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Student Practice Book

## **Sample Booklet**

Grade 7  
**Reading**



Lori Mammen  
Editorial Director

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Selected pages from  
**STAAR MASTER™**

**Student Practice Book**  
**Reading, Grade 7**

for the State of Texas Assessments  
of Academic Readiness

**Teacher Guide**



**Lori Mammen**  
Editorial Director

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STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book, Teacher Guide—Reading, Grade 7

## What’s Inside the Student Practice Book?

The *STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book* provides practice and review material for the Grade 7 Reading portion of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™).

- The reading passages reflect the kinds of passages students might encounter on the actual STAAR. These include the following types of selections: fictional literary texts (stories, poems, and dramas), nonfiction literary texts (biographies and autobiographies), informational texts (expository, persuasive, and procedural passages), and media literacy texts (newspapers, advertisements, blogs, and Web pages).
- The reading passages (single and paired) cover a broad range of topics and ideas of interest to seventh-grade students.
- Several readability formulas were used to ensure that the texts are appropriate for seventh grade.
- The questions that follow a passage focus on the 2009–2010 STAAR-eligible ELA-R Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Texas Education Agency, 2010c) reading standards.
- Each question is labeled for easy identification of the TEKS-based standard and expectation addressed in the question.
- Several questions throughout the book address the same standard/expectation, providing repeated practice for students in a variety of contexts.

The following types of selections appear in the *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book*.

**Fictional literary texts** include stories, poems, and drama. These selections present an obvious progression of ideas. For example, a story would have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

**Nonfiction literary texts** include biographies and autobiographies. These selections relate true events from individuals’ lives and present a specific point of view.

**Informational texts** include expository, persuasive, and procedural passages. Expository selections give information about topics in science, social studies, art, or other curricular areas. Persuasive selections present an argument from a specific viewpoint or position. Procedural selections give multi-step or detailed directions.

**Media literacy texts** include text from various forms of media, such as newspapers, advertisements, blogs, and Web pages. These selections present information through words, images, and graphics and relate information for specific audiences and purposes. All elements of a text work together to communicate a message.

### Practice-Item Skills Tags

Each practice item is labeled with a “skills tag” (see Figure 1, below) for easy identification of the TEKS-based standard and expectation addressed in the question. The tag also notes the complexity level of the item. (For more information about complexity levels, refer to Box 1, “Descriptions of *STAAR MASTER™* Complexity Levels,” page 5).

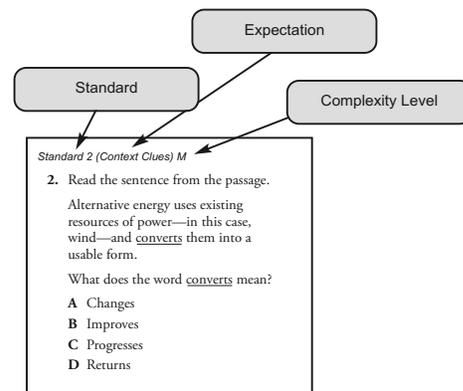


Figure 1: Practice-Item Skills Tag

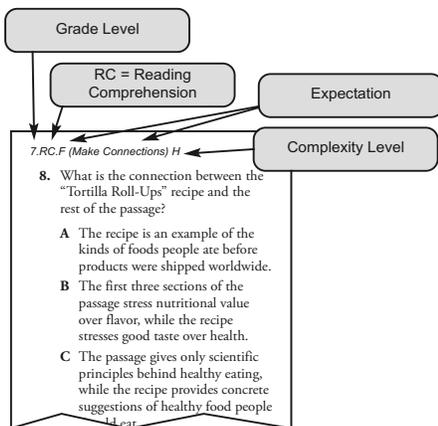
### This Teacher Guide includes—

- an overview of the Student Practice Book and key characteristics of the STAAR
- descriptions of *STAAR MASTER* complexity levels
- strategies for test preparation and reading instruction
- a master list of STAAR-eligible standards and expectations addressed in the ELA-R TEKS
- a correlation chart
- a complete answer key (with corresponding complexity levels for the items in each passage)

