

Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)
Performance Level Descriptors
Grade 8 Science

Reporting Category	Does Not Meet Proficiency <i>A student performing at this level demonstrates knowledge and skills related to the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning that do not meet proficiency:</i>	Proficient <i>A student performing at this level demonstrates knowledge and skills related to the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning that meet proficiency:</i>	Advanced <i>A student performing at this level demonstrates knowledge and skills related to the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning that exceed proficiency:</i>
Living Systems and Ecosystem Interactions	The student may be able to correctly recognize plants and animals.	The student correctly recognizes some characteristics of animals and plants (parts and behaviors), related to their different functions, which can be used to tell organisms apart.	The student correctly recognizes many characteristics of animals and plants (parts and behaviors), including identifying their different functions, which can be used to tell organisms apart.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize that plants need light, air, and/or water to grow and survive.	The student correctly recognizes that plants need light, air, and water to grow, including some conditions that may help/harm growth.	The student correctly recognizes that plants need light, air, and water to grow through a process called photosynthesis, and compares growth and survival based on differing conditions.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize that living organisms (animals and humans) need food.	The student correctly recognizes that living organisms need food to obtain energy and grow.	The student correctly recognizes that the amount of energy or expected growth for a living organism can change based on the amount, type, or quality of food.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize living and non-living parts of an ecosystem.	The student correctly recognizes some ways in which living organisms interact with other living and non-living parts of an ecosystem (e.g., habitat, shelter, water).	The student correctly recognizes many ways in which living organisms interact with other living and non-living parts of an ecosystem, including in simple food chains/webs.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize a trait that helps a living organism (animal) adapt and survive.	The student correctly recognizes some traits that help living organisms adapt and survive.	The student correctly recognizes many traits that help living organisms adapt and survive, including identifying the function of helpful traits.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize an individual living organism and/or groups of living organisms (animal/s).	The student correctly recognizes living organisms in an ecosystem and some resources they need to grow and sustain their population.	The student correctly recognizes living organisms in an ecosystem and how changes in resources, including those due to human activity, might affect an individual living organism or groups of living organisms.

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Living Systems and Ecosystem Interactions (continued)	The student may be able to correctly recognize an offspring of a living organism with identical traits (plant, animal, and/or human) compared to the offspring of a different species.	The student correctly recognizes that reproduction produces offspring with similar though varied traits compared to offspring from a different species (e.g., a species has offspring of the same species that may have a different color or spot pattern).	The student correctly recognizes that reproduction produces offspring with similar though varied traits compared to offspring of the same species (e.g., a species has offspring of the same species but with variations on the same traits).
	The student may be able to correctly recognize highly similar animals based on simple physical characteristics.	The student correctly recognizes some anatomically similar organisms.	The student correctly recognizes many anatomically similar organisms, including that fossils of common extinct organisms are like organisms living today.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize a common feature found in Virginia watersheds (e.g., river, stream, lake, reservoir).	The student correctly recognizes some common features of watersheds in connection with their function and why they are important in Virginia.	The student correctly recognizes many common features of watersheds and identifies simple steps to improve the health of watersheds and keep water clean in Virginia.

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Earth/Space Systems and Earth Resources	The student may be able to correctly recognize simple weather conditions.	The student correctly recognizes some weather conditions and their characteristics, including the connection between changes in weather conditions and everyday decisions and activities.	The student correctly recognizes many weather conditions and their characteristics, including the connection to the atmosphere (e.g., cloudy or clear, windy or calm) and common weather tools and information (e.g., thermometer, forecast).
	The student may be able to correctly recognize the sun, Earth, and the moon.	The student correctly recognizes and compares some astronomical objects in the solar system and their features (e.g., size, shape, position, composition).	The student correctly recognizes and compares many astronomical objects in the solar system and their features.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize the direction that a common object will fall due to gravity on Earth.	The student correctly recognizes that gravity influences movement of objects on Earth and in space, including the movement of Earth around the sun and the moon around Earth.	The student correctly recognizes that gravity influences movement of objects on Earth and in space, including the movement of planets around the sun, moons around planets, and comets/asteroids around the sun.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize day and night.	The student correctly recognizes that the sun provides Earth and its organisms with light and heat energy.	The student correctly recognizes the connection between Earth's rotation and day/night and Earth's tilt and the four major seasons.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize some common objects or materials that come from Earth's natural resources.	The student correctly recognizes some natural resources and the materials humans commonly use that come from Earth's natural resources.	The student correctly recognizes many natural resources and the materials humans commonly use that come from Earth's renewable and nonrenewable resources.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize activities that harm Earth.	The student correctly recognizes some ways in which people and communities use and impact Earth's environment and resources, including some simple ways to protect the environment or conserve natural resources.	The student correctly recognizes many ways in which people and communities use and impact Earth's environment and resources, including many simple ways to protect the environment or conserve natural resources compared to activities that pollute or harm Earth's environment.

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Force, Motion, Energy, and Matter	The student may be able to correctly recognize hot and/or cold temperatures in common everyday contexts.	The student correctly recognizes temperature as a measure of how hot or cold matter is and that thermal energy is transferable.	The student correctly recognizes common examples of heat transfer and simple ways it can be minimized (e.g., coat to stay warm) or maximized (e.g., fan to get cool).
	The student may be able to correctly recognize the three phases of water – solid, liquid, and/or gas.	The student correctly recognizes water phases, including at some common points of experience through the water cycle.	The student correctly recognizes water phases and how water changes phase, including at many common points of experience through the water cycle.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize a basic form of energy (i.e., electrical, sound, thermal, and/or light energy).	The student correctly recognizes some basic forms of energy based on a common use or source and that energy is transferred and transformed.	The student correctly recognizes many basic forms of energy based on a common use or source and that energy is transferred and transformed to help meet needs (e.g., electrical energy lights lamps and heats stoves).
	The student may be able to correctly recognize common objects at rest and in motion.	The student correctly recognizes some objects in motion involving simple actions and reactions.	The student correctly recognizes many objects in motion involving simple actions and reactions.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize common objects in relation to descriptions of their weight and mass.	The student correctly recognizes that the force, mass, and motion of objects are related and comparable in common everyday situations.	The student correctly recognizes that the force, mass, and any changes in the motion of objects are related and comparable in common everyday situations.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize some smaller parts of common objects, animals, and plants.	The student correctly recognizes that common objects, animals, and plants are made of smaller parts and identifies some seen and unseen parts.	The student correctly recognizes that common objects, animals, and plants are made of smaller parts, identifies many seen and unseen parts, and recognizes that technology (e.g., magnifying glass, microscope) helps us see very small parts.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize and compare physical properties (i.e., size and shape) of common objects.	The student correctly recognizes and measures some physical and chemical properties (e.g., size, shape, hardness/softness, weight/mass, volume, density) of matter including before or after a physical or chemical change occurs.	The student correctly recognizes and measures many physical and chemical properties of matter including identifying changes in properties that result from common activities (e.g., cooking an egg, boiling water, burning wood).