

8th Grade STAAR Standards-Based Questions

Standards-Based, Reusable Questions Aligned to Assessed TEKS

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
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REPORTING CATEGORY 1: READING

STRAND 1: VOCABULARY (TEKS §2)

● 2(A) — Use Resources to Determine Meaning

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What resource would help you understand this word?*
- *What information about this word can you find in the dictionary entry?*
- *How is this word pronounced, and what is its origin?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Model selecting appropriate resources (glossary, dictionary, thesaurus, etymology tools)
- Show how to read a dictionary entry (pronunciation, part of speech, origin, multiple meanings)
- Provide practice with print and digital resources

● **2(B) — Use Context Within or Beyond a Paragraph**

READINESS STANDARD — High Priority

NEW FOCUS: Context clues can be within OR beyond the paragraph (requires reading across multiple paragraphs)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What clues in this paragraph or surrounding paragraphs help you understand this word?*
- *How does information earlier or later in the text clarify this word's meaning?*
- *What context does the author provide—either nearby or elsewhere in the text—to help you understand this unfamiliar word?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach that context clues may appear:
 - In the same sentence
 - In surrounding sentences
 - In earlier or later paragraphs
 - Through examples or explanations across the text
- Model searching beyond the immediate paragraph for meaning
- Use sentence stems: "The text earlier explained ___, so this word probably means ___"

STAAR Connection: 8th grade context questions require students to synthesize information across multiple paragraphs to determine meaning.

8th Grade Difference from 7th:

- 7th = context such as contrast or cause-effect (specific types)

- 8th = context within or beyond a paragraph (location/scope, any type)

● 2(C) — Greek and Latin Roots

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Focus Roots: ast, qui, path, mand/mend, duc

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What does the root [root] mean in this word?*
- *How does knowing the root help you determine the word's meaning?*
- *What other words share this same root, and what do they have in common?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Pre-teach root meanings explicitly
- Create word family charts for each root
- Show how roots combine with prefixes/suffixes

Root Reference Chart for Students:

Root	Meaning	Example Words
ast	star	astronomy, astronaut, asteroid, astrology
qui	quiet, rest	quiet, tranquil, acquiesce, tranquility
path	feeling, suffering	sympathy, empathy, apathy, pathetic
mand/mend	order, command	demand, command, recommend, amendment
duc	lead	conduct, deduce, reduce, introduce, produce

STRAND 2: COMPREHENSION SKILLS (TEKS §5)

● 5(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 (headings, images, graphs) to predict
- Create prediction tracker: Prediction | Evidence For | Evidence Against | Confirmed/Revised

● 5(E) — Make Connections

READINESS STANDARD — High Priority

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 (not superficial)
- Teach connection types: Text-to-Self, Text-to-Text, Text-to-World
- Use stems: "This reminds me of ___ because ___"
- Show how connections deepen understanding or provide insight

STAAR Connection: Connections questions often ask how personal experience, other texts, or societal knowledge helps interpret character actions, themes, or author's message.

● 5(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:

- **NEVER use the word "infer" in the question**
- 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: The most frequently assessed standard. Questions ask students to determine character traits, motivations, relationships, themes, and author's implied messages using textual evidence.

Example STAAR Pattern:

- "What can the reader conclude about [character] based on [paragraph/section]?"
- "The reader can infer that..."
- "Based on the selection, what does [detail] suggest about...?"

● 5(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
- Teach that key ideas answer "What is this mostly about?"

STAAR Connection: Often paired with summarizing. Students must identify which details are central to meaning vs. minor.

● 5(H) — Synthesize Information

READINESS STANDARD — High Priority

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How do these ideas work together to create new understanding?*
- *What new insight emerges when you combine [section A] with [section B]?*
- *How has your thinking changed after reading the entire text?*
- *What conclusion can you draw when you consider all of this information together?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define synthesis: combining ideas to create NEW understanding (not summary)
- Model: "Before I thought __, but now I understand __"
- Show how synthesis = addition that creates something beyond the parts

- Use Venn diagrams to show overlapping ideas creating new insight

STAAR Connection: Higher-order thinking questions that require students to integrate multiple text sections or compare ideas across texts.

