

English Language Arts – Sample Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements and Performance Indicators

Vermont Content Area Graduation Proficiencies and Performance Indicators:

- Are required by Section 2120.8 of the Education Quality Standards
- Reflect existing learning standards required by the Vermont State Board of Education
- Are designed to be used in conjunction with the Vermont Transferable Skill Graduation Proficiencies
- Include three sets of performance indicators differentiated by grade cluster – Elementary, Middle, and High School
- Serve as benchmarks of learning progression for elementary and middle school

This document is designed to:

- Assist Vermont Supervisory Union/School Districts (SU/SDs) and schools in developing learning expectations for their students
- Promote consistency across schools and SU/SDs for transfer students
- Increase personalization and flexibility for instruction and learning
- Help build curriculum and guide assessment development
- Support formative assessment practices, including the use of Performance Assessments
- Simultaneously provide data and insight into achievement when aligned with the transferable skills
- Support student achievement of the expected content standards

Spotlight on Equity: The Spotlight on Equity includes a list of considerations for the purpose of providing an equity literate and socially conscious lens to the teaching and learning of English Language Arts (ELA), as well as to recognize the historic exclusion and marginalization of groups and communities. The enumerated considerations are not a complete list, but rather a starting point from which educators can design historically and socially relevant learning opportunities in ELA; supplemental resources can be found on the [ELA webpage](#).

Contact Information:

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GRADUATION PROFICIENCIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS — MIDDLE SCHOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS — HIGH SCHOOL
<p>1. READING</p> <p>Comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a wide range and level of complex literary and informational texts.</p> <p>Spotlight on Equity</p> <p>Instructional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative authors, characters, and topics in classroom libraries • Access to texts in home languages • Access to multiple formats (braille, audio, etc.) for students with visual impairments • Potential for biased content • Strategies for vocabulary acquisition • Access to books at home <p>Content and Curricular Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify classroom library and required reading list by replacing or supplementing canonical texts with those that center the voices and lives of diverse people. • Use text sets to build vocabulary, develop background knowledge, and expose students to multiple perspectives. 	<p>a. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (1)</p> <p>b. Determine themes and central ideas of texts; summarize texts. (2)</p> <p>c. Analyze the relationships or interactions between individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in literary and informational text. (3)</p> <p>d. Interpret words and phrases and analyze how word choice shapes meaning and tone. (4)</p> <p>e. Analyze how individual components contribute to overall text structure. (5)</p> <p>f. Determine how author's point of view influences the meaning, style, and content of text. (6)</p> <p>g. Evaluate content and multiple sources of information presented in diverse media formats to address a question or solve a problem. (7)</p>	<p>a. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (1)</p> <p>b. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text. (2)</p> <p>c. Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events. (3)</p> <p>d. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. (4)</p>	<p>a. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support an analysis of the text, including any applicable primary or secondary sources, and determine both explicit and implicit meanings, such as inferences that can be drawn from the text and where the text leaves matters uncertain. (1)</p> <p>b. Determine the central ideas of the text and provide an objective summary. (2)</p> <p>c. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text. (3)</p> <p>d. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (4)</p>

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<p>1. READING (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-teach important vocabulary and necessary background knowledge to make complex texts accessible to readers of all ability levels, including English Learners. • Teach students about implicit bias and how to evaluate sources for biases. • Teach vocabulary strategies (e.g., using cognates to connect new vocabulary with similar words in a student’s first language). • Include lessons about how to access books (e.g., school and public library). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Evaluate content and multiple sources of information presented in diverse media formats to address a question or solve a problem. (7) i. Delineate and evaluate the argument and claims. (8) j. Integrate information from multiple sources to build knowledge and compare author's approaches or perspectives. (9) k. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. (10) l. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. (5) f. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. (6) g. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea. (7) h. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (4) f. Analyze how an author chose to structure a text and how that structure contributes to the text’s meaning and its aesthetic and rhetorical impact. (5) g. Determine an author’s point of view, purpose, or rhetorical strategies in a text, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text. (6)

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1. READING (cont.)		i. Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (9)	h. Evaluate content and multiple sources of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., print, digital, visual, quantitative) to address a question or solve a problem. (7) i. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning. (8) j. Integrate information from diverse sources into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources. (9)

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<p>2. WRITING - Text Types and Purposes</p> <p>Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p> <p>Spotlight on Equity</p> <p>Instructional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, historical, and cultural factors that influence how students write • Culture and first language of the writer • Relationship and power structure between writer and reader • Perceived value of academic classroom English over other forms of English • Importance of explicit instruction and modeling for authentic purposes and audiences • Varied and representative models of excellent writing • Variety of writing tools (e.g., voice to text, pen and paper, or computer) • Option to write in first language • Personal or sensitive nature of writing topics and expectations around sharing work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. (1) b. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas clearly and accurately. (2) c. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. (3) d. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing and focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (5) e. Use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (1) b. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. (2) c. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. (3) d. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (1) b. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (2) c. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. (3) d. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (5)

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<p>2. WRITING - Text Types and Purposes (cont.)</p> <p>Content and Curricular Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to explore writing through their own cultural lens and honor their work. • Explicitly teach about purpose and audience. • Teach about the evolution of the English language and historical language movements (e.g., plain language). • Place equal value on diverse forms of English that differ from standard academic classroom English (e.g., Ebonics, etc.). • Include varied and representative models of excellent writing. • Use a rubric or scoring criteria to make expectations clear for each assignment. • Encourage and accept use of a variety of writing tools (e.g., voice to text, pen and paper, or computer). • Allow students to choose topics and whether or not to share (and with whom). • Make sure students are aware of sharing requirements before they begin writing. 		<p>e. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (6)</p>	<p>e. Use technology to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. (6)</p>

