

**GRADE EIGHT**



## **Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program**

Information for Parents



Background and Sample Test Questions for  
the California Standards Tests (CSTs)



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### Purpose of this Parent Guide

This guide has sample (released) STAR questions shown in a way to help you better understand your child's STAR results. STAR test results are only one way of showing what your child has learned. Talk with your child's teacher to discuss specific STAR test results and any questions you may have about this guide. A sample STAR report and Guide to Your STAR Student Report can be found at the end of this guide.

## Introduction

Every spring, California students take tests that are a part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program.

Most students take the California Standards Tests (CSTs), which were developed for California public schools and are aligned to the California content standards. California standards are statements of what students are expected to know and do and what schools are expected to teach.

Students and their parents receive individual test results showing how the student is meeting the state's academic expectations. STAR test results are one way of showing what your child has learned. Teachers and communities learn how schools are doing in getting groups of students to reach these standards. The purpose of this guide is to give parents sample test questions to help you better understand STAR results.

A sample student report and Guide to Your STAR Student Report can be found on pages 22 through 25 of this guide. This report shows which performance level a student achieved in each subject tested. In California, the performance levels are advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic, and are shown by the dark green, light green, yellow, orange, and red bars on the student report. **The goal in California is to have all students perform at the proficient or advanced level.**

After you receive your child's report and discuss these test results with your child's teacher, this guide may be used to see the types of questions your child might answer correctly based on his or her performance level. If your child is not performing at the advanced or proficient level, you can then look at the types of questions your child needs to answer correctly to reach the state target of proficient.

Students who take the CSTs are tested in mathematics and English–language arts (grades two through eleven), science (grades five, eight, and nine through eleven), and history–social science (grades eight through eleven). The English–language arts test also includes a writing test for students in grades four and seven. See

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/guidecstwrit08.asp>.

Grade	Math	English– Language Arts	Science	History– Social Science
2	•	•		
3	•	•		
4	•	•		
5	•	•	•	
6	•	•		
7	•	•		
8	•	•	•	•
9	•	•	•	•
10	•	•	•	•
11	•	•	•	•



The tests are kept confidential, but each year the state releases many questions to the public, and these released questions can help take much of the mystery out of the state tests. Students, parents, teachers, school officials, and other interested parties can look through dozens of questions at every grade to understand what students are expected to learn and how they are asked to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

This parent guide includes a sample of English–language arts, history–social science, and science questions for the CSTs. Each question provides two important pieces of information:

- The correct answer
- The state content standard the question is measuring

To view more test questions, visit [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp). This Web page offers more information about each question and about students' answers.

To see what California students are expected to know at each grade level—the content standards—visit [www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/).

## Purposes for Testing

The results of the STAR Program tests can:

- Provide parents/guardians with one piece of information about the student's performance. Test results should be considered with all other information on the student's progress, such as report cards and parent-teacher conferences, to help parents/guardians understand how well the student knows the subject matter.
- Serve as a tool that helps parents/guardians and teachers work together to improve student learning.
- Help school districts and schools identify strengths and areas that need improvement in their educational programs.
- Allow the public and policymakers to hold public schools accountable for student achievement.
- Provide state and federal policymakers with information to help make program decisions and allocate resources.

## STAR Program Tests

The STAR Program includes four types of tests. Each student is required to take the test that is right for his or her age and individual needs.

- The **California Standards Tests (CSTs)** are for California public schools and are aligned to the state content standards. Students in grades two through eleven take the CSTs for the subjects listed for their grade on page 1. The questions in this guide are CST questions previously used on actual tests.
- The **California Modified Assessment (CMA)** is a grade-level assessment for students with disabilities in California public schools who meet the state criteria.
- The **California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)** is for California public school students who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications.
- The **Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)** have been developed for Spanish-speaking English learners in California public schools. These tests measure the achievement of state content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics in Spanish.

## Who Takes the STAR Program Tests?

All California public school students in grades two through eleven participate in the STAR Program.

### How Do English Learners Participate in STAR Program Tests?

All English learners, regardless of their primary language, are required to take the STAR Program tests administered in English. California state law requires that all Spanish-speaking English learners take the STS *in addition to the English STAR Program tests* if:

- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than a total of 12 months, **or**
- They receive instruction in Spanish, regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States.

### How Do Students with Disabilities Participate in STAR Program Tests?

Most students with disabilities take the CSTs with all other students under standard conditions. Testing students with disabilities helps ensure that these students are getting the educational services they need to succeed. Some students with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take tests. These are listed in the Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web page at [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).