STRAND 3: RESPONSE SKILLS (TEKS §6)

● **6(C) — Use Text Evidence**

READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What evidence from the text supports your response?*
- *Which specific details show [your claim/idea]?*
- *Where in the text do you find support for this answer?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Model selecting relevant vs. irrelevant evidence
- Teach quotation vs. paraphrase
- Show how to introduce evidence: "According to the text..." "The author states..." "In paragraph ___, the text shows..."
- Practice using line/paragraph numbers to cite precisely

STAAR Connection: EVERY multiple-choice question requires text evidence. ECR scoring heavily weighs sufficient, relevant evidence.

● **6(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 "Somebody Wanted But So Then" for narrative summary
- Use summary frames: "This text is mainly about __. First, __. Then, __. Finally, __."
- Show what to leave out: minor details, examples, repetition

STAAR Connection: Summary questions often appear as "Which sentence BEST summarizes..." or in ECR where students must demonstrate understanding through summary.

STRAND 4: LITERARY ELEMENTS (TEKS §7)

● **7(A) — Analyze Theme Development Through Character/Event Interaction**

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: How themes are DEVELOPED through the INTERACTION of characters and events (not just inferring theme)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How do the character's interactions with others help develop the theme?*
- *How do the events work together to reveal the theme?*
- *What theme emerges through the way characters and events connect?*
- *How does the relationship between [character/event] develop the message about [theme]?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- **Focus on DEVELOPMENT, not just identification**
- Show how theme emerges gradually through:
 - Character interactions (conflicts, conversations, relationships)

- Event sequences (cause-effect, consequences)
- The interplay between character choices and plot events
- Model: "The theme of ___ develops as the character interacts with ___ and experiences ___"

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th/7th = infer multiple themes using text evidence
- 8th = analyze HOW themes are DEVELOPED through character/event interaction

● 7(B) — Analyze Character Motivations and Behaviors

READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority

NEW FOCUS: Motivations AND behaviors (not just qualities)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What motivates the character to [act/decide/respond] this way?*
- *How does the character's motivation influence what happens in the story?*
- *How do the character's behaviors affect the events and conflict resolution?*
- *What drives the character's actions, and how does this shape the resolution?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define clearly:
 - **Motivation** = why character does something (reasons, desires, fears, goals)
 - **Behavior** = what character does (actions, decisions, responses)
- Model connecting motivation → behavior → consequence → resolution
- Use chain graphic organizer: Motivation → Behavior → Event → Resolution
- Show how understanding motivation explains behavior and predicts outcomes

STAAR Connection: Very frequent. Questions ask students to identify what drives characters and how their actions shape plot outcomes and conflict resolution.

Example STAAR Pattern:

- "What motivates [character] to [action]?"
- "How does [character's] motivation influence the resolution?"
- "[Character's] behavior is important because it..."

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = character responses develop plot
- 7th = character qualities influence events/resolution
- 8th = character motivations and behaviors influence events/resolution

● 7(C) — Analyze Non-Linear Plot Development

READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority

NEW FOCUS: Non-linear plot structures (flashbacks, foreshadowing, subplots, parallel plots) and COMPARE to linear plot

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, events in sequence
 - **Non-linear** = out of order, uses flashbacks, parallel stories, subplots
 - **Flashback** = jumps to past events
 - **Foreshadowing** = hints at future events
 - **Subplot** = secondary storyline that relates to main plot
 - **Parallel plot** = two or more storylines happening simultaneously
- Model COMPARISON: "In a linear plot, we would see ___. But with this flashback, we understand ___"
- Show how non-linear structure creates:

- Suspense (withholding information)
- Deeper understanding (revealing backstory)
- Complexity (multiple storylines)
- Emphasis (starting in media res)

STAAR Connection: Questions require students to analyze the EFFECT of non-linear structure AND compare it to linear plot development.

Example STAAR Pattern:

- "How does the flashback in paragraph ___ affect the plot?"
- "How does the use of parallel plots contribute to the story?"
- "How would the reader's understanding be different if the story were told chronologically?"