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**Readiness vs. Supporting Standards**  
 The eligible, or tested, TEKS are divided into “readiness standards” and “supporting standards,” with greater emphasis on the former. Readiness standards address broader, deeper ideas and are deemed more critical for students to know. Supporting standards address more narrowly defined ideas and will still be assessed, although not emphasized. The *STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book* mirrors this balance of readiness and supporting standards to provide meaningful, authentic student practice for the STAAR™.

**Figure 19**  
 The standards listed under TEKS “Figure 19” are important metacognitive reading skills that students will continue to apply (in greater depth and using increasingly complex texts) as they advance in grade level (Texas Education Agency, 2010b). Figure 19 standards are meant to be used with all text types and during both assigned and independent reading (see Figure 2, below).



**Figure 2: Practice Item for Reading Comprehension Skills (Figure 19)**

**Increased Rigor**  
 The STAAR is described as “significantly more rigorous” (Texas Education Agency, 2010a) than the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). But what does *rigor* mean in assessment? For the STAAR, it means the cognitive complexity of items will increase to assess skills at a greater depth. The *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book* provides items written at varying levels of complexity to accommodate this increase in rigor. (Refer to the “Depth of Knowledge” section on this page and Box 1 on page 5 for more information about the levels of complexity in practice items.)

In addition, the *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book* includes more rigorous reading passages. Various genres are represented throughout the book, and each reading passage is enhanced by its authentic layout. The passages address fresh, relevant topics, while also including classic literature selections (e.g., fictional adaptations and poems).

**Alignment**  
 According to the mandate of No Child Left Behind (2001), states are required to develop assessments that tightly align to their content standards. To ensure that this requirement is met, states and districts often conduct alignment studies. In such a study, an assessment is compared to the state’s content standards. If an assessment is rigorous, the study will not yield large disparities between the cognitive demands of the expectations and that of the assessment.

**Depth of Knowledge**  
 Norman Webb’s (2002) “depth of knowledge” model is currently one of the most influential alignment models in the field of education. “Depth of knowledge” describes the degree of complexity of knowledge a curricular item requires. Webb identifies four levels of depth of knowledge: recall (Level 1), skill or concept (Level 2), strategic thinking (Level 3), and extended thinking (Level 4). Distinct cognitive demands occur during each activity, or thinking process, level.

The items in the *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book* were aligned to the TEKS using a modified version of the “depth-of-knowledge” model (see Box 1, “Descriptions of *STAAR MASTER™* Complexity Levels,” page 5). During the alignment process, the complexity level of each item (designated “Low,” “Moderate,” or “High”) was determined. The level can be found in the skills tag of each practice item and in the Answer Key.

### Descriptions of STAAR MASTER™ Complexity Levels

The following descriptions provide an overview of the three complexity levels used to align the STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book items to the eligible ELA-R TEKS. Each explanation details the kinds of activities that occur within each level. However, they do not represent all of the possible thought processes for each level.

#### Low Complexity (L)

Low-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 1 of the Webb (2002) model. Items of low complexity may involve recalling—but not analyzing—story events and other basic elements of a text structure. An item may ask students to recognize or reproduce—but not interpret—figurative language. Items of this complexity may require identifying the meaning of a word through language structure or word relationships. At this cognitive level, students may need to locate details in a chart, graph, or diagram. A low-complexity item may ask students to recall, identify, arrange, locate, or define information and concepts.

Low Complexity

Standard 6 (Plot Development/Characters) L

3. What does Anthony do immediately before his first chess competition?
- A Anthony meets with Grandpa Joe.
  - B Anthony goes to his doctor's office.
  - C Anthony plays in a basketball game.
  - D Anthony talks with students in Room 112.