## Statements of Performance on the CSTs

In California, the performance levels used are:

- **Advanced.** This category represents a superior performance. Students demonstrate a comprehensive and complex understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by this assessment, at this grade, in this content area.
- **Proficient.** This category represents a solid performance. Students demonstrate a competent and adequate understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by this assessment, at this grade, in this content area.
- **Basic.** This category represents a limited performance. Students demonstrate a partial and rudimentary understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by this assessment, at this grade, in this content area.
- **Far Below/Below Basic.** This category represents a serious lack of performance. Students demonstrate little or a flawed understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by this assessment, at this grade, in this content area.

**The goal in California is to have all students perform at the proficient or advanced level.**

The grade-level statements of performance explain how well students understand the material being taught, including their academic strengths and weaknesses. This parent guide includes grade-level statements of performance (except for far below basic) for:

- Grade Eight English–Language Arts (page 5)
- Grade Eight History–Social Science (page 14)
- Grade Eight Science (page 18)

Following these descriptions are sample questions for the performance descriptions. The majority of students at that performance level answered the question correctly. For example, “Question 4 (Basic Sample)” indicates that most of the students who achieved an overall “basic” score were able to answer Question 4 correctly. In other words, Question 4 typifies what a student scoring at the Basic level knows and can do.

# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts (ELA)

## Typical Grade Eight ELA Performance on the CST



### Advanced

Students in grade eight at the advanced level consistently grasp the essential message of literary and informational texts and also analyze features of the text as a whole. They infer main ideas and underlying themes, understand the structure of both informational and literary texts, analyze literary elements, and synthesize ideas within and between texts. Advanced students also possess an excellent command of English language skills: they develop thesis statements, use sophisticated sentence structures, and apply complex rules of written conventions.

### Proficient

Students in grade eight at the proficient level demonstrate a good understanding of literary and informational texts. They understand the organization and structure of various texts, determine main ideas, summarize information, and understand key literary elements such as characterization, plot, and theme. The English language skills of proficient students include an understanding of word origins, sentence structure, and the relationships among ideas in a written composition.

### Basic

Students in grade eight at the basic level demonstrate a limited understanding of literary and informational texts: they identify explicitly stated main ideas, recognize appropriate summaries, identify the main events of the plot, and understand aspects of characterization. The English language skills of students at this level include using context to find the meaning of multiple-meaning words, identifying misspelled words, applying basic grammar rules, and identifying support for general statements.

### Below Basic

Students in grade eight at the below basic level demonstrate little understanding of the essential meaning of literary and informational texts, but they may identify explicitly stated main ideas and the main events of a plot, understand the general organization of a text, and recognize character traits. The English language skills of students at this level may include knowledge of root words and simple grammar rules. Students also may identify an appropriate word choice and link ideas within sentences and between paragraphs.

### Standards on Which Grade Eight ELA Questions Are Based

#### Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 measure Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials):

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, students read one million words annually on their own, including a good representation of narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information).

## Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

*This reading selection is for the question on the page that follows.*

### Should Teenagers Work at a Job While They Are Still in School?

*Eva Korzinski attends school at Bloomfield High School and works after school and on weekends at All The Rage Fashion Shop in Crosstown Mall.*

I think teenagers should think seriously about the benefits of working. The skills they develop and the sense of responsibility they acquire will help them in the process of becoming independent adults. Having a job gives teenagers the opportunity to function in a real workplace and helps narrow down career options. It gives them some experience and a reference they can use later when applying for a full-time job. Working a job while still in school also helps a teen learn to manage his or her money. Observing the skills required of people in the workplace helps teens see the need for taking practical courses in school, like bookkeeping and keyboarding.

Most working teens feel they are learning new skills and see their jobs as opportunities to meet people and become responsible, independent persons. Working develops the ability to cooperate with and work as a team with other people. It also teaches how to deal with stress and how to work without revealing one's negative emotions to co-workers, supervisors, or customers. Having a job helps a teenager to become more responsible.

Working is fun, exciting, and builds good friendships. My job gives me something to do in my spare time, and it gives me the feeling that I'm doing something useful and receiving something for my time and effort.

*Renata Gutiérrez attends school at San Lorenzo High School and assists on weekends with a landscape business.*

My parents don't want me to have a job during school. They feel the added pressure from working would cause a slump in my grades. They prefer instead that I fully benefit from the educational opportunities I can enjoy now.

Parents who allow and even encourage their teens to get an after-school job "for the experience" are doing them a great disservice. Teens' education and high school experience are much more important and valuable than the little bit of spending money acquired from a minimum-wage job. Also, work takes up a lot of time that should be spent on homework and personal enjoyment. Work also limits the after-school activities they can enjoy with their classmates. There are only a few years in which they can participate in school plays, band, chorus, and sports activities. I think if I gave up such things now, I would later regret throwing away those opportunities.

I feel sorry for those who think that jobs are easy to cope with and who attempt a job when there really is no need for one. Usually, their desires for making money and gaining independence result in a lot of hard work and not enough sleep. They end up being tired and crabby the next day.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to say that teenagers shouldn't do any type of work until after they graduate. I think teenagers should learn teamwork and useful work skills by working for their own families. Their assistance at home is only a small compensation for the expenses their parents incur as a result of providing clothing, shelter, health care, and entertainment for at least 18 years. Even though they may not be paid for the work they do at home, it shows their appreciation for what their parents have done for them.

# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

## Question 1 (Advanced Sample)

According to the information in the passage, what decision has Renata Gutiérrez made regarding teenagers and work?

- A Teenagers should not work until after they have graduated.
- B Teenagers should not work if they have homework.
- C Teenagers should work only if they are not paid for it.
- D Teenagers should work only with their own families.

**Correct answer: D**

This question assesses analysis of a proposition in text written in a proposition and support pattern of organization.

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### Standard: Structural Features of Informational Materials

Analyze text that uses proposition and support patterns.

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## Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

*These reading selections are for the question on the page that follows.*

### Should Students Do the Grading?

**The Supreme Court says the practice doesn't violate a student's right to privacy, but is it right for students to grade one another?**

#### DOCUMENT A

##### **Pro**

1. The Supreme Court was absolutely correct to say it's OK for students to grade one another's homework, quizzes, and tests; in fact, it's a great idea.
2. By grading one another's papers and seeing the problems their peers encounter, as well as their own, students double their exposure to the troubles that they may meet on future exams and tests. The basic purpose of school is to learn not just what others have done right, but to learn from what they have done wrong. How better to teach this than to put it directly into the lives of students?
3. Teachers are underappreciated and underpaid for the number of hours they have to work to be able to really teach well. Grading all their students' papers can take hours on end. Some of that time and energy can be saved by spending a few minutes in class, while providing an invaluable learning experience.
4. I understand that some individuals are sensitive to their classmates seeing their work or grades. School is a place where every mistake can be learned from, and self-esteem can be built. Any good teacher would make allowances for students who don't want their classmates to grade their assignments.
5. Grading one another's papers may be one of the best ways for students to reinforce within themselves the ways to respond to the most difficult parts of what they are learning. It simply can't be denied that in-class grading of assignments is a great way to learn, and those with personal issues can resolve those issues if they just present their problems to their teachers. Allowing students to learn in the best way they are able should be the responsibility of society. If learning in school upsets some students and their parents, perhaps they don't really realize what they are upset about.

# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

## DOCUMENT B

### Con

1. A girl cringes as her classmate announces her failing test grade and hands her the paper, bathed in the red ink of the student grader. The composure of the classroom gradually deteriorates.
2. With the increase in student grading over the past few years, scenes like this have become a bitter reality in schools across the nation. Teachers are not only instructing their students to grade one another’s papers, but also to announce the final grades to the class, subjecting them to the harsh judgment of their peers. Teachers and schools should not advocate student grading and public announcement of grades because it provides a traumatizing breach of privacy for students and families and it subjects students to harsh judgments and treatment by their peers.
3. Since 1974, a law known as the Buckley Amendment has prohibited the release of education records maintained by schools in order to preserve the privacy of students and their families. I strongly disagree with the Court’s ruling that this law [the Buckley Amendment] does not pertain to student grading.
4. I can think of no greater breach of privacy than the exposure of one’s personal information to a group of peers. This can be very embarrassing and cause unfair judgment by one’s colleagues. Releasing this sort of personal information should be avoided, especially by institutions that seek to provide a supportive environment conducive to mutual learning during essential years of human development.

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# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

## Question 2 (Proficient Sample)

Given the structure and content of both of these documents, they can *best* be described as

- A expository.
- B narrative.
- C persuasive.
- D descriptive.

This question assesses analysis of the purpose of a text written in a proposition and support pattern of organization.

**Correct answer: C**

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### Standard: Structural Features of Informational Materials

Analyze text that uses proposition and support patterns.

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# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

*These reading selections are for the questions on the pages that follow.*

## DOCUMENT A

### Evergreen Teen Book Club Offer

*The Evergreen Teen Book Club invites you to join us and take full advantage of our limited-time introductory offer.*



If you join our club, you will receive a certificate for 3 free books. These are yours to keep, even if you decide to cancel your membership. However, if you decide to purchase just one book at regular club price, you will receive a certificate for an additional 3 free selections after your first order is placed.

As our member, you can benefit from all of our super sales and our Bonus Program. You accumulate 2 bonus points with each cash purchase of one book. Every 6 bonus points will earn you a certificate for one free book!

To join our club, fill in the brief application listing your name, address, and phone number on the postage-paid card at the bottom of this page. Then drop the card in the mail and our current catalog will be immediately mailed out to you for your 3 free selections!

This catalog offers a wide selection of over 500 books in every issue, including mysteries, romances, adventures, biographies, cookbooks, crafts, sports, and many more. Our catalog also contains such highlights as interviews with your favorite authors, reviews of newly released novels, and a teen top-ten list for both fiction and nonfiction.

