



DRAFT Introduction to the New York State P-12 English Language Arts Learning Standards (Revised 2017)

In 2015, New York State (NYS) began a process of review and revision of its current English Language Arts (ELA) Learning Standards adopted in January 2011. Through numerous phases of public comment and virtual and face-to-face meetings with committees consisting of NYS educators, teachers of English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners and Students with Disabilities, parents, curriculum specialists, school administrators, college professors, and experts in cognitive research, the New York State P-12 English Language Arts Learning Standards (Revised 2017) were developed. These revised standards reflect the collaborative efforts and expertise of all constituents involved.

The New York State P-12 English Language Arts Learning Standards (Revised 2017) consist of revisions, additions, deletions, vertical movement, and clarifications of the current English Language Arts Standards. They are defined as the knowledge, skills, and understanding that individuals can and do habitually demonstrate over time because of instruction and experience.

Understanding the English Language Arts Learning Standards

New York State has a rich history of learning standards, with educational expectations dating back to the 1800s. The development of the first set of student learning standards in seven content areas began in the early 1990s. The English Language Arts Learning Standards outline what a student should know and be able to do independently by the end of each grade. The heart of the document consists of grade-level specifications of the overall anchor standards. These **anchor standards** represent broad statements about the expectations for students as they prepare for high school graduation, positioning them for potential success in either college or careers, or both. Each of the **grade level standards** represents a set of more specific, end-of-year expectations.

For each anchor standard, a detailed sweep of expectations rises from the Prekindergarten foundational level to the graduation-ready level of 11th and 12 graders. This progression is less like a staircase—which implies discrete steps—and more like an upward path. This path, though tracing a steady upward climb, sometimes has overlaps from one grade to the next and even repetitions from grade to grade. In fact, this repetition is built into the high school standards where grades 9 and 10, as well as grades 11 and 12, are banded together. It would be too simplistic, however, to assume that students are simply covering the same ground in this path.

The Standards set grade-specific standards, but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations. It is also beyond the scope of the standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs) and Students with Disabilities. The department ensured that teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs) and Students with Disabilities participated in the revision of the standards. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has created two statewide frameworks, the [*Blueprint for Improved Results for*](#)

[Students with Disabilities](#) and the [Blueprint for English Language Learner Success](#), aimed to clarify expectations and to provide guidance for administrators, policymakers, and practitioners to prepare ELLs/MLLs and Students with Disabilities for success. These principles therein the frameworks are intended to enhance programming and improve instruction that would allow for students within these populations to reach the same standards as all students and leave school prepared to successfully transition to post-school learning, living, and working. The standards should be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset, along with appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of all students. No set of grade-specific standards can fully reflect the great variety in abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in any given classroom. However, the standards do provide clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students.

How to read the English Language Arts Learning Standards

The English Language Arts Learning Standards are organized by grade level from Prekindergarten through grade eight and by grade-band (9-10 and 11-12) at the high school level.

Learning Standards define what a student should know and be able to do.

Anchor Standards represent broad statements about the expectations for students as they prepare for high school graduation, positioning them for college and careers. There are 28 English Language Arts Anchor Standards in Reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking, and Language.

Grade-level and Grade-band Standards describe specific end-of-year expectations about what students should understand and be able to do at a specific grade level or grade band (for grades 9-10 and 11-12).

Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers exemplify important reading and writing practices that should begin in the early grades and continue through high school and life. These practices should be used in conjunction with the grade-level learning standards and be part of classroom instruction.

Strands define the main organizational categories for English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language).

Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading sections clarify the reading and text complexity expectations for each grade level. This is located at the beginning of the Reading Standards at each grade level or grade band.

Example:

4th Grade English Language Arts Learning Standards

Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading for P-5

Students in grades Prekindergarten through Grade 5 should read a balance of literature and informational texts, both full-length and shorter works, including:

Literature: stories, drama, poetry, fiction, and other literary texts

Informational Text: biographies, autobiographies, books and articles about science, art, history, social studies, and information displayed in charts, graphs, or maps, in both print and digital sources

Text Complexity Expectations for 4th Grade

By the end of the school year read and comprehend literary and informational texts that are appropriately complex at or above grade level.

Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading section

5th Grade Writing Standards

Grade-level and Strand

Text Types and Purposes

5W1: Write an argument to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

5W1a: Introduce a precise claim and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

5W1b: Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details from various sources.

5W1c: Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary while offering an opinion on a topic.

5W1d: Use appropriate transitional words, phrases, and clauses to clarify and connect ideas and concepts.

