



**State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™)  
Performance Level Descriptors  
English II Writing**

**Performance Level Descriptors**

**When writing essays in response to increasingly complex writing tasks,\* students achieving Level III: Advanced Academic Performance can**

- Write skillfully crafted expository essays with sustained focus, an organizing structure that enhances meaning, and development that lends substance to the essay
- Write persuasive essays that maintain a convincing position and sustain focus with a skillful organizing structure, compelling evidence and support, purposeful and precise word choice, and an understanding and control of rhetorical techniques that enhance effectiveness
- Choose sentences that are purposeful and well controlled

**When writing essays in response to increasingly complex writing tasks,\* students achieving Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance can**

- Write expository essays that contain a clear thesis statement, use an appropriate organizing structure, sufficiently develop ideas with specific details and examples, choose words that reflect an understanding of the explanatory purpose, and demonstrate an adequate command of written conventions
- Write persuasive essays that contain a clear position, use a logical organizing structure, sufficiently develop relevant reasons and evidence, create an appropriate tone through clear and specific word choice, and demonstrate an adequate command of written conventions
- Use a variety of sentence structures
- Revise drafts to strengthen the introductory and concluding paragraphs, add information that enhances the supporting details, strengthen transitions within and between paragraphs, improve the effectiveness of sentences, and recognize appropriate style and word choice
- Edit drafts to correct grammar, sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

## English II Writing—Continued

### Performance Level Descriptors

**When writing essays in response to increasingly complex writing tasks,\* students achieving Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance can**

- Write basic or limited essays that are only marginally suited to the expository task and minimally developed, with a partial command of conventions
- Write basic or limited essays that are only marginally suited to the persuasive task and minimally developed, with a partial command of conventions
- Demonstrate a minimal control of sentence structure
- Demonstrate basic skills in revision and editing

\* For English II writing, “increasingly complex writing tasks” refers specifically to expository and persuasive writing. The expository task requires students to clearly explain what they think about a specific topic. The rigor of the expository writing task increases from English I to English II in that the prompts are more demanding in English II, specifically with regard to the cognitive complexity of the stimulus (the synopsis or quotation students use in developing the essay) and the sophistication of the topic. The persuasive task requires students to take a position on a specific issue and to develop an argument that not only supports this position but also convinces the reader of its merit. Persuasive writing, which is assessed on STAAR for the first time, also increases the rigor of English II writing.