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<p>3. WRITING - Research</p> <p>Conduct short and sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</p> <p>Spotlight on Equity</p> <p>Instructional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias of source material • Access to texts in first language • Access to multiple formats (braille, audio, etc.) for students with visual impairments • Multiple perspectives and interpretations of materials • Sensitive nature of some topics to specific communities • Expectation of background knowledge • Culturally dependent parameters around plagiarism and “text borrowing” <p>Content and Curricular Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students about implicit bias and how to evaluate sources for biases. • Allow students to choose topics and whether or not to share (and with whom). • Use text sets to build vocabulary and background knowledge and to expose students to multiple perspectives. • Explicitly teach expectations for citations, paraphrasing, and avoiding plagiarism. 	<p>a. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information and provide a list of sources. (8)</p> <p>b. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (9)</p>	<p>a. Collect relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source. (8)</p> <p>b. Quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. (8)</p> <p>c. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (9)</p>	<p>a. Collect relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using effective research and online-search methods, and determine the credibility and accuracy of the sources while assessing the strengths and limitations of each source for the specific task, purpose, and audience. (8)</p> <p>b. Integrate information into the text selectively and purposefully to maintain the flow of ideas, while following a standard citation format and avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source. (8)</p> <p>c. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (9)</p>

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<p>4. SPEAKING AND LISTENING - Discussion</p> <p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of discussions, responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives and expressing ideas clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>Spotlight on Equity</p> <p>Instructional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice and choice in topic • Diverse and flexible groupings to build knowledge and explore perspectives • Opportunities to share in first language • Ensuring all voices are heard • Modeling inclusive thinking and respectful use of language • Social, historical, and cultural factors that influence how students speak • Creating a safe space for honest sharing • Sensitive nature of some topics to specific communities <p>Content and Curricular Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach about civil discourse and respectful communication. 	<p>a. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade level topics and texts, following agreed upon rules and roles, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (1)</p> <p>b. Summarize information from various sources visually, quantitatively, and orally, explaining how claims are supported by reasons and evidence. (2)</p> <p>c. Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence. (3)</p>	<p>a. Refer to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (1)</p> <p>b. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly; track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed; pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. (1)</p> <p>c. Respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas. (1)</p>	<p>a. Refer to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. (1)</p> <p>b. Operate effectively in a group to promote a civil exchange of ideas that probes reasoning and evidence, ensuring a full range of positions on a topic or issue; set clear goals and deadlines and establish individual roles as needed; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; promote divergent and creative perspectives. (1)</p>

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<p>4. SPEAKING AND LISTENING – Discussion (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a culture of community at the beginning of the year. • Provide opportunities for students to discuss in multiple formats and languages. 		<p>d. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives behind its presentation. (2)</p> <p>e. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (3)</p>	<p>c. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task. (1)</p> <p>d. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data. (2)</p> <p>e. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, connections among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used. (3)</p>

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<p>5. SPEAKING AND LISTENING (Presentation)</p> <p>Present information, findings and supporting evidence conveying a clear and distinct perspective.</p> <p>Spotlight on Equity</p> <p>Instructional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice and choice in topic • Opportunities to share in first language • Social, historical, and cultural factors that influence how students speak • Creating a safe space for honest sharing • Sensitive nature of some topics to specific communities • Opportunities to present in multiple formats <p>Content and Curricular Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a culture of community at the beginning of the year. • Provide opportunities for students to present in multiple formats and languages. 	<p>a. Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. (4)</p> <p>b. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. (5)</p> <p>c. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation. (6)</p>	<p>a. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details. (4)</p> <p>b. Use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (4)</p> <p>c. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest. (5)</p> <p>d. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (6)</p>	<p>a. Develop a clear line of reasoning. (4)</p> <p>b. Address alternative or opposing perspectives. (4)</p> <p>c. Use appropriate organization, development, style, and substance appropriate to a range of purposes and audiences for both formal and informal tasks. (4)</p> <p>d. Make strategic use of digital media in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. (5)</p> <p>e. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (6)</p>

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<p>6. LANGUAGE</p> <p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <p>Spotlight on Equity</p> <p>Instructional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships among group affiliation, identity, and language • Differences among patterns in English dialects, other languages, and more conventionally written English • Perceived value of academic classroom English over other forms of English • Multilingual writers • Evolution of language • Linguistic resources of all students • Strategies for vocabulary acquisition (e.g., cognates to connect with first language) • Differences of grammar, usage, and syntax based on purpose and audience • Option to write or speak in first language <p>Content and Curricular Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly teach about differences among patterns in English dialects, other languages, and more conventionally written English. 	<p>a. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (2)</p> <p>b. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (3)</p> <p>c. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies including contextual analysis, morphological analysis, and reference materials. (4)</p> <p>d. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings, including similes, metaphors, idioms, adages, and proverbs. (5)</p>	<p>a. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (2)</p> <p>b. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (3)</p> <p>c. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (4)</p> <p>d. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (5)</p> <p>e. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. (6)</p> <p>f. Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (6)</p>	<p>a. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (2)</p> <p>b. 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. (3)</p> <p>c. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (4)</p> <p>d. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (5)</p> <p>e. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college- and career-readiness level. (6)</p>

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<p>6. LANGUAGE (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a rubric or scoring criteria to make expectations for the conventions of English grammar and usage clear for each assignment. • Teach about the continued evolution of the English language. • Teach vocabulary strategies (e.g., using cognates to connect new vocabulary with similar words in a student’s first language). • Teach about the ways in which purpose and audience dictate differences in grammar, usage, and syntax for written and spoken communication. 	<p>e. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships. (6)</p>		<p>f. Demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (6)</p>