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = analyze plot elements (rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, flashback)
- 7th = analyze foreshadowing and suspense
- 8th = analyze NON-LINEAR plot development (flashbacks, foreshadowing, subplots, parallel plots) and COMPARE to linear

● **7(D) — Explain Setting's Influence on Values and Beliefs**

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: How setting influences characters' VALUES and BELIEFS (not just actions or development)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [time period/place/culture] shape the character's values or beliefs?*
- *What does the character believe because of where or when they live?*
- *How would the character's values be different in a different setting?*
- *What does the setting reveal about what the character considers important?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Values** = what character considers important (family, honor, freedom, success)
 - **Beliefs** = what character thinks is true (about society, people, right/wrong)
- Show how setting shapes values and beliefs:
 - Historical period → cultural norms → character beliefs
 - Geographical location → available opportunities → character values
 - Social context → expectations → character worldview
- Model: "Because the character lives in [setting], they believe ___ and value ___"

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = setting influences character and plot development
- 7th = setting influences character and plot development
- 8th = setting influences characters' VALUES and BELIEFS

STRAND 4: GENRE (TEKS §8)

● 8(A) — Demonstrate Knowledge of Literary Genres

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Focus Genres: realistic fiction, adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, humor, fantasy, science fiction, short stories

NEW GENRE FOR 8TH: short stories (as a distinct category)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What characteristics of [genre] do you notice in this text?*
- *How does this text fit the [genre] genre?*
- *What distinguishes this as a [short story] rather than another genre?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Create genre characteristic charts
- Teach 8th grade genre marker:
 - **Short Story** = brief narrative, limited characters, single effect/impression, focused plot

- (Review 6th/7th genres: realistic fiction, adventure, historical fiction, mystery, humor, myths, fantasy, science fiction)

● 8(B) — Analyze Graphical Elements in Various Poetic Forms

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Specific poetic forms (epic, lyric, humorous) in addition to graphical elements

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [punctuation/line length/spacing] affect the poem's meaning?*
- *What characteristics of [epic/lyric/humorous] poetry do you notice?*
- *How do the graphical elements work with the poetic form to create meaning?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define poetic forms:
 - **Epic** = long narrative poem, heroic deeds, elevated style
 - **Lyric** = expresses personal feelings/emotions, musical quality
 - **Humorous** = creates comedy through wordplay, exaggeration, absurdity
- Show how graphical elements support form:
 - Line length creates rhythm and pacing
 - Punctuation controls pauses and emphasis
 - Capitalization adds emphasis or meaning
- Connect form + graphical elements to overall effect

● 8(C) — Analyze Dramatic Action Through Acts and Scenes

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: How playwrights develop dramatic action through structure of acts and scenes (not just dialogue/staging)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the playwright use acts and scenes to develop the dramatic action?*
- *What happens at the end of this act/scene, and why is it significant?*
- *How does dividing the play into acts and scenes affect the pacing or tension?*
- *What would change if this were presented in one continuous scene?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Act** = major division of a play, often marks significant plot shift
 - **Scene** = smaller division within an act, usually marks change in time/place/characters
 - **Dramatic action** = the unfolding of plot through conflict, tension, revelation
- Show how structure creates:
 - Pacing (scene breaks control speed)
 - Suspense (act endings create cliffhangers)
 - Focus (scenes isolate specific moments)
- Model: "The playwright ends this act with ___, which creates suspense and..."

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th/7th = analyze how playwrights develop characters through dialogue and staging
- 8th = analyze how playwrights develop dramatic action through acts and scenes

● 8(D)(i) — Controlling Idea/Thesis with Evidence

READINESS STANDARD — High Priority

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What is the author's main claim or controlling idea?*
- *How does the evidence in this section support the author's thesis?*
- *What type of evidence does the author use, and how does it strengthen the claim?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define: **Controlling idea** = main point, what the author wants you to know/believe
- Model distinguishing thesis from topic

- Teach evidence types: facts, statistics, examples, expert opinions, anecdotes
- Show how evidence "proves" or supports the controlling idea

STAAR Connection: Informational text questions often ask students to identify the central idea and explain how evidence supports it.

