minimally accurate analysis; ● minimally addresses the prompt and provides minimal development of the claim or topic that is limited in its appropriateness to the task, purpose, and audience; ● uses limited reasoning and reference to ideas and information from the unit texts and a new text; ● demonstrates limited organization and coherence; ● style is minimally effective. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates no comprehension of ideas by providing an inaccurate or no analysis; ● is undeveloped and/or inappropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; ● includes little or no reasoning or reference to ideas and information from the unit texts and a new text; ● lacks organization and coherence; ● has an inappropriate style.

<p>KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS</p>		<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity; ● may include a few minor errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage, but meaning is clear. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates some command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity; ● may include errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that occasionally impede understanding, but the meaning is generally clear. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrates limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity; ● may include errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that often impede understanding. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● does not demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English at the appropriate level of complexity; ● includes frequent and varied errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that impede understanding.
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SAMPLE TEST ITEMS

Sample Multiple-Choice Item:

Read the excerpt from *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*.

"'No danger,' Kit shuddered. 'I wouldn't go near your freezing river again for the world.' She had made them both laugh, but underneath her **nonchalance**, Kit felt uneasy."

What is the meaning of the word **nonchalance** as it is used in the excerpt?

- A. growing fear
- B. welcome relief
- C. failed attempt at humor
- D. absence of visible concern

Sample Technology-Enhanced Item:

Jonas and Jonas's father each view release differently. Match each adjective to the character's view it **best** describes. Drag and drop **two** responses into each box. Each response can be used only once.

How Jonas Views Release	How Jonas's Father Views Release

normal

violent

pleasant

cruel

Sample Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) Item:

PART A

What does paragraph 2 of Excerpt 1 reveal about Sarah's point of view?

- A. Sarah no longer feels she is part of the Puritan community.
- B. Sarah still does not understand the events of her childhood.
- C. Sarah wishes to relieve herself of the guilt and unhappy memories of her past.
- D. Sarah does not agree with the actions of the councilmen who wish to change the name of Salem.

PART B

Which sentence from paragraph 2 of Excerpt 1 **best** supports the correct answer in PART A?

- A. "As God in heaven knows, changing a name cannot change the history of a place."
- B. "The history has for so long lived like a spider in my breast."
- C. "With this letter I hope to sweep away the terror and the sadness and to have my heart made pure again by God's grace."
- D. "That is truly the meaning of the word 'Puritan.'"

Sample Multiple-Select (MS) Item:

How do paragraphs 13 through 16 of Excerpt 2 contribute to the plot? Choose **two** correct answers.

- A. They emphasize Martha's determination to act.
- B. They reveal the conflict that Sarah experiences.
- C. They show how the family's problems will be resolved.
- D. They indicate that Martha and Sarah share the same feelings.
- E. They suggest the role that Sarah's brothers will play in the story.

Sample Constructed-Response (CR) Item:

Based on Excerpt 2 from *The Heretic's Daughter* by Kathleen Kent, respond to the following prompt in the space provided.

Write a paragraph explaining why in Excerpt 2 Martha reacts to the accusation of being a witch in the way that she does. Support your explanation with evidence from Excerpt 2 of *The Heretic's Daughter*.

Essay Directions and Sample Writing Prompt:

You will now respond to a writing prompt based on what you learned during the unit and from the new text(s) you read in the assessment.

When responding to the prompt, be sure to do the following:

- Organize and fully develop your ideas with thoughtful analysis.
- Support your essay with information from THREE texts, including:
 - Specific evidence from the new text(s) and
 - Relevant information from TWO unit texts.
- Identify the texts you are referencing.
- Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

The texts in The Witch of Blackbird Pond unit and the excerpts from *The Heretic's Daughter* describe the people who lived in Puritan New England and what shaped their identities.

Write a well-developed essay explaining how people's values, beliefs, and actions impact their identities.

Support your explanation with relevant ideas and information from one of the excerpts from *The Heretic's Daughter* and from any **two** unit texts listed below:

- The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare
- "Choices" by Nikki Giovanni
- "Identity" by Julio Noboa Polanco
- "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost

RESOURCES

K-12 ELA Resources Library

- [Louisiana Student Standards in ELA](#): offers comprehensive information about interpreting and implementing the standards
- [K-12 ELA Planning Resources](#): guides for planning and implementing quality ELA instruction, which include a variety of instructional strategies
- [ELA Guidebooks](#): a whole-class curriculum made by teachers for teachers that ensures all students can read, understand, and express their understanding of complex, grade-level texts
- [English Learners Library](#): contains a collection of resources for supporting English Learners

ADAM (Online Testing System)

- [Online Tools Training](#): students practice using the online tools so that they are well prepared to navigate the online testing system
- [Accessibility Tools](#): provide descriptions of accessibility features in the online testing platform

Contact Us

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