

ELA Content Area Standards Clarifications Documents

Why write a clarifications document?

Welcome to Delaware's Statewide Recommended Curriculum in English Language Arts. This document represents many months of dedicated contribution from classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, academicians, and Delaware Department of Education specialists and associates.

The standards as they appear in this document have not been changed from New Directions written in 1995; however, ten years later, recommendations were made for thorough revision, as a result of a rigorous review process conducted by McREL (2004) and Achieve (2005). These recommendations called for the standards to avoid redundancy, for all standards to be defined and clarified, and for the addition of grade level expectations.

During 2005, teams of teachers, University of Delaware academicians, curriculum specialists, and Department of Education consultants worked to develop, revise, and review the standards and to write the grade level expectations. Teams of teachers conducted alignment studies to ensure the standards and grade level expectations are aligned with other national standards from the NCTE, the IRA, and Reading First. Further alignment studies confirm that the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) are also aligned from one grade to the next as well as to the expectations of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP).

Derived from the standards and the Grade Level Expectations, the components of the Delaware Recommended Curriculum in English Language Arts include

- model units,
- a glossary of terms,
- assessments,
- and course syllabi/course descriptions.

These components do not represent an entire curriculum of learning but rather provide guidance in how instruction should be designed or delivered. Therefore, the Delaware Recommended Curriculum sets standards of rigor by which schools and teachers may gauge their success and provides teachers with an outline of learning expectations and goals to drive assessments in the classroom.

The goals of the English Language Arts Content Standards are to:

- establish rigor in subject content for all K-12 students in Delaware.
- promote teaching strategies which assure success for all students.
- use assessments that measure how well students have met the standards.
- give local school districts the tools to align curriculum to the standards.
- hold districts accountable for demonstrating student progress toward meeting the standards.

Rationale for the English Language Arts Content Standards:

The ELA Content Standards prepare students to meet the linguistic demands of today and tomorrow's world. They support students' development in solving problems, gathering and using resources, working collaboratively, and assuming responsibility for their own learning. They further support teachers in preparing students to succeed in a highly challenging academic and competitive world through a framework that fosters high standards of performance.

Students will	<i>Rather than</i>
• engage in authentic and purposeful communication activities;	• <i>engage in skill and drill exercises isolated from meaningful application;</i>
• explore varied literary and technical genres of reading and purposes for writing;	• <i>be limited to a narrow range of writing purposes and literary genres (only fiction, only stories);</i>
• be instructed using materials appropriate to their individual and developmental needs;	• <i>work through prepackaged programs or materials assigned regardless of their individual needs;</i>
• be active participants in gathering information from a variety of sources;	• <i>be passive recipients of information from teachers and textbooks;</i>
• engage in integrated and meaningful communication;	• <i>consistently engage in activities that focus on each of the language arts separately</i>
• be assessed through ongoing instructional activities which require them to solve problems,	• <i>be tested with measures that assess the mastery of isolated facts or skills;</i>

<p>gather and use resources, work collaboratively, and assume responsibility for their learning;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access, organize, and communicate information using modern technology <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience a multicultural perspective throughout their language arts instruction; • reflect on their own literacy development and set goals for their literacy learning; • be involved in language arts activities throughout the curriculum; • be constructive and critical members of a community of lifelong learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be limited to the use of paper and pencil</i> <p><i>Rather than:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be exposed to a single perspective only;</i> • <i>always accept goals set by other without critical evaluation;</i> • <i>receive language arts instruction only during a specified time during the school day;</i> • <i>perceive learning as a series of unrelated events limited to school settings.</i>
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Therefore the English Language Arts Framework assumes that:

- language is at the heart of all human interaction.
- schools must use students’ home and early social experiences as the foundation for English language arts development.
- students’ linguistic diversity must be recognized, respected, and built upon.
- the language arts are important tools for acquiring concepts and knowledge in all content areas.
- students need to develop language and communication skills that will allow them to function in a complex society and in a variety of workplaces.

Standard 1- Students will use written and oral English appropriate for various purposes and audiences.

Standard One recognizes that students communicate ideas primarily through writing and speaking.

In order to meet the standard students should

- be aware of the factors which influence the effectiveness of their writing and speaking (e.g., audience, purpose, form).
- develop their capacity for organizing and supporting their thinking for a specific audience.
- develop a facility of language (e.g., word choice, style, sentence formation, conventions) which will allow them to communicate effectively.
- transfer their written and oral language proficiency to authentic settings.

As a result, teachers should develop real-world; authentic opportunities for learning that require students to demonstrate their communication proficiency, both written and oral.

Standard 2- Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing.

ELA Content Standard Two recognizes that effective listening, reading or viewing requires three processes: constructing, examining, and extending meaning from text.

The teaching of reading as a process is on- going: as a text becomes more rigorous, it is imperative that teachers continue teaching reading strategies at all levels.

In order to meet this standard, students should

- determine meaning by using word recognition skills, reading strategies, prior knowledge, textual clues.
- interpret text(s) through critical analysis, evaluation, and reasoning.
- extend meaning by transferring information gained to authentic situations (e.g., make decisions, solve problems, complete tasks, create products, enjoy literary experiences).

Designing their instruction with scientifically-based reading research, teachers should develop real-world, authentic opportunities for learning that enable students to become independent readers, listeners, and viewers.

Standard 3- Students will access, organize, and evaluate information gained through listening, reading, and viewing.

ELA Content Standard Three recognizes that in today's information-rich and technology-based world, students must be able to access, organize, and evaluate information in order to inform their thinking.

In order to meet this standard, students should be able to

- identify the question/issue/topic
- locate and verify reliable sources
- select appropriate information from these sources
- evaluate the information found
- synthesize information to determine what has been learned

As a result, teachers should design real-world, authentic opportunities for developing students'

- reading literacy (becoming an avid and capable reader).
- technology literacy (becoming a skilled user of technology tools).
- information literacy (becoming an organized investigator, a critical and creative thinker, an effective communicator, and a responsible information user).

Standard 4- Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.

ELA Content Standard Four recognizes that print and visual media can provide rich and timeless insights into key themes, dilemmas, and challenges faced in life.

In order to meet this standard, students should respond to print and visual media by

- making inferences and drawing conclusions.
- making connections to self, to other texts, and to the world.
- seeking a variety of other literary texts and media as a result of literary experiences.
- using texts as resources for understanding social, cultural, and political issues.

As a result, teachers should provide students exposure to a broad range of literature from various cultures, genres, and time periods; enabling them to find personal relevance in their reading, to use literature as a resource for shaping decisions, and to recognize literary merit.