

Reminders

Item & Scoring Samplers

The purpose of the Item & Scoring Samplers is to share operationalized items with corresponding data and offer examples of student responses across the score points. Teachers may utilize the samplers for instructional and calibration purposes.

- [2017 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler Grade 3](#) (PDF)
- [2017 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler Grade 4](#) (PDF)
- [2017 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler Grade 5](#) (PDF)
- [2017 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler Grade 6](#) (PDF)
- [2017 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler Grade 7](#) (PDF)
- [2017 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler Grade 8](#) (PDF)

Test Designs

- [PCS PSSA English Language Arts Test Design](#) (PDF)

Accommodations Guidelines

- [2018 Accommodations Guidelines](#) (PDF)
- [2018 Accommodations Guidelines for ELs](#) (PDF)
- [2018 Unique Accommodation Form](#) (PDF)
- [2018 Confidentiality Agreement for Language Interpreters/Sight Translators and Educational Sign Language Interpreters Form](#) (PDF)
- [2018 PSSA Scribing Unique Accommodations Form](#) (PDF)
- [2018 Read Aloud and Scribing Guidelines](#) (PDF)

Professional Learning

Recently, Tim Shanahan responded to questions regarding a post in his blog. You can read the full text at [Shanahan on Literacy](#).

Below are “some key ideas when thinking about teaching kids to read with more complex text than we might have dared to use in the past.”

1. Not all texts need to be at an instructional level.

If one challenges the idea of placing kids in instructional level books to facilitate learning (e.g., guided reading, Accelerated Reader), why is the alternative to only place kids in frustration level texts? The idea that all reading should be at the instructional level is wrong in part because of the inherent notion that all reading experience should be at any level. Text difficulty should vary; kids should move across a range of texts from easy to difficult.

In the teaching of most skilled activities (e.g., foreign language, dancing, bicycle racing), the idea is not to protect the learners from harder applications of those skills, but to vary the routines between relatively easy challenges and those that scare and potentially embarrass the learner.

2. Text level is not the only feature of the learning situation that can be varied.

Not only should texts vary in difficulty, but the amount of help, guidance, explanation, and scaffolding ought to vary, too. When kids are placed in frustration level texts they need greater support than when they are reading instructional level or independent level texts—just the opposite of what many of our instructional routines provide.

I should intentionally place kids in easier or harder text and should add or withdraw support based upon need. When kids are in easy texts, the training wheels can be taken off. When they are in harder texts, as a teacher I need to be prepared to offer greater guidance and support. That means easier texts when reading with 30 kids, and harder texts—certainly beyond the normally prescribed levels—when I’m sitting closely with 6-8 kids and can monitor more closely and intervene more easily.

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Our monthly ELA Assessment eBlast will focus on providing the following: insight around standardized assessment, professional learning for ELA classroom instruction and assessment, professional opportunities, and a question/answer section.

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PENNSYLVANIA ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT (PASA)

Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) is a statewide alternate assessment designed for students with the **most significant cognitive disabilities**. Specifically, it is intended for those who are unable to participate meaningfully in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) even with accommodations. By administering the PASA to students with severe disabilities, schools achieve compliance with federal laws and the Pennsylvania School Code that require that all students participate in the statewide accountability system.

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“Research indicates that literacy instruction must not only encompass the traditional foundational skills of vocabulary and comprehension but also—and more significantly—the skill set needed to access and construct meaning from complex text” (Sisson and Sisson, 2014, p.6).