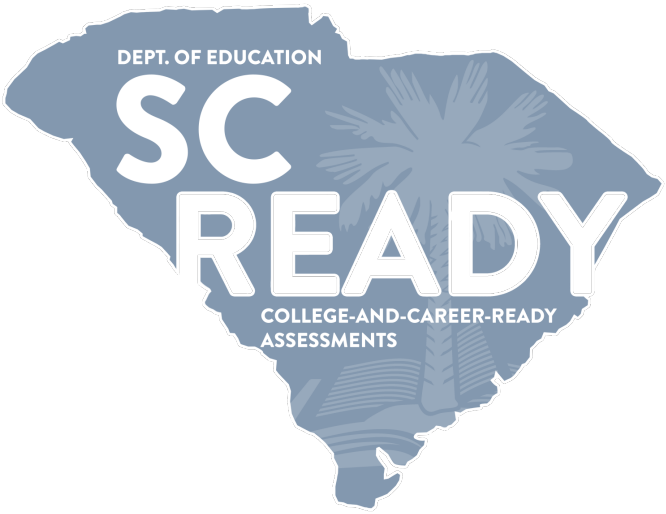
SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



SC READY ELA Grades 6-8
2025 Test Data Review Report

Office of Assessment and Standards

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Introduction

Data Recognition Corporation and the South Carolina Department of Education Office of Assessment and Standards (OAS) convened a panel of content experts to review item data from the Spring 2025 administration of SC READY. The panel of content experts analyzed operational and field test items, including information about how students performed on each item. Based on their analyses, the panel offered the instructional insights and strategies outlined in this document to support student learning.

Operational items on the Spring 2025 SC READY ELA assessment were aligned to the *2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards*. All instructional insights and strategies in this document, including those from the analysis of operational items, have been organized based on their alignment to the 2024 ELA standards.

To be most useful for teachers, all relevant instructional insights and strategies from the 2024 SC READY ELA Grades 6-8 Test Data Review Report are included in this year's report. This includes instructional insights and strategies to support student learning offered by both the 2024 and 2025 panels of content experts. New instructional insights and strategies not previously identified in the 2024 SC READY ELA Grades 6-8 Test Data Review Report are labeled as "New for 2025".

The OAS recognizes the hard work of the panel and South Carolina educators and offers these relevant and useful suggestions for improving instruction as an addendum to those from previous years.

Insights and Instructional Strategies for AOR.1.1

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 7th grade that targets a section of AOR.1.1. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Read the sentences from the passage.

The timing chips accurately recorded our time from the starting line to the finish line so that the officials could start the skiers in intervals. Using this method meant there was a comfortable space between the racers on the trail, and everyone was not attempting to simultaneously navigate the same tight turns.

How do the details in the sentences contribute to the meaning of the passage?

ELA.7.AOR.1.1 asks students to analyze how lines of dialogue, specific events, or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of the characters, and/or create meaning. This item asks students to analyze how the details in the excerpt affect the meaning of the entire passage.

- ELA.7.AOR.1.1 covers several elements and how those elements develop the plot, reveal aspects of character(s), and create meaning. In grade 6, the indicator focuses on specific events and descriptive details. In grade 8, the elements become more global to include all key elements.
- Incorrect Answer: They explain the excitement of entering the ski race.
- By choosing this incorrect answer, the teacher knows that the student misread or misunderstood something in the passage or in the question. As part of classroom instruction and assessment, ask students to explain their answers. For example, the teacher may consider asking this student what he or she sees in these sentences that indicates excitement. This will allow the teacher the opportunity to learn where the student goes off track in his or her thinking.
- Because each AOR.1.1 indicator for grades 6-8 encompasses many elements, instruction should incorporate all elements in the grade level indicator and the preceding grade level indicators, and how those elements impact meaning, reveal aspects of character(s), and develop the plot (as determined by each grade level's expectations).
- To be successful with this type of item, the students should have ample opportunities to analyze elements of literary text, how those elements interact with one another, and how those elements impact the full text.
- Classroom instruction in grades 6-8 should go beyond the identification of dialogue, character, and the plot diagram. These are skills introduced in grades K-4. In grades 6-8, students should regularly analyze literary texts and how literary elements function and interact within those texts.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.1.2

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 8th grade that targets a section of AOR.1.2. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Read the sentence from the passage.

"There's practically an entire forest in Grandma's yard."

Which tone is created by the figurative language in the sentence?

