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Student Practice Book

## **Sample Booklet**

Grade 8  
**Reading**



Lori Mammen  
Editorial Director

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**STAAR MASTER™**

**Student Practice Book**  
**Reading, Grade 8**

for the State of Texas Assessments  
of Academic Readiness

**Teacher Guide**



**Lori Mammen**  
Editorial Director

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ISBN: 978-1-60539-733-7

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STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book, Teacher Guide—Reading, Grade 8

## What’s Inside the Student Practice Book?

The *STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book* provides practice and review material for the Grade 8 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 eighth-grade students.
- Several readability formulas were used to ensure that the texts are appropriate for eighth 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).

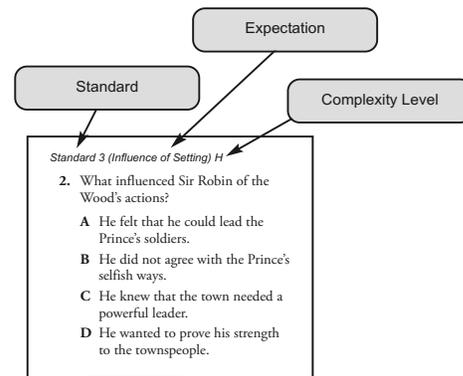


Figure 1: Practice-Item Skills Tag

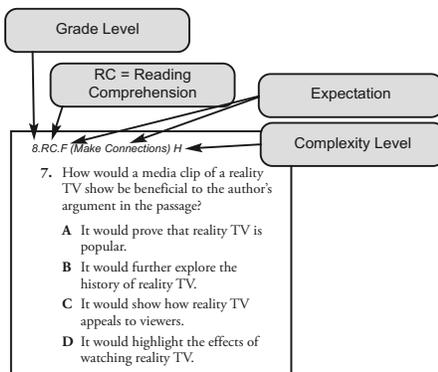
### This Teacher Guide includes—

- 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.

Standard 10 (Main Idea/Details) L

3. According to the speech, the most basic American right is the right to—

- A elect one's own leaders
- B send one's children to school
- C identify as a Republican or a Democrat
- D choose to live in the North or the South

Low Complexity

### 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) M

7. How is the conflict resolved in this story?

- A Josh reluctantly reveals he knows nothing about sports.
- B Josh realizes he does not need to be ashamed of his hobby.
- C Josh returns to New York City during summers to visit relatives.
- D Josh discovers Mr. Phillips was once a dancer in New York City.

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.

Standard 10 (Connections Across Texts) H

10. Based on the information presented in "To Cut or Not to Cut?" and "Meet V-Frog," you can determine that—

- A dissecting an animal is more scientific than using a computer simulation
- B simulations are a better way of learning about frogs than animal dissection
- C both simulations and animal dissections offer unique learning opportunities
- D students who object to dissecting real animals will also object to a simulation

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 8

	Forgotten Faces	Give CD-Burning a Spin	To An Old Cities with Backpack	From New York to Nowhere	To Cut or Not to Cut?	"We Shall Overcome"	Enclipher Your Secrets	Sir Robin of the Wood	The Lustrous Cloak and the Great White Cat	Keeping It Real	Make a Memory Magnet!	Floating, Man-Made Creations	A Doctor's Determination	A Sixth-Amendment Lesson	The Player Piano	Song Troops	Mud Art	The Dirt Debate
<b>Standard 2: Vocabulary</b>																		
Rocks/Affixes (R)			2					5	1		2	5			2	1	2	
Context Clues (R)	1,2		2	2	3	2	1,2	6	6	1,3	9	2,3	4	2,4	7	4	1,10	3
Dictionary/Glossary (R)		1,6	8		4	1							2		3	3		
<b>Standard 3: Literary Text/ Theme and Genre</b>																		
Themes (S)									10									
Mythologies (S)									9,11									
Influence of Setting (S)				4			2	2	2						5			
<b>Standard 4: Literary Text/ Poetry</b>																		
Poetic Forms (S)			5,7					8								8		
<b>Standard 5: Literary Text/Drama</b>																		
Characterization in Drama (S)														1,3,5				
<b>Standard 6: Literary Text/ Fiction</b>																		
Plot Development (R)	4			7			3	5						6	4			
Theme/Conflict Resolution (R)	8			3			4	3,8							9			
Point of View (S)	10		4	5				4										
<b>Standard 7: Literary Text/ Nonfiction</b>																		
Author's Use of Language (S)	3		3			4,5							1,3,6					
<b>Standard 8: Literary Text/ Sensory Language</b>																		
Similes/Metaphors (S)	5,6			1			1,7	7	7	5				6	4,5,7			

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

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STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book  
Reading—Grade 8, *continued*

