

Comprehending and Responding to Texts: Grade 12 Rubric

Task

Students analyze and interpret texts. They show comprehension through close reading. They form questions. They make predictions. They examine contextual elements.

Curriculum alignment

This rubric assesses student performance against the following outcomes:

- Discern and analyze context ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))
- Understand and interpret content ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))
- Evaluate the verisimilitude, appropriateness and significance of texts ([Outcome](#))
- Connect self, text, culture and milieu ([Outcome](#))

Rubric

Criterion	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Analysis of context and purpose	Identifies basic context or purpose with minimal explanation; limited connection to text creator's intent.	Explains context and purpose with some detail; begins to assess whether purpose was achieved or suitability to audience.	Analyzes context and purpose clearly; assesses achievement and audience suitability with supporting evidence from the text.	Synthesizes multiple contextual elements; evaluates how historical, societal or personal context shapes meaning and creator choices.
Interpretation of textual elements	Identifies one or two textual elements (character, theme, tone, imagery) with surface-level observation.	Describes how selected elements (character, theme, tone, imagery) contribute to meaning; some analysis of relationships among ideas.	Analyzes how setting, character, tone, figurative language or other elements work together to develop theme and create effect.	Evaluates the craft and artistry of multiple textual elements; explains how their interplay creates layers of meaning and significance.
Evaluation and judgment	States opinions about the text without criteria or supporting evidence.	Applies basic criteria to evaluate effectiveness; references text with inconsistent supporting evidence.	Uses clear criteria to assess plausibility, appropriateness and significance; supports judgments with relevant textual evidence.	Establishes and monitors sophisticated criteria; modifies judgment based on evidence; considers multiple valid interpretations.

Personal and critical response	Mentions personal reaction or cultural perspective without development.	Connects personal experience or cultural perspective to text; begins to reflect on how interpretation changes through discussion.	Forms and supports a position on issues arising from the text; reflects on how personal, moral or cultural perspective shapes understanding.	Demonstrates mature critical stance; integrates personal insight with textual analysis; shows growth in perspective through engagement with multiple viewpoints.
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Scoring

Assign each criterion a level: Beginning (1), Developing (2), Proficient (3), or Exemplary (4). Sum the four criterion scores. A total of 4 to 7 indicates beginning performance; 8 to 11 indicates developing performance; 12 to 14 indicates proficient performance; 15 to 16 indicates exemplary performance.

Notes for the teacher

- **Consistency in evidence:** Require students to anchor every claim about context, purpose, or textual effect with a specific quotation, scene reference, or description. Vague references ("the author uses symbolism") do not meet proficient or above without concrete support.
- **Distinguish interpretation from evaluation:** Students often confuse liking a text with evaluating its effectiveness. Proficient work assesses whether the text achieves its purpose for its intended audience, not whether the student enjoyed it. Model this distinction explicitly.
- **Monitor context analysis:** Many students skip context or treat it as background decoration. Emphasize that understanding context (historical, social, personal) changes how an audience reads the text. Ask: "How would this text be read differently in another time or by another reader?"
- **Growth in perspective:** For the response criterion, look for evidence that the student's thinking has shifted through engagement with the text or through discussion. A simple personal connection is developing; a reflection on how the text challenged or deepened their understanding is proficient or above.