NYS Curriculum Alignment Reflection Tool for Next Generation English Language Arts (ELA) Units

To assist with the development of local curriculum, the NYS Education Department has taken some of the key hallmarks from the literacy briefs and created the *NYS Curriculum Alignment Reflection Tool for Next Generation English Language Arts (ELA) Units*. Evaluating evidence of the indicators provided in this tool is a process that engages educators and administrators in thoughtful conversations around curricular and instructional decisions. This resource supports districts and classroom teachers as they plan instruction for all students.

The NYS Curriculum Alignment Reflection Tool for English Language Arts (ELA) can be used by curriculum writers and classroom teachers to evaluate the degree of standards alignment for existing or proposed ELA units. For the purpose of this tool, curriculum is defined as the content, concepts, and skills students learn throughout a full year of instruction. Curriculum resources include lessons, books, and materials aligned to the Next Generation ELA Standards. Units typically extend over a sustained period-of-time and can be as brief as a few weeks or longer, depending on local choice. The time allotted to each unit depends on the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills included. This tool provides a space to reflect on the indicators of standards-based ELA instruction present in an existing or proposed unit.

The tool's indicators represent best practices in English Language Arts instruction. Informed by the research in *Topic Briefs on Advanced Literacies,* as well as the Introduction to the Next Generation ELA Learning Standards, the indicators are guidelines intended to support research-based practices. It is understood that **not all indicators will necessarily be represented in a single unit**. However, all the standards and indicators should be addressed over the course of the school year to ensure all students are provided a comprehensive sequence of instruction, aligned to the Next Generation ELA Standards.

Curriculum alignment and development is a fluid, ongoing process; therefore, revisions and adjustments should continue to be made following students' engagement with the curriculum and assessment of student learning. Knowing educators constantly reflect, the tool also provides a space for reflection following implementation of the unit.

Although this tool is most appropriate for 3rd through 12th grade learning environments, it could also be used in prekindergarten through 2nd grade environments, with modifications to reflect developmentally-appropriate practices as well as the inclusion of all domains of early learning. For more information on early learning resources, visit the NYSED Office of Early Learning.

For additional support with this process, please consider reaching out to your local BOCES, teacher center, district office, or the NYSED's Office of Curriculum & Instruction (518-474-5922 or emscurric@nysed.gov).

Grade: _____ Unit Title / Topic(s): _____

Complete the **Rationale**, **Standards & Assessment Summary**, **Indicators Alignment Log**, and **Final Analysis** for each unit of study in your English Language Arts curriculum.

Rationale

Think about why you are teaching this unit. How does the unit prepare our students to become lifelong readers, writers, learners, and thinkers?

Standards & Assessment Summary

Which Next Generation ELA Standards are taught through this unit? How are they assessed?

	Standards	Assessment
Reading Standard(s)		
Writing Standard(s)		
Speaking & Listening Standard(s)		
Language Standard(s)		

Note: *Standards are in separate rows for planning purposes; however, standards are likely to be integrated throughout the unit. While all standards will be addressed throughout the year, not all standards will be present in one unit.*

Core Elements • Indicators Alignment Log

(Please note that not all indicators need to be present in a single unit)

Indicators of High-Quality ELA Curriculum / Instruction	Evidence in Unit	Alignment Scale
Lessons are developed within an instructional cycle, focusing on a multifaceted topic and including a clear purpose and progression for students.		Choose degree of alignment
Includes inquiry, critical thinking, and/or problem solving.		Choose degree of alignment
Includes opportunities to practice reading, writing, listening, and speaking for multiple purposes (including learning and pleasure) with authentic texts/audiences and real-world contexts.		Choose degree of alignment
Includes opportunities for written, spoken, visual, and/or digital responses, affording time for skills practice in the use of current, digital media.		Choose degree of alignment
Utilizes a variety of assessments, including pre-, self-, formative, and summative. Multiple assessment formats are utilized, including observation and peer/teacher feedback.		Choose degree of alignment

Alignment Scale
+ prevalent
√ present
- partially present
n/a not applicable

← Use the alignment scale to determine the degree to which the unit aligns with each indicator.