#### Moderate Complexity (M)

Moderate-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 2 of the Webb model. Items of moderate complexity involve both comprehension and the subsequent processing of text. Students are asked to make inferences and identify cause-and-effect relationships. However, students are not required to go beyond the text. Major concepts, such as main idea, are considered in a literal, rather than abstract, manner. Students are asked to compare word meanings, which they determine through context clues. At this cognitive level, students will need to identify similarities and differences. Items may involve determining information in a text feature, such as a chart, graph, or diagram. Items of this complexity may ask students to predict, organize, classify, compare, interpret, distinguish, relate, or summarize. Some items also require students to apply low-complexity skills and concepts.

Standard 6 (Plot Development/Characters) M

4. Why is Joey frustrated with his brother Danny in the poem?
- A Joey thinks Danny is lazy.
  - B Joey feels Danny teases him too much.
  - C Danny does not understand the value of reading.
  - D Danny does not invite Joey to play baseball with him.

Moderate Complexity

#### High Complexity (H)

High-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 3 and/or Level 4 of the Webb model. Items of high complexity require students to use strategic, multi-step thinking; develop a deeper understanding of the text; and extend thinking beyond the text. Major concepts, such as theme and figurative language, are now identified and examined in an abstract manner. Students are asked to demonstrate more flexible thinking, apply prior knowledge, and support their responses. Students may need to generalize and transfer new information to new tasks. High-complexity items may require students to make inferences across an entire passage or analyze relationships between ideas or texts. At this cognitive level, students will need to analyze similarities and differences. Items may involve relating information in a text feature, such as a chart, graph, or diagram, to the text. A high-complexity item may ask students to plan, reason, explain, hypothesize, compare, differentiate, draw conclusions, cite evidence, analyze, synthesize, apply, or prove. Some items also require students to apply low- and/or moderate-complexity skills and concepts.

7.RC.D (Inferences) H

7. From Jodi James's argument, the reader can assume that she has a strong belief in the—
- A ability of technology to improve driving
  - B individual's responsibility to limit risk to others
  - C ability of technology to improve communication
  - D individual's right to act without government interference

High Complexity

\*Note: Although state standards may include expectations that require extended thinking, many large-scale assessment activities are not classified as Level 4. Performance and open-ended assessment may require activities at Level 4.

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Box 1: Descriptions of STAAR MASTER™ Complexity Levels

## How to Use This Book

### Effective Test Preparation

What is the most effective way to prepare students for any reading competency test? Experienced educators know that the best test preparation includes three critical components—

- a strong curriculum that is aligned with the content and skills to be assessed
- effective, relevant, and varied instructional methods that allow students to learn content and skills in many different ways
- targeted practice that familiarizes students with the specific content and format of the test

Obviously, a strong curriculum and effective, relevant, and varied instructional methods provide the foundation for all appropriate test preparation. Contrary to what some might believe, merely “teaching the test” performs a great disservice to students. Students must acquire knowledge, practice skills, and have specific educational experiences that can never be included on tests limited by time and in scope. For this reason, resources like the *STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book* should never become the heart of the curriculum or replace strong instructional methods.

### Targeted Practice

The *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book* does, however, address the final element of effective test preparation (targeted test practice). This book familiarizes students with—

- the specific content of Texas’ competency test
- the general format of competency tests

When students become familiar with both the content and the format of a test, they know what to expect on the actual test. This, in turn, improves their chances for success.

### Using *STAAR MASTER™* Products

Used as part of the regular curriculum, the *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book* allows teachers to—

- pretest skills students need for the actual test
- determine students’ areas of strength and/or weakness
- provide meaningful test-taking practice for students
- ease students’ test anxiety
- communicate test expectations and content to parents

## Other Suggestions for Instruction

The *STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book* can serve as a springboard for other effective instructional activities that help with test preparation.