ELA.8.AOR.1.2 asks students to analyze how figurative language impacts mood, tone, and meaning in a text. The second part of the indicator asks the student to explain an author's use of symbolism. This item asks students to determine the figurative language being used and then to determine the tone it creates. Tone enters AOR.1.2 in 6th grade.

- To be successful with a question like this, the students must be able to recognize an author's use of hyperbole in a text. The term hyperbole enters the language of the standard in the 3rd grade. Students must also understand why an author may choose to use hyperbole and how it can affect a written text.
- At the middle school level, instruction of figurative language must extend beyond identification and definition. Middle school students must have practice examining figurative language in texts and explaining how the language impacts the mood, tone, and meaning of a text (6th grade), and students must have practice analyzing the impact of figurative language on mood, tone, and meaning within a text (7th-8th grades).
- Instruction should include how to determine tone in a literary text. Students should practice examining the characteristics of formal tone vs. informal tone, serious tone vs. humorous tone, along with other types of tone. Instruction should support students in noticing and examining word choice, figurative language (AOR.1.2), context, and sentence length and structure. Instruction should extend beyond a list of tone words and provide students the opportunity to examine how an author creates tone and why he or she creates a specific tone.
- Instruction should also include studying how an author creates mood within a text. Students should practice examining the author's choice of setting, how the author describes the setting, a character's emotions, the conflict, and how it is resolved (or not), and the author's use of imagery and figurative language (AOR.1.2). As with tone, students in middle school should not be restricted to a list of words that describe mood, but analyze the author's craft of creating mood.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.2.1

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 6th grade that targets a section of AOR.2.1. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Part A
What is the theme of the passage?

Part B
Which sentence from the passage best supports the answer in part A?

ELA.6.AOR.6.1 asks students to analyze how key details contribute to the development of a theme. In grades 7 and 8, students are applying this same skill to multiple themes. Students in 7th grade are expected to compare and contrast multiple themes and how they are developed, and students in 8th grade are expected to analyze how an author uses key details to develop two or more themes within a text and across multiple texts.

- To be successful with questions like these, the students must be able to determine a theme (or themes) within a text. Students must also have a working understanding of key details and how an author uses key details to develop a theme.
- Students in grades 7 and 8 must have opportunities to work with rich, complex texts that have multiple themes.
- Although this test item is in multiple-choice format on SC READY, teachers are encouraged to use this in a short-answer format in the classroom because it requires the student to determine the theme and provide text evidence that supports their answer.
- When teaching students to analyze key details and their contribution to the development of a theme, it is important to ensure that students receive:
    - instruction that provides a clear definition of what a theme is and what a theme is not.
    - instruction that supports students as they examine character, conflict, and conflict resolution. Students should be supported in determining how a conflict is resolved. These factors may contribute to developing a theme.
    - support determining recurring symbols, images, ideas, or motifs within a story. While “motif” is not directly named in the ELA standards and will not be directly assessed on the SC READY assessments, it is an important element in literature that relates to the development of a theme.
    - opportunities to examine and analyze an author’s purpose. For example, if an author includes a recurring symbol or image within a story, students should consider why the author chooses to do this.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.2.2

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 8th grade that targets a section of AOR.2.2. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Which sentence from the passage best supports the idea that origami principles can be used to make large items fit into small spaces?

ELA.8.AOR.2.2 asks students to analyze how supporting details contribute to the development of two or more central ideas within and across informational texts. As mentioned in the Assessment Specifications for Teachers document, summative assessment may use one or more central ideas and one or more texts. Some SC READY items will only target one central idea, while others will target two central ideas. Classroom instruction should occur at the intent of the indicator, which is two or more central ideas within one or more texts. This constraint for summative assessment also applies to 7th grade. ELA.6.AOR.2.2 includes only one central idea and one text.

- This item provides students with a central idea from the text. This is on the lower end of the cognitive scale for ELA.8.AOR.2.2. Classroom instruction should provide opportunities for students to determine a central idea within a full text and express the central idea. For this test item, students are provided with a list of sentences from the passage. In the classroom, questions like this should be open-ended so students must return to the text and evaluate the supporting details to determine which ones best support the central idea. By asking students to provide both answers from the text instead of from a list of answer choices, the teacher will be able to see when students have misunderstandings or misconceptions. This will allow the teacher to support students and address misconceptions or misunderstandings.
- Students at the middle level should regularly be exposed to rich, complex texts that allow for more than one central idea.
- Instruction should include asking students to determine a central idea within a section or sections of a single text, within a complete text, and for students in grades 7-8, across two texts.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.3.1

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample from 6th grade that targets a section of AOR.3.1. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

How does Noelle's offer to teach Peyton new painting methods impact Peyton's perspective?

