

## The Arizona English Language Arts Standards 2016 Draft Introduction

### **Purpose of the Standards**

The Arizona English Language Arts Standards define the knowledge, understanding, and skills that need to be effectively taught and learned for all students to be ready to succeed in credit-bearing, college-entry and/or in the workplace. The standards present a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century.

Grade-specific K-12 standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language translate the broad aims of The Arizona English Language Arts Anchor Standards into age- and attainment-appropriate terms. These standards allow for an integrated approach to literacy to help guide instruction.

### **Process for the Development of the Standards**

In response to Governor Ducey's call to review and revise the Arizona English Language Arts Standards, an extended, broad-based effort was led by Arizona educators to create the next generation of successful K-12 Arizona students. The standards revision workgroups built the current standards using research and input from numerous models and sources, including state departments of education, scholars, K-12 teachers, academic and instructional coaches, curriculum directors, administrators, university professors, parents, students, and other members of the public.

The ELA Standards Review Work Group:

- Reviewed public feedback on the standards, identifying categories of public feedback within and across grade levels;
- Revised grade-level standards, applying grade-level expertise and research while addressing public feedback; and
- Developed the draft of the Arizona English Language Arts Standards for adoption by the Arizona State Board of Education.

The standards review process was made up of the following groups:

- ELA Standards Review Work Group (over 100 members) - fluid groups of diverse, Arizona, K-20 content experts responsible for creating working drafts of the standards;
- ELA Standards Subcommittee (14 members) - permanent working group members for each grade level who approved standards revision decisions and represented the thoughts of the grade-level work groups in public meetings;
- Arizona Standards Development Committee (17 members) - a group appointed by the Arizona State Board of Education and made up of business representatives, community members, parents, teachers, and university professors who approved decisions and drafts presented by the ELA Standards Subcommittee prior to presentations and final adoption by the Arizona State Board of Education; and
- Arizona State Board of Education - the final decision-making body for the standards.

**Comment [Q1]:** The purpose of the standards statement was developed and approved by the ELA and Mathematics working groups early in the process in order to guide their work. This has appeared in all versions of the introduction.

**Comment [Q2]:** In the interest of full transparency, the Working Group felt it was important that the process was clearly explained for all stakeