

## English I STAAR Standards-Based Questions

### Standards-Based, Reusable Questions Aligned to Assessed TEKS

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#### How to Use This Document

##### These questions are designed to:

- Be posted in your classroom and returned to all year
- Work across any text in the appropriate genre
- Require the exact cognitive work of the standard
- Never name the skill being tested
- Grow with students through teacher modeling and scaffolding

##### Color-Coding Guide:

- **Readiness Standards** = Most heavily weighted on STAAR
- **Supporting Standards** = Lower weight on STAAR

#### REPORTING CATEGORY 1: READING

##### STRAND 1: VOCABULARY (TEKS §2)

- **2(A) — Use Resources for Technical/Discipline-Based Vocabulary**

##### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Technical dictionaries and discipline-based vocabulary (specialized terms from specific fields)

##### Standards-Based Questions:

- *What resource would help you clarify the precise meaning of this technical term?*

- *How does the [glossary/technical dictionary] definition help you understand this specialized vocabulary?*
- *What does this discipline-based term mean in this field?*

### **Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define technical/discipline-based vocabulary: specialized terms used in specific fields (scientific, medical, legal, technical)
- Model using appropriate resources:
  - Glossaries (in textbooks, articles)
  - Technical dictionaries (field-specific)
  - Specialized reference materials
- Show how context determines which resource is most appropriate
- Teach that technical vocabulary has precise, specific meanings (not general)

### **High School Difference:**

- Middle school = general dictionary use
- High school = technical dictionaries for discipline-based vocabulary

## ● **2(B) — Analyze Denotative and Connotative Meanings**

### **READINESS STANDARD — High Priority**

**NEW FOCUS:** Distinguish between denotation and connotation using context

### **Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What is the literal meaning (denotation) of this word?*
- *What feeling or association (connotation) does this word carry in this context?*
- *How does the context reveal whether the author intends the denotative or connotative meaning?*
- *Why might the author have chosen this word instead of a synonym with different connotations?*

### **Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define clearly:
  - **Denotation** = literal, dictionary definition

- **Connotation** = emotional associations, implications, feelings
- Teach that connotations can be:
  - Positive (home vs. house: home = warmth, belonging)
  - Negative (childish vs. youthful: childish = immature)
  - Neutral
- Model analyzing context to determine intended meaning
- Show how word choice affects tone and meaning

**STAAR Connection:** Questions require students to recognize how authors use connotation deliberately to create specific effects or convey attitudes.

### Example Analysis:

- "She was *thrifty*" (positive: careful with money)
- "She was *cheap*" (negative: unwilling to spend)
- Same denotation, different connotations

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = use context to determine meaning
- High school = analyze context to distinguish denotation from connotation

## ● 2(C) — Determine Meaning of Foreign Words/Phrases

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**Focus Phrases:** bona fide, caveat, carte blanche, tête-à-tête, bon appétit, quid pro quo

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *What does the foreign phrase [phrase] mean in this context?*
- *How does the author's use of [foreign phrase] add meaning that an English equivalent would not?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Pre-teach common foreign phrases used in English

- Provide literal translations and contextual meanings
- Show how foreign phrases often carry nuance or formality

### Common Foreign Phrases Reference:

Phrase	Meaning	Context
bona fide	genuine, authentic	"a bona fide expert"
caveat	warning, caution	"The offer comes with a caveat"
carte blanche	complete freedom	"He was given carte blanche"
tête-à-tête	private conversation	"They had a tête-à-tête"
bon appétit	enjoy your meal	(before eating)
quid pro quo	something for something	"a quid pro quo arrangement"

## STRAND 2: COMPREHENSION SKILLS (TEKS §4)

### ● 4(C) — Make and Confirm Predictions

#### SUPPORTING STANDARD

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *Based on [text feature/genre characteristic/structure], what do you predict will happen?*
- *What evidence confirms or changes your prediction?*
- *How does [this event/detail] support or challenge what you predicted?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Model prediction based on genre characteristics
- Show how to use text features to predict
- Create prediction tracker: Prediction | Evidence For | Evidence Against | Confirmed/Revised

## ● 4(E) — Make Connections

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does this connect to your own experience?*
- *What does this remind you of from another text we've read?*
- *How does this relate to something happening in society?*
- *How does this connection help you understand [character's situation/author's message]?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Model specific, meaningful connections
- Teach connection types: Text-to-Self, Text-to-Text, Text-to-World
- Show how connections deepen understanding

**Note:** In English I, connections become supporting standard (vs. readiness in middle school), showing shift toward more sophisticated analysis.

