



Our Students. Their Moment.

**New York State Testing Program  
Common Core 3–8  
English Language Arts Test**

**Understanding the Common Core 3–8  
English Language Arts Score Reports**

**August 2015**



## New York State Testing Program Common Core English Language Arts Test

### Understanding the English Language Arts Score Report

With the adoption of the New York P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics, the Board of Regents signaled a shift in both instruction and assessment. Beginning in Spring 2013, New York State administered tests designed to assess student performance in accordance with the instructional shifts and the rigor demanded by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To aid in the transition to the new tests, New York State has released a number of resources, including test blueprints and specifications, sample questions, and criteria for writing test questions. This document will help students, families, educators, and the public better understand how to interpret the 2015 score reports.

#### Understanding the English Language Arts Score Report

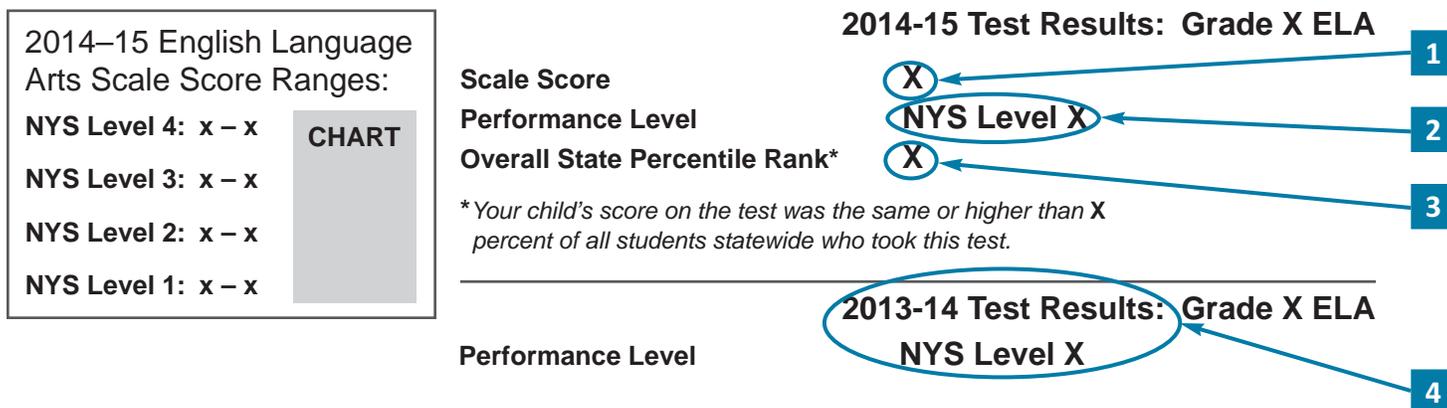
Each year, students in Grades 3–8 participate in the ELA Common Core Tests. Scores from these tests do not tell the whole story about what a child knows and can do. The results from the Grades 3–8 ELA Common Core Tests will not be included in your child’s official transcript or permanent student record.

After the test, families receive score reports that explain how their children performed. This document explains the parts of that score report. For ELA, the same two subscores are reported across all grades: **Reading** and **Writing from Sources**. There is only one difference in the ELA score reports across Grades 3–8: the total number of possible points per subscore. The number of subscore points for each grade is presented in Appendix 1 at the end of the document as a reference.

We encourage you to work with your child's teachers and other educators to put together a plan to specifically target what your child learns and how he or she learns best. If you are concerned by your child's overall score, or by your child's performance on a specific subscore, we encourage you to:

- Ask your child's ELA teacher about which skills your child finds most challenging.
- Review with your child his or her ELA class work and homework to see how he or she is progressing in the same skills.
- Talk to your child's ELA teacher and/or the principal to see if your child may need additional, targeted support to improve these skills.
- Advocate for your child to receive additional support as needed. Students whose Performance Level is either NYS Level 1 or NYS Level 2 may be eligible for academic intervention services (AIS) from their schools.

# Your Child's Test Results



**1** **Scale Score (2014–15):** The Scale Score is determined by the number of points that your child earned on the test in 2014–15. The number of points have to be on a scale so that the test results mean the same thing year after year even though different students are taking the test with different questions. The higher the number of points your child earned, the higher his or her scale score. Scale scores are most meaningful when they are associated with a performance level. Table 1 provides the range of scale scores for each grade in 2014–15, as well as the scale score your child would need to meet their grade-level performance expectations and to be on track for college and career readiness. Note that the 2014–15 scale score may be absent from the report if a student completed an insufficient number of questions on the test, was medically excused from the test, or there was an administrative error.