● 8(D)(ii) — Footnotes, Endnotes, and Citations

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Footnotes, endnotes, and citations (more formal academic features)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What information do the [footnotes/endnotes/citations] provide?*
- *How do the citations add credibility to the author's claims?*
- *Why did the author include this [footnote/endnote]?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define each feature:
 - **Footnote** = note at bottom of page, provides source or additional info
 - **Endnote** = note at end of document, same purpose as footnote
 - **Citation** = reference to source, shows where information came from
- Show how these features:
 - Provide credibility (shows research)
 - Offer additional information (expands on point)
 - Allow fact-checking (reader can verify)

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = introduction, foreword, preface, references, acknowledgements
- 7th = references or acknowledgements
- 8th = footnotes, endnotes, and citations

● 8(D)(iii) — Multiple Organizational Patterns to Develop Thesis

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: MULTIPLE patterns within ONE text to develop the thesis

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What organizational patterns does the author use in this text?*
- *How does the author shift from [pattern 1] to [pattern 2] to develop the thesis?*
- *Why might the author use multiple organizational patterns?*
- *How do the different patterns work together to support the controlling idea?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Review organizational patterns:
 - Chronological/sequence
 - Compare-contrast
 - Cause-effect
 - Problem-solution
 - Description
 - Classification
 - Definition
- Show how authors combine patterns:
 - "The author uses description in paragraph 1, then shifts to cause-effect in paragraph 2"
 - "The text begins with a problem, then uses comparison to explore solutions"
- Model: "The author combines ___ and ___ patterns to develop the thesis that ___"

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = organizational patterns (definition, classification, advantage/disadvantage)
- 7th = patterns that support multiple topics, categories, subcategories
- 8th = MULTIPLE organizational patterns within a text to develop the thesis

● 8(E)(i) — Identify Claim and Analyze the Argument

READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority**NEW FOCUS:** Identify claim AND analyze the argument (not just identify)**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What position does the author take on this issue?*
- *How does the author build and support the argument?*
- *What makes this argument effective or ineffective?*
- *How does the author's reasoning support the claim?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Claim** = the author's position, what they're arguing
 - **Argument** = the entire case (claim + reasons + evidence + reasoning)
- Model analyzing the argument:
 - Identify the claim
 - Trace the reasoning (logical connections)
 - Evaluate the evidence (sufficient? relevant?)
 - Assess the overall effectiveness
- Show how to analyze: "The author claims ___, then supports it by ___, which makes the argument ___"

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th/7th = identifying the claim
- 8th = identifying the claim AND analyzing the argument

● **8(E)(ii) — Identify and Explain the Counterargument****READINESS STANDARD** — Highest Priority**NEW FOCUS:** Counterargument (opposing argument), not just consideration of alternatives**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *What counterargument does the author address?*

- *How does the author respond to the opposing viewpoint?*
- *Why does the author include the counterargument?*
- *How does addressing the counterargument strengthen the author's position?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Counterargument** = opposing viewpoint, what others might argue against the claim
 - **Rebuttal** = author's response to the counterargument
 - **Concession** = acknowledging valid points from the other side
- Show why authors include counterarguments:
 - Shows fairness
 - Demonstrates thorough thinking
 - Allows them to refute opposing views
 - Strengthens their own argument
- Model: "The author acknowledges that ___ (counterargument), but argues that ___ (rebuttal)"

STAAR Connection: Very frequent in argumentative passages. Students must identify counterarguments and explain how authors address them.

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = explain how author uses evidence to support argument
- 7th = explain evidence use and consideration of alternatives
- 8th = identify and explain the COUNTERARGUMENT (specific opposing argument)

● 8(E)(iii) — Identify Intended Audience

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Standards-Based Questions:

- *Who is the author trying to persuade?*
- *How can you tell this is written for [specific audience]?*
- *What clues in the language or content reveal the intended reader?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach audience clues: vocabulary level, background knowledge assumed, tone, examples used
- Model: "The author assumes the reader knows ___, so the audience is probably..."
- Show how audience affects word choice and content

STRAND 5: AUTHOR'S PURPOSE AND CRAFT (TEKS §9)**● 9(A) — Explain Author's Purpose and Message****READINESS STANDARD — Highest Priority****Standards-Based Questions:**

- *Why did the author write this text?*
- *What does the author want you to understand or believe?*
- *How do you know the author's purpose is to [inform/persuade/entertain]?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach the three purposes: Inform, Persuade, Entertain (+ variations)
- Show how purpose shapes choices: structure, tone, evidence, language
- Model finding purpose clues in genre, title, and content
- Define **message**: what the author wants you to take away

STAAR Connection: Purpose questions appear across all genres. Students must identify why the author wrote the text and what they want readers to know/believe/feel.

● 9(B) — Analyze Text Structure's Contribution**SUPPORTING STANDARD****Standards-Based Questions:**

- *How does the [chronological/compare-contrast/cause-effect/problem-solution] structure help the author achieve their purpose?*
- *What would change if the author had organized this differently?*
- *Why is this organizational structure effective for this topic?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Name structure types and their purposes
- Teach signal words for each structure
- Connect structure to purpose: "Because the author wants to persuade, problem-solution structure makes sense"

● 9(C) — Analyze Print and Graphic Features

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the [chart/graph/image/bold text/caption] support the author's purpose?*
- *What information does this feature add that the text alone does not?*
- *Why did the author include this graphic feature?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Name common features: headings, bold/italic text, images, charts, graphs, diagrams, captions, sidebars
- Model reading features for information
- Show how features clarify, emphasize, or provide visual evidence

● 9(D) — Analyze Extended Metaphor

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Extended metaphor (metaphor developed throughout a text)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the author develop the comparison between ___ and ___ throughout the text?*
- *What does the extended metaphor reveal that a simple comparison would not?*
- *How does the extended metaphor contribute to the author's message?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Extended metaphor** = comparison developed and elaborated across multiple lines, paragraphs, or even entire text
 - Unlike simple metaphor (single comparison), extended metaphor is sustained
- Show examples: "Life is a journey" developed throughout a poem (road, destinations, obstacles, travelers)
- Model tracking the metaphor: "In line 1, the author introduces ___. In line 5, the metaphor continues with ___"
- Focus on PURPOSE: creates cohesion, deepens meaning, provides unifying theme

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th/7th = metaphor and personification
- 8th = extended metaphor

● **9(E) — Analyze Multiple Points of View and Irony**

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Multiple points of view AND irony

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the use of multiple points of view affect your understanding of events?*
- *What do you learn from [character's/narrator's] perspective that you wouldn't know otherwise?*
- *How does the irony in this situation create meaning or effect?*
- *What makes this moment ironic, and what is the effect?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Multiple points of view** = story told from more than one perspective (alternating narrators, multiple characters' thoughts)
 - **Irony** = contrast between expectation and reality
 - **Verbal irony** = saying opposite of what you mean (sarcasm)
 - **Situational irony** = outcome is opposite of what's expected
 - **Dramatic irony** = reader knows something character doesn't
- Show how multiple POV creates:
 - Complexity (different perspectives on same events)
 - Depth (understand multiple characters' motivations)
 - Contrast (see contradictions or different interpretations)
- Show how irony creates:
 - Humor, tension, emphasis, or deeper meaning
 - Criticism or commentary

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = omniscient and limited narrative point of view
- 7th = subjective and objective point of view
- 8th = multiple points of view AND irony

● 9(F) — Analyze Language's Contribution to Mood, Voice, and Tone

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Standards-Based Questions:

- *What feeling does this section create, and which specific words contribute to that feeling?*
- *How would you describe the author's personality or attitude based on the language?*
- *How does the author's word choice affect the [mood/voice/tone]?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define all three:
 - **Mood** = reader's feeling (suspenseful, joyful, somber, tense)
 - **Voice** = author's personality/style (formal, playful, serious, conversational)

- **Tone** = author's attitude toward subject (respectful, critical, admiring, sarcastic)
- Provide mood/tone/voice word banks
- Model: "The author uses words like ___, ___, and ___ to create a [mood] feeling and establish a [tone] tone"

● 9(G) — Rhetorical Devices and Logical Fallacies

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Analogy and juxtaposition (rhetorical devices) | Bandwagon appeals and circular reasoning (logical fallacies)

Standards-Based Questions:

- *How does the author's use of [analogy/juxtaposition] help make the point?*
- *What is the purpose of the [rhetorical device]?*
- *How does [bandwagon appeal/circular reasoning] reveal a flaw in the reasoning?*
- *Why might the author use [flawed reasoning/emotional appeal]?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define and provide examples:

Rhetorical Devices (Persuasive Techniques):

- **Analogy** = extended comparison to explain or persuade ("The brain is like a computer...")
- **Juxtaposition** = placing contrasting ideas side-by-side for effect ("It was the best of times, it was the worst of times")
- **Logical Fallacies (Flawed Reasoning):**
 - **Bandwagon appeal** = "everyone's doing it, so you should too"
 - **Circular reasoning** = using the claim as evidence for itself ("This book is popular because many people read it")
- Model identifying and explaining the purpose or flaw
- Show difference: rhetorical devices = persuasive techniques; logical fallacies = reasoning errors

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = explain differences between rhetorical devices and logical fallacies (general)
- 7th = direct address, rhetorical questions | loaded language, sweeping generalizations
- 8th = analogy, juxtaposition | bandwagon appeals, circular reasoning

REPORTING CATEGORY 2: WRITING

Revising and Editing (Multiple Choice)

● 10(B)(i) — Purposeful Structure

READINESS STANDARD

Focus: introduction, transitions, coherence within and across paragraphs, conclusion

Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which sentence would BEST introduce this topic?*
- *What transition would improve the connection between these paragraphs?*
- *Which sentence does NOT belong in this paragraph?*
- *What would make this conclusion more effective?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach transition types: addition, contrast, cause-effect, sequence, conclusion
- Model coherence: all sentences in a paragraph relate to one idea
- Show strong introduction characteristics: hook, context, thesis
- Show strong conclusion characteristics: restate main idea, final thought, call to action

● 10(B)(ii) — Depth of Thought with Specific Facts, Details, and Examples

READINESS STANDARD

Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which sentence adds the most specific support to this paragraph?*
- *What [detail/example] would BEST develop this idea?*
- *Which revision adds depth to this statement?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Show vague vs. specific details
- Model adding facts, examples, descriptions, explanations
- Teach: specific details answer who, what, when, where, why, how

● **10(C) — Revise for Clarity, Development, Organization, Style, Word Choice, Sentence Variety**

READINESS STANDARD**Standards-Based Questions:**

- *Which revision improves the clarity of this sentence?*
- *What change would improve the word choice?*
- *Which sentence should be moved to improve organization?*
- *How could this sentence be revised for better style?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define each revision focus:
 - **Clarity** = easier to understand
 - **Development** = more detailed, complete
 - **Organization** = logical order
 - **Style** = voice, tone, variety
 - **Word choice** = precise, vivid, appropriate
 - **Sentence variety** = different lengths and structures

● 10(D)(i) — Complete Complex Sentences, Subject-Verb Agreement

READINESS STANDARD

Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which revision corrects the sentence fragment?*
- *What is the error in this sentence? (run-on/splice/fragment)*
- *Which verb agrees with the subject in this sentence?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Define:
 - **Fragment** = incomplete sentence (missing subject or verb)
 - **Run-on** = two sentences incorrectly joined
 - **Comma splice** = two sentences joined with only a comma
- Teach subject-verb agreement rules
- Model identifying and correcting each error type

● 10(D)(ii) — Verb Tenses and Active/Passive Voice

READINESS STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Active and passive voice added to verb tenses

Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which verb tense is correct in this sentence?*
- *Should this sentence use active or passive voice?*
- *Which revision corrects the verb tense or voice error?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach tense consistency within paragraphs
- Define voice:
 - **Active voice** = subject performs action ("The dog bit the man")
 - **Passive voice** = subject receives action ("The man was bitten by the dog")