→ Use this space to reflect on the unit after implementation.

Reflection after Implementation

Supporting All Students • Indicators Alignment Log

(Please note that not all indicators need to be present in a single unit)

Indicators of High-Quality ELA Curriculum / Instruction	Evidence in Unit	Alignment Scale
Classroom and instructional practices are research-based, developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and capitalize on linguistic and cultural diversity.		Choose degree of alignment
Classroom and instructional practices are flexible, use scaffolds when appropriate, and promote equal opportunities to learn for all students.		Choose degree of alignment
Technology is used to personalize learning and empower students to take responsibility for their own learning.		Choose degree of alignment
Adequate time and multiple opportunities are provided for students' mastery of learning processes.		Choose degree of alignment
Planned learning environment supports quality interactions and collaboration through flexible grouping and work spaces; encourages utilization of peers as language resources when speaking, reading, and writing.		Choose degree of alignment

Alignment Scale
+ prevalent
√ present
- partially present
n/a not applicable

← Use the alignment scale to determine the degree to which the unit aligns with each indicator.

→ Use this space to reflect on the unit after implementation.

Reflection after Implementation

Engaging, Content-Rich Texts • Indicators Alignment Log

(Please note that not all indicators need to be present in a single unit)

Indicators of High-Quality ELA Curriculum / Instruction	Evidence in Unit	Alignment Scale
Multiple, content-rich, high-interest, grade-level, accessible texts are utilized.		Choose degree of alignment
Texts feature essential knowledge that students need to answer a 'big' question or idea that guides the unit.		Choose degree of alignment
Text selection process considers culturally responsive and relevant texts; texts are available in students' home languages when available and appropriate.		Choose degree of alignment
Texts represent a variety of formats (e.g., printed material, speech, graphics, visual art, digital representations, video, and/or other visual and audio depictions of ideas, concepts, and experiences).		Choose degree of alignment

Alignment Scale
+ prevalent
√ present
- partially present
n/a not applicable

← Use the alignment scale to determine the degree to which the unit aligns with each indicator.
→ Use this space to reflect on the unit after implementation.

Reflection after Implementation

Building Written Language • Indicators Alignment Log

(Please note that not all indicators need to be present in a single unit)

Indicators of High-Quality ELA Curriculum / Instruction	Evidence in Unit	Alignment Scale
Writing tasks are appropriately challenging and include a variety of formats.		Choose degree of alignment
Writing is used as a method for consolidating thinking before and after reading (e.g., summarizing or responding by sharing opinions).		Choose degree of alignment
Time is afforded to plan, revise, edit, rewrite, or try a new approach while writing. Writing models/examples are created with and/or analyzed by students.		Choose degree of alignment
An extended written piece is produced to demonstrate understanding of content and language.		Choose degree of alignment
Opportunities to use oral language and discussion to facilitate the writing process are built into the unit.		Choose degree of alignment
Target words, previously taught words, instruction in grammar/mechanics, language structures, and/or strategies for academic language are included in unit.		Choose degree of alignment

Alignment Scale
+ prevalent
√ present
- partially present
n/a not applicable

← Use the alignment scale to determine the degree to which the unit aligns with each indicator.
→ Use this space to reflect on the unit after implementation.

Reflection after Implementation

Academic Vocabulary • Indicators Alignment Log

(Please note that not all indicators need to be present in a single unit)

Indicators of High-Quality ELA Curriculum / Instruction	Evidence in Unit	Alignment Scale
Multiple formats, methods, and opportunities are utilized to deepen language skills, background knowledge, and academic vocabulary.		Choose degree of alignment
Target words (academic vocabulary) and word-learning strategies are taught to aid in and communicate students' understanding of concepts and text.		Choose degree of alignment
Differences between the conventions of academic English and features of informal written communication, speech, and electronic communication are emphasized.		Choose degree of alignment

Alignment Scale

+ prevalent
√ present
- partially present
n/a not applicable

← Use the alignment scale to determine the degree to which the unit aligns with each indicator.