Once you are a member, you will receive our catalog bimonthly, but you are under no obligation to purchase any selections. We send you only exactly what you order.

If you join before June 30th, we will also provide complimentary shipping and handling on your first selections, even if you choose to order nothing except your 3 free books.

*You can build a great book collection!*

*Begin now by taking advantage of this phenomenal offer.*

## DOCUMENT B

### Evergreen Teen Book Club Return Policy

When receiving your order, please check all items. If you are not completely satisfied with your purchase, you may return it to us within 21 days of receipt. This can be done by attaching the pre-addressed return label enclosed in every shipment.

Upon receiving a returned book or order, your refund will be processed, but you will not be reimbursed for shipping charges. You will receive a full refund for all returned items on the condition that they are unworn, undamaged, and returned within 21 days. You can choose to have a check mailed to your shipping address or to have the amount credited to your account. Your preference can be noted by checking the appropriate box on the return label.

Any return due to shipping error or product defect may be returned free of charge. Simply notify us of the problem, and we will be happy to include the shipping amount in your refund.

In this instance, contact our Customer Service Department by calling 1-800-613-XXXX between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. (EST). Our customer representatives will be happy to assist you.

Thank you for your business. Evergreen Teen values its customers, and your satisfaction is our goal!

# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

## Question 3 (Proficient Sample)

Document A tries to do all of these *except*

- A interest you in reading.
- B convince you to buy something.
- C offer you extra benefits.
- D explain a warranty to you.

**Correct answer: D**

This question assesses analysis of the purpose of a text written in a proposition and support pattern of organization.

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### Standard: Structural Features of Informational Materials

Analyze text that uses proposition and support patterns.

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## Question 4 (Basic Sample)

The purpose of Document B is to explain

- A why damaged items cannot be returned.
- B why shipping charges for returns will not be paid.
- C how a return should be processed.
- D how customer representatives will help you.

**Correct answer: C**

This question assesses analysis of the purpose of a text written in a proposition and support pattern of organization.

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### Standard: Structural Features of Informational Materials

Analyze text that uses proposition and support patterns.

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# Grade Eight: English–Language Arts

## Question 5 (Basic Sample)

Which phrase in Document A is meant to make readers act quickly?

- A a great book collection
- B on your first selections
- C limited-time introductory offer
- D invites you to join

**Correct answer: C**

This question assesses analysis of persuasive language in a text written in a proposition and support pattern of organization.

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### Standard: Structural Features of Informational Materials

Analyze text that uses proposition and support patterns.

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# Grade Eight: History–Social Science

## Typical Grade Eight History–Social Science Performance on the CST

### Advanced

Students in grade eight at the advanced level demonstrate an understanding of complex social studies concepts, including cultural and political connections between the past and the present, the impact of geography on human development, and the relationship between past cultures and modern cultures. Advanced students demonstrate thorough knowledge of historical information, including important events and ideas, and the ideas and political concepts used to justify the structures of past societies at various times. Advanced students show analytical skills through their ability to synthesize ideas and information, seeing the connections between events and ideas,

and the impact of ideas and beliefs on historical events. They are able to analyze primary sources and show a mastery of period vocabulary.

### Proficient

Students in grade eight at the proficient level demonstrate an ability to understand social studies concepts, including the influence of the past on the present, human responses to geography, and the relationship between past cultures and modern cultures. Proficient students demonstrate a knowledge of historical information including important events and ideas, as well as descriptive knowledge of the structures of past societies at various times. They recognize connections between the past and present, and the relationships between ideas and past events. Proficient students are able to read and understand primary sources and are able to understand period vocabulary.

### Basic

Students in grade eight at the basic level are able to recognize the features of cultures in the past and are able to identify geographic relationships and cultural interactions. Basic students demonstrate the ability to recall major events from the past and recognize the effects of past events. They recall key figures from historical eras, and recognize historical comparisons. Basic students are able to recognize names of historic cultures and commonly used period vocabulary.

### Below Basic

Students in grade eight at the below basic level may recognize features of cultures in the past. They may recall major events from the past. Below basic students may recognize key figures from the past. They may recall commonly used period vocabulary.

## Standards on Which Grade Eight History–Social Science Questions Are Based

**Question 1 measures Civil War and Its Aftermath:** Students analyze the multiple causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.

**Question 2 measures Civil War and Its Aftermath:** Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.

**Question 3 measures Civil War and Its Aftermath:** Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

**Question 4 measures U.S. Constitution and the Early Republic:** Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.

# Grade Eight: History–Social Science

## Question 1 (Advanced Sample)

Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address is similar to the Declaration of Independence in that both documents

- A include descriptions of laws which should be passed.
- B emphasize the need for effective government.
- C support the ideals of self-government and human rights.
- D justify the need for economic change.

**Correct answer: C**

This question assesses understanding of the relationship between two major documents in American history.

