

**Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)  
Performance Level Descriptors  
High School Science**

<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Proficiency</b> <i>A student performing at this level demonstrates knowledge and skills related to the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning that <b>do not meet proficiency</b>:</i>	<b>Proficient</b> <i>A student performing at this level demonstrates knowledge and skills related to the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning that <b>meet proficiency</b>:</i>	<b>Advanced</b> <i>A student performing at this level demonstrates knowledge and skills related to the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning that <b>exceed proficiency</b>:</i>
<b>Life at the Molecular / Cellular and Systems / Organisms Levels</b>	The student may be able to correctly recognize: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• light, air/oxygen, water, and food, or</li> <li>• that living organisms (plant, animal, and/or human) need these to survive.</li> </ul>	The student correctly recognizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• humans and animals need oxygen to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat to grow and obtain energy, and</li> <li>• plants need light, air, and water to grow and create energy through photosynthesis.</li> </ul>	The student correctly recognizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• growth and energy may change based on the type, amount, or availability of light, air/oxygen, water, and food to organisms, and</li> <li>• plant have parts associated with the basic inputs (i.e., water, sunlight, carbon dioxide) and outputs (i.e., oxygen, sugar) of photosynthesis (e.g., roots take in water, leaves take in sunlight, leaves release oxygen).</li> </ul>
	The student may be able to recognize simple everyday steps that people can take to support their health (e.g., washing hands, brushing teeth, washing and eating healthy food, and getting regular sleep).	The student correctly recognizes that bacteria and viruses impact human health, and some simple steps people can take to support health and wellness.	The student correctly recognizes that bacteria and viruses are too small to be seen with the naked eye and can cause illness or sickness if simple steps are not taken to support health and wellness.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize an offspring of a living organism (plant, animal, and/or human) with identical or highly similar traits.	The student correctly recognizes that reproduction produces offspring with similar, though varied, traits.	The student correctly recognizes that offspring may not be identical, may have variations of the same or similar traits, and may develop a helpful trait.
	The student may be able to correctly recognize a plant and animal and how they are different.	The student correctly recognizes and compares some plants and animals and ways in which their unique structures and behaviors are connected to their functions.	The student correctly recognizes and compares many plants and animals and ways in which their unique structures and behaviors are connected to their functions.

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<p><b>Interactions of Life Forms and Ecosystem Dynamics</b></p>	<p>The student may be able to correctly recognize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a simple trait of a living organism or a group of living organisms (plant, animal, and human) that help them survive, or</li> <li>• a simple resource or environmental factor that a living organism or group of living organisms needs to survive.</li> </ul>	<p>The student correctly recognizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the function of simple traits of living organisms or groups of living organisms,</li> <li>• living organisms’ survival is related to having helpful traits, and</li> <li>• how a living organism or group of living organisms might be affected by beneficial or challenging changes in resources or environmental factors.</li> </ul>	<p>The student correctly recognizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple traits based on their function,</li> <li>• survival of living organisms is related to helpful variations of a given trait, and</li> <li>• how the variety/diversity of life on Earth might be affected based on beneficial or challenging changes in resources or environmental factors.</li> </ul>
	<p>The student may be able to correctly recognize a way in which a living organism interacts with another living or non-living part of an ecosystem.</p>	<p>The student correctly recognizes some ways in which living organisms interact with other living and non-living parts of an ecosystem, including in simple food chains.</p>	<p>The student correctly recognizes many ways in which living organisms interact with other living and non-living parts of an ecosystem and how interactions might change under different conditions, including in simple food chains and food webs.</p>