ELA.6.AOR.3.1 asks students to determine and explain the impact of multiple narrators or shifts in points of view and/or perspective. This item targets "…shifts in … perspective".

- Middle school students should be able to determine that the point of view is the narrative point of view from which a story is told. While understanding the difference between a first-person and third-person narrator is essential, it is only the foundation for what middle school students should be able to do. In the middle grades, students should be asking why an author has chosen a specific point of view from which to narrate the story, or how that choice impacts the story and what the reader knows about elements within the story, such as the setting and character(s). Students should also have access to rich, complex texts that show a shift in narrative point of view, whether it be a shift from a character within the story to a narrator outside the story, or multiple characters within the story. Students should be asked to explain how the shift in narrators affects different elements of the story (6th grade) and how an author uses different points of view within a story. While point of view is not named in the 8th-grade indicator because the focus is on how an author uses differing perspectives to create effects, students in 8th grade should continue analyzing the impact of point of view on literary texts.
- Middle school students should understand that within literary texts, the perspective is that of a character or characters, including the narrator. A character's perspective is how he or she views events, places, and other characters within the story. Students should have opportunities to examine how shifting or different perspectives impact the text (6th), the characters (7th- 8th), and create effects, such as suspense (8th).

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.4.1

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 8th grade that targets a section of AOR.4.1. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Part A
Which statement best represents the author's perspective about origami?

Part B
Which sentence from the passage best supports the answer in part A?

ELA.8.AOR.4.1 asks students to analyze an author's perspective or purpose in a text and how an author uses rhetoric to advance that perspective or purpose. This item targets "…analyze an author's perspective…"

- Middle school students should be able to determine how an author feels about a topic or subject. Instruction should include asking students to examine an author's word choice about a topic, to include connotations of words and phrases, the tone an author uses when discussing a topic, the type of examples or evidence an author uses, and how an author structures the text.
- Instruction should provide opportunities for students to annotate text.
- Middle school students should go beyond identifying text structures and examine how and why an author uses a certain text structure (AOR.5.2) as part of his or her purpose.
- Instruction in 6th grade should provide students with the opportunity to analyze different accounts of the same event or topic. Students should also have instructional time analyzing how different perspectives on the same topic impact the content and style of each account.

From the 2024 Data Review Document

- Items requiring students to analyze informational text structure(s) appear to be difficult for many students. The committee recommends that teachers help students make connections between text structure and organization. Additionally, students should have support and practice making connections between text structure, organization, and an author's purpose. As applied to AOR.5.3, classroom instruction should provide students with opportunities to analyze how an author may strategically structure or organize a text to impact or persuade the reader.
- When analyzing for an author's purpose, start with a short excerpt that has a single purpose. Ask students to annotate, noting what the author's purpose is and what in the text shows that. Students should have the opportunity to work in small groups and discuss their annotations.
- Once students can successfully determine an author's purpose and clearly explain how they determined it, the teacher should add an additional piece of the text that illustrates a different purpose. Ask students to repeat the process.

- Once students can successfully work with small chunks of text, give students the full text showing multiple purposes. The discussion then should center on why the author has multiple purposes and how that affects the reader.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.5.1

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 6th grade that targets a section of AOR.5.1. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

How does Chapter I contribute to the development of the setting?

ELA.6.AOR.5.1 asks students to analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of theme, setting, or plot. This item targets "how a particular… chapter… contributes to the development of a setting."

- Understanding the structure of a text supports the students' comprehension of the story.
- Some students will need to be explicitly taught the structures of poems, prose (short stories and novels), and dramas. Mentor texts of each type and genre studies can aid instruction.
- Instruction of literary text structures should include questions such as:
    - Why does the author include [this sentence, this paragraph, this chapter, this scene, this stanza]?
    - What does this [sentence, paragraph, chapter, scene, stanza] tell us about [theme, setting, plot]?
    - How does this [sentence, paragraph, chapter, scene, stanza] support the theme?
    - How do these pieces fit together to create the story?

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.5.2

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 8th grade that targets a section of AOR.5.2. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Read the sentences from the passage.

Some of these galaxies are better observed from space as opposed to from Earth's surface. Scientists need to place telescopes into space. Each space telescope needs to be bigger than what fits into a rocket.

How do the sentences convey the author's purpose?