## ● 4(F) — Make Inferences

### READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *What can you determine about [character/situation] based on the evidence?*
- *What does the author suggest through [detail/dialogue/description]?*
- *How does [this evidence] help you understand [character's feelings/motivation/author's message]?*
- *What conclusion can you draw from [these details]?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Model "reading between the lines" think-alouds
- Model and use inference equation:  $x = \text{In-Fer (Text + Knowledge)}$

- Show the difference between stated (explicit) and unstated (implicit) information

**STAAR Connection:** Still the most frequently assessed standard. Questions ask students to determine character traits, motivations, relationships, themes, and author's implied messages using textual evidence.

## ● 4(G) — Evaluate Details for Key Ideas

**READINESS STANDARD** — High Priority

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *Which details are most important for understanding [this section/the author's point]?*
- *How does this detail contribute to the main idea?*
- *What is the key idea of this section, and which details support it?*
- *Which detail is central to understanding the author's message?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Model sorting details: Essential vs. Interesting vs. Supporting
- Show how to distinguish main idea from supporting details
- Use graphic organizers: Key Idea at top, supporting details below

**STAAR Connection:** Questions require evaluating detail significance and determining key ideas.

## ● 4(H) — Synthesize Information from Two Texts

**READINESS STANDARD** — High Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** Synthesis specifically from TWO texts (paired passages)

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What new understanding emerges when you combine ideas from both texts?*
- *How do these two texts work together to deepen your understanding of [topic]?*
- *What conclusion can you draw when you consider information from both selections?*
- *How has your thinking changed after reading both texts?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define synthesis from two texts: combining ideas from separate sources to create new understanding
- Model: "Text 1 shows \_\_\_, Text 2 shows \_\_\_, together they reveal \_\_\_"
- Show how synthesis ≠ summary of two texts
- Teach comparison + integration = synthesis

**STAAR Connection:** English I frequently includes paired passages requiring synthesis across texts.

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = synthesize information to create new understanding
- High school = synthesize information FROM TWO TEXTS specifically

## STRAND 3: RESPONSE SKILLS (TEKS §5)

### ● 5(C) — Use Text Evidence and Original Commentary

**READINESS STANDARD** — Highest Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** Text evidence PLUS original commentary (not just evidence)

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *What evidence from the text supports your response, and what is your insight about this evidence?*
- *How do you interpret or explain this textual evidence?*
- *What does this evidence reveal, and what is your analysis of its significance?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
  - **Text evidence** = direct support from the text (quotes, paraphrase, specific details)
  - **Original commentary** = your analysis, interpretation, explanation, insight
- Teach the pattern: Evidence + Commentary
- Model: "The text states \_\_\_ (evidence). This shows that \_\_\_ (commentary)"

- Show that commentary answers "So what?" or "Why does this matter?"

**STAAR Connection:** High-scoring responses require BOTH sufficient evidence AND thoughtful commentary explaining the evidence.

**Example Structure:**

- Evidence: "The author describes the setting as 'desolate and gray'"
- Commentary: "This word choice creates a hopeless mood that mirrors the character's emotional state"

**High School Difference:**

- Middle school = use text evidence to support response
- High school = use text evidence AND original commentary

● **5(D) — Paraphrase and Summarize**

**READINESS STANDARD — High Priority**

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *How would you restate this section in your own words?*
- *What are the most important points in this section, in order?*
- *How would you summarize this text while keeping the main ideas and logical order?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define difference: **Paraphrase** = same length, own words | **Summary** = shorter, main ideas only
- Model summary structures appropriate to genre
- Show what to include/exclude

**STRAND 4: LITERARY ELEMENTS (TEKS §6)**

## ● 6(A) — Analyze Theme Development Through Characterization and Plot

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** How themes develop through BOTH characterization AND plot (integrated analysis)

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How do the character's development and the plot events work together to reveal the theme?*
- *What theme emerges through the way the character changes and the plot unfolds?*
- *How does the author use both characterization and plot to develop the message about [theme]?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Show how theme develops through the INTERSECTION of:
  - **Characterization** = how author develops characters (traits, growth, complexity)
  - **Plot** = sequence of events, conflict, resolution
- Model: "The author develops the theme of \_\_\_ by showing how the character \_\_\_ (characterization) through events that \_\_\_ (plot)"
- Teach that theme emerges from character arc + plot progression

#### High School Difference:

- Middle school = analyze how themes develop through character/event interaction
- High school = analyze theme development specifically through characterization AND plot in variety of texts

## ● 6(B) — Analyze Complex Character Development

### READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** Complex yet believable characters developed through literary devices, INCLUDING character foils

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the author develop this character as both complex and believable?*
- *What literary devices does the author use to create this character?*
- *How does the [character foil] help you understand the main character?*
- *What contrasts between characters reveal important traits?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
  - **Complex character** = multi-dimensional, has contradictions, depth, internal conflicts
  - **Believable character** = realistic motivations, authentic responses, consistent yet nuanced
  - **Character foil** = character whose contrasting traits highlight the main character's qualities
- Teach literary devices for character development:
  - Direct characterization (author tells)
  - Indirect characterization (show through actions, dialogue, thoughts, others' reactions)
  - Character foils (contrasting characters)
  - Internal conflict
  - Dynamic vs. static characterization
- Model: "The author develops [character] as complex by showing \_\_\_ but also \_\_\_. The character foil, [name], highlights this complexity by contrasting \_\_\_"

**STAAR Connection:** Very frequent. Questions ask how authors create multi-dimensional, realistic characters using various techniques.

### High School Difference:

- 8th grade = analyze character motivations and behaviors

- High school = analyze how authors develop COMPLEX YET BELIEVABLE characters through literary devices, including foils

## ● 6(C) — Analyze Non-Linear Plot Development

### READINESS STANDARD — High Priority

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [flashback/subplot/parallel plot] add to your understanding of the main plot?*
- *What would be different if this story were told in chronological order?*
- *How does the non-linear structure affect your understanding compared to a linear plot?*
- *How do the [parallel plots/subplots] connect to or enhance the main plot?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define plot structures:
  - **Linear** = chronological order
  - **Non-linear** = out of order, uses flashbacks, parallel stories, subplots
  - **Flashback** = jumps to past events
  - **Foreshadowing** = hints at future events
  - **Subplot** = secondary storyline
  - **Parallel plot** = simultaneous storylines
- Model COMPARISON: "In a linear plot, we would \_\_\_\_. But with this structure, we \_\_\_\_"
- Show effects of non-linear structure: suspense, deeper understanding, complexity, emphasis

**STAAR Connection:** Questions require analyzing the EFFECT of non-linear structure AND comparing to linear development.

**Note:** Same standard as 8th grade, showing continuation and deepening of skill.

## ● 6(D) — Analyze Setting's Influence on Theme

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** How setting influences THEME (not character or plot)

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *How does the [time period/place/culture] contribute to the theme?*
- *What theme emerges because of where or when this story takes place?*
- *How would the theme be different in a different setting?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Show how setting shapes theme:
  - Historical context → themes about society, change, human nature
  - Physical environment → themes about survival, isolation, conflict
  - Cultural setting → themes about identity, belonging, values
- Model: "The [setting] contributes to the theme of \_\_\_ because \_\_\_"

**High School Difference:**

- 8th grade = setting influences characters' values and beliefs
- High school = setting influences THEME

**STRAND 4: GENRE (TEKS §7)**

● **7(A) — Read and Respond to American, British, and World Literature**

**SUPPORTING STANDARD****Standards-Based Questions:**

- *How does this text reflect [American/British/world] literary traditions or perspectives?*
- *What cultural or historical context influences this work?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Teach characteristics of different literary traditions
- Show how cultural context shapes literature
- Model recognizing cultural/historical influences in texts