5W1e: Provide a concluding statement or section related to the argument presented.

5W1f: Maintain a style and tone appropriate to the writing task.

Grade-level Standards

5W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.

5W2a: Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general focus, and organize related information logically.

5W2b: Develop a topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other relevant information; include text features, illustrations, and multimedia to aid comprehension.

5W2c: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain a topic.

5W2d: Use appropriate transitional/linking words, phrases, and clauses to clarify and connect ideas and concepts.

5W2e: Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

5W2f: Establish a style aligned to a subject area or task.

Grade-level Standards

Understanding this Document

In order to help curriculum planners, this document bundles together a variety of resources. It begins with this Introduction, which includes the sections How to Read the Standards, and the Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers. These practices outline those expectations for students—and their teachers—that pervade the entire literacy program P-12. These lifelong practices intend to position students for success in college and/or careers. We expect students to **“think, write, speak, and listen to understand” every day, in all subject areas**. These foundational “Practices,” therefore, should appear at the forefront of all programmatic planning and design. They should also serve as helpful reminders for all teachers, for each daily lesson.

By design, these standards do not specify any one method of instruction or approach. Specific programmatic design, choices in literature, and instructional strategies and approaches all remain as decisions for individual districts. In order to help districts with these decisions, this document will be followed by additional resources to help provide guidance on the standards.

Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers Overview

One new aspect in the revised standards is the inclusion of the Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers. Students should engage in reading and writing regularly and repeatedly; therefore, it is important to foster and support these literacy practices. Classroom planning and instruction based on the ELA standards should develop within the context of the Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers. Once firmly and richly developed, these practices extend well beyond graduation, articulating qualities of lifelong learning. These practices are a context for the NYS English Language Arts Learning Standards which, in turn, support these practices by specifying grade level expectations for readers and writers.

The chart below outlines some of the most important practices expected of readers and writers. Although there are two lists, these practices are blended. For example, by design, the first bullet under reading intentionally mentions thinking, writing, speaking, and listening. In other words, successful readers employ a complex web of skills in order to become effective communicators who strive to understand the world around them. Similarly, one of the practices of writers includes a blend of thinking, reading, speaking, and listening as they strengthen their writing.

The practices also indicate that teachers should expect students to read often and widely from a range of global and diverse texts. The New York State Education Department remains committed to encouraging local districts to choose and develop the literature and informational texts they use as they design their ELA curriculum or programs. One dimension of this choice includes the diversity of texts. Teachers should encourage students to explore a wide range of texts, including a balance of classical and contemporary literature. Students should also read full-length and shorter texts from a variety of cultures and viewpoints, both in print and digital media.

Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers

Lifelong Practices of Readers	Lifelong Practices of Writers
<p>Readers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● think, write, speak, and listen to understand ● read often and widely from a range of global and diverse texts ● read for multiple purposes, including for learning and for pleasure ● self-select texts based on interest ● persevere through challenging, complex texts ● enrich personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through reading and communicating with others ● monitor comprehension and apply reading strategies flexibly ● make connections (to self, other texts, ideas, cultures, eras, etc.) 	<p>Writers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● think, read, speak, and listen to support writing ● write often and widely in a variety of formats, using print and digital resources and tools ● write for multiple purposes, including for learning and for pleasure ● persevere through challenging writing tasks ● enrich personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through writing and communicating with others ● experiment and play with language ● analyze mentor texts to enhance writing ● strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

Standards-based Curriculum Development: Guidance for Educators

The English Language Arts Standards do not dictate curriculum or teaching methods. Teachers and other educational leaders at the local level should use these standards to develop or guide their selection of curriculum, programs, and individual lessons. Each district, building, and classroom should explore and choose “Best Practices” to achieve these standards, while matching the approach to individual communities, work teams, students, etc. Standards introduced and taught at one grade level should be reinforced and continued through graduation. Curriculum decisions in New York State are made at the local level. Examples in the standards are included to help provide clarification; these examples are not mandates.

Additional Guidance for Educators

As teachers implement the standards in their classrooms, the following key points should be considered and used to guide their own choices as they develop curriculum, lesson plans, classroom assessments, and professional development.

