

OKLAHOMA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Teachers use standards as guides for developing curriculum and instruction that is appropriately engaging, challenging, and sequenced for the students in their care. By nature, acquiring language arts knowledge and skills is a recursive learning endeavor: students revisit concepts again and again as they use language at increasingly sophisticated levels. Because of this recursive learning process, language arts learning will not progress for students in the strictly linear way it may in other content areas. Nonetheless, it is important for any set of standards to provide “concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education” (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). In order to make this document a clear, coherent description of what students are expected to know and be able to do at specific stages, the writers have adopted some guidelines for design and organization.

Clarity

- ★ Standard statements are written with verbs that indicate specifically what learning students must demonstrate and at what depth. When students *defend, compare, estimate, paraphrase, predict, or summarize*, they are able to show a broader range of mastery of a concept than when they are expected to *identify, recognize, or recall*. However, the writers also have given full consideration to the complexity of the content itself. For example, it is more challenging to identify the implied theme of an extended essay than to identify the subject of a sentence. The progression of language arts learning from pre-kindergarten through high school should reflect a grade-level appropriate relationship between the level of critical thinking students use and the actual listening, speaking, reading, and writing experiences students have.
- ★ Content to be emphasized and assessed at specific grade levels (e.g., modes of writing or particular elements of grammar) is clearly identified.
- ★ Definitions for terms used in the standards document are compiled in an updated, expanded glossary.

Coherence

- ★ Eight overarching standards, the College- and Career- Ready English Language Arts standards, identify the knowledge and skills of the discipline that PK-12 students are to learn; each standard for every grade is delineated at the appropriate level.
- ★ A PK-12 vertical progression of standards, organized by the eight overarching standards, allows for educators to recognize how all the standards are intertwined to develop the total literacy of a student. When a skill is no longer present, mastery is implied; however, teachers must support previous grade level skills according to the mastery level of their students. This grade-to-grade, standard-by-standard progression can be viewed in a horizontal format, organized into overlapping grade bands.
- ★ Users must examine all of the standards for each grade level as a whole to have a coherent understanding of what is required of learners.
- ★ Because of the interconnectedness of language arts concepts and skills, various aspects of what students know and can do may be described in more than one standard. For example, learners conducting research (Standard 6) should use speaking and listening (Standard 1), the reading and writing processes (Standard 2), academic vocabulary (Standard 4), critical reading and writing (Standard 3), formal grammar and usage (Standard

5), and more than likely, they will access research and complete their research products because they are competent in multimodal literacies (Standard 7).

- ★ As students progress through grade levels, expectations encompass the content of the previous grades. Specifically in connection to reading assignments, the complexity of texts increases as students advance to later grades; however, simpler texts can be used effectively in order for learners to develop a deeper understanding of content (as examples – theme, figurative language, genre, structure).

Purpose

In addition to a commitment to clear and coherent standards, the writers were guided by four fundamental purposes of English language arts education.

- ★ All learners must hear the voices of their own heritage in the literature they encounter. They must be given the opportunity to speak with the voices they choose for themselves in the writing they create. The language arts classroom is a place that is inclusive of race, ethnicity, culture, and all perspectives that reflect the richness of human experience.
- ★ All learners are supported to become independent readers in a range of disciplines. The ability to interpret literature as well as informative, highly technical, and often lengthy reading passages on one's own is paramount in achieving academic and career success. Furthermore, learners who possess the skills required to read independently have the power to choose both what they *need* and what they *want* to read.
- ★ All learners are supported to become independent writers for a variety of audiences and a range of purposes. Four- and five-year-olds begin writing by verbally telling their ideas and stories to others, but their status as independent writers is not earned with mastery of the five-paragraph essay form in high school. Independent writers are able to access multiple strategies and formats to communicate and craft the message so that it resonates with any readers they want to reach.
- ★ A literate citizenry possesses the skills required to analyze, evaluate, act upon, and compose a wide range of communications. An ultimate goal of language arts education is the development of informed citizens who can contribute to the common good.

OKLAHOMA COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STUDENTS

The following eight standards encompass the content and competencies of English language arts. Each standard reflects both reading and writing applications, as these processes are bound together in the literate world.

The order of the standards is meant to suggest that students learn to read and write by speaking and listening on their way to the ultimate goal of becoming independent, critical readers and writers. At the same time, speaking and listening skills will continue to be developed as students progress through the grade levels, and concepts of independent reading and writing will be introduced even in the earliest grades.

Independent reading and writing is a natural outgrowth of strong standards implementation through rigorous curriculum. Standard 8 addresses the integrated nature of English language arts and acknowledges students' need to grow increasingly independent for college and career readiness. Being able to work independently and seek out opportunities to read and write is a significant part of life-long learning. These skills easily transfer to test taking, civic engagement, and citizen participation.