ELA.8.AOR.5.2 asks students to analyze how the structure of individual text sections (e.g., a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section) and/or text features convey an author's purpose in an informational text. This item targets "analyze how a text structure (sentences) conveys an author's purpose."

- At the middle school level, instruction must go beyond teaching students the different types of informational text structures and how to identify their use. In 7th and 8th grades, students are analyzing how the structure of a full text or a section of text supports the reader in better understanding the text. Also in these grades, students are connecting an author's decision to use a specific text structure (or structures) to convey his or her purpose in writing the text.
- The correct answer to the above item is "by explaining a problem that could be solved by origami principles." To answer this correctly, students must first be able to determine the cause-and-effect structure within the provided sentences and then determine how the structure connects to the author's purpose.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.5.3

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 8th grade that targets a section of AOR.5.3. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Read the sentences from the passage.

Recently, a team at Harvard has been using origami to create artificial muscles. Initial tests show that these artificial muscles can lift up to 1,000 times their weight.

Which statement best explains the author's use of rhetoric in the sentences?

ELA.8.AOR.5.3 asks students to trace the development of an author's argument while analyzing the types of reasoning and/or rhetorical appeals used in an informational text. This item targets "analyzing the types of… rhetorical appeals used in an informational text."

- In 6th-grade ELA, instruction must allow students the opportunity to build a foundational knowledge of ethos, pathos, and logos, and be able to locate examples within a text. Entering 7th grade without this foundational knowledge will impact students' abilities to move into the skills of explaining the three rhetorical appeals and how they function in a text. This also impacts 8th grade, when students will be expected to analyze an author's use of ethos, pathos, and logos.
- In this particular item, the correct answer states, "the sentences appeal both to credibility by referring to a reputable institution's study and to logic by including numerical data." To be successful on these types of items, students must
    - Have a working knowledge of ethos, pathos, and logos (6th grade)
    - Be able to locate examples of each within a text (6th-8th)
    - Be able to explain why or how the examples are representative of ethos, pathos, and logos (7th-8th).
    - Analyze how or why the author uses a specific type of ethos, pathos, and logos to support an argument or persuade a reader (8th).
- Teachers are reminded that this sample item only represents one way this indicator can be assessed. Instruction should target the entire grade-level indicator.

From the 2024 Data Review Document

As applied to AOR.5.3, classroom instruction should provide students with opportunities to analyze how an author may strategically structure or organize a text to impact or persuade the reader.

The committee recommends these instructional considerations:

- The teacher should choose a persuasive text that illustrates more than one purpose the author is trying to achieve. For example, one section of the text may provide data or information to inform the reader about a topic. Another section of the text may then try to persuade the reader to feel or think a certain way.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to AOR.6.1

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 7th grade that targets a section of AOR.6.1. The format of the item has been changed for the purpose of this document.

Which sentence best summarizes the section "Termites"?

ELA.7.AOR.6.1 asks students to summarize and/or paraphrase from grade-level text to enhance comprehension. While the language of AOR.6.1 is the same for grades 6-8, the students should be applying these skills to increasingly complex texts. This item targets "summarize… from grade-level text to enhance comprehension."

- Middle-level instruction should provide students with the opportunity to summarize full texts and sections of text. As part of instruction, students should develop their own summaries and share them verbally or in writing.
- For summative assessment, paraphrasing will apply to sections of text or one or more sentences. This is more limited than how it is taught in the classroom. Classroom instruction should provide opportunities for students to both paraphrase and summarize using the same text.
- While plagiarism and citing sources are not assessed on summative assessment, instruction should regularly include citing sources to avoid plagiarism.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to Vocabulary Indicators

New for 2025

Below are three different partial sample items from 6th and 7th grades that each target a section of one of the vocabulary indicators. The format of the items has been changed for the purpose of this document.

1. **Read the sentence from the passage.**

   They act like feather dusters to help lift away tiny dust particles before they can adhere to our sensitive eyes.
   What does the word adhere mean as it is used in the sentence?

This item targets **ELA.6.AOR.7.1a**, which requires students to "determine or clarify the meaning of known, unknown, … words… use context to determine the meaning of words…"

- Instruction should include providing students with opportunities to use context to determine meaning. Some students will need additional support in understanding what "context" means. In this particular example, the correct answer is "attach". To get this item correct, the student must notice phrases such as "…feather dusters to help lift away…" "before they can… to our sensitive eyes."

2. **Which two words in the passage have similar meanings?**

This item targets **ELA.6.AOR.8.1b**, which requires students to "determine the relationship between words."