## ● 7(B) — Analyze Structure, Prosody, and Graphic Elements in Poetry

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Prosody (sound patterns) added to structure and graphic elements

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [line length/word position/stanza structure] affect the poem's meaning?*
- *What effect does the [rhythm/sound pattern/prosody] create?*
- *How do the graphic elements contribute to how you read and understand this poem?*
- *Why might the poet have chosen this particular structure and sound pattern?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
  - **Structure** = line length, stanza organization, form
  - **Prosody** = sound patterns, rhythm, meter, rhyme, alliteration, assonance
  - **Graphic elements** = word position, spacing, capitalization, punctuation
- Read poems ALOUD to demonstrate prosody
- Show how sound patterns create meaning and mood
- Connect all three elements to overall effect

#### High School Difference:

- Middle school = analyze specific elements in poetry
- High school = analyze structure, PROSODY, and graphic elements (adds sound analysis)

## ● 7(C) — Analyze Dramatic Conventions

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Asides, soliloquies, dramatic irony, satire

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [aside/soliloquy] reveal information to the audience?*
- *What does the dramatic irony create, and how does it affect your understanding?*
- *How does the author use satire to critique or comment on [subject]?*
- *What is the function of this dramatic convention in this scene?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define dramatic conventions:
  - **Aside** = character speaks to audience, other characters don't hear
  - **Soliloquy** = character speaks thoughts aloud when alone, reveals inner conflict
  - **Dramatic irony** = audience knows something characters don't
  - **Satire** = uses humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize or comment
- Show how each convention functions:
  - Asides/soliloquies = reveal true thoughts/feelings
  - Dramatic irony = creates tension or humor
  - Satire = critiques society, human nature, institutions
- Model analyzing FUNCTION, not just identifying

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = analyze how playwrights develop dramatic action through acts/scenes
- High school = analyze FUNCTION of specific dramatic conventions

### ● 7(D)(i) — Clear Thesis, Relevant Evidence, Pertinent Examples, Conclusion

#### READINESS STANDARD — High Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** All elements of informational text structure (thesis, evidence, examples, conclusion)

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *What is the author's thesis, and is it clear?*
- *How does the evidence support the thesis?*
- *What examples does the author provide, and how are they pertinent?*

- *How does the conclusion reinforce or extend the thesis?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define each element:
  - **Clear thesis** = main argument or controlling idea, stated directly
  - **Relevant supporting evidence** = facts, data, expert testimony that directly supports thesis
  - **Pertinent examples** = specific instances that illustrate or prove points
  - **Conclusion** = reinforces thesis, provides final insight or call to action
- Model evaluating quality:
  - Is the thesis clear and arguable?
  - Is evidence sufficient and relevant?
  - Are examples specific and pertinent?
  - Does conclusion effectively close the argument?

**STAAR Connection:** Questions ask students to analyze how well authors construct informational texts using these elements.

## ● 7(D)(ii) — Multiple Organizational Patterns to Develop Thesis

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *What organizational patterns does the author use in this text?*
- *How does the author shift between patterns to develop the thesis?*
- *Why might the author use multiple organizational patterns?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Review organizational patterns (chronological, compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution, etc.)
- Show how authors combine patterns strategically
- Model: "The author uses \_\_\_ pattern to \_\_\_, then shifts to \_\_\_ pattern to \_\_\_"

## ● 7(E)(i) — Clear Arguable Claim, Appeals, Convincing Conclusion

**READINESS STANDARD** — Highest Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** Arguable claim (not just claim) + appeals + convincing conclusion

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What arguable claim does the author make?*
- *What makes this claim arguable rather than a statement of fact?*
- *What appeals does the author use to persuade?*
- *How does the conclusion convince the reader?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define:
  - **Arguable claim** = position that can be debated, not a fact (arguable: "School should start later" vs. fact: "School starts at 8am")
  - **Appeals** = rhetorical strategies to persuade
    - **Ethos** = credibility, authority
    - **Pathos** = emotion, values
    - **Logos** = logic, reasoning
  - **Convincing conclusion** = reinforces claim, final appeal, call to action
- Model identifying and analyzing each element
- Show how effective arguments combine multiple appeals