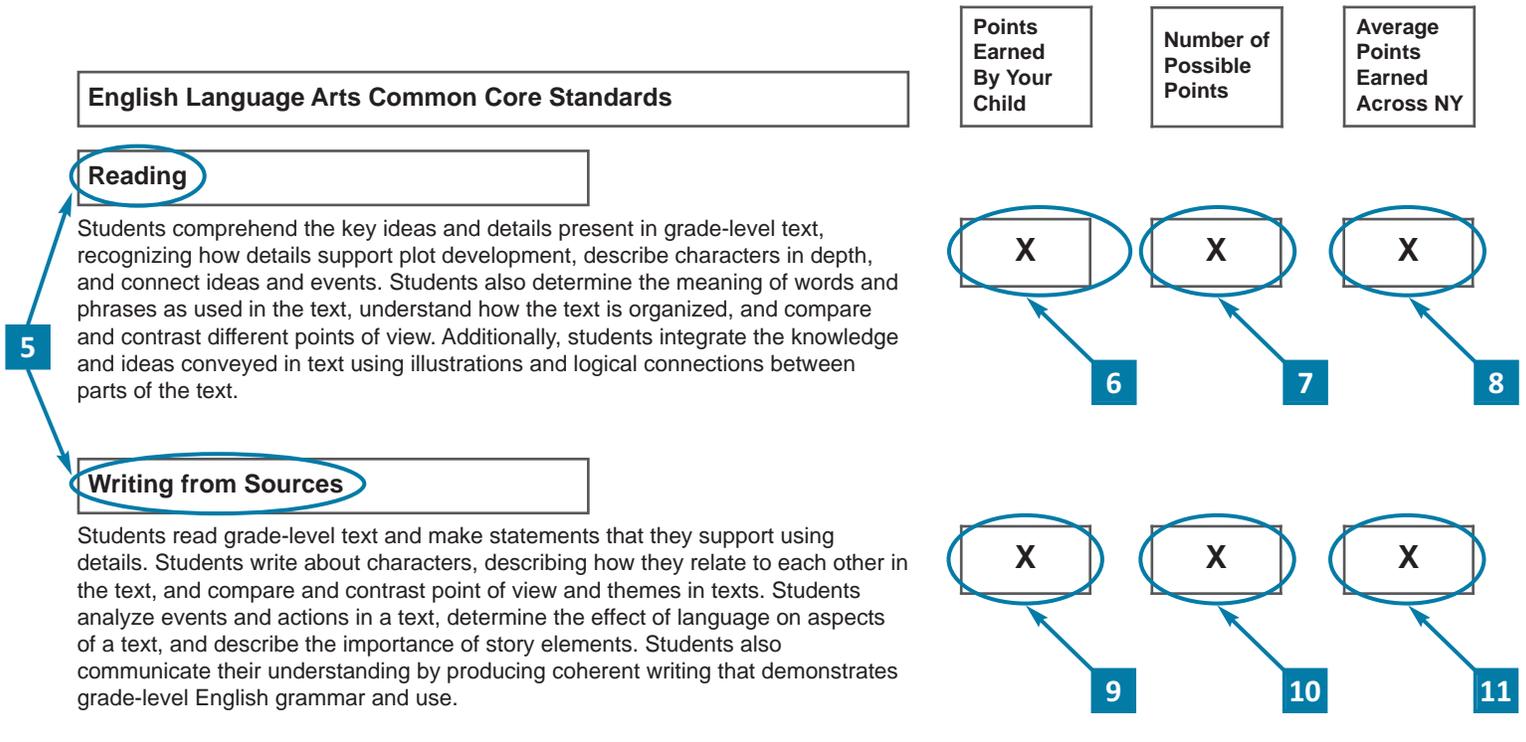
**Table 1:** Range and Proficiency Level of Scale Scores Across Grades

	Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Range of Scale Scores	147–429	138–423	97–413	117–421	98–414	100–412
Scale Scores Greater than or Equal to this Value are Proficient	320	320	320	320	318	316

**2** **Performance Level (2014–15):** Students are assigned a *Performance Level* based on how they perform on the test. There are four possible performance levels: NYS Level 1, NYS Level 2, NYS Level 3, and NYS Level 4. Each student is assigned to a performance level based on the scale score earned. For a full description of each performance level, please refer to the bottom of page 1 of the score report. For a detailed description of the skills, knowledge, and practices that are typical of students at each performance level, please visit <https://www.engageny.org/resource/performance-level-descriptions-for-ela-and-mathematics>

**3** **Overall State Percentile Rank (2014–15):** Overall State Percentile Rank compares your child's scale score to those of the rest of the students who took the same subject area test in 2014–15. Percentile ranks are reported on a scale of 1–99. If your child has an *Overall State Percentile Rank* of X, it means that your child's scale score was the same or higher than those of X% of all students who took the same test. The higher the *Overall State Percentile Rank*, the better your child did compared to other students.