### Group Work

Teachers and students work through selected practice exercises together, noting the kinds of questions and the range of answer choices. They discuss common errors for each kind of question and strategies for avoiding these errors.

### Predicting Answers

Students predict the correct answer before reading the given answer choices. This encourages students to think through the question rather than focus on finding the right answer. Students then read the given answer choices and determine which one, if any, matches the answer they have given.

### Developing Test Questions

Once students become familiar with the format of test questions, they develop “test-type” questions for other assigned reading (e.g., science, social studies).

### Vocabulary Development

Teachers and students foster vocabulary development in all subject areas through the use of word walls, word webs, word games, synonym/antonym charts, analogies, word categories, “word-of-the-day” activities, etc.

### Two-Sentence Recaps

Students regularly summarize what they have read in one or two sentences. For fiction, students use the basic elements (setting, characters, problem, solution) to guide their summaries. For nonfiction, students use the journalist’s questions (who, what, where, when, why) for the same purpose. The teacher may also list three to five key words from a reading selection and direct students to write a one- to two-sentence summary that includes the given words.

### Generalizations

After students read a selection, the teacher states a generalization based on the reading, and students provide specific facts and details to support the generalization; or the teacher provides specifics from the selection, and students state the generalization.

STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book  
Reading—Grade 7

	Along the Forest Way	Memorial Day Controversy	Rock Candy Science	Baseball Questions Harmful Habit	Airy Alternatives	A Magic Unseen	Baby Girl	Free Speech May Be Costly	Once in 3 Years and A Grand Victory	Be A Cheesy Eater	Baking Braided Bread	Don't Back Up, Be a Driver	Who Were Jack and Jill?	Voyage to the Crazy Island	Sage Advice	Common Cents	Vote for... Who?	The Secret Chess Champ	Deadly Defense	My Shoe Source Shoes
<b>Standard 2: Vocabulary</b>																				
Roots/Affixes (R)			8	2	1			1					6		3	3	3			
Context Clues (R)	2.5	4.6	6	4	2	6		4	3.4	3.7	1	3	3	1.3		7	8	6	4	
Dictionary/Glossary (R)					7				8					5	2			1	6	
<b>Standard 3: Literary Text/Theme and Genre</b>																				
Themes (S)	8														8		1	8		
Stylistic Conventions (S)	3.9													11						
Influence of Place/Time (S)						3		2						2						
<b>Standard 4: Literary Text/Poetry</b>																				
Graphical Elements (S)						2.8									5.7					
<b>Standard 5: Literary Text/Drama</b>																				
Dialogue/Stage Directions (S)																	4,6,9			
<b>Standard 6: Literary Text/Fiction</b>																				
Setting/Plot Development (R)	1						1													5.7
Plot Development/Characters (R)							4.6							7	4		5	2.3		
Point of View (S)	7													10						4
<b>Standard 7: Literary Text/Nonfiction</b>																				
Autobiography/Fictional Adaptation (S)									11,12,13											
<b>Standard 8: Literary Text/Sensory Language</b>																				
Author's Use of Language (R)	4					1,4,7	3		1.6	1				6.8	6		2,7			

(R) = Readiness Standard (S) = Supporting Standard

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STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book  
Reading—Grade 7, continued

