

**ILEARN**

***Stimulus Specifications***

**English/Language Arts**

**July 2020**

Stimulus specifications assist test developers during the test creation process, allowing developers to select texts and topics at appropriate grade levels, according to best practices. This document is a supplement to the English/Language Arts (ELA) licensed bank stimulus specifications [<https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/ela-stimulus-specifications.pdf>], offering additional guidance and information specific to Indiana’s custom development. The information in this document covers:

- Stimulus Word Count Guidelines (across IN licensed banks and IN custom development)
- Media Literacy Stimuli Considerations
- Paired Passage with Audio Considerations

All ILEARN texts must be rich and robust enough to support a variety of ELA items aligned to Indiana Academic Standards. Texts included on ILEARN have been reviewed and rated through various lenses, including ratings for text complexity (quantitative and qualitative measures) and reviews by educator committees. While text complexity measures follow word count and readability ratings, it is the combination of factors including, but not limited to: professional judgment, experience of the educator review committee, along with qualitative data, and quantitative data.

### Stimulus Word Count Guidelines

Stimuli of varying lengths are included on ILEARN. The stimuli may be reading nonfiction or reading literature passages. Also, some licensed bank passages are classified as short text, while other texts fall into the long text category, as shown in Table 1. A mix of passage lengths can be found in ILEARN’s stimulus pools, however, the ILEARN passages eligible for computer-adaptive testing generally do not exceed the top end of the maximum word count range listed in the “long text” category in Table 1. Educators may accept passages that extend beyond the identified word count criteria if warranted through qualitative criteria.

**Table 1**

Grade	Word Count Range (short text)	Word Count Range (long text)
3	200-487	488-650
4	450-562	563-750
5	450-562	563-750
6	650-712	713-950
7	650-712	713-950
8	650-712	713-950

Recommended Lexile and Flesch-Kincaid ranges for each grade are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Grade	Lexile Band	Flesch Kincaid
3	420-820	1.98-5.34
4-5	740-1010	4.51-7.73
6-8	925-1185	6.51-10.34

### **Media Literacy Stimuli Considerations**

Indiana Academic Standards include media literacy standards at all grades. For ILEARN, this means custom items must be developed to meet these standards. The guiding principles for media literacy are listed below.

## **MEDIA LITERACY**

**Guiding Principle:** *Students develop critical thinking about the messages received and created by media. Students recognize that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization and develop understanding that people use individual skills, beliefs, and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages. Students develop media literacy skills in order to become more informed, reflective, and engaged participants in society.*<sup>iv</sup>

<sup>iv</sup> Adapted from *Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in the United States*. National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007. Available at: <http://namle.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CorePrinciples.pdf>.

For media literacy standards to be assessed, there is a need for media literacy stimuli. The stimuli used to assess media literacy standards follow the quantitative and qualitative assessment previously described. Media literacy specifications were developed to guide item development (<http://iasstandardviewer-878159656.us-east-2.elb.amazonaws.com/>). These specifications include guidelines and parameters for media literacy stimuli. The information below provides additional guidance for the array of stimuli possible for media literacy.

### **Content Limits and Word Count Ranges**

- Media literacy stimuli are mostly discrete pieces; appropriate public domain or permissionable material can be considered.
- The stimulus should be a good model of grade-appropriate text.
- The stimulus should sound and look like authentic media literacy (if developed) and tap a variety of topics/areas.

- Commissioned media literacy stimuli should appear to be excerpts from media sources.
- Examples of media literacy stimuli may include audio, video, posters, advertisements, news, news clips, advertisements, or informational graphics. At grades 6-8, historical political cartoons, graphic novels, and other cartoon depictions may be used.
- The length of the stimuli will vary and will be dependent on the task;
  - However, these guidelines should be followed:
    - 150 words or less for the elementary grade band
    - 225 words or less for the middle school grade band

**Readability ranges**

For media literacy standards that require a text accompaniment (dual texts/paired texts), the text should be at the lowest end of that grade level’s acceptable Lexile Band, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Lexile Band</b>	<b>Flesch Kincaid</b>
3	420-820	1.98-5.34
4-5	740-1010	4.51-7.73
6-8	925-1185	6.51-10.34

For media literacy standards that include an audio component, the recommended time ranges outlined in Table 4 are applied:

**Table 4**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<b>3</b>	0.75–1.0
<b>4</b>	0.75–1.0
<b>5</b>	0.75–1.0
<b>6</b>	0.75–1.0
<b>7</b>	0.75–1.0
<b>8</b>	0.75–1.0

### **Paired Passage with Audio Considerations**

ILEARN passages may include audio. For reading comprehension passages that address text with an accompanying audio, the audio must not violate Text-to-Speech rules. Therefore, texts must not be read aloud if a reading comprehension construct is being measured. In order to include an audio portion of a text to address a specific Indiana standard (e.g., 5.RL.4.1: Analyze how visual and multimedia presentations and representations can enhance the meaning of a text), only *a portion of the text should be used as the audio element*. All items that address the “text/audio” portion should focus *only* on that portion/combination. All other items, assessing a variety of Indiana standards, should avoid text from the text/audio portion. In summary, items assessing reading comprehension not related to the text/audio standards should avoid using text and content from the text/audio portion of the stimulus.