
English Standards of Learning

for Virginia Public Schools



**Board of Education
Commonwealth of Virginia**

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English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools

**Adopted in January 2017 by the
Board of Education**

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Introduction

The goals of the *English Standards of Learning* are to teach students to read, write, research, and communicate. Students should be prepared to participate in society as literate citizens, equipped with the ability to think analytically, solve problems, communicate effectively, and collaborate with diverse groups in their communities, workplace, and postsecondary education. As students progress through the school years, they become active and involved learners and develop a full command of the English language, evidenced by their use of Standard English and their rich speaking and writing vocabularies.

Students become competent readers of a variety of texts and are encouraged to acquire a lifelong love of reading. In kindergarten through third grade, the primary goal is to teach all students to read fluently and to comprehend a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections that relate to all areas of the curriculum. In fourth through twelfth grades, students continue to acquire and refine strategies for comprehending and analyzing selections that encompass all literary genres, exemplify universal themes, and relate to all content areas. Students in high school become familiar with a wide variety of authors, nonfiction and fiction texts, and classic literary works.

Proficient use of the English language enables students to explore and articulate the complex issues and ideas encountered in public and personal life. By engaging in critical and creative thinking, students are able to solve problems and use language to further educational, career, and personal endeavors.

Organization of the English Standards of Learning

Standards for kindergarten through twelfth grade are organized in four related strands: Communication and Multimodal Literacies, Reading, Writing, and Research. Each grade level is preceded by an overview that describes the major concepts and skills that each student will be expected to understand and demonstrate. The vertically aligned standards reflect a comprehensive instructional program and document a progression of expected achievement in the development of skills.

In the Communication Strand, students learn to participate in classroom discussion and collaborate with diverse groups to achieve a common goal. In grades three through twelve, students learn to prepare, deliver, and critique oral presentations. In grades four through twelve the Communication strand includes a focus on experiencing and creating multimodal presentations. Students also analyze, develop and produce media messages. Students' home language and cultural literacies are the starting point for all language learning; competency in the use of Standard English is a goal for all students. Therefore, daily speaking opportunities, both formal and informal, are a part of every English curriculum.

Reading begins with an awareness of the concepts of print and the sounds and structure of oral and written language. Students in the primary grades acquire a strong foundation in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension strategies. Students continue to study the structure of words and language and refine comprehension strategies throughout all grades. In middle school and high school, students further analyze what they read and make comparisons across a wide variety of fiction, nonfiction, and cross-curricular texts. Students encounter new information and deepen their learning through reading of nonfiction texts. Students' appreciation for literary texts is enhanced by interaction with a broad array of classic and contemporary literature, which engages the reading skills of students and invites them to develop an appreciation for the power and beauty of the written word.

From kindergarten through twelfth grade, students become increasingly aware of the structure of language and the writing process. Students have the opportunity to explore writing in multiple forms, including narrative, expository, reflective, and persuasive/argumentative. Proficiency in written communication is achieved through frequent opportunities to apply skills for a variety of purposes and audiences. Therefore, daily writing experiences are essential for all students.

Research skills are also developed across grade levels. In this strand, students first learn to create and investigate research questions and access information. Later, students evaluate the validity of sources, appropriately credit sources, and synthesize information into a research-based product. Research skills are the foundation of college and career readiness; by encouraging autonomous problem solving and the ability to critically evaluate and synthesize information, students are prepared to adapt to real world situations.

Although the strands are developed separately, they are expected to be seamlessly integrated in the classroom. Standards that incorporate rigor in English help students develop the expected performance competencies.

Proficiency in reading, writing, communication, and research skills allows students to learn and use knowledge to make meaningful connections between their lives and academic disciplines. Through the rigorous application of the *English Standards of Learning*, students become critical thinkers, effective contributors, and global citizens.

Grade Four

In fourth grade, there is an increased emphasis on reading comprehension by comparing fiction and nonfiction texts, identifying cause and effect relationships, and differentiating between fact and opinion. The student will expand vocabulary using knowledge of roots, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and homophones. The student will continue to increase communication and collaboration skills by working in diverse teams as both a facilitator and a contributor. Students will deliver multimodal presentations and begin to examine media messages. The student will demonstrate comprehension of the research process by evaluating the relevance and reliability of information collected to create a research product. Additionally students will continue to understand the difference between plagiarism and using his/her own words.

