ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Developed 2012-2013
Implemented 2013-2014

Mountain Brook Schools
32 Vine Street
Mountain Brook, AL 35213

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Mountain Brook Schools
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Mountain Brook Schools

Purpose

The purpose of Mountain Brook Schools is to provide an effective, challenging, and engaging education for every one of our students.

Curriculum Goals

Goal #1: Develop and implement an effective, challenging, and engaging curriculum which promotes the highest level of academic excellence and personal growth for each student.

Goal #2: Ensure that each individual is prepared to become an independent lifelong learner.

English Language Arts Philosophy

Mountain Brook Schools believes in creating and empowering communities of avid readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators so that every student critically and creatively interacts with written and spoken language in the classroom and for a lifetime.

ALABAMA'S K-12 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The 2010 *Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* is based upon the culmination of an extensive, broad-based national effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of Grades K-12 English language arts academic standards. These standards are intended to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

Alabama standards are based on work led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) and build on the foundation laid by states in their decades long work on crafting high-quality education standards. The standards also draw on the most important international models as well as research and input from numerous sources, including state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, educators from kindergarten through college, and parents, students, and other members of the public. In their design and content, refined through successive drafts and numerous rounds of feedback, the standards represent a synthesis of the best elements of standards-related work to date and an important advance over previous work.

As specified by the CCSSO and the NGA, the standards are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked. A particular standard was included in the document only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for college and career readiness in a twenty-first-century, globally competitive society. The standards are intended to be a living work: as new and better evidence emerges, the standards will be revised accordingly. The standards are an extension of a prior initiative led by the CCSSO and the NGA to develop College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language as well as in mathematics. The CCR Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Standards, released in draft form in September 2009, serve, in revised form, as the backbone for the present document. Grade-specific K-12 standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language translate the broad (and, for the earliest grades, seemingly distant) aims of the CCR standards into age and attainment-appropriate terms.

The standards set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, so too must the standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines. Literacy standards for Grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content-area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. It is important to note that the Grades 6-12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them. Alabama currently incorporates many of these standards into the standards for those subjects; however, future course of study committees may consider adopting them as content-area literacy standards.

As a natural outgrowth of meeting the charge to define college and career readiness, the standards also layout a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understandings students are expected to demonstrate have wide applicability outside the classroom or workplace. Students who meet the standards readily undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digital formats. They actively seek the wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and

informational texts that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens worldviews. They reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. In short, students who meet the standards develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language.

ALABAMA'S K-12 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The goal of the Alabama English language arts curriculum, represented on the banner at the top of the preceding page, is for all students to achieve English language literacy in order to be college and career ready. This is accomplished through a sequential, comprehensive curriculum that develops lifelong, critical thinkers who approach problem solving with confidence.

The academic content standards in this course of study are based on and include all standards in the 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts* & *Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* as well as supplemental content designed to strengthen the standards for Alabama's students. The standards are organized through the strands of Reading Foundations in Grades K-5, Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Each of these strands is represented by a piece of the puzzle that forms the shape of the state of Alabama. Content standards in all strands must be mastered in order for Alabama's students to achieve the goal of English language literacy.

Although the standards are presented in separate strands, they are as interrelated as are the pieces of the puzzle. No strand stands alone; all strands are necessary and depend on each other and must be connected in classroom instruction in order for students to become college and career ready. Reading foundations are established during the first six years of school; all other strands are addressed in each grade, K-12, as concepts and skills increase in rigor across the grades. **Reading Foundations** includes the wide range of processes from early recognition that letters and combinations of letters represent sounds to the more complex knowledge of roots and affixes, use of context clues, and fluent reading with accuracy and expression. **Reading Literature** standards range from the ability in the early grades to retell stories with key details and describe characters and settings to the ability in senior high grades to support analysis of how a theme develops over the course of a text. Standards in the **Reading Informational** Text strand are of equal importance to those in the Reading Literature strand and are essential to developing skills students use throughout their years in school and careers. Many standards are identical to literature standards but must be applied to informational text in each grade. **Writing** standards are demanding even in the early grades and present clear and specific expectations for opinion pieces, informative or explanatory text, and narrative text. Shared research projects and use of digital tools are important elements in this strand throughout the grades. **Speaking and Listening** standards require students to collaborate for both comprehension and presentation. Preparation for discussions is emphasized across the grades, as is following agreed-upon rules. Students learn to adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, which they apply in all subject areas and life endeavors. Standards included in the **Language** strand require early understanding and application of the conventions of Standard English, with specific increasing expectations listed at each grade level. Knowledge of language and its conventions is applied to writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Vocabulary development also receives continuing emphasis in the language strand.

The foundation of skills and knowledge in the K-12 English language arts curriculum should prepare all students to function as highly skilled communicators for personal and academic needs in elementary, middle, and high school as well as at the college and career level. With this important foundation, Alabama students can achieve the goal of English language literacy.

POSITION STATEMENTS

Appreciation of Literature and Enjoyment of Reading

It is important for teachers to provide students with a variety of authentic texts, allow students to self-select some of their reading materials, and increase efforts to inspire within students a genuine love of reading. In addition, efforts should be made to increase the quantity of reading to help students expand their reading abilities and bring them into regular contact with new words, sentence structures, and paragraph and story structures.

