



Achievement Level Descriptors
for
Grade 3 Science

Georgia Department of Education
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Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors

With the implementation of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, Georgia educators have developed four achievement levels to describe student mastery and command of the knowledge and skills outlined in Georgia’s content standards. Most students have at least some knowledge of the content described in the content standards; however, achievement levels succinctly describe how much mastery a student has. Achievement levels give meaning and context to scale scores by describing the knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to achieve each level.

The four achievement levels on Georgia Milestones are *Beginning Learner*, *Developing Learner*, *Proficient Learner*, and *Distinguished Learner*. The general meaning of each of the four levels is provided below:

Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***need substantial academic support*** to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***need additional academic support*** to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***are prepared*** for the next grade level or course and are on track for college and career readiness.

Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***are well prepared*** for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for college and career readiness.

More detailed and content-specific concepts and skills are provided for each grade, content area, and course in the **Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)**. ALDs are narrative descriptions of the knowledge and skills expected at each of the four achievement levels and were developed for each grade level, content area, and course by committees of Georgia educators in March 2015 and July 2015. The ALDs are based on the state-adopted content standards.

ALDs show a progression of knowledge and skills for which students must demonstrate competency across the achievement levels. It is important to understand that a student should demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills within his/her achievement level *as well as all content and skills in any achievement levels that precede his/her own, if any*. For example, a Proficient Learner should also possess the knowledge and skills of a Developing Learner *and* a Beginning Learner.

POLICY ALDs			
Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
<p>Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need substantial academic support to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>	<p>Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need additional academic support to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>	<p>Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are prepared for the next grade level or course and are on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>	<p>Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are well prepared for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>
RANGE ALDs			
Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
<p>A student who achieves at the Beginning Learner level demonstrates minimal command of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize the physical characteristics of a rock; recognize examples of fossils; recognize the formation of heat; identify objects that are magnetic; recognize that different organisms live in different habitats; identify common sources of pollution; record observations; and observe safety procedures during scientific investigations. 	<p>A student who achieves at the Developing Learner level demonstrates partial command of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify physical characteristics of rocks, minerals, and soils; investigate fossils as evidence of organisms that lived long ago; recognize that heat can be produced by different processes; identify that a change in heat results in a change in the temperature of a substance; describe how magnets affect other objects; recognize the natural habitats of Georgia; 	<p>A student who achieves at the Proficient Learner level demonstrates proficiency of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize and investigate the physical characteristics of rocks, minerals, and soils; investigate fossils as evidence of organisms that lived long ago and recognize how fossils are formed; explore the processes that produce heat; investigate changes in temperature as the result of a transfer (gain or loss) of heat; investigate how insulation affects heating and cooling; 	<p>A student who achieves at the Distinguished Learner level demonstrates advanced proficiency of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the physical characteristics and changes of rocks, minerals, and soils; analyze fossils as evidence of life from long ago; analyze how heat is produced and the effects of heating and/or cooling; explain the connection between heat and temperature; describe how magnets affect other magnets and common objects;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize that different organisms live in different habitats; • recognize pollution and its effect in the environment; • record investigational observations; • use pictures and explanations to represent the real world; and • recognize that safety is essential in experimental science. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate the actions of magnets and how they interact with other materials; • investigate the habitats of different organisms in Georgia; • explore how organisms depend on their habitats; • recognize that pollution and humans affect the environment; • recognize ways to protect the environment; • accurately record scientific observations; • use addition and subtraction in the analysis of investigational data; • analyze graphics and descriptions that represent scientific investigations; • describe safety protocol appropriate when conducting scientific investigations; and • accurately communicate scientific findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze the habitats of different organisms; • analyze the dependence of organisms on their habitats and how each organism affects its habitat; • assess the effects of pollution and humans on the natural environment and determine strategies to help improve the environment; • accurately and concisely record scientific observations; • accurately add and subtract whole-number data; • represent real-world objects and concepts using number sequences, graphics, maps, and/or descriptions; • analyze safety protocol appropriate during specific scientific investigations; and • accurately and concisely communicate scientific concepts.
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