Standard 9: Informational Text/Culture and History	Along the Forest Way	Memorial Day Controversy	Rock Candy Science	Baseball Fan Questions	Airy Alternatives	A Magic Unseen	Baby Girl	Free Speech May Be Costly	Once in a Hundred Years and A Grand Victory	Be A Choosy Eater	Baking Bread	Don't Bark the Bark and Drive	Who Were Jack and Jill?	Vorpage to the Crazy Island	Sage Advice	Common Cents	Vote for... Who?	The Secret Chess Champ	Deadly Defense	My Shoe Source Shoes
Theme/Purpose (S)		7		7	5		9													
Standard 10: Informational Text/Expository																				
Evaluation of Summary (R)			8	10																
Facts/Assertions/Opinions (S)				1	1,8,8															
Organizational Patterns (R)			3	2																
Connections Across Texts (R)				2																
Standard 11: Informational Text/Persuasive																				
Structure of Argument/Types of Evidence (R)					3	4														
Rhetorical Fallacies (R)																				
Standard 12: Informational Text/Procedural																				
Graphical Components (S)																				
Standard 13: Media Literacy																				
Media Messages (S)																				
Media Influences (S)																				
Reading Comprehension Skills (Figure 19)																				
Inferences (7.RC.D) (R,S)	6	1,5			3,9	5	2,5,8	6,9	5,7	5		6,7	2,4	4					2,7	
Summarize/Paraphrase/Synthesize (7.RC.E) (R,S)							7				8		8	9	1	9			8	
Make Connections (7.RC.F) (R)					5	8			10	8		4				8				

(R) = Readiness Standard (S) = Supporting Standard

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## Answer Key

Note: Complexity levels appear in parentheses. L = Low, M = Moderate, H = High

### Along the Forest Way

1. C (H) 2. D (M) 3. A (M) 4. D (H)  
5. C (M) 6. A (M) 7. A (H) 8. A (H)  
9. C (M)

### Memorial Day Controversy

1. A (M) 2. C (H) 3. D (M) 4. B (M)  
5. D (H) 6. C (M) 7. B (H) 8. D (M)

### Rock Candy Science

### Free Speech May Be Costly

1. C (L) 2. A (H) 3. C (M) 4. A (M)  
5. C (H) 6. C (M) 7. B (M) 8. C (H)  
9. A (H)

### Once in a Hundred Years and A Grand Victory

1. C (M) 2. D (H) 3. D (M) 4. A (M)  
5. C (H) 6. A (M) 7. C (H) 8. C (M)  
9. D (M) 10. D (L) 11. D (H) 12. D (H)  
13. D (M)

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## Speech May Be Costly

Alex Fuentes learned a tough lesson during his senior year of high school. He decided to exercise his freedom of speech and criticize his high school online. Within a few weeks, he found himself expelled from the National Honor Society. The conflict made news headlines across the country and ultimately forced Alex to transfer to another school.

Alex was an 18-year-old student at Wesley Chapel High School in Florida when he became frustrated with the academic standing of his school. Florida state test scores showed that Wesley Chapel High ranked below the state averages in reading, math, and science. He started a page on a popular social networking site about his school named “Wesley Chapel High = Fail.” Other students and former students of the high school began posting negative comments about their academic experiences as well.

The staff at Wesley Chapel High heard about the page and some of the comments. Alex changed the name of the page to “Pros and Cons of Wesley Chapel High,” but the damage was already done. A panel of six teachers met and voted unanimously to remove Alex from the National Honor Society on the grounds that he had broken his pledge to show loyalty to his school.

Alex felt he was being treated unfairly. He was particularly upset that three of his own teachers were on the panel that voted to remove him. He quickly decided to transfer to another school, saying that he could not sit in the classrooms of teachers who had voted against him.

Alex’s removal from the National Honor Society made newspaper headlines in Florida. National news networks also picked up the story, and experts began to discuss the situation. Did Alex have the right to say negative things about his school online? Did the National Honor Society have the right to remove him for criticizing his school?

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to free speech. Students like Alex are free to express their opinions about their schools because they have that right of free speech. The Internet has opened up a new way to express opinions, and the court system is still working through some of the issues of free speech online. However, should the National Honor Society be able to use Alex’s comments against him and claim he broke his pledge? After all, Alex’s social networking page was free speech and he published it off campus on his own time.



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The National Honor Society, not the school, issued the consequence. As a private organization, the National Honor Society sets its own rules and standards for student behavior. Since Alex had taken the National Honor Society pledge, including the clause about showing loyalty to his school, the organization could remove him for failing to keep his pledge. Although Alex's online posting was free speech published during his own time, he also had to face the consequences of exercising this right.