Key Points:

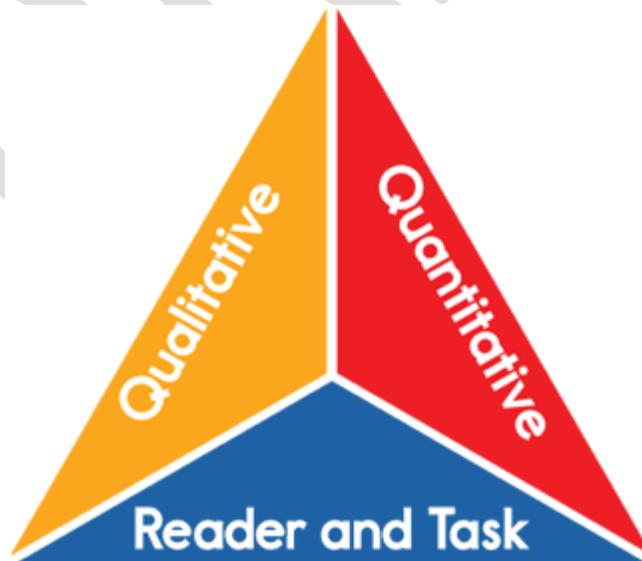
- In addition to spoken and written communication, the student learning standards address inquiry, research, critical thinking, and problem solving.
- Students should employ the literacy skills embedded in the standards both individually and collaboratively.
- When choosing texts to meet the standards, teachers should provide a balance of classic and contemporary literature (both full length and shorter works). Works should reflect a global and diverse variety of authors, time periods, genres, and cultural perspectives.
- Although some standards may be taught and practiced in isolation, in actual use they are more often blended and interwoven.
- The development of all literacy skills requires extensive opportunities to practice, especially with authentic texts and real-life communication situations, including authentic social, cultural, professional, and academic contexts.
- The standards address a student's ability to read, listen to, and view creative works in various genres and across various cultures. In addition to acquiring knowledge about the history, forms, and artistic craft of the works studied, students are expected to develop informed written, spoken, visual, and digital responses.
- The word "text" should be construed as encompassing far more than printed material. Text may also refer to speech, graphics, visual art, digital representations, video, and other visual and audio depictions of ideas, concepts, and experiences.
- Students should understand and be able to observe the differences between the form and function of the conventions of Standard American English and features of informal written communication, speech, and electronic communication.
- The standards include frequent references to digital media. Students must achieve fluency and develop skilled practice in the use of current media, and, given the pace of technological development, they must be able to adapt quickly to new media as they develop.

Integration of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Standards

By design, this document presents the standards in an organizational pattern that groups together the strands of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. This organizational scheme follows a pattern with which most teachers are familiar. In no way, however, does this format imply that these standards should be taught discretely in the classroom. A well-designed, richly developed lesson includes many standards from across a range of domains. Teachers blend reading with writing; they infuse language and vocabulary throughout their lessons; and speaking and listening play important roles in every classroom activity. Attention to and practice with digital media—both in reading and writing—are also essential to this blend of approaches.

Range of Reading and Text Complexity Expectations

One of the most important elements of the English language arts standards is the concept of text complexity, which is critical to preparing students for college and careers. **This expectation is the cornerstone for the New York State English Language Arts Learning Standards when the standards refer to “texts of appropriate complexity at or above grade level.”** For clear guidance regarding text complexity for each grade level band (grades 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10 and 11-12), see *supplemental information on text complexity available on EngageNY: <https://www.engageny.org/resource/appendix-a-common-core-standards-for-elaliteracy-supporting-research-and-glossary>*



This graphic helps to demonstrate the relationship between qualitative and quantitative measures of text complexity, as well as the key relationship of reader and task as teachers select appropriate texts for their students to read and comprehend. The tools for measuring text complexity are both useful and imperfect: As such, each element of the graphic cannot be taken as the sole determiner of text placement for a grade and they are designed to work together. Quantitative measures are anchored in college- and career-readiness reading demands and employ algorithms to measure dimensions of text complexity (e.g., word frequency and difficulty, sentence length, and text cohesion) that are difficult for a human reader to evaluate. Quantitative analyses can accurately place a text within a text complexity grade band; however, they are less reliable in placing a text in a specific grade level within the band. The chart below presents the quantitative ranges for text complexity by grade band.

Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures¹

NYELA Grade Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	Flesch-Kincaid ²	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	Text Evaluator
2 nd – 3 rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	100 – 590
4 th – 5 th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	405 – 720
6 th – 8 th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	550 – 940
9 th – 10 th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	750 – 1125
11 th – CCR	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.2	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	890-1360

Once a text is shown to be within an appropriate grade band, however, the qualitative analysis, can provide the kind of specific information needed to place texts at the high or low end of the quantitative band or in a specific grade. Qualitative analyses of texts measure other important dimensions of texts, such as the complexity of a text’s structure, language conventionality and clarity, levels of meaning, and knowledge demands. Qualitative measures themselves are neither anchored in college- and career-readiness levels, nor band or grade specific; they depend on the professional judgments of teachers or other trained, professional evaluators.

