Achievement Level Descriptors

for

Grade 4 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**
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.*
RANGE ALDs			
Beginning Learner	**Developing Learner**	**Proficient Learner**	**Distinguished Learner**
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 • identify changes in the natural world; • identify the states of water; • describe the relative positions of Earth, the Moon, and the Sun; • identify characteristics of weather; • observe that light can be reflected by a mirror and that a vibrating object produces sound; • classify a force as either a push or a pull;	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 • identify and compare physical characteristics of stars and planets; • identify changes in the states of water within the water cycle; • identify cause and effect relationships between Earth, the Moon, and the Sun; • use data to compare and describe weather; • recognize the nature of light using mirrors and prisms during investigations; • compare sounds produced by vibrating objects;	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 • describe characteristics and patterns of change related to stars and planets; • describe natural cycles and systems to make inferences related to Earth, the Moon, and the Sun; • use data and maps to predict weather events; • represent the characteristics of light (including lenses) and sound through diagrams and models; • compare relationships of force, motion, energy, and matter	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 • evaluate models used to explain natural phenomena on Earth and beyond Earth; • analyze natural cycles and systems to make inferences and conclusions about interactions between Earth, the Moon, and the Sun; • compare and evaluate data from multiple sources to predict and explain weather events; • analyze given models to predict the behavior of light and

• recognize that plants get energy from the Sun; and • identify organisms that use adaptations such as camouflage to survive.	• recognize that forces can affect the motion of an object; • identify producers and consumers in an ecosystem; and • identify factors that affect the survival of organisms.	through investigations; • recognize and describe the roles of organisms and the flow of energy within ecosystems; and • predict how environmental factors can affect the survival of organisms.	sound; • analyze interactions and relationships between force, motion, energy, and matter; • use models to compare the roles of organisms and the flow of energy within ecosystems; and • analyze factors that affect the survival of organisms.