- Instruction should include allowing students to examine and explain connotations of words (ELA.AOR.8.1c) and why an author chooses one connotation over another. It should also provide opportunities for students to interpret an author's use of figurative language (ELA.AOR.8.1a).
- For this particular item, students must look at the relationships between words such as "disaster and catastrophe" and "instructed and produced."

3. **Read the sentence from "Letter from Route 66."**

   I now feel like I'm a walking Google search of Route 66 facts.
   What does the figurative language in the sentence indicate about Margo?

This item targets **ELA.7.AOR.8.1a**, which requires students to "identify an author's use of figurative… language in literary, informational, and multimedia texts: a. interpret figures of speech in context and analyze how they function within a text…"

- Middle-level instruction must go beyond asking students to identify examples of figurative language in a text. Students must also have opportunities to interpret and analyze what the underlying meaning is and why the author chooses to use a specific type of figurative language or a figure of speech.

- The correct answer for this item is, “She feels very knowledgeable about her subject.” While we know the writer is not a literal Google search, she indicates that she has learned so much about the subject that she feels like she knows a lot of information. While it is important that students recognize this as a simile, the purpose of using the simile is what students must be able to explain.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to Writing Indicators

New for 2025

Below are two partial sample items from 8th grade that each target a section of a writing indicator. The format of the items has been changed for the purpose of this document.

1. **Which sentence is the best revision of sentence 4 to show precise language?**
   (4) His chocolate company did well and gave Hershey money.

This item targets **ELA.8.C.2.1d**, which asks students to "use precise language…" This expectation is also in ELA.C.2.1d for grades 6-7.

- In classroom instruction, this skill would be taught as part of the writing process, which includes revision. Instruction should allow students to revise their own sentences. This particular item on SC READY is part of a set of items that are presented with an editing passage.
- To help students understand the importance of using precise language in their writing to better communicate to the reader, they must understand it is important to:
  - choose strong words that engage the reader, clarify the writer's message, and that impact the meaning of the writing.
  - use specific examples to add clarity and engage the reader.
  - eliminate filler words, such as stuff.
  - remove redundant words and phrases within sentences.
  - understand that precise language creates clarity for the reader. The writer should be careful to select words that match his or her voice and that the audience will understand.
- Provide students opportunities to revise mentor sentences before revising their own sentences. Start small when asking students to revise their sentences for precise language. Allow students the opportunity to correct and receive feedback on 1-2 sentences before moving into larger chunks of text.

2. **A student is writing a report about pesticides. Read the paragraph the student wrote.**
   Pesticides are products that repel or destroy pests, such as harmful insects. For years, many farmers used chemical pesticides to protect their crops from being eaten or infected. _____, many farmers are choosing to use natural or organic pesticides instead of chemical pesticides. Natural and organic pesticides keep pests away without harming ecosystems.

Which transition best completes the sentence to clarify the ideas in the paragraph?

This item targets **ELA.8.C.2.1c**, which asks students to "use varied transitions to clarify the relationships between ideas and concepts." This skill is also present in ELA.8.C.1c in grades 6-7. While this selection of text is informational and aligns with C.2.1, this skill is also applied in C.1.1.

- Instruction should go beyond providing students with lists of transitional words and phrases. Students need support and practice understanding how transitions work to clarify and connect ideas and concepts. For example, in the sample above, the student must realize that the transition must show a sequence of time because the preceding sentence begins with "for years".
- Instruction should include mentor texts that model how transitions are used. Students should have time to examine the transitions and receive support in understanding the purpose of the transitions and how the transitions impact the reader's understanding of the text. For some students, this will require explicit instruction of transitions and examples of successful and unsuccessful uses of transitions in writing.
- Provide a paragraph to students. Remove the transitions. Ask students to add the transitions and explain why they chose to use each transition and how it functions in the paragraph.
- Students should have the opportunity to review and revise transitions in their own writing.