**STAAR Connection:** Very frequent. Questions require recognizing arguable claims and analyzing persuasive techniques.

**High School Difference:**

- Middle school = identify claim and analyze argument

- High school = identify ARGUABLE claim, analyze appeals, evaluate conclusion

## ● 7(E)(ii) — Evidence Types and Treatment of Counterarguments

**READINESS STANDARD** — Highest Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** Treatment of counterarguments including concessions AND rebuttals

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What types of evidence does the author use?*
- *How does the author treat counterarguments?*
- *What does the author concede to the opposing side?*
- *How does the author rebut the counterargument?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Teach evidence types: facts, statistics, examples, expert testimony, anecdotes
- Define treatment of counterarguments:
  - **Counterargument** = opposing viewpoint
  - **Concession** = acknowledging valid points from other side ("While it's true that...")
  - **Rebuttal** = responding to counterargument, showing why your position is still stronger
- Model the pattern: Acknowledge counterargument → Make concession (if appropriate) → Provide rebuttal
- Show how this treatment strengthens arguments by demonstrating fairness and thorough thinking

**STAAR Connection:** Questions ask students to identify how authors address opposing views and why this matters.

**High School Difference:**

- 8th grade = identify and explain counterargument
- High school = analyze evidence types AND treatment including concessions and rebuttals

● **7(E)(iii) — Identifiable Audience or Reader**

**SUPPORTING STANDARD**

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *Who is the intended audience for this argument?*
- *How can you identify the target reader?*
- *What clues reveal who the author is trying to persuade?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Teach audience clues: vocabulary level, assumed knowledge, tone, values appealed to
- Show how audience affects argument choices

**STRAND 5: AUTHOR'S PURPOSE AND CRAFT (TEKS §8)**

● **8(A) — Analyze Author's Purpose, Audience, and Message**

**READINESS STANDARD** — Highest Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** All three elements—purpose, audience, AND message

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What is the author's purpose for writing this text?*
- *Who is the intended audience?*
- *What message does the author want to convey?*
- *How do purpose, audience, and message work together in this text?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define all three:
  - **Purpose** = why author wrote (inform, persuade, entertain, reflect, etc.)
  - **Audience** = intended readers
  - **Message** = what author wants readers to understand, believe, or feel
- Show how they're interconnected:
  - Purpose shapes how message is delivered
  - Audience determines language, tone, appeals
  - Message is the "so what?"
- Model analyzing all three together

**STAAR Connection:** Questions require integrated analysis of purpose, audience, and message.

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = explain author's purpose and message
- High school = analyze purpose, audience, AND message (adds audience)

## ● 8(B) — Analyze Text Structure to Achieve Purpose

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [organizational structure] help the author achieve their purpose?*
- *What would change if the author had structured this differently?*
- *Why is this structure effective for the author's purpose?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Connect structure types to purposes
- Show how structure choices support goals

## ● 8(C) — Evaluate Print and Graphic Features

## SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** EVALUATE (not just analyze) print and graphic features

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How effective is the author's use of [print/graphic feature]?*
- *Does this [chart/image/formatting] successfully achieve the author's purpose?*
- *What could improve the effectiveness of this feature?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Model EVALUATING effectiveness, not just identifying
- Teach criteria for evaluation: clarity, relevance, impact
- Show how to assess whether features successfully support purpose

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = analyze print and graphic features
- High school = EVALUATE their effectiveness

## ● 8(D) — Analyze How Language Achieves Specific Purposes

**READINESS STANDARD** — High Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** Broad analysis of language use for specific purposes (general, not device-specific)

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the author's use of language achieve [specific purpose]?*
- *What language choices help the author [inform/persuade/create mood/establish tone]?*
- *How does the author's language affect the reader's understanding or response?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach that "language" includes:
  - Word choice (diction)
  - Sentence structure (syntax)

- Figurative language
- Tone
- Style
- Model analyzing how language serves purpose
- Show multiple language elements working together

**STAAR Connection:** Broad language analysis questions that require recognizing how various linguistic choices achieve effects.