Communication and Multimodal Literacies

- 4.1 The student will use effective oral communication skills in a variety of settings.
 - a) Listen actively and speak using appropriate discussion rules.
 - b) Contribute to group discussions across content areas.
 - c) Orally summarize information expressing ideas clearly.
 - d) Ask specific questions to gather ideas and opinions from others.
 - e) Use evidence to support opinions and conclusions.
 - f) Connect comments to the remarks of others.
 - g) Use specific vocabulary to communicate ideas.
 - h) Demonstrate the ability to collaborate with diverse teams, while sharing responsibility for the work.
 - i) Work respectfully with others, and show value for individual contributions.
- 4.2 The student will create and deliver multimodal, interactive presentations.
 - a) Locate, organize, and analyze information from a variety of multimodal texts.
 - b) Speak audibly with appropriate pacing.
 - c) Use language and style appropriate to the audience, topic, and purpose.
 - d) Make eye contact with the audience.
 - e) Ask and answer questions to gather or clarify information presented orally.
- 4.3 The student will learn how media messages are constructed and for what purposes.
 - a) Differentiate between auditory, visual, and written media messages and their purposes.
 - b) Compare and contrast how ideas and topics are depicted in a variety of media and formats.

Reading

- 4.4 The student will expand vocabulary when reading.
 - a) Use context to clarify meanings of unfamiliar words.
 - b) Use knowledge of roots, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and homophones to determine the meaning of new words.
 - c) Use word-reference materials.
 - d) Use vocabulary from other content areas.
 - e) Develop and use general and specialized vocabulary through speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

- 4.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction texts, and poetry.
- a) Describe how the choice of language, setting, and characters contributes to the development of plot.
 - b) Identify the theme(s).
 - c) Summarize events in the plot.
 - d) Identify genres.
 - e) Identify the narrator of a story and the speaker of a poem.
 - f) Identify the conflict and resolution.
 - g) Identify sensory words.
 - h) Draw conclusions/make inferences about text using the text as support.
 - i) Compare/contrast details in literary and informational nonfiction texts.
 - j) Identify cause and effect relationships.
 - k) Use reading strategies throughout the reading process to monitor comprehension.
 - l) Read with fluency, accuracy, and meaningful expression.
- 4.6 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts.
- a) Use text features such as type, headings, and graphics, to predict and categorize information.
 - b) Explain the author's purpose.
 - c) Identify the main idea.
 - d) Summarize supporting details.
 - e) Draw conclusions and make inferences using textual information as support.
 - f) Distinguish between cause and effect.
 - g) Distinguish between fact and opinion.
 - h) Use reading strategies throughout the reading process to monitor comprehension.
 - i) Read with fluency, accuracy, and meaningful expression.

Writing

- 4.7 The student will write in a variety of forms to include narrative, descriptive, opinion, and expository.
- a) Engage in writing as a process.
 - b) Select audience and purpose.
 - c) Narrow the topic.
 - d) Use a variety of prewriting strategies.
 - e) Recognize different forms of writing have different patterns of organization.
 - f) Organize writing to convey a central idea.
 - g) Write a clear topic sentence focusing on the main idea.
 - h) Write related paragraphs on the same topic.
 - i) Elaborate writing by including details to support the purpose.
 - j) Express an opinion about a topic and provide fact-based reasons for support.
 - k) Use transition words and prepositional phrases for sentence variety.
 - l) Utilize elements of style, including word choice and sentence variation.
 - m) Revise writing for clarity of content using specific vocabulary and information.

4.8 The student will self- and peer-edit writing for capitalization, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphing, and Standard English.

- a) Use subject-verb agreement.
- b) Eliminate double negatives.
- c) Use noun-pronoun agreement.
- d) Use commas in series, dates, and addresses.
- e) Correctly use adjectives and adverbs.
- f) Use quotation marks with dialogue.
- g) Use correct spelling including common homophones.
- h) Use singular possessives.

Research

4.9 The student will demonstrate comprehension of information resources to create a research product.

- a) Construct questions about a topic.
- b) Collect and organize information from multiple resources.
- c) Evaluate the relevance and reliability of information.
- d) Give credit to sources used in research.
- e) Avoid plagiarism and use own words.
- f) Demonstrate ethical use of the Internet.