- Show when to use each:
 - Active = clearer, stronger, more direct (preferred in most writing)
 - Passive = when actor is unknown or unimportant ("The building was constructed in 1920")
- Model identifying and converting between voices

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th/7th = consistent, appropriate use of verb tenses
- 8th = verb tenses AND active/passive voice

● 10(D)(vii) — Correct Spelling (Commonly Confused Terms)

READINESS STANDARD

Focus: its/it's, affect/effect, there/their/they're, to/two/too

Standards-Based Questions:

- *Which word is spelled correctly in this sentence?*
- *What is the spelling error in this sentence?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Create memory tricks for each pair
- Provide definitions:
 - its = possessive | it's = it is
 - affect = verb (influence) | effect = noun (result)
 - there = place | their = possessive | they're = they are
 - to = direction | too = also/excessive | two = number
- Practice in context

● 10(D)(iii) — Prepositions and Subject-Verb Agreement

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Show how prepositional phrases can separate subject and verb
 - Model crossing out prepositional phrases to find true subject
 - Example: "The box of crayons IS on the table" (box IS, not crayons are)
-

● **10(D)(iv) — Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement**

SUPPORTING STANDARD**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Teach pronoun-antecedent agreement (pronoun matches noun in number and gender)
 - Show common errors: "Everyone should bring their book" (singular/plural mismatch)
 - Model corrections
-

● **10(D)(v) — Correct Capitalization**

SUPPORTING STANDARD**Teacher Scaffolding Moves:**

- Review capitalization rules (proper nouns, sentence beginnings, titles)
- Practice with organization names, geographical locations, titles

● **10(D)(vi) — Punctuation (Commas, Semicolons, Colons, Parentheses)**

SUPPORTING STANDARD

NEW FOCUS: Commas in nonrestrictive phrases/clauses + semicolons, colons, parentheses

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach comma rules:
 - **Nonrestrictive phrases/clauses** = extra information that can be removed ("My brother, who lives in Texas, is visiting" vs. "My brother who lives in Texas is visiting")
 - Use commas to set off nonrestrictive elements
- Teach other punctuation:
 - **Semicolon** = joins independent clauses; used before conjunctive adverbs
 - **Colon** = introduces list, explanation, or quotation
 - **Parentheses** = additional or explanatory information
- Model identifying and using each correctly

8th Grade Difference from 6th/7th:

- 6th = commas in complex sentences, transitions, introductory elements
- 7th = commas to set off words, phrases, clauses + semicolons
- 8th = commas in nonrestrictive phrases/clauses + semicolons, colons, parentheses

Extended Constructed Response (ECR)

● 6(B) — Write Responses Demonstrating Understanding

READINESS STANDARD — Assessed in ECR

Focus: Write responses that demonstrate understanding of texts, including comparing sources within and across genres

Standards-Based Prompts:

- *How are these two texts similar and different in [theme/structure/purpose]?*
- *Compare how [character A] and [character B] respond to similar situations.*
- *What do both texts suggest about [theme/topic]?*
- *How do the authors of both texts develop [idea/theme]?*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach comparison structure: Introduce → Similarity → Difference → Conclusion

- Provide comparison stems: "Both texts...", "While Text 1..., Text 2...", "Similarly...", "In contrast..."
- Model using evidence from BOTH texts

● 11(B) — Compose Informational Texts

READINESS STANDARD — Assessed in ECR

Focus: Multi-paragraph essays that convey information about a topic, using a clear controlling idea or thesis statement

Standards-Based Prompts:

- *Write an informational essay explaining [process/concept/topic] based on the text(s).*
- *Using evidence from the text(s), explain how [topic] is developed.*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach informational essay structure: Introduction with thesis → Body paragraphs with evidence → Conclusion
- Model topic sentences that support thesis
- Show how to integrate textual evidence smoothly

● 11(C) — Compose Argumentative Texts

READINESS STANDARD — Assessed in ECR

Focus: Multi-paragraph argumentative texts using genre characteristics and craft

Standards-Based Prompts:

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

- *Based on the text(s), argue whether [claim]. Support your position with evidence.*