---

**Standard: Students analyze the multiple causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.**

Discuss Abraham Lincoln’s presidency and his significant writings and speeches and their relationship to the Declaration of Independence, such as his “House Divided” speech (1858), Gettysburg Address (1863), Emancipation Proclamation (1863), and inaugural addresses (1861 and 1865).

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## Question 2 (Proficient Sample)

The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States were intended to solve problems relating to

- A government organization.
- B civil rights.
- C checks and balances.
- D rapid economic change.

This question assesses knowledge of the significance of Constitutional Amendments.

**Correct answer: B**

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**Standard: Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.**

Understand the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and analyze their connection to Reconstruction.

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# Grade Eight: History–Social Science

## Question 3 (Proficient Sample)

What led the newspapers to speak of “Bleeding Kansas” in 1856?

- A fighting between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces
- B attacks on job-seeking Irish immigrants
- C conflict between cattle ranchers and farmers
- D reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling against Dred Scott

**Correct answer: A**

**This question assesses understanding of a major event leading to the Civil War.**

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**Standard: Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.**

Analyze the significance of the States’ Rights Doctrine, the Missouri Compromise (1820), the Wilmot Proviso (1846), the Compromise of 1850, Henry Clay’s role in the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision (1857), and the Lincoln-Douglas debates (1858).

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# Grade Eight: History–Social Science

## Question 4 (Basic Sample)

What agricultural invention, designed to increase production, had the effect of increasing the number of slaves needed for labor in the Deep South?

- A the wheat reaper
- B the cotton gin
- C the steel plow
- D the rice mill

This question assesses knowledge of the cotton gin.

**Correct answer: B**

---

**Standard: Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.**

Describe the development of the agrarian economy in the South, identify the locations of the cotton-producing states, and discuss the significance of cotton and the cotton gin.

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**Secondary Standard: Historical Interpretation**

Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long- and short-term causal relations.

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# Grade Eight: Science

## Typical Grade Eight Science Performance on the CST

### Advanced

Students in grade eight at the advanced level comprehend principles of density, forces, motion, and the structure of matter. They understand and can explain why different units of measurement are appropriate in different cases. Advanced students are able to define what a chemical change is and describe the defining characteristics of acids and bases. They are able to explain the placement on a periodic table of elements. They can complete a data table using existing information.

### Proficient

Students in grade eight at the proficient level demonstrate a good understanding of density, forces, motion, and the structure of matter. They can select proper units of measurement. Proficient students can use data to define relationships between variables and identify solutions as acids, bases, or neutrals. They are able to identify groups on the periodic table and describe the general characteristics of these groups. Proficient students can draw relationships from graphs and data tables.

### Basic

Students in grade eight at the basic level are able to identify the basic concepts of density, force, motion, and structure of matter. They are able to recognize the need for different units of measurement according to the size of what is being measured. They are able to describe a substance as being a solid, liquid, or gas. Basic students are able to identify subatomic particles on a diagram.

### Below Basic

Students in grade eight at the below basic level can identify properties of substances. They know that atoms have protons, neutrons, and electrons. They are able to sort objects from least dense to most dense. They are able to identify phase changes and properties of substances.

### Standards on Which Grade Eight Science Questions Are Based

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**Question 1 measures Chemistry of Living Systems:** Principles of chemistry underlie the functioning of biological systems.

**Questions 2 and 3 measure Structure of Matter:** Each of the more than 100 elements of matter has distinct properties and a distinct atomic structure. All forms of matter are composed of one or more of the elements.

**Question 4 measures Reactions:** Chemical reactions are processes in which atoms are rearranged into different combinations of molecules.

**Question 5 measures Periodic Table:** The organization of the periodic table is based on the properties of the elements and reflects the structure of atoms.

# Grade Eight: Science

## Question 1 (Advanced Sample)

What characteristic of carbon (C) makes it essential to living organisms?

- A Carbon forms crystal structures under certain conditions.
- B Carbon can exist as a solid, liquid, or gas.
- C Carbon bonds in many ways with itself to form chains.
- D Carbon exists in radioactive forms.

**Correct answer: C**

This question assesses knowledge of an important characteristic of carbon.

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**Standard: Principles of chemistry underlie the functioning of biological systems. As a basis for understanding this concept:**

Students know that carbon, because of its ability to combine in many ways with itself and other elements, has a central role in the chemistry of living organisms.

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## Question 2 (Proficient Sample)

Which of the following is found farthest from the center of an atom?

- A nucleus
- B proton
- C neutron
- D electron

This question assesses an understanding of the subatomic composition and structure of an atom.

**Correct answer: D**

---

**Standard: Each of the more than 100 elements of matter has distinct properties and a distinct atomic structure. As a basis for understanding this concept:**

Students know the structure of the atom and know it is composed of protons, neutrons, and electrons.