To help students cultivate a love for reading and an appreciation of literature, teachers should provide students with opportunities for sustained silent reading of student-selected, high-interest reading materials. Such opportunities allow students to naturally develop increased reading fluency and comprehension. However, self-selection of reading materials is not intended to replace direct instruction on assigned or more challenging reading selections. Direct instruction in reading strategies does not detract from reading enjoyment; rather it increases the pleasure that may be gained from reading literature. Substantial amounts of reading time in the classroom should be spent providing instruction in comprehension strategies such as identifying main idea, making inferences, identifying author purpose, distinguishing fact and opinion, summarizing, predicting, and questioning.

Fluency

Fluency is one of the five essential components of reading instruction. Fluency involves both the number of words read per minute and the ability to read with expression. Reading with expression includes combining words in phrases and clauses and pausing appropriately for commas and end punctuation. For most readers, fluent reading requires practice and instruction and cannot occur when students are reading text with many unfamiliar words. Teachers and other competent readers should model fluent reading with material at the student's independent reading level and then have the student read the same passage orally. To achieve reading fluency, several important strategies should be employed as part of reading instruction:

Allow for repeated readings,

Provide explanations of why certain words are grouped and connected,

Provide explanations of why pauses are appropriate at certain places,

Utilize high-interest poetry and story reading materials,

Allow for reading of quantities of materials without paying special attention to quality, and

Encourage use of decoding skills to aid in word recognition.

Differentiated Instruction and English Language Learners

Providing differentiated instruction is not only for English language learners (ELLs), nor for struggling readers or students with special needs, but for all students. Teachers are able to differentiate content, process, and product based upon the fact that learners differ in readiness, interests, and learning styles. Ongoing and diagnostic assessment is at the core of differentiated instruction. All students are able to learn—just not in the same way.

An increasing number of students in today's classrooms come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and have limited English proficiency. These students are not a homogeneous group of students learning English. Personal, cultural, and educational backgrounds differ significantly and, therefore, require instruction that meets their particular needs.

ELLs require instruction that makes content comprehensible, which accelerates acquisition of academic language proficiency. Appropriate instructional support should include access to literature in the student's heritage language for classroom and homework assignments, integration of multicultural literature and availability of bilingual books, meaningful hands-on activities that contextualize abstract concepts, and use of the heritage language in writing and speaking activities. Instructional strategies should be adjusted as language proficiency increases.

ELLs must simultaneously learn English as a new language and the content area of English language arts. The World-class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium's *English Language Proficiency Standards* (WIDA ELP Standards) can assist English language arts teachers in Alabama in designing language development objectives that

support and develop the English language and content knowledge and skills at the appropriate level of English proficiency. By reviewing the sample language objectives or model performance indicators (MPIs), language arts and reading teachers can determine reasonable learning expectations for ELLs.

Technology

Technology significantly enhances the curriculum and engages students actively in the learning process and therefore should be an integral part of the English language arts classroom. Furthermore, technology allows teachers the opportunity to extend learning experiences beyond the textbook to the realm of primary sources and alternate methods of instruction by appealing to various student learning styles. Teachers must incorporate progressive technological tools that interest and motivate students to use the English language for both construction of meaning and creative expression. Because access to ever-changing technology varies across the state, standards in this document are not dependent on a particular technology, but may be met through available local resources. Nonetheless, providing teachers with current technology is highly recommended if students are to have increased opportunities to develop literacy levels sufficient to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

Technological equipment and resources available for teacher and student use include, but are not limited to, overhead projectors, televisions, tape recorders, video cassette recorders (VCRs), digital video disk (DVD) players, computers, software programs, videoconferencing, e-mail, sound mixers, video recording and editing equipment, and digital cameras. Technology enhances the effectiveness of instruction, but does not replace the teacher. Teachers model and emphasize ways for students to use and manage technological equipment and resources. From essay writing and research to reading and assessment, instruction that incorporates multiple ways for obtaining information and enhancing expression serves to prepare Alabama's students to achieve excellence in English language literacy.

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.

Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing process that involves identifying student strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of designing an instructional program to meet individual needs. Teachers use the assessment process to modify the instructional program for remediation, enrichment, and effectiveness. Assessment for the English language arts classroom should be both informal and formal. Informal assessment may include teacher observations of students' notes, questions, or journal entries, whereas formal assessment may include essays or tests. Whenever possible, teachers should assess student learning using authentic or performance-based activities that actively engage students. Each strand of the language arts curriculum entails a process that can be assessed using authentic or performance-based assessments. In addition to assessing individual performance, group work should be assessed for skills vital to the real world such as problem solving and interpersonal communication.