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach argumentative structure: Introduction with claim → Body paragraphs with reasons and evidence → Counterclaim/rebuttal → Conclusion
- Model using evidence to support reasoning
- Show how to address opposing viewpoints (important at 8th grade level)

● **11(D) — Compose Correspondence**

SUPPORTING STANDARD

Focus: Reflects an opinion, registers a complaint, or requests information in a business or friendly structure

Teacher Scaffolding Moves:

- Teach business letter format: heading, inside address, greeting, body, closing, signature
- Show difference between formal (business) and friendly tone
- Model appropriate language for purpose (opinion, complaint, request)

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) — Context within or beyond paragraph ★ **NEW SCOPE**
- 5(E) — Make connections
- 5(F) — Make inferences ★ **MOST TESTED**
- 5(G) — Evaluate details for key ideas
- 5(H) — Synthesize information
- 6(C) — Use text evidence ★ **EVERY QUESTION**
- 6(D) — Paraphrase and summarize
- 7(B) — Character motivations and behaviors ★ **VERY FREQUENT**
- 7(C) — Non-linear plot development ★ **NEW FOCUS**
- 8(D)(i) — Controlling idea/thesis
- 8(E)(i) — Identify claim and analyze argument ★ **NEW DEPTH**
- 8(E)(ii) — Identify and explain counterargument ★ **NEW FOCUS**
- 9(A) — Author's purpose and message ★ **VERY FREQUENT**

● IMPORTANT BUT LESS FREQUENT:

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

What's NEW in 8th Grade (Compared to 6th/7th)?

Vocabulary:

- 2(B): Context *within or beyond a paragraph* (requires reading across multiple paragraphs)
- 2(C): New roots: ast, qui, path, mand/mend, duc

Literary Elements:

- 7(A): Analyze HOW themes are DEVELOPED through character/event interaction (not just infer theme)
- 7(B): Character *motivations and behaviors* (why + what) → influence events/resolution
- 7(C): *Non-linear plot development* (flashbacks, foreshadowing, subplots, parallel plots) + COMPARE to linear
- 7(D): Setting influences characters' *values and beliefs* (not just actions)

Genre:

- 8(A): Added genre: *short stories*
- 8(B): *Specific poetic forms* (epic, lyric, humorous) + graphical elements
- 8(C): Develop dramatic action through *acts and scenes* (not just dialogue/staging)
- 8(D)(ii): *Footnotes, endnotes, citations* (formal academic features)
- 8(D)(iii): *Multiple organizational patterns* within a text to develop thesis
- 8(E)(i): Identify claim AND *analyze the argument*
- 8(E)(ii): Identify and explain the *counterargument* (specific opposing argument)

Author's Craft:

- 9(D): *Extended metaphor* (sustained comparison)
- 9(E): *Multiple points of view and irony*
- 9(G): *Analogy, juxtaposition | bandwagon appeals, circular reasoning*

Writing:

- 10(D)(ii): Added *active and passive voice* to verb tenses
- 10(D)(vi): Commas in *nonrestrictive phrases/clauses* + semicolons, colons, parentheses

Complexity Progression Summary (6th → 7th → 8th)

Character Analysis:

- 6th: Responses develop plot
- 7th: Qualities influence events/resolution
- 8th: **Motivations and behaviors** influence events/resolution

Plot Analysis:

- 6th: Plot elements (rising action, climax, etc.)
- 7th: Foreshadowing and suspense
- 8th: **Non-linear structures + compare to linear**

Theme Analysis:

- 6th: Infer themes
- 7th: Infer themes
- 8th: **Analyze HOW themes develop through interaction**

Argument Analysis:

- 6th: Explain evidence use
- 7th: Evidence use + consideration of alternatives
- 8th: **Identify/analyze claim + identify/explain counterargument**

Context Clues:

- 6th: Definition, analogy, examples
- 7th: Contrast, cause-effect
- 8th: **Within or beyond a paragraph** (any type, greater scope)

Final Reminder: These questions are designed to be reusable across ANY text. Don't rewrite them for each passage — adapt the bracketed sections and let the cognitive demand do the work.