---

# Grade Eight: Science

## Question 3 (Proficient Sample)

Which of the following *best* describes an atom?

- A protons and electrons grouped together in a random pattern
- B protons and electrons grouped together in an alternating pattern
- C a core of protons and neutrons surrounded by electrons
- D a core of electrons and neutrons surrounded by protons

**Correct answer: C**

This question assesses an understanding of the subatomic composition and structure of an atom.

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**Standard: Each of the more than 100 elements of matter has distinct properties and a distinct atomic structure. As a basis for understanding this concept:**

Students know the structure of the atom and know it is composed of protons, neutrons, and electrons.

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## Question 4 (Proficient Sample)

Which of the following forms of energy is released or absorbed in *most* chemical reactions?

- A light energy
- B electrical energy
- C sound energy
- D heat energy

This question assesses knowledge that chemical reactions cause heat change.

**Correct answer: D**

---

**Standard: Chemical reactions are processes in which atoms are rearranged into different combinations of molecules. As a basis for understanding this concept:**

Students know chemical reactions usually liberate heat or absorb heat.

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# Grade Eight: Science

## Question 5 (Proficient Sample)

In a comparison of metals to nonmetals, metals tend to have

- A lower melting points and greater conductivity than nonmetals.
- B lower conductivity and lower density than nonmetals.
- C higher density and lower melting points than nonmetals.
- D greater conductivity and higher melting points than nonmetals.

**Correct answer: D**

This question assesses an understanding of the properties of metals and nonmetals.

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**Standard: The organization of the periodic table is based on the properties of the elements and reflects the structure of atoms. As a basis for understanding this concept:**

Students know substances can be classified by their properties, including their melting temperature, density, hardness, and thermal and electrical conductivity.

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# STAR Student Report

U S I N G A S S E S S M E N T S T O H E L P S T U D E N T S L E A R N

LOCAL ID #: 999999999  
 STUDENT #: 0000052392      DATE OF BIRTH: 00/00/0000  
 GRADE: 8      TEST DATE: Spring 0000



FOR THE PARENT/GUARDIAN OF:  
**CHILD'S NAME**  
 1237 Main Street  
 City, CA 12345

SCHOOL: California Middle  
 DISTRICT: California Unified Earlimart Elementary

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Each year, California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program measures your child's progress in meeting California's world class content standards. These standards describe what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

This report shows your child's scores on the STAR Program tests. I encourage you to discuss these results with your child and your child's teacher(s). Besides giving you valuable information about your child's academic strengths and weaknesses, test scores help us understand how well our schools are doing and how we might do better in the most important job of all - preparing students to succeed in school and beyond.

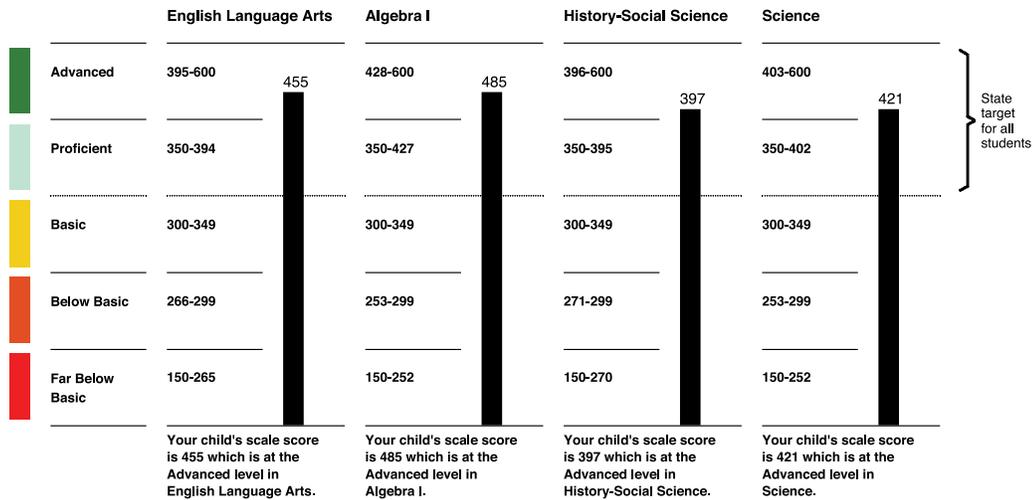
Sincerely,

*Jack O'Connell*  
**JACK O'CONNELL**,  
 STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



## Your child's overall results on the California Standards Tests

### Your child's scale scores and performance levels



Find complete STAR results at <http://star.cde.ca.gov> and your school's Accountability Report Card (SARC) at [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa) or ask for a copy of the SARC at your child's school.

## How should I use these STAR Program results?

These results are one of several tools used to follow your child's educational progress. While they provide an important measure, they should be viewed with other available information about your child's achievement, such as classroom tests, assignments, and grades.

