



New Jersey Student Learning Assessments — English Language Arts Companion Guide — Grades 3 through 8

The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments for English Language Arts (NJSLA-ELA) measures student proficiency with grade level skills, knowledge, and concepts that are critical to college and career readiness. On each assessment, students read and analyze passages from authentic fiction and nonfiction texts. The test can also include multimedia stimuli such as video or audio. The NJSLA-ELA assessments emphasize the importance of close reading, synthesizing ideas within and across texts, determining the meaning of words and phrases in context, and writing effectively when using and/or analyzing sources.

NJSLA-ELA Grades 3–8

The NJSLA-ELA blueprints define the total number of tasks and points for any given grade or course assessment. To maintain the content coverage while shortening the assessment, it was necessary to create two blueprints for grades 3 through 8. One test form was assembled according to each blueprint.

The NJSLA-ELA assessments:

- align to a representative sampling of standards and evidence statements;
- reflect the balance between literary and informational texts;
- include a writing task in each unit and associated scoring rubrics;
- align to the ELA Task Models;
- maintain all item types (Evidence-Based Selected Response; Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response; and Prose Constructed Response); and
- report on all five subclaims and performance levels.

NJSLA-ELA Grade 3

Blueprint 1 for grade 3 consists of a Literary Analysis Task and Research Simulation Task. Blueprint 2 is composed of a Narrative Writing Task, Short Passage Set, and Research Simulation Task. The units, ELA task types, and testing times for each blueprint are outlined in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 - ELA Grade 3 (Blueprint 1)

Unit	Task	Time
Unit 1	Literary Analysis Task	75 minutes
Unit 2	Research Simulation Task	75 minutes
Total: 2 Units	All Tasks	Total: 150 minutes

Table 2 - ELA Grade 3 (Blueprint 2)

Unit	Task	Time
Unit 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative Writing Task • Short Passage Set 	75 minutes
Unit 2	Research Simulation Task	75 minutes
Total: 2 Units	All Tasks	Total: 150 minutes

NJSLA-ELA Grades 4 through 8

Blueprint 1 for grades 4 through 8 consists of a Literary Analysis Task, Short Passage Set, and Research Simulation Task. Blueprint 2 is composed of a Narrative Writing Task, Long or Paired Passage Set, and Research Simulation Task. The units, ELA task types, and testing times for each blueprint are outlined in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 - ELA Grades 4 through 8 (Blueprint 1)

Unit	Task	Time
Unit 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Literary Analysis TaskShort Passage Set	90 minutes
Unit 2	Research Simulation Task	90 minutes
Total: 2 Units	All Tasks	Total: 180 minutes

Table 4 - ELA Grades 4 through 8 (Blueprint 2)

Unit	Task	Time
Unit 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Narrative Writing TaskLong or Paired Passage Set	90 minutes
Unit 2	Research Simulation Task	90 minutes
Total: 2 Units	All Tasks	Total: 180 minutes

Comparability of Forms

Two NJSLA-ELA forms adhere to stringent content specifications and statistical requirements to ensure that the forms are comparable and fair for all students. Total points vary between the two forms due to the nature of the design of the Literary Analysis Task and Narrative Writing Tasks. However, they both ask students to read and respond to literary texts. Both tasks report and align to the Literary Text subclaim, standards, and evidence statements. The forms are designed so that students, regardless of which form they are assigned, will need to demonstrate the same level of knowledge to meet a specific performance level.

Expert analysis was conducted to ensure that scores are comparable across forms. First, the two forms were built to be similar in content and difficulty. Then, the two forms were equated by means of a statistical process conducted to establish comparable scores on different forms of an assessment.

The two forms will be randomly assigned to students. Therefore, all students need to be prepared to respond to all three task types.

For More Information

The NJSLA-ELA blueprints and additional test support documents (e.g., evidence statements, scoring rubrics) can be found on the [Test Content and Other Information](#) webpage of the [NJSLA Resource Center](#) under Educator Resources.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Assessments at assessment@doe.nj.gov.