Standard 9: Informational Text/Culture and History	Forgotten Faces	Give C-D-Burning a Spin	To An Old Cities with Backpack	From New York to Nowhere	To Cut or Not to Cut?	"We Shall Overcome"	Enipher Your Secrets	Sir Robin of the Wood	The Lustrous Cloak and the Great White Cat	Keeping It Real	Make a Memory Magnet!	Floating, Man-Made Creations	A Doctor's Determination	A Sixth- Amendment Lesson	The Player Piano	Song	Ski Troops	Mud Art	The Dirt Debate
Compare Purposes (S)					9														
Standard 10: Informational Text/Expository																			
Main Idea/Details (R)		3	6			3	3.7			4.8	5.6, 7, 11	4.10					1.5	3.9	1
Factual Claims (S)		4	3		7					2		1					6.7		
Inferences/Conclusions (R)		9	8		6		4			9	1.4	6.7	5				3.9	7	6
Connections Across Texts (R)			7.9	8	10		5.9					9	8.9						
Standard 11: Informational Text/Persuasive																			
Compare/Contrast Conclusions (S)					8													2.5	
Rhetorical/Logical Fallacies (S)					1,2					6									4
Standard 12: Informational Text/Procedural																			
Clarity/Purpose of Graphics (S)		2.5, 7, 8									3.8, 10							4.5, 6.8	
Standard 13: Media Literacy																			
Role of Media (S)			10, 13							10									
Media Techniques (S)			11, 12	10															7.8
Reading Comprehension Skills (Figure 19)																			
Inferences (8.RC.D) (R,S)	7.11		6	5	6	5		9			12			7.8	1.8	2			
Summarize/Paraphrase/Synthesize (8.RC.E) (R,S)	9		1	4		6	6					8	7		10	6.9			
Make Connections (8.RC.F) (R)							8			7			9				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

### Forgotten Faces

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

### Give CD-Burning a Spin

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

### “We Shall Overcome”

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

### Encipher Your Secrets

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

### Sir Robin of the Wood

STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book, Teacher Guide—Reading, Grade 8

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ISBN: 978-1-60539-239-4

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## “WE SHALL OVERCOME”

The following speech was delivered to Congress on March 15, 1965, by President Lyndon B. Johnson following an outbreak of violence at a voting rights protest in Selma, Alabama.

... There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem. And we are met here tonight as Americans—not as Democrats or Republicans. We are met here as Americans to solve that problem.

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: “All men are created equal,” “government by consent of the governed,” “give me liberty or give me death.” And those are not just clever words, and those are not just empty theories. In their name Americans have fought and died for two centuries, and tonight around the world they stand there as guardians of our liberty, risking their lives.

Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man’s possessions; it cannot be found in his power, or in his position. It really rests on his right to be treated as a man equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, he shall choose his leaders, educate his children, provide for his family according to his ability and his merits as a human being. To apply any other test—to deny a man his hopes because of his color, or race, or his religion, or the place of his birth is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for American freedom.

Our fathers believed that if this noble view of the rights of man was to flourish, it must be rooted in democracy. The most basic right of all was the right to choose your own leaders. The history of this country, in large measure, is the history of the expansion of that right to all of our people. Many of the issues of civil rights are very complex and most difficult. But about this there can and should be no argument.

Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote....



**ABOVE:** Demonstrators prepare to march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965.



**BELOW:** Police officers wait for demonstrators.

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Standard 2 (Dictionary/Glossary) M

1. Read the sentence from the speech and the thesaurus entry that follows.

In their name Americans have fought and died for two centuries, and tonight around the world they stand there as guardians of our liberty, risking their lives.

**guardians** attendants, caregivers, defenders, sponsors

Which synonym for guardians works best in this sentence?

- A Attendants
- B Caregivers
- C Defenders
- D Sponsors

Standard 2 (Context Clues) M

2. Read the sentences from the speech.

Our fathers believed that if this noble view of the rights of man was to flourish, it must be rooted in democracy... The history of this country, in large measure, is the history of the expansion of that right to all of our people.

The word expansion means—

- A process of changing
- B denial by means of law
- C increase in range or extent
- D permission with limitations

Standard 10 (Main Idea/Details) L

3. According to the speech, the most basic American right is the right to—
- A elect one's own leaders
  - B send one's children to school
  - C identify as a Republican or a Democrat
  - D choose to live in the North or the South

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Standard 7 (Author's Use of Language) H

4. What truth does the speaker attempt to convey in the speech?
- A The issue of voting rights is extremely complex.
  - B Every person should have an equal right to vote.
  - C Dignity can be found in the measure of a man's power or position.
  - D Many factors should be considered before granting a person voting rights.

Standard 7 (Author's Use of Language) H

5. The speaker uses famous phrases like "government by consent of the governed" and "give me liberty or give me death" to—
- A assert his authority over other leaders
  - B appeal to the reader's sense of history
  - C contradict the words of well-known Americans
  - D make the reader consider America's past mistakes

8.RC.E (Summarize/Paraphrase/Synthesize) M

6. Read the sentences from the speech.
- ...There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem. And we are met here tonight as Americans—not as Democrats or Republicans.
- In these sentences, the speaker is trying to communicate that—
- A voting rights issues affect all Americans
  - B voting rights issues are not actually a problem
  - C Democrats and Republicans agree on voting rights
  - D the North and South must each determine their own voting rights

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