→ Use this space to reflect on the unit after implementation.

Reflection after Implementation

Classroom Discussion • Indicators Alignment Log

(Please note that not all indicators need to be present in a single unit)

Indicators of High-Quality ELA Curriculum / Instruction	Evidence in Unit	Alignment Scale
Classroom discussion is used to support reading, writing, and build conversational and academic language.		Choose degree of alignment
Target words and other academic language are utilized during peer-peer and teacher-peer discussion; students are encouraged to experiment with language.		Choose degree of alignment
Unit includes frequent use of discussion formats (small group, jigsaw, etc.) and opportunities to make connections (to self, other texts, ideas, cultures, eras, etc.).		Choose degree of alignment

Alignment Scale
+ prevalent
√ present
- partially present
n/a not applicable

← Use the alignment scale to determine the degree to which the unit aligns with each indicator.
→ Use this space to reflect on the unit after implementation.

Reflection after Implementation

Final Analysis

Having completed the tool, provide a final statement of analysis. Consider the comprehensive inclusion of indicators (understanding that not all indicators may be represented in a unit), how well they were addressed, the use and assessment of standards, and how all these aspects relate to the stated goals and rationale of the unit.

Glossary of Terms

academic language – key terms used in a discipline (e.g., photosynthesis, Fertile Crescent, alliteration) as well as general-purpose language used in all academic texts and talk (e.g., words like "however" and "therefore" that connect ideas; phrases like, "some have argued" or "research suggests" that signal the writer's viewpoint and support argumentation)

advanced literacies – the skills and competencies that enable communication, spoken and written, in increasingly diverse ways and with increasingly diverse audiences; advanced literacies promote the understanding and use of text for a variety of purposes

authentic – pertaining to the real world with relevance to the learner (e.g., the school board represents an authentic audience for 4th graders writing an argument about cafeteria menus)

consolidating thinking – combining thoughts into a single, more effective, or coherent whole (e.g., summarizing)

content-rich text – text relevant to the unit's big idea that features background knowledge and academic vocabulary

digital media – audio/visual content that may include websites, social networks, videos, graphics, slideshows, or other electronic forms

extended written piece – a fully developed essay, story, feature article or informational piece, research paper, poem, argument, narrative, or other written piece, guided by the expectations of the genre

high-interest text – text that motivates students to read *(Reminder: When choosing texts to meet the Next Generation Learning Standards, teachers should provide a balance of classic and contemporary literature (both full-length and shorter works). Work should be culturally responsive, relevant to all students, and available in the home language when possible. Texts should reflect a global and diverse variety of authors, time periods, genres, and cultural perspectives.)*

home language – the primary language spoken at a student's home (Native Language or Mother Tongue)

instructional cycle – a lesson sequence made up of varied core learning tasks that build from one to the next, enabling the study of content-based themes, academic words, and word-learning strategies

language resources – the structures, tools, processes, and people from which students acquire language (e.g., the use of language structures and words found in mentor texts or adopting language peers use successfully in their own text or speech)

multifaceted topic – a concept that can be explored across disciplines and from multiple perspectives

target words – a small set of academic vocabulary that teachers teach within a lesson or unit; target words should help students understand the text, learn and talk about the unit's theme, and comprehend material across content areas

text – printed material, as well as speech, graphics, visual art, digital representations, video, and other visual and audio depictions of ideas, concepts, and experiences

word-learning strategies – methods students use to try to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words they encounter while reading (e.g., breaking words into meaningful parts, using clues in surrounding text, consciously attending to words)