
Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy Appendix

Including English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Adopted November 2011

K-12

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How to Read the Standards Documents

Overall Document Organization

The Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy comprise three main sections: a comprehensive K–5 section and two content area-specific sections for grades 6–12, one for ELA and one for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Three appendices accompany the main document.

Each section is divided into *strands*. K–5 and 6–12 ELA have reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language strands; the 6–12 History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical subjects section focuses on reading and writing. Each strand has a specific set of *College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards* that is identical across all grades and content areas.

Standards for each grade within K–8 and for grades 9–10 and 11–12 follow the CCR anchor standards in each strand. Each *grade-specific standard* corresponds to the same-numbered CCR anchor standard. Put another way, each CCR anchor standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader CCR statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations.

Individual CCR anchor standards can be identified by their strand, CCR status, and number (R.CCR.6, for example). Individual grade-specific standards can be identified by their strand, grade, and number (or number and letter, where applicable), so that RI.4.3 stands for Reading, Informational Text, grade 4, standard 3 and W.5.1a stands for Writing, grade 5, standard 1a. Strand designations can be found in brackets alongside the full strand title. The Montana Content Standards for ELA also correspond to the national Common Core Standards in numbering for easy reference.

Who is responsible for which portion of the Standards?

A single K–5 section lists standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language across the curriculum, reflecting the fact that most or all of the instruction students in these grades receive comes from one teacher. Grades 6–12 have two content area-specific sections, the first for the English language arts teacher and the second for teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Each section uses the same CCR anchor standards but also includes grade-specific standards tuned to the literacy requirements of the particular discipline(s). Specific standards for each grade also include language pertaining to Indian Education for All.

Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language

The descriptions that follow are not standards themselves but instead offer a portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual.

- **They demonstrate independence.**

Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker’s key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. They build on others’ ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood. Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.

- **They build strong content knowledge.**

Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.

- **They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.**

Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. They set and adjust purpose for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use as warranted by the task. They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition of an audience should affect tone when speaking and how the connotations of words affect meaning. They also know that different disciplines call for different types of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence in history, experimental evidence in science).

- **They comprehend as well as critique.**

Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author’s or speaker’s assumptions and premises and assess the veracity of claims and the soundness of reasoning.

- **They value evidence.**

Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.

- **They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.**

Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.

- **They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.**

Students appreciate that the twenty-first century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures, including those of American Indians, and specifically, Montana Indians, through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

Key Features of the Standards

Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension

The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college- and career-readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts.

Writing: Text types, responding to reading, and research

The standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Standard 9 stresses the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Because of the centrality of writing to most forms of inquiry, research standards are prominently included in this strand, though skills important to research are infused throughout the document.

Speaking and Listening: Flexible communication and collaboration

Including but not limited to skills necessary for formal presentations, the Speaking and Listening standards require students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills. Students must learn to work together, express and listen carefully to ideas, integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources. They must also evaluate what they hear, use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes, and adapt speech to context and task.

Language: Conventions, effective use, and vocabulary

The Language standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English, but they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among alternatives. The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships, and their nuances and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

[Appendices A, B and C of the Common Core Standards](#)

Appendix A contains supplementary material on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language as well as a glossary of key terms. Appendix B consists of text exemplars illustrating the complexity, quality, and range of reading appropriate for various grade levels with accompanying sample performance tasks. Appendix C includes annotated samples demonstrating at least adequate performance in student writing at various grade levels.

More on Text Complexity and Text Types

Text Complexity



It is important to remember that there are three factors to consider while measuring text complexity. They are as follows:

- Qualitative
- Quantitative
- Matching Reader to Text and Task

For more information, visit the [ELA Measuring Text Complexity](#) site of the Common Core State Standards.

Range of Text Types

The MT ELA Standards indicate a significant amount of reading of informational text. By necessity, this happens in all content areas, not simply in reading or writing content areas. The percentages below take into account a student's full day of learning. For more information, see new information on text complexity at the [Common Core Standards website](#). A quick glance chart is provided below for you to see the general suggested breakdown by grade-level of literature to informational text.

	Literature	Informational Text
PreK-5th Grade	50%	50%
6th-8th Grade	45%	55%
9th-12th Grade	30%	70%

IEFA lessons/framework/EU's

The Montana Content Standards for ELA and Literacy reflect Montana's constitutional mandate that all educators must provide instruction that includes the unique and distinct heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner (See [IEFA: MCA 20-1-501 Article X](#); and visit the [OPI homepage for resources and materials](#).)

Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages by Grade

The standards aim to align instruction with this framework so that many more students than at present can meet the requirements of college and career readiness. In K–5, the standards follow the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) lead in balancing the reading of literature with the reading of informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. In accord with NAEP’s growing emphasis on informational texts in the higher grades, the standards demand that a significant amount of reading of informational texts take place in and outside the ELA classroom. Fulfilling the standards for 6–12 ELA requires much greater attention to a specific category of informational text—literary nonfiction—than has been traditional. Because the ELA classroom must focus on literature (stories, drama, and poetry) as well as literary nonfiction, a great deal of informational reading in grades 6–12 must take place in other classes if the NAEP assessment framework is to be matched instructionally.¹ To measure students’ growth toward college and career readiness, assessments aligned with the standards should adhere to the distribution of texts across grades cited in the NAEP framework.

Grade	Literary	Informational
4	50%	50%
8	45%	55%
12	30%	70%

Source: National Assessment Governing Board. (2008). *Reading framework for the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Range of Text Types for K–5

Students in K–5 apply the Reading standards to the following range of text types, with texts selected from a broad range of cultures and periods.

Literature			Informational Text
Stories	Dramas	Poetry	Literary Nonfiction and Historical, Scientific, and Technical Texts
Includes children’s adventure stories, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth	Includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes	Includes nursery rhymes and the subgenres of the narrative poem, limerick, and free verse poem	Includes biographies and autobiographies; books about history, social studies, science, and the arts; technical texts, including directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps; and digital sources on a range of topics

¹ The percentages on the table reflect the sum of student reading, not just reading in ELA settings. Teachers of senior English classes, for example, are not required to devote 70 percent of reading to informational texts. Rather, 70 percent of student reading across the grade should be informational.

Language Progressive Skills, by Grade

The following skills, marked with an asterisk (*) in Language standards 1–3, are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking.

Standard	Grade(s)							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9–10	11–12
L.3.1f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.								
L.3.3a. Choose words and phrases for effect.								
L.4.1f. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.								
L.4.1g. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to/too/two</i> ; <i>there/their</i>).								
L.4.3a. Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.*								
L.4.3b. Choose punctuation for effect.								
L.5.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.								
L.5.2a. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.†								
L.6.1c. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.								
L.6.1d. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).								
L.6.1e. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.								
L.6.2a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.								
L.6.3a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.‡								
L.6.3b. Maintain consistency in style and tone.								
L.7.1c. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.								
L.7.3a. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.								
L.8.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.								
L.9–10.1a. Use parallel structure.								

* Subsumed by L.7.3a

† Subsumed by L.9–10.1a

‡ Subsumed by L.11–12.3a

Build Knowledge Systematically in English Language Arts K–5

Building knowledge systematically in English language arts is like giving children various pieces of a puzzle in each grade that, over time, will form one big picture. At a curricular or instructional level, texts—within and across grade levels—need to be selected around topics or themes that systematically develop the knowledge base of students. Within a grade level, there should be an adequate number of titles on a single topic that would allow children to study that topic for a sustained period. The knowledge children have learned about particular topics in early grade levels should then be expanded and developed in subsequent grade levels to ensure an increasingly deeper understanding of these topics. Children in the upper elementary grades will generally be expected to read these texts independently and reflect on them in writing. However, children in the early grades (particularly K–2) should participate in rich, structured conversations with an adult in response to the written texts that are read aloud, *orally* comparing and contrasting as well as analyzing and synthesizing, in the manner called for by the *Standards*.

Preparation for reading complex informational texts should begin at the very earliest elementary school grades. What follows is one example that uses domain-specific nonfiction titles across grade levels to illustrate how curriculum designers and classroom teachers can infuse the English language arts block with rich, age-appropriate content knowledge and vocabulary in history/social studies, science, and the arts. Having students listen to informational read-alouds in the early grades helps lay the necessary foundation for students’ reading and understanding of increasingly complex texts on their own in subsequent grades.

