

<b>Title:</b>	Kodiak Island	<b>Author:</b>	Tamra Orr
<b>Genre:</b>	Expository	<b>Est. Grade Level:</b>	8
<b>Word Count:</b>	493	<b>Lexile:</b>	800

**Notes:**

KAMM reading passages and items were designed to facilitate students’ ability to demonstrate their grade-level content knowledge and skills, as specified in the state’s indicators, by minimizing or removing the effects of processing or physical challenges related to the students’ disabilities, without significant alteration of the assessed construct. Therefore, the KAMM design considers the particular needs of the students eligible for this assessment in order to increase their **access** to the assessed content—appropriate access to test content is necessary to ensure the validity of the assessment results. Lack of access could result in the measurement of sources of variance that are not related to the intended test content (*construct irrelevance*) or could allow construct-irrelevant abilities to interfere with that student’s ability to fully demonstrate what he or she knows and can do, and subsequently the test results underestimate the student’s achievement (*under-representation*).

Thus, the overall goals for creating a passage for a modified reading assessment include ensuring that the text contains enough detail to be engaging and supportive of test items that assess grade-level content, yet purposefully simplified for the KAMM student population so as to reduce the construct-irrelevant language as well as the cognitive complexity of the content without significantly altering the construct assessed. Below are key strategies for increasing access for the KAMM student population. Common to these strategies is the basic notion of facilitating or supporting students’ processing of the text by:

- Reducing sentence, paragraph, and passage length to minimize demands on working memory.
- Using text with familiar/common topics to KAMM students
- Creating clear, literal, explicit connections within the text
- Organizing and formatting text to facilitate students’ processing of information related to overall purpose/theme (e.g., use of subheadings, bulleted lists, repetition of key words/information)

**Passage Word Count and Readability**

Word count and readability of KAMM passages are reduced to decrease the working memory demands on students. For expository texts, sufficient information and context is presented to students to respond to the questions, but the text in general is less complicated and detailed, and presents little, if any, extraneous information.

Grade 8 KAMM passages are limited to 800 words; this KAMM passage has 493 words, which is appropriate at grade 8. General education passages range from 500-1500 words per passage.

The Lexile readability score of 800 falls within the lower limits of the grade 8 Lexile reader measure, and thus is at a lower readability level than grade 8 general education passages, yet remains on-grade level.

### **Sentence Structure**

Simple grammatical structures are used and sentence length is kept to a minimum in order to facilitate students' processing of information. Punctuation marks associated with more complex sentence structures such as commas, colons, and semicolons, are avoided when possible. Sentences follow the general rule of containing one main idea, purpose, or event (i.e., presenting elements of a complex idea separately) in order to help students focus on key pieces of information.

For example, in the text, three sentences were used to describe the size of Kodiak bears. "Kodiak bears are quite big. The males are often up to five feet long. They weigh over one thousand pounds." These three sentences could be combined as follows, "Kodiak bears are quite big, measuring up to five feet long and weighing over one thousand pounds." However, presenting each event as distinct units of information should facilitate processing of the information in each sentence.

### **Paragraph Structure**

Paragraphs are generally short (two to four simple sentences) and focus on a single purpose or event. This grouping of information is intended to facilitate students' information processing by decreasing demand on working memory. Also, when possible, paragraphs start with a topic sentence in order to help focus students on the key information/idea in a paragraph and to provide structure to the information presented. Subsequent sentences support students' understanding of the key information/idea in the topic sentence.

### **Connections Within Text**

Connections between parts of text or information within the text are explicit to minimize the need for inference. Additionally, passages use redundant statements to reduce demand on working memory (i.e., to provide readers with support in remembering prior text) and help strengthen encoding of information.

### **Text Organization and Formatting**

This passage is organized into four distinct sections (including the introduction). Each section is spatially distinct and has a bold-faced subheading, and uses bullets to further organize information. This organization and formatting strategy provides a structure for grouping information and highlights key information, thereby decreasing demands on working memory and facilitating students' processing of the text.

# Kodiak Island

Just thirty miles off the coast of Alaska is a very long string of islands known as the Kodiak Islands. The island chain covers almost 5,000 square miles. That is about the size of the state of Connecticut!

## Just the Facts, Ma'am

The largest island in the chain is called Kodiak Island. It is a very unusual island.

- It is the second largest island in the United States. Hawaii is the largest island in the United States.
- It can only be reached by airplane or by taking a ferry through the Alaska Marine Highway System.
- It was first settled by the Russians over 200 years ago.
- It is the largest fishing port in the United States.
- Two-thirds of the island is a national wildlife refuge.
- There are less than 100 miles of road on the entire island.
- There are many mountains on the island that soar thousands of feet into the sky.
- There are more than 3,000 brown bears living on the island.

## The Famous Bears

Many people cannot think of Kodiak Island without thinking about its bear population. Kodiak is one of the best places in the world to see these big mammals in their natural habitats, or the places they are most comfortable living in.