**High School Difference:**

- Middle school = specific figurative language or devices
- High school = broad "use of language" to achieve purposes

● **8(E) — Analyze Irony and Oxymoron**

**SUPPORTING STANDARD**

**NEW FOCUS:** Irony and oxymoron as literary devices

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *How does the author's use of irony achieve a specific purpose?*
- *What effect does the oxymoron create?*
- *Why might the author use [irony/oxymoron] here?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define:
  - **Irony** = contrast between expectation and reality (verbal, situational, dramatic)
  - **Oxymoron** = contradictory terms together ("jumbo shrimp," "deafening silence")
- Show how each device creates:
  - Irony = humor, emphasis, criticism, deeper meaning
  - Oxymoron = emphasis, paradox, complexity
- Model analyzing PURPOSE and EFFECT

● **8(F) — Analyze Diction and Syntax Contribution to Mood, Voice, and Tone**

**READINESS STANDARD** — Highest Priority

**NEW FOCUS:** DICTION and SYNTAX specifically (not just "language")

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *How does the author's word choice (diction) contribute to the [mood/voice/tone]?*
- *How does the sentence structure (syntax) affect the [mood/voice/tone]?*
- *What mood, voice, and tone emerge from the author's diction and syntax?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define clearly:
  - **Diction** = word choice, vocabulary level, formality
  - **Syntax** = sentence structure, length, patterns, complexity
- Show how diction creates effects:
  - Formal vs. informal
  - Abstract vs. concrete
  - Simple vs. complex vocabulary
- Show how syntax creates effects:
  - Short sentences = tension, urgency
  - Long sentences = contemplation, complexity
  - Parallel structure = emphasis, rhythm
  - Varied structure = engagement
- Analyze contribution to:
  - **Mood** = reader's feeling
  - **Voice** = author's personality/style
  - **Tone** = author's attitude

**STAAR Connection:** Very frequent. Questions specifically ask about diction and syntax effects.

**High School Difference:**

- Middle school = analyze language's contribution to mood, voice, tone
- High school = analyze DICTION and SYNTAX specifically

## ● 8(G) — Rhetorical Devices and Logical Fallacies

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Understatement and overstatement | Straw man and red herring

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the author's use of [understatement/overstatement] achieve a purpose?*
- *What effect does the [rhetorical device] create?*
- *How does [straw man/red herring] reveal flawed reasoning?*
- *Why might the author use this [fallacy/device]?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define and provide examples:

#### Rhetorical Devices:

- **Understatement** = saying less than the truth for effect ("It's a bit chilly" during a blizzard)
- **Overstatement (hyperbole)** = exaggeration for effect ("I've told you a million times")
- **Logical Fallacies:**
  - **Straw man** = misrepresenting opponent's argument to make it easier to attack
  - **Red herring** = distracting from the real issue with irrelevant information
- Model identifying and explaining purpose or flaw

**High School Difference:** Each grade level focuses on different specific devices and fallacies, building repertoire.

## REPORTING CATEGORY 2: WRITING

### Revising and Editing (Multiple Choice)

#### ● 9(B)(i) — Organizing Structure Appropriate to Purpose, Audience, Topic, Context

### READINESS STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Structure must be appropriate to ALL FOUR: purpose, audience, topic, AND context

### Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which organizing structure is most appropriate for this [purpose/audience/topic/context]?*
- *How should this be organized given the purpose, audience, topic, and context?*
- *Which structure would BEST suit these writing conditions?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach that structure depends on:
  - **Purpose** = inform, persuade, entertain, etc.
  - **Audience** = who is reading
  - **Topic** = what is being discussed
  - **Context** = situation, constraints (timed/open-ended, formal/informal)
- Show how different combinations require different structures
- Model selecting appropriate organization

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = organizing with purposeful structure
- High school = structure appropriate to purpose, audience, topic, AND context (more variables)

### ● 9(B)(ii) — Depth of Thought with Specific Details, Examples, and Commentary

#### READINESS STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Commentary added to details and examples

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which sentence adds specific details, examples, AND commentary?*
- *What revision would add depth through details, examples, and analysis?*
- *Which option provides both support and original insight?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define all three:
  - **Details** = specific facts, descriptions
  - **Examples** = specific instances
  - **Commentary** = analysis, interpretation, insight
- Show that depth requires all three, not just details
- Model: Detail/Example + Commentary = Depth