**4** **Performance Level (2013–14):** The 2013–14 performance level indicates the performance level that your child achieved on the 2013–14 test. The 2013–14 performance level can be compared to the 2014–15 performance level to determine how your child has demonstrated improvement between years. If your child achieved a NYS Level 1 in 2013–14 and then achieved a NYS Level 3 in 2014–15, then your child went from performing well below proficient to demonstrating grade-level proficiency in the grade-level standards. Note that students taking the Grade 3 test will not have a 2013–14 performance level, as there is no assessment in Grade 2.



**5** **Reading and Writing from Sources Subscores**

Subscores are calculated based on points earned on groups of questions on the test that measure similar or related knowledge or skills. Subscores provide additional information about how your child performed. The points from the ELA test are divided between **Reading** and **Writing from Sources** subscores. The **Reading** subscore provides a general sense of your child’s performance on multiple-choice questions that measure **Reading**. These **Reading** questions measure learning standards in both reading and language conventions. The **Writing from Sources** subscore is based on the points that your child earned on short (2 point) and extended (4 point) writing questions. **Writing from Sources** questions measure learning standards in writing, reading, and language conventions.

For examples of questions from the 2015 ELA tests from grades 3–8, please visit

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/released-2015-3-8-ela-and-mathematics-state-test-questions>

**6** **Points Earned By Your Child on Reading**

*Points Earned By Your Child on Reading* represents the number of questions measuring reading that your child has answered correctly. Each question that your child answered correctly earns one point. For example, if your child correctly answers X questions that measure **Reading**, he or she will have an X for *Points Earned By Your Child on Reading*.

**7** **Number of Possible Points on Reading**

*Number of Possible Points on Reading* describes the total number of questions measuring **Reading** on the 2015 ELA test. This can be compared with *Points Earned By Your Child on Reading*. For example, if your child correctly answered X questions out of X, the *Number of Possible Points on Reading*, then he or she answered X of the questions incorrectly.

For more information about how many questions measuring **Reading** were included on the test, please visit

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/test-guides-for-english-language-arts-and-mathematics>

## 8 Average Points Earned Across NY on Reading

*The Average Points Earned Across NY on Reading* reports the average number of points earned by students throughout the state. This number can be used to compare your child's performance to that of the other students who took the ELA test. Please note that it is possible to earn more points than average in **Reading** and still be considered not proficient.

## 9 Points Earned By Your Child on Writing from Sources

*Points Earned by your Child on Writing from Sources* represents the number of points earned on questions measuring **Writing from Sources**. Questions that measure **Writing from Sources** include two types of constructed-response questions: short-response (maximum of 2 points) and extended-response (maximum of 4 points). Teachers rate each student's responses to these questions. The points earned on each question are totaled to determine *Points Earned by your Child on Writing from Sources*.

## 10 Number of Possible Points on Writing from Sources

*Number of Possible Points on Writing from Sources* describes the total number of points a student can earn on questions measuring **Writing from Sources** on the 2015 ELA test. This can be compared with *Points Earned By Your Child on Writing from Sources*. For example, if your child earned X points on questions that measure **Writing from Sources**, and there are X possible points on questions that measure **Writing from Sources**, then he or she did not earn X of the possible points. These points may have been missed because of the degree to which your child's written responses were developed and/or supported by evidence.

For more information about how many questions measuring **Writing from Sources** were included on the test, please visit <https://www.engageny.org/resource/test-guides-for-english-language-arts-and-mathematics>.

## 11 Average Points Earned Across NY on Writing from Sources

*The Average Points Earned Across NY on Writing from Sources* represents the average number of points earned by students throughout the State on questions that measure **Writing from Sources**. This number can be used to compare your child's performance to that of the average ELA test taker. Please note that it is possible to earn more points than average in **Writing from Sources** and still be considered not proficient.

### Appendix 1. The Number of Possible Subscore Points for ELA by Grade

Grade	Reporting Categories	
	Reading	Writing from Sources
3–4	31	24
5–8	42	24