A quantitative analysis can situate a text in, for example, the grades 6-8 text complexity band; a qualitative analysis conducted by the teacher then can determine if the text is better suited for grade 6 rather than grade 8 students, and when in the year to introduce such a text.¹ Considerations that are associated with the reader provide the third leg of the triangle. Here, teachers consider the student’s motivation, background knowledge, and task variables as they make final determinations about whether to include a text for study or not, and as important what scaffolds and supports are necessary to help students access and understand the text.

¹ Certain texts do not lend themselves well to a quantitative analysis: poetry, drama/plays are best evaluated by a combination of a robust qualitative analysis, reader and task considerations, and teacher professional judgement.

Shared Responsibility for Literacy Development

Although literacy development certainly resides in the domain of the English Language Arts classroom, other disciplines have recognized the importance of literacy to their own subject areas. Each of these subject areas has its own required set of standards, specifying the content knowledge in that area. These ELA standards are designed to connect with and support the knowledge and learning standards of these other content areas. Concurrent with the revision of the ELA standards was the revision of the standards for Grades 6-12 Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. The Grades 6-12 Literacy Standards, which connect to the standards in the related content areas (Social Studies, Science, etc.), reflect the same revision and development as the current ELA standards. The intent is for these two sets of standards to work together. In this way, teachers from across the curriculum can work together with common expectations for their students' literacy.

This common goal shows up even more fundamentally at the elementary level, where a typical instructional model includes a teacher who provides instruction in a variety of subjects, in addition to ELA. Although the Grades 6-12 Literacy Standards share similar goals with the ELA standards, they also recognize that each subject area has its own discourse practices and nomenclature.

Early Learning and the Standards

For our youngest learners, the English Language Arts Standards should be implemented with careful understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practice. The academic foundation that is set for our youngest learners is essential, and the social emotional needs and environment for learning are key ingredients for student success. As these standards are implemented, it is important to meet the needs of the "whole child," recognizing that a well-rounded education, positive learning environment, strong home-school connection, and high expectations all contribute to student success. The NYSED Early Learning Task Force, which includes over 30 educators from across New York State, has been organized to make recommendations around resources to support early learning. The work started in February 2017 and will continue in the coming months. Updates will be provided on the AIMHighNY website (<http://www.nysed.gov/aimhighny>).

For Prekindergarten, please also see the NYSED Prekindergarten Standards (<https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-prekindergarten-foundation-for-the-common-core>) which, in addition to including the ELA Standards, include many early learning standards arranged in the five developmental domains. The ELA standards for prekindergarten students are embedded in the Communication, Language, and Literacy Domain. A brief description of each domain appears below:

- **Approaches to Learning** – How children become involved in learning and acquiring knowledge.
- **Physical Development and Health** – Children's physical health and ability to engage in daily activities.
- **Social and Emotional Development** – The emotional competence and ability to form positive

relationships that give meaning to children’s experiences in the home, school, and larger community.

- **Communication, Language, and Literacy** – How children understand, create, and communicate meaning.
- **Cognition and Knowledge of the World** – What children need to know and understand about their world and how they apply what they know.

Reading and Writing for Enjoyment and Self-Expression

As close reading provides a structure for deep analysis of text and for learning about the world, students should also read for enjoyment and personal interest. Student selection of text, as well as time to read and write for enjoyment, expression, and connection with others, is included in the Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers section. Classroom teachers, parents, and school and community librarians can serve as great resources to connect students to texts and information.

Writing

Teachers will notice that the number of writing standards has been streamlined and consolidated. Because some of the original standards outlined almost identical expectations from year to year, they have been moved to the Lifelong Practices of Writers in order to show more clearly that every lesson, throughout every school year, should support the practices that help to develop strong and effective writers. For example, the Practices state that students should “write often and widely in a variety of formats, using print and digital resources.” This expectation provides a foundation for program design as teachers prepare writing lessons and opportunities for students. As teachers support this practice, students will have regular and frequent opportunities to write in a variety of formats, producing texts that fall into one or more of the following domains—research, argument, explanation, description, analysis, and narration, as well as creative texts, such as stories and poems. The Lifelong Practices of Writers section also includes elements of a recursive approach to writing, including revision and multiple drafts, based on feedback from peers, and teachers.