Exemplar Texts on a Topic Across Grades	K	1	2–3	4–5
<p>The Human Body</p> <p>Students can begin learning about the human body starting in kindergarten and then review and extend their learning during each subsequent grade.</p>	<p>The five senses and associated body parts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>My Five Senses</i> by Aliko (1989) ▪ <i>Hearing</i> by Maria Rius (1985) ▪ <i>Sight</i> by Maria Rius (1985) ▪ <i>Smell</i> by Maria Rius (1985) ▪ <i>Taste</i> by Maria Rius (1985) ▪ <i>Touch</i> by Maria Rius (1985) <p>Taking care of your body: Overview (hygiene, diet, exercise, rest)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>My Amazing Body: A First Look at Health & Fitness</i> by Pat Thomas (2001) ▪ <i>Get Up and Go!</i> by Nancy Carlson (2008) ▪ <i>Go Wash Up</i> by Doering Tourville (2008) ▪ <i>Sleep</i> by Paul Showers (1997) ▪ <i>Fuel the Body</i> by Doering Tourville (2008) 	<p>Introduction to the systems of the human body and associated body parts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Under Your Skin: Your Amazing Body</i> by Mick Manning (2007) ▪ <i>Me and My Amazing Body</i> by Joan Sweeney (1999) ▪ <i>The Human Body</i> by Gallimard Jeunesse (2007) ▪ <i>The Busy Body Book</i> by Lizzy Rockwell (2008) ▪ <i>First Encyclopedia of the Human Body</i> by Fiona Chandler (2004) <p>Taking care of your body: Germs, diseases, and preventing illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Germs Make Me Sick</i> by Marilyn Berger (1995) ▪ <i>Tiny Life on Your Body</i> by Christine Taylor-Butler (2005) ▪ <i>Germ Stories</i> by Arthur Kornberg (2007) ▪ <i>All About Scabs</i> by Genichiro Yagu (1998) 	<p>Digestive and excretory systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What Happens to a Hamburger</i> by Paul Showers (1985) ▪ <i>The Digestive System</i> by Christine Taylor-Butler (2008) ▪ <i>The Digestive System</i> by Rebecca L. Johnson (2006) ▪ <i>The Digestive System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007) <p>Taking care of your body: Healthy eating and nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Good Enough to Eat</i> by Lizzy Rockwell (1999) ▪ <i>Showdown at the Food Pyramid</i> by Rex Barron (2004) <p>Muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Mighty Muscular and Skeletal Systems</i> Crabtree Publishing (2009) ▪ <i>Muscles</i> by Seymour Simon (1998) ▪ <i>Bones</i> by Seymour Simon (1998) ▪ <i>The Astounding Nervous System</i> Crabtree Publishing (2009) ▪ <i>The Nervous System</i> by Joelle Riley (2004) 	<p>Circulatory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Heart</i> by Seymour Simon (2006) ▪ <i>The Heart and Circulation</i> by Carol Ballard (2005) ▪ <i>The Circulatory System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007) ▪ <i>The Amazing Circulatory System</i> by John Burstein (2009) <p>Respiratory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Lungs</i> by Seymour Simon (2007) ▪ <i>The Respiratory System</i> by Susan Glass (2004) ▪ <i>The Respiratory System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007) ▪ <i>The Remarkable Respiratory System</i> by John Burstein (2009) <p>Endocrine system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Endocrine System</i> by Rebecca Olien (2006) ▪ <i>The Exciting Endocrine System</i> by John Burstein (2009)

Distribution of Types of Writing

NAEP outlines a distribution across the grades of the core purposes and types of student writing. The 2011 NAEP framework, like the standards, cultivates the development of three mutually reinforcing writing capacities: writing to persuade, to explain, and to convey real or imagined experience. Evidence concerning the demands of college and career readiness gathered during development of the standards concurs with NAEP’s shifting emphases: standards for grades 9–12 describe writing in all three forms, but, consistent with NAEP, the overwhelming focus of writing throughout high school should be on arguments and informative/explanatory texts.² See following table.

Grade	To Persuade	To Explain	To Convey Experience
4	30%	35%	35%
8	35%	35%	30%
12	40%	40%	20%

Source: National Assessment Governing Board. (2007). *Writing framework for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress, pre-publication edition*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc.

Focus and Coherence in Instruction and Assessment

While the standards delineate specific expectations in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, each standard need not be a separate focus for instruction and assessment. Often, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task. For example, when editing writing, students address Writing standard 5 (“Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach”) as well as Language standards 1–3 (which deal with conventions of standard English and knowledge of language). When drawing evidence from literary and informational texts per Writing standard 9, students are also demonstrating their comprehension skill in relation to specific standards in Reading. When discussing something they have read or written, students are also demonstrating their speaking and listening skills. The CCR anchor standards themselves provide another source of focus and coherence.

² As with reading, the percentages in the table reflect the sum of student writing, not just writing in ELA settings.

Selecting Instructional Materials

New York State has created a large resource library and rubric for review of materials, as well as sample curriculum units that provide scope/sequence and suggested materials.

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/tri-state-quality-review-rubric-and-rating-process>

<https://www.engageny.org/common-core-curriculum>

Edreports is another resource for materials that have been reviewed by educators: <https://www.edreports.org/>

Glossary

For clarification of any glossary terms used throughout this document, you can find answers at the [Core Standards website](#).