Standard 1: Speaking and Listening

Students will speak and listen effectively in a variety of situations including, but not limited to, responses to reading and writing.

Standard 2: Reading Foundations/Reading Process and Writing Process

Students will develop foundational skills for future reading success by working with sounds, letters, and text. Students will use recursive processes when reading and writing.

Standard 3: Critical Reading and Writing

Students will apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing.

Standard 4: Vocabulary

Students will expand their working vocabularies to effectively communicate and understand texts.

Standard 5: Language

Students will apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to reading and writing.

Standard 6: Research

Students will engage in inquiry to acquire, refine, and share knowledge.

Standard 7: Multimodal Literacies

Students will acquire, refine, and share knowledge through a variety of written, oral, visual, digital, non-verbal, and interactive texts.

Standard 8: Independent Reading and Writing

Students will read and write for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, academic and personal, for extended periods of time.

OKLAHOMA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS GUIDING RESEARCH

Well-recognized guiding research in language arts upholds Oklahoma’s Eight CCR Standards as a whole, especially the standards’ emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing: we read what others have written and write to create reading for audiences beyond ourselves. This guiding research deserves expanded commentary.

READING FOUNDATIONS

The International Literacy Association (ILA) and the Report of the Subgroups of the National Reading Panel have identified important components of reading. Foundational reading skills are included within Standard 2: Reading Process.

PRINT CONCEPTS - the ability to understand distinguishing features of print, including knowing that the print on the page contains a message, that print contains words that can be read aloud, that print has a distinct “right side up,” and that words are read from left to right.

PHONOLOGICAL/PHONEMIC AWARENESS - the understanding that words and syllables can be broken down into smaller units or phonemes is a strong predictor of later reading success.

PHONICS/DECODING - instruction that provides students with a consistent strategy to apply knowledge of sound-symbol relationships to assist them in identifying unfamiliar words.

VOCABULARY – a comprehension that a reader's understanding of text is inextricably linked to his or her vocabulary base that can be developed through reading, direct instruction, and student-centered activities.

READING FLUENCY – a recognition that fluent reading is characterized by reading words with automaticity and expression and recognizing words with speed, accuracy, and prosody; such automatic word recognition frees a student’s attention to comprehend the text.

COMPREHENSION/CRITICAL LITERACY – a recognition that the goal of reading is understanding text by establishing a purpose for reading and determining what is literal and what is implied in the text. Critical literacy involves the reader being able to make connections between parts of a text and between texts. In addition to these foundational components, skilled reading is influenced by the development of motivation and engagement, attitude, and stance toward reading and writing and the process of interacting with text before, during and after reading.

MOTIVATION and ENGAGEMENT - readers’ desire to interact with a text, influenced by their own self-efficacy as well as the genre, text level, author, illustrator, or topic of a text. The reader’s engagement with text may be influenced by motivation to interact with a specific text.

ATTITUDE - a reader’s attitude toward reading for academic or leisure purposes influences the probability that he/she will choose to become engaged in the reading process.

STANCE - whether a reader is approaching a text for pleasure or for information.

READING PROCESS - the importance of a reader being involved with the text before (setting a purpose for reading), during (reading, monitoring comprehension, investigating terms he/she does not understand), and after (referring back to the text to strengthen one's understanding, answer questions, engage in discussions and complete projects) reading.

WRITING PROCESS

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has identified a process, confirmed by research, that skilled writers use to create text. Because writing is recursive, the stages of the process may not occur in a linear sequence, but the writer may revert to an activity characteristic of an earlier stage. The stages of the writing process include –

PREWRITING - preparing to write by gathering and organizing ideas, generating a topic, and clarifying purpose, audience, and form.

DRAFTING - putting ideas down on paper with a focus on content while using notes or ideas generated during prewriting, without over-concern about adherence to grammatical rules, spelling, or mechanics.

REVISING - refining of content, not mechanics. Revision begins during the prewriting activity and continues through the final draft, as writers think again about the choices made for content and add, delete, or rearrange the material. Skilled writers may revise a draft several times, accepting suggestions for improvement from peers and teachers in addition to self-critique.

EDITING – making writing suitable for publication, including the correction of errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, sentence structure, and legibility so that errors in conventions do not interfere with an audience's ability to understand the message.

PUBLISHING - sharing the writer's product with and/or being evaluated by the intended audience, or readers in general. An authentic audience, one with whom the students want to communicate, is necessary for effective writing. It is important to note that not every piece that a writer begins will be carried through the entire writing process and polished for publication. However, each student should be expected to develop some pieces of writing thoroughly enough to be published. Publishing reinforces the knowledge that writing is an act of communication.

MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

The Multimodal Literacies advanced from the Oklahoma *Priority Academic Student Skills*’ Visual Literacy standard.

Text in the twenty-first century is not limited to print. Increasingly, texts are composites of print, images, sound, video, charts, and interactive links. Students need to know how to interpret and produce these kinds of texts for college, career, and informed citizenship. A statement by the NCTE Executive Committee (February 2013) confirms,

... the 21st century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities, and social trajectories of individuals and groups. Active, successful participants in this 21st century global society must be able to

- develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology;
- build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so as to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;
- design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information; create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts; and
- attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

The committee asserts,

The use of multimodal literacies has expanded the ways we acquire information and understand concepts. Ever since the days of illustrated books and maps texts have included visual elements for the purpose of imparting information. The contemporary difference is the ease with which we can combine words, images, sound, color, animation, video, and styles of print in projects so that they are part of our everyday lives and, at least by our youngest generation, often taken for granted.

What this means for teaching

The techniques of acquiring, organizing, evaluating, and creatively using multimodal information should become an increasingly important component of the English language arts classroom (November 2005).

Further Support

A large body of research has been consulted for each of Oklahoma’s Eight College- and Career- Ready Standards; these sources are provided in a complete bibliography which can be accessed on the Oklahoma Department of Education’s English Language Arts Standards webpage.

OKLAHOMA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EIGHT OVERARCHING STANDARDS IN READING AND WRITING

Academic standards establish objective performance criteria. They are used as guides for developing curriculum and instruction that is appropriately engaging, challenging, and sequenced for students. Acquiring language arts knowledge and skills is a recursive learning endeavor. Students need to revisit concepts as they develop language arts acumen at increasingly higher levels of complexity.

The eight overarching standards reinforce the recursive nature of the language arts, a non-linear process that involves the continuous and thoughtful refinement of concepts and skills. In each of the eight overarching English language arts standards, concepts and skills are expressed in terms of both reading and writing, intended to support integrated, rather than isolated, reading/writing instruction. Research supports this integrated model of English language arts, where students read to understand the meaning and composition of a text and write with readers' expectations and assumptions in mind.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COLLEGE- AND CAREER- STANDARDS

Standard 1: Speaking and Listening - Students will speak and listen effectively in a variety of situations including, but not limited to, responses to reading and writing.

Reading

Students will develop and apply effective communication skills through speaking and active listening.

Writing

Students will develop and apply effective communication skills through speaking and active listening to create individual and group projects and presentations.

Standard 2: Reading Foundations/Reading and Writing Process - Students will develop foundational skills for future reading success by working with sounds, letters, and text. Students will use a variety of recursive reading and writing processes.

Reading

Students will read and comprehend increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Writing

Students will develop and strengthen writing by engaging in a recursive process that includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Standard 3: Critical Reading and Critical Writing - Students will apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing.

Reading

Students will comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and respond to a variety of complex texts of all literary and informational genres from a variety of historical, cultural, ethnic, and global perspectives.

Writing

Students will write for varied purposes and audiences in all modes, using fully developed ideas, strong organization, well-chosen words, fluent sentences, and appropriate voice.

Standard 4: Vocabulary - Students will expand their working vocabularies to effectively communicate and understand texts.

Reading

Students will expand academic, domain-appropriate, grade-level vocabularies through reading, word study, and class discussion.

Writing

Students will apply knowledge of vocabularies to communicate by using descriptive, academic, and domain-appropriate abstract and concrete words in their writing.

Standard 5: Language - Students will apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to reading and writing.

Reading

Students will apply knowledge of grammar and rhetorical style to analyze and evaluate a variety of texts.

Writing

Students will demonstrate command of Standard English grammar, mechanics, and usage through writing and other modes of communication.

Standard 6: Research - Students will engage in inquiry to acquire, refine, and share knowledge.

Reading

Students will comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize resources to acquire and refine knowledge.

Writing

Students will summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create reports, projects, papers, texts, and presentations for multiple purposes.

Standard 7: Multimodal Literacies - Students will acquire, refine, and share knowledge through a variety of written, oral, visual, digital, non-verbal, and interactive texts.

Reading

Students will evaluate written, oral, visual, and digital texts in order to draw conclusions and analyze arguments.

Writing

Students will create multimodal texts to communicate knowledge and develop arguments.

Standard 8: Independent Reading and Writing - Students will read and write for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, academic and personal, for extended periods of time.

Reading

Students will read independently for a variety of purposes and for extended periods of time. Students will select appropriate texts for specific purposes.

Writing

Students will write independently for extended periods of time. Students will vary their modes of expression to suit audience and task.