These results are also intended to help ensure your child is getting the best possible education. If your child is not performing at the level you would like, these results can help guide a conversation with your child's teacher in order to help focus on specific areas for improvement.

CHILD'S NAME

## Your child's strengths and needs based on these tests

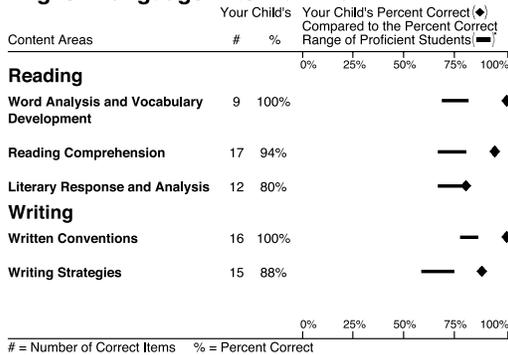
**A NOTE ON USING THIS INFORMATION:** A single test can provide only limited information. A student taking the same test more than once might score higher or lower in each tested area within a small range. You should confirm your child's strengths and needs in these topics by reviewing classroom work, standards-based assessments, and your child's progress during the year.

Find released test items at [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp) and a complete copy of the standards at [www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss).

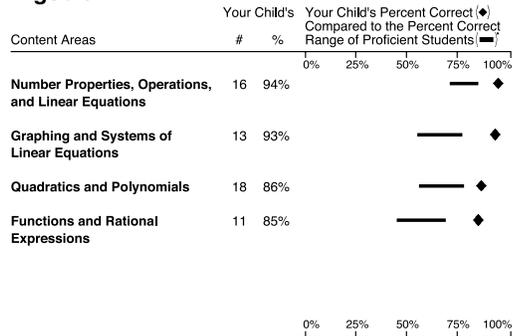
In the charts below, your child's percent correct is compared to the percent correct range of students statewide whose performance level was Proficient on the total test. Proficient is the state target for all students.

### English Language Arts

GRADE 8

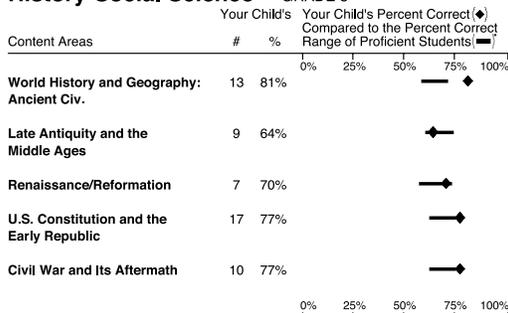


### Algebra I



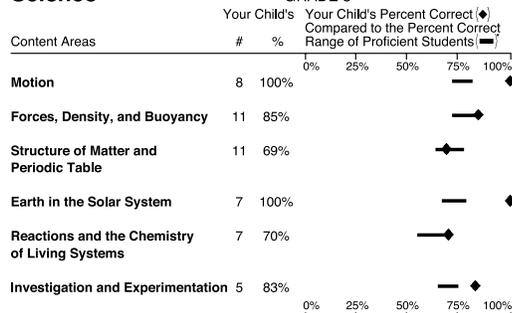
### History-Social Science

GRADE 8



### Science

GRADE 8



## California Reading List (CRL)

Your child's recommended California Reading List Number is 12.

This recommended reading list number is based on your child's California English-Language Arts Standards Test score. While the CRL will provide you with a list of titles, no single score will tell you what books your child can or should read. Encourage your child to explore other reading list numbers to find books of interest.

To access the California Reading List:

- Visit <http://star.cde.ca.gov> and click on California Reading List
- Click Search for a Reading List to find books for your child

## More about the STAR Program

Questions about the STAR Program or your child's test results should first be directed to your child's teacher(s). Additional information may be available through the school principal or counselor. Information about the STAR Program, such as sample test questions and statewide tests, also is available on the CDE Web site at [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr).



# THE GUIDE TO YOUR STAR STUDENT REPORT CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TESTS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This guide helps you follow your child's report and the recommendations that are provided. Some sections of your child's report are translated word for word and other sections are translated more generally.

**1 Your child's information**

Here you find: your child's student number, date of birth, grade, test date, school, and district. If available, your mailing address also appears in this section.

**2 Introductory Letter from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Each year, California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program measures your child's progress in meeting California's world class content standards. These standards describe what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

This report shows your child's scores on the STAR Program tests. I encourage you to discuss these results with your child and your child's teacher(s). Besides giving you valuable information about your child's academic strengths and weaknesses, test scores help us understand how well our schools are doing and how we might do better in the most important job of all – preparing students to succeed in school and beyond.