Literacy

The English language arts curriculum for the twenty-first century includes the strands of reading foundations, literature, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening, and language that prepare students for their roles as citizens in a diverse society. As in the past, reading, writing, and critical thinking continue to play central roles in the development of literate individuals. As the world changes, however, students must assume a more active role in their learning as they inquire and research using technology and information from a variety of sources to solve complex problems and to compete in a global society. Students are learning how to locate and use information responsibly as they become better readers, writers, and thinkers. The purpose of the English language arts curriculum is to develop English language literacy in all students, which includes the ability to read, write, and speak effectively; to think critically in a diverse society; and to problem solve independently in a complex world. Ultimately, literacy enables students to fully participate in a democratic society. The preparation students receive in the English language arts classroom helps students move into the future as truly literate individuals.

Appendix D of this document, "Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Grades 6-12," makes clear that literacy is not a goal to be addressed in the English language arts class alone. Standards for teaching reading and writing skills in other content courses—especially in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects—clearly illustrate the role other content areas must play in literacy acquisition and development. Students should, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they should be able to construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS: NOTES ON RANGE AND CONTENT

Teachers of other subjects may rely upon collaboration with teachers of English language arts to teach literacy standards. For convenience and as a resource for collaboration with other teachers, these standards are included in Appendix D.

Student Reading

Reading is critical to building knowledge in history or social studies as well as in science and technical subjects. College- and career-ready reading in these fields requires an appreciation of the norms and conventions of each discipline, such as the kinds of evidence used in history and science; an understanding of domain-specific words and phrases; an attention to precise details; and the capacity to evaluate intricate arguments, synthesize complex information, and follow detailed descriptions of events and concepts. In history/social studies, for example, students need to be able to analyze, evaluate, and differentiate primary and secondary sources. When reading scientific and technical texts, students need to be able to gain knowledge from challenging texts that often make extensive use of elaborate diagrams and data to convey information and illustrate concepts. Students must be able to read complex informational texts in these fields with independence and confidence because the vast majority of reading in college and workforce training programs will be sophisticated nonfiction. It is important to note that these reading standards are meant to complement the specific content demands of the disciplines, not replace them.

Student Writing

For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college- and career-ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality, first-draft text under a tight deadline and the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and long time frames throughout the year.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below were developed prior to the development of grade-level standards. The Grades K-12 standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. The 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* are noted in brackets following Grades K-12 standards. Alabama standards that have been added to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are noted by a state of Alabama symbol (   ).

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. (See "Research to Build and Present Knowledge" for the CCR anchor standards for Writing on page xiv and "Comprehension and Collaboration" for the CCR anchor standards for Speaking and Listening on page xv for additional standards relevant to gathering, assessing, and applying information from print and digital sources.)
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below were developed prior to the development of grade-level standards. The Grades K-12 standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. The 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* are noted in brackets following Grades K-12 standards. Alabama standards that have been added to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are noted by a state of Alabama symbol (   ).

Text Types and Purposes

 (These broad types of writing include many subgenres. See Appendix A for further information regarding definitions of key writing types.)
1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative or explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames, including time for research, reflection, and revision, and shorter time frames such as a single sitting or a day or two for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below were developed prior to the development of grade-level standards. The Grades K-12 standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. The 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* are noted in brackets following Grades K-12 standards. Alabama standards that have been added to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are noted by a state of Alabama symbol (   ).

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below were developed prior to the development of grade-level standards. The Grades K-12 standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. The 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* are noted in brackets following Grades K-12 standards. Alabama standards that have been added to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are noted by a state of Alabama symbol (   ).

Conventions of Standard English
1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression

DIRECTIONS FOR INTERPRETING THE MINIMUM REQUIRED CONTENT

Academic content standards in this document are divided into grade clusters K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Each cluster contains an introduction that provides an overview of student characteristics, effective instructional strategies, and content addressed within that cluster. Following the introduction are the grade-level content standards organized by strands.

Strands are groups of related content standards and, in each grade, include Reading Standards for Literature, Reading Standards for Informational Text, Writing Standards, Speaking and Listening Standards, and Language Standards. The Grades K-5 section of the document also includes an additional strand, Reading Standards: Foundational Skills. In the illustration below, the strand is "Reading Standards for Literature."

Subcategories denote the specific purpose of a group of standards within a strand. In the example below, the subcategory is "Key Ideas and Details."

Content Standards are written below each strand and subcategory as shown in the illustration. Content standards define what students should know and be able to do at the conclusion of a grade. Content standards in this document contain minimum required content. The order in which standards are listed within a grade is not intended to convey a sequence for instruction or to dictate curriculum or teaching methods. Often two are more standards may be addressed together in one lesson or unit. Each content standard completes the phrase "*Students will*."

Content Standard Identifiers are found in brackets following most standards. These identifiers indicate the 2010 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) strand, grade, and number. For example, in the illustration below, the strand is Reading Standards for Literature (RL), the grade is Kindergarten (K), and the CCSS numbers are one (1), two (2), and three (3). Alabama standards that have been added to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are noted at the end of a standard by a state of Alabama symbol (as shown beside 1.a. below).

KINDERGARTEN
Students will:

Strand ⟶ **Reading Standards for Literature**

Subcategory

Content Standards

Content Standard Identifiers

Key Ideas and Details
1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text. (RL.K.1)
a. Make predictions to determine main idea and anticipate an ending.
2. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details. (RL.K.2)
3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story. (RL.K.3)