From the 2024 Data Review Document

In the middle-level grades, students are expected to "improve writing by… considering feedback from adults and peers and revising to improve clarity…" (ELA.C.5.1). Students tend to think of revision as an opportunity to correct errors instead of viewing it as an opportunity to seek and implement feedback to improve the clarity of their writing. The committee has several recommendations to help students revise their writing for clarity:

- Students should be provided with their own written pieces to revise or provided with other samples of written text that need revision.
- Provide a sample text(s) to students and ask students to read the text aloud. This can be done in a writing conference with the teacher or in small groups. If students have difficulty understanding the text as written, there is a problem with clarity.
- Once students have determined problems with clarity, ask the students specific questions about what may be missing or unclear. For example, if a sentence states: "In the story, the author personifies Aidan's baseball glove by calling it 'he' and describing how it 'grabs a hold of the baseball…' He makes it seem like it is on the field as part of the team." If a student were to read this aloud, the question a teacher may ask is, "Who is *he* in the second sentence?" Through discussion, the teacher can help the student understand that while the pronoun *he* is intended to

refer to the author, it seems to be referring to Aidan. The teacher can then talk through with the student how this lack of clarity might confuse the reader and how the student can revise to improve clarity for the reader.

- By allowing students the opportunity to read and revise in small groups or writing conferences, teachers can help students better understand the concept of clarity and can use this as a time to address comma rules, misplaced modifiers, etc....
- To help students better understand how to improve organization, teachers may wish to present sentence strips to allow students to manipulate the sentences until the organization is clear to the reader. This will also allow students to determine where and how to place transitions to connect ideas.

New for 2025

Below is a partial sample item from 6th grade that targets a section of C.1.1c. The format of the items has been changed for the purpose of this document.

A student is writing an argumentative response about why video gaming should be considered a sport.
Which sentence should the student include in the argument to acknowledge an alternative perspective?

This item targets **ELA.6.C.1.1c**, which asks students to "acknowledge an alternative perspective." This skill is still relevant in grades 7-8, but replaces "alternative perspective" with "counterclaim".

- Remember that assessing writing on a state summative assessment may differ from how writing is taught in the classroom. Writing should be taught as a process. If the student can write an alternative perspective in his or her own written works, the student can select an alternative perspective in a test item.
- This skill is also applied in the argument writing tasks for the Text Dependent Writing item, which requires students to apply their argumentative writing skills.

From the 2024 Data Review Report

In the middle-level grades, ELA.C.1.1 progresses from acknowledging an *alternative perspective* in Grade 6 to acknowledging a *counterclaim* in Grade 7, and then to acknowledging *and refuting* a counterclaim in Grade 8. Some strategies the panel suggests are:

- Practice anticipating alternative perspectives or counterclaims as you read argumentative texts in class, asking students questions such as "What would be the other side of this argument?" or "What could someone say against this argument?"
- Ask students to annotate text to help them find examples. (This can also help them think about an author's purpose and structure.)

- Teachers might randomly pass out sets of claims and alternative perspectives or counterclaims, and task students with finding the student whose claim is their opposite. Once matched, students should have an opportunity to explain how they determined who was their opposite and why.
- Once students grasp the concept of claim and alternative perspective/ counterclaim as individual elements, add text. Create multiple stations. At each station, provide 5-8 sample paragraphs that each contain a claim and alternative perspective (6th grade) or a claim and counterclaim (7th-8th grades). Students will travel in small groups to each station. The teacher may wish to use a timer. While at each station, students will first work independently to determine the claim and alternative perspective/ counterclaim in each paragraph. Students should then have time to discuss their responses and come to a consensus before moving to the next station. Once all groups have visited each station, present one paragraph from one of the stations. The group at that station should then show the class what they determined as the claim and alternative perspective/ counterclaim and explain why. Allow students to ask questions. Correct any misunderstandings. Each group should have the opportunity to explain at least one paragraph from their station.
- This can be extended for 8th-grade students by including paragraphs that contain refutations to the counterclaim.
- This can be extended for all grades by incorporating opportunities for students to determine evidence and reasons as well as claims and alternative perspectives/ counterclaims.

Insights and Instructional Strategies Aligned to Research Indicators
From the 2024 Data Review Document

The committee noted that items aligned with the Research indicators were among the more difficult items on the test, particularly for sixth-grade students. As with other indicators addressed in this document, the research indicators are good to tie back to an author's purpose. Encourage students to think about the intended audience for a potential source: Who is the author trying to reach? Who is publishing this work, and why? Some insights or strategies the panel recommends are:

- Review what *purpose* is: students need to know the focus of their written work as well as the purpose of the source they are reading.
- Students should start by focusing on what they want the audience to know, and then think about whether a particular resource will help them reach that goal. What questions might a reader have, and will using this resource help answer any of those questions?
- Create a "credibility checklist" or set up a rating system for potential sources (e.g., "most credible," "best," etc.). Ask students to consider whether a source might be (or appear to be) biased, and reinforce that bias might not be a "yes or no" question.
- Rank sources according to bias toward a particular viewpoint.