Kodiak bears are quite big. The males are often up to five feet long. They weigh over one thousand pounds. They make many different sounds, including woofing like a dog and growling like a tiger. However, when they are really upset, they roar. The bear's roar sounds like a train rushing down the track at full speed!

## Other Residents

Over 50 years ago, the island set up a special refuge, or safe place, for these bears to grow and thrive. It is an amazingly large place. It covers almost two million acres. Along with being home to so many bears, Kodiak Island also has 600 pairs of bald eagles nesting on it. More than a million

seabirds spend some time visiting the island during the winter as well. There are more than one hundred salmon streams throughout the island.

Tiny brown bats less than four inches long fly through the night skies. They are searching for a dinner of insects. The short-tailed weasel, also known as the ermine, hunts for food. It is brown during the summer. In the winter the ermine's fur turns white so it blends in with its surroundings.

A brown mouse-like creature called a vole lives underground on the island too. The vole builds complex homes under the soil. These homes are joined together by tunnels and runways. In the mountains, mountain goats climb the steep slopes. Red squirrels scamper through the forests. There is wildlife around every corner.

People also enjoy coming to Kodiak Island. There are many different outdoor activities people can do there. These activities include:

- fishing
- hiking
- rafting
- camping
- boating
- kayaking
- taking pictures
- watching wildlife

Kodiak Island is the perfect place to go to see nature up close!

**R.8.1.3.1**

**▲ determines meaning of words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions, comparison-contrast, clue words, cause-effect) from sentences or paragraphs.**

Read the sentences below from the passage.

The vole builds complex homes under the soil. These homes are joined together by tunnels and runways.

In the first sentence, what does the word complex mean?

- A. formed on top of the ground
- B. developed from simple materials
- C. made up of many connected parts\*

---

**Note:**

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator by structuring the item in a way that reduces the cognitive processing demands on students. As noted above in the indicator description, the supporting text can take several different forms (definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions), each offering different levels of support for deriving the meaning of a word and subsequently requiring different types of cognitive processing by the student. The supporting text in this item is definitional, and thus most closely related to deriving the meaning of the word “complex” (i.e., near transfer of information). Although sometimes used in instruction, the use of alternate context clues, such as examples and descriptions, would likely increase demand on students’ cognitive processing. For instance, providing an example would require a student to integrate the two examples and then derive the concept they share. This type of processing is more demanding than the processing required to match a definition to a word.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students’ working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to process is reduced.

**R.8.1.4.2**

**▲ understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.**

Which section has information about small animals on Kodiak Island?

- A. “Just the Facts, Ma’am”
- B. “The Famous Bears”
- C. “Other Residents”\*

---

**Note:**

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator, but at a lower level of cognitive complexity. As noted above in the indicator description, the text features can take several forms, each differing in how it is used to organize and support text. This item requires the use of a specific text feature to locate information within the passage, and thus reduces the cognitive demand of the item to either recall (i.e., the student recalls the information from the passage) or recognition/identification (i.e., the student returns to the passage and locates the correct answer). In contrast, an item written to this indicator requiring the explicit understanding of the purpose of a text feature would require greater cognitive demands and represent increased cognitive complexity.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students’ working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to consider and select among is reduced.

**R.8.1.4.10**

**▲ identifies the topic, main idea(s), supporting details, and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level text.**

The passage states that people enjoy coming to Kodiak Island because

- A. the bears are big enough for people to see from a distance.
- B. there are many outdoor activities for people to do on the island.\*
- C. the only ways for people to reach the island are by airplane or ferry.

---

**Note:**

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator, but at a lower level of cognitive complexity. The reasons why people enjoy Kodiak island are explicitly stated in the passage as a paragraph containing a bulleted list of activities people enjoy. Therefore, the item requires students to either recall the text or return to the passage and locate (identify, recognize) the correct answer. The explicit information in the text reduces the cognitive processing requirements of the item.

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students' working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to consider and select among is reduced.

**R.8.1.4.15**

**▲distinguishes between fact and opinion, and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media, politics, warfare), bias, and stereotypes in various types of appropriate-level texts.**

Which sentence from the passage is an **opinion**?

- A. “It is a very unusual island.”\*
- B. “The males are often up to five feet long.”
- C. “Red squirrels scamper through the forest.”

---

**Note:**

This item assesses the central skill reflected in the indicator at a lower level of cognitive complexity. By focusing on the difference between fact and opinion, versus recognizing propaganda, bias, and stereotypes, the item requires only the essential understanding of the skill reflected in the indicator. This item assesses a lower level of cognitive complexity of this indicator by requiring students to recognize statements of overt opinion versus other types of non-fact statements presented as fact. Recognizing propaganda, bias, or stereotypes would require greater cognitive demand as it would entail maintaining statements posed as facts within working memory while systematically assessing whether or not these statements are fact-based using recall or recognition (searching through the text).

Additionally, presenting three versus four multiple-choice options reduces the demand on students’ working memory because the number of possible answers the student needs to consider and select among is reduced.