### High School Difference:

- Middle school = specific facts, details, examples
- High school = details, examples, AND commentary (adds analysis)

● **9(C) — Revise for Clarity, Development, Organization, Style, Diction, Sentence Effectiveness**

**READINESS STANDARD**

**NEW FOCUS:** Diction (not just "word choice") and sentence effectiveness (including parallel constructions and phrase/clause placement)

**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *Which revision improves [clarity/development/organization/style/diction/sentence effectiveness]?*
- *How could this sentence use parallel construction more effectively?*
- *Where should this phrase or clause be placed for better sentence effectiveness?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Define each element:
  - **Clarity** = clear meaning
  - **Development** = sufficient detail
  - **Organization** = logical order
  - **Style** = voice, tone, variety
  - **Diction** = word choice, precision
  - **Sentence effectiveness** = impact, clarity, variety
- Teach parallel construction: similar grammatical structures for similar ideas
  - Parallel: "She likes reading, writing, and jogging"
  - Not parallel: "She likes reading, to write, and jogs"
- Show effective phrase/clause placement:
  - Misplaced: "He nearly ate all the cookies" (didn't eat them)
  - Clear: "He ate nearly all the cookies" (ate most of them)

**STAAR Connection:** Questions test recognition of parallel structure and proper placement of modifiers.

**High School Difference:**

- Middle school = general revision skills

- High school = includes parallel constructions and phrase/clause placement specifically

## ● 9(D)(i) — Variety of Complete, Controlled Sentences

### READINESS STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Variety and control (not just correctness)

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which revision provides sentence variety?*
- *How can this be revised to avoid fragments, run-ons, and splices?*
- *Which option demonstrates controlled sentence structure?*

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach sentence variety:
  - Simple, compound, complex, compound-complex
  - Different lengths
  - Different beginnings
- Define controlled sentences: purposeful structure, not unintentional errors
- Show how variety improves writing

#### High School Difference:

- Middle school = complete complex sentences
- High school = VARIETY of complete, CONTROLLED sentences

## ● 9(D)(ii) — Verb Tense and Active/Passive Voice

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

#### Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which verb tense is correct?*

- *Should this use active or passive voice?*

**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Teach consistent tense use
- Review active vs. passive voice

**● 9(D)(iii) — Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement****SUPPORTING STANDARD****Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Review agreement rules
- Show common errors and corrections

**● 9(D)(iv) — Correct Capitalization****SUPPORTING STANDARD****Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Review capitalization rules

**● 9(D)(v) — Punctuation (Commas, Semicolons, Colons, Dashes)**

## SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Dashes added to set off phrases and clauses

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach when to use each:
  - **Commas** = set off nonessential information
  - **Semicolons** = join independent clauses
  - **Colons** = introduce lists, explanations
  - **Dashes** = emphasize or set off interrupting information (more dramatic than commas)

## ● 9(D)(vi) — Correct Spelling

## SUPPORTING STANDARD

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Review spelling rules
- Focus on commonly misspelled words

## Extended Constructed Response (ECR)

## ● 5(B) — Write Responses Demonstrating Understanding

**READINESS STANDARD** — Assessed in ECR

**Focus:** Compare texts within and across genres

### Standards-Based Prompts:

- *Compare how these texts address [theme/topic/issue].*

- *How do the authors of both texts develop [idea]?*
- *What similarities and differences exist in how these texts present [subject]?*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach comparison across genres
- Model using evidence and commentary from both texts

## ● 10(B) — Compose Informational Texts

**READINESS STANDARD** — Assessed in ECR

**NEW FOCUS:** Explanatory essays, reports, personal essays (specific types)

### Standards-Based Prompts:

- *Write an explanatory essay about [topic] using evidence from the text(s).*
- *Compose a personal essay reflecting on [subject].*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach genre characteristics:
  - **Explanatory essay** = explains how/why
  - **Report** = presents researched information
  - **Personal essay** = reflects on experience with insight
- Model each genre's structure and craft

