



High School English Language Arts (ELA) Interim Assessment Guidance



Smart Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) interim assessment content provides the opportunity for educators and students to interact with items that are developed using the same rigorous methodology and alignment to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as the summative assessment, DC CAPE Next. However, SBAC-developed high school ELA interim assessments do not directly align with the District's end-of-course assessment model. Moreover, the CCSS for ELA groups grades 9 and 10 into a single combined band. This means that individual standard codes (like RL.9-10.1 or W.9-10.1) apply to both courses and both years, ELA I and ELA II.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has provided the following interim recommendations for Local Education Agencies (LEAs):

- **Focus on IABs and FIABs:** Using Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and Focused Interim Assessment Blocks (FIABs), rather than the Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA). The IABs and FIABs are shorter assessments targeted to specific skills and provide more detailed information to guide instructional next steps.
- **Strategic Use of the IAIP:** For any specific target gaps, educators can use the [Interim Assessment Item Portal \(IAIP\)](#) to search for and export individual items by standard or target to create custom quizzes that align to their curriculum map.

As LEAs use these interim tools, they will need to consider transitions from introductory skill-building in ELA I (9th grade) to mastery and independent application by the end of ELA II (10th grade).

Reading Progression for Literary and Informational Texts

- **ELA I (Grade 9):** Students read texts within the lower-to-middle range of the 9–10 text complexity band (roughly Lexile 1050L to 1200L) with active teacher scaffolding. Focus centers on explicit strategies and structures, singular viewpoints as applied to larger themes, and basic rhetorical devices and strategies.
- **ELA II (Grade 10):** Students tackle texts at the high end of the 9–10 complexity band (above 1200L) independently and proficiently. Analysis deepens into implied themes, complex narrative and expository structures, multiple competing and cooperative perspectives, and rhetorical fallacies.

Writing Progression for Multiple Genres

- **ELA I (Grade 9):** Students focus on core structures of narrative, argumentative, and expository writing, balancing narrative and analytic tasks. Students learn how to form a thesis, integrate textual evidence, and use appropriate tone.
- **ELA II (Grade 10):** Students develop sophisticated arguments and narratives, introducing counterclaims or opposing perspectives, and sustaining a genre-specific tone. Students may encounter research writing that requires evaluating multiple competing informational sources.

Language and Grammar Focus

- **ELA I (Grade 9):** Introduces and practices advanced syntax, including parallel structure and varied phrase/clause types (participial, absolute, independent/dependent).
- **ELA II (Grade 10):** Precise application and editing using advanced punctuation like semicolons, colons, and conjunctive adverbs to link complex independent clauses fluidly.

Recommended Interim Assessments: Grade 9 (ELA I)*

ELA I Claims	SBAC Interim Assessment Block (2026-27)
1 – Reading <i>LEAs can choose the assessment blocks that best align with their current instructional sequence</i>	FIAB: Make and Support Inferences (Literary/Informational) FIAB: Text Analysis (Literary/Informational) FIAB: Word Meaning and Language Use (Literary/Informational) IAB: Read Literary Texts IAB: Read Informational Texts
2 – Writing	FIAB: Language and Vocabulary Use FIAB: Write and Revise Argumentative Texts FIAB: Write and Revise Explanatory Texts FIAB: Write and Revise Narratives IAB: Brief Writes IAB: Editing IAB: Revision
3 – Listening	FIAB: Listen/Interpret
4 – Research/Inquiry	FIAB: Research: Use Evidence IAB: Research

Recommended Interim Assessments: Grade 10 (ELA II)

ELA II Claims	SBAC Interim Assessment Block (2026-27)
1 – Reading <i>LEAs can choose the assessment blocks that best align with their current instructional sequence</i>	FIAB: Make and Support Inferences (Literary/Informational) FIAB: Text Analysis (Literary/Informational) FIAB: Word Meaning and Language Use (Literary/Informational) IAB: Read Literary Texts IAB: Read Informational Texts
2 – Writing	FIAB: Language and Vocabulary Use FIAB: Write and Revise Argumentative Texts FIAB: Write and Revise Explanatory Texts FIAB: Write and Revise Narratives IAB: Brief Writes IAB: Editing IAB: Revision
3 – Listening	FIAB: Listen/Interpret
4 – Research/Inquiry	FIAB: Research: Analyze and Integrate Information FIAB: Research: Evaluate Information and Sources

***Assessment Block Overlap:** Since ELA CCSS groups grades 9 and 10 into a single band, interim assessment blocks will also overlap in grade coverage. LEAs can use [SBAC achievement levels](#) to determine student performance within their current grade. LEAs can use these levels to assess students' progress toward mastery by grade 10 with the ability to drill down to item-level analysis as a tool to develop appropriate instructional supports.