Think about Alex's page for a moment. Was there a constructive purpose for the "Wesley Chapel High = Fail" page? Not really. The page was merely a way for Alex and others to vent their frustrations about their school. In a perfect world, Alex's opinions would be protected by free speech.

But in the real world, a person should always weigh their words carefully before saying something. Consider who would be hurt, the possible consequences, and most of all, whether making your statement is worth the risk.

Alex's page is still active online, but he paid a high price for his free speech. Because of his school transfer, he could not try out for the track team during his senior year and he did not graduate with his friends at Wesley Chapel High. Wesley Chapel High may not have the strongest academic scores in Florida, but it certainly taught Alex a life lesson: think before speaking. Or, in this case: think before posting online. While our right to free speech is of great value, exercising that right may not always be worth the cost.



Standard 2 (Roots/Affixes) L

1. What does the prefix *trans-* mean in the word transfer?
  - A Through or into
  - B Above or up high
  - C Across or beyond
  - D Following or after

Standard 11 (Rhetorical Fallacies) H

2. Read the sentence from the passage.

The conflict [between Alex and his school] made news headlines across the country and ultimately forced Alex to transfer to another school.

This sentence is misleading because it—

- A implies that Alex had to leave Wesley Chapel High
- B portrays Alex as a constant troublemaker at his school
- C presents Alex’s case as more public than it actually was
- D makes the conflict sound like a simple misunderstanding

Standard 10 (Connections Across Texts) M

3. Which of the following reasons directly contributed to Alex’s decision to transfer schools?
  - A Wesley Chapel High School’s low academic standing
  - B His own decision to change the name of his social networking page
  - C His teachers’ voting to remove him from the National Honor Society
  - D The fact that he was a senior and needed to graduate from high school

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Standard 2 (Context Clues) M

4. Read the sentence from the passage.
- A panel of six teachers met and voted unanimously to remove Alex from the National Honor Society on the grounds that he had broken his pledge to show loyalty to his school.
- The word unanimously tells the reader that the teachers—
- A were in total agreement
  - B could not come to a decision
  - C voted without complete information
  - D changed their decision several times

Standard 11 (Rhetorical Fallacies) H

5. The author implies that Alex’s free speech may not have been worth the consequences because Alex’s social networking site—
- A offended many people
  - B was published off campus
  - C did not really benefit anyone
  - D changed from its original form

7.RC.D (Inferences) M

6. Which of the following best represents the “high price” Alex paid for his free speech?
- A Wesley Chapel High having below average academic scores
  - B The National Honor Society setting high standards for its members
  - C Alex not being able to graduate with his friends from Wesley Chapel High
  - D The U.S. court system’s ongoing work to determine laws about free speech online

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Standard 10 (Evaluation of Summary) M

7. Which sentence from the passage best expresses the author’s main message?
- A *The page was merely a way for Alex and others to vent their frustrations about their school.*
  - B *While our right to free speech is of great value, exercising that right may not always be worth the cost.*
  - C *After all, Alex’s social networking page was free speech and he published it off campus on his own time.*
  - D *Alex was an 18-year-old student at Wesley Chapel High School in Florida when he became frustrated with the academic standing of his school.*

Standard 11 (Structure of Argument/Types of Evidence) H

8. The author supports the main argument in this passage by—
- A appealing to the reader’s emotions
  - B emphasizing his/her authority over Alex
  - C describing the cause and effect of Alex’s actions
  - D comparing Alex’s situation to other students’ experiences

7.RC.D (Inferences) H

9. What can the reader conclude about free speech based on this passage?
- A Laws about free speech online are not clear-cut.
  - B Students are never allowed to criticize their schools.
  - C In most instances, free speech is not protected by any laws.
  - D The National Honor Society does not believe in free speech.

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