**3 Your child's scale scores and performance levels**

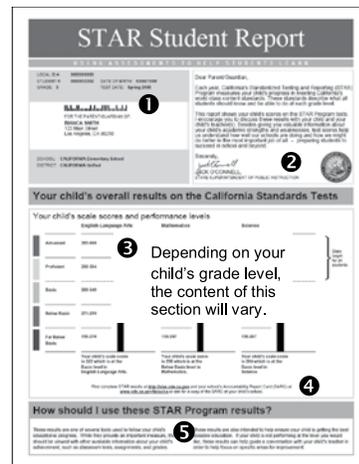
See how your child did on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) by looking at the vertical black bars below each subject heading. The number at the top of each bar is your child's exact score on the test. The colored boxes to the left and the text at the bottom of each black bar provide your child's performance level in each subject. There are five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The goal in California is to have all students perform at the proficient or advanced level.

English–language arts and mathematics are tested for most students in Grades 2–11. All students in Grades 8 and 11 are tested in history–social science, and some high school students take an end-of-course world history test. All students in Grades 5, 8, and 10 are tested in science and some high school students take end-of-course science tests. Scores are provided for all of the tests your child took. If your child did not take one or more of these tests or if a score was not to be reported, this is noted.

**4 You can use these Web addresses to find complete STAR results (<http://star.cde.ca.gov>) and your school's accountability report card ([www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa/)). You can also request a copy of the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) at your child's school.**

**5 How should I use these STAR Program results?**

This section suggests other ways to monitor your child's educational progress, including through classroom tests, assignments, and grades. You can use these sources of information to talk with your child's teacher about specific areas for improvement.



**6 A note on using this information**

A single test can provide only limited information. A student taking the same test more than once might score higher or lower within a small range in each content area tested. You should confirm your child’s strengths and needs in these topics by reviewing classroom work, standards-based assessments, and progress reports during the year.

**7 Your child’s strengths and needs based on these tests**

These charts show how your child did in the different content areas for each test taken. The subject for each test is listed at the top of each chart. Most reports for students in Grades 2–11 include English–language arts and mathematics. Reports for students in Grades 5, 8, and 10 include science. Reports for students in Grades 8 and 11 include history–social science. Reports for high school students may include results for end-of-course tests in science or world history.

The items on the California Standards Test (CST) are grouped into the content areas on the left of each chart. These content areas are based on the California content standards, which describe what your child should know and be able to do at each grade level. (If your child did not take any of the tests expected for his/her grade level or if a score was unavailable to be reported, this is noted on the report.)

Next to the name of each content area are the number of questions your child answered correctly in that content area and the percentage of questions your child answered correctly in that content area, represented by a diamond on the chart. The bar shows the range of scores for students who scored at the proficient level on the test for that content area.

Below the chart is additional information about your child’s performance on each test.

**8 This section contains one of the following:**

- More information about the English–Language Arts Content Standards and the grade-level Mathematics Content Standards (Grades 2–4, 6 and 7) or Algebra I Standards (Grade 7).
- Content area results in science (Grades 5, 8, and 10), history–social science (Grades 8 and 11), and end-of-course tests.
- Additional resources (Grade 5).

**9 Left: California Reading List (CRL), and: More about the STAR Program or Early Assessment Program (EAP) (for Grade 11)**

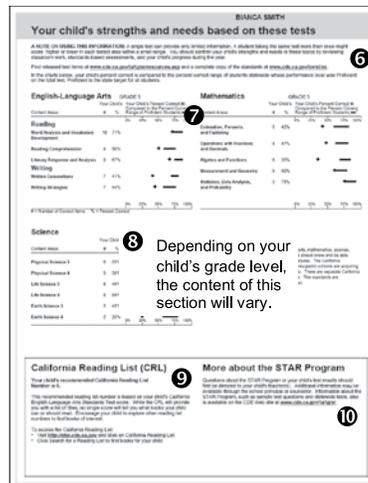
**CRL** — This recommended reading list number is based on your child’s California English–Language Arts Standards Test score. Your child should be able to read titles within the list independently. Of course, no single test will tell you what books your child can or should read—encourage your child to explore other reading list numbers to find books of interest. Strong reading skills are critical for success in all school subjects. Encourage your child to read at home.

To access the California Reading List:

- Visit <http://star.cde.ca.gov> and click on California Reading List.
- Click Search for a Reading List to find books for your child.

**EAP** — If your child is in Grade 11, this section also presents information about the California State University’s Early Assessment Program (EAP) and results for the EAP, if your child took the EAP. Additional information regarding EAP can be found at [www.calstate.edu/eap](http://www.calstate.edu/eap).

**10 More about the STAR Program** — This section provides information about how you can get answers to your questions about the STAR Program and your child’s STAR test results.



## Want to see more questions?

CDE released test questions: [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp)

More samples with information similar to what is found in this parent guide:  
[www.starsamplequestions.org](http://www.starsamplequestions.org)

## Want to see the California content standards?

[www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/)

## Want more information about how students have performed?

<http://star.cde.ca.gov/>