## ● 10(C) — Compose Argumentative Texts

**READINESS STANDARD** — Assessed in ECR

### Standards-Based Prompts:

- *Write an argumentative essay about [issue]. Use evidence from the text(s) to support your claim.*

### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

**Standards-Based Questions (SBQ)**, Erika Prelow 2025

- Teach argumentative structure: claim → reasons + evidence → counterargument/rebuttal → conclusion
- Model incorporating concessions and rebuttals
- Show how to use evidence and commentary

## ● 10(D) — Compose Correspondence

### SUPPORTING STANDARD

**NEW FOCUS:** Professional or friendly structure (simplified from middle school)

#### Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Review business and friendly letter formats
- Show appropriate tone for each

### STAAR Success Strategy: The Question Stays Clean

#### Remember:

- The question embeds the thinking — it doesn't announce it
- Teacher scaffolding happens OUTSIDE the question
- Students grow with the question through modeling and practice
- Text changes, question stays the same

**Post these questions. Return to them all year. Watch your students grow.**

### Readiness vs. Supporting Standards Priority Guide

#### ● HIGHEST PRIORITY (Most Frequent on STAAR):

- 2(B) — Denotation vs. connotation ★ **NEW FOCUS**
- 4(F) — Make inferences ★ **STILL MOST TESTED**

- 4(G) — Evaluate details for key ideas
- 4(H) — Synthesize from two texts ★ **PAIRED PASSAGES**
- 5(C) — Text evidence AND commentary ★ **CRITICAL SKILL**
- 5(D) — Paraphrase and summarize
- 6(B) — Complex character development ★ **VERY FREQUENT**
- 6(C) — Non-linear plot development
- 7(D)(i) — Thesis, evidence, examples, conclusion
- 7(E)(i) — Arguable claim, appeals, conclusion ★ **VERY FREQUENT**
- 7(E)(ii) — Evidence and counterargument treatment ★ **CRITICAL**
- 8(A) — Purpose, audience, message ★ **ALL THREE**
- 8(D) — How language achieves purposes
- 8(F) — Diction and syntax effects ★ **VERY FREQUENT**

### ● **IMPORTANT BUT LESS FREQUENT:**

All other supporting standards should still be taught but receive less emphasis in test prep.

### **NEW** What's **NEW** in English I (High School Transition)?

#### **Major Shifts:**

#### **Vocabulary:**

- Denotation vs. connotation analysis (not just context)
- Technical/discipline-based vocabulary
- Foreign phrases commonly used in English

#### **Comprehension:**

- Synthesize from **TWO** texts specifically (paired passages)
- Evidence **PLUS** original commentary (analysis required)

#### **Literary Analysis:**

- Complex yet believable characters through literary devices
- Theme development through characterization AND plot
- Setting's influence on theme (not character)
- Dramatic conventions: asides, soliloquies, dramatic irony, satire

### **Informational/Argumentative:**

- Arguable claim (not just claim)
- Appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)
- Concessions and rebuttals (not just counterargument)
- All elements: thesis, evidence, examples, conclusion

### **Author's Craft:**

- Purpose, audience, AND message (all three)
- Diction and syntax (specific language elements)
- Prosody in poetry (sound patterns)
- Evaluate (not just analyze) features

### **Writing:**

- Structure appropriate to purpose, audience, topic, AND context
- Commentary added to details and examples
- Parallel constructions and phrase/clause placement
- Variety of controlled sentences

### **Middle School to High School Progression**

#### **Evidence Use:**

- MS: Use text evidence
- HS: Use text evidence + original commentary

**Character:**

- MS: Motivations and behaviors
- HS: Complex yet believable through literary devices (including foils)

**Argument:**

- MS: Identify claim, explain counterargument
- HS: Arguable claim, appeals, concessions and rebuttals

**Language:**

- MS: How language contributes to effects
- HS: How DICTION and SYNTAX specifically contribute

**Audience:**

- MS: Identify intended audience
- HS: Analyze purpose, audience, and message together

**Final Reminder:** These questions are designed to be reusable. Don't rewrite them for each passage — adapt the bracketed sections and let the cognitive demand do the work. High school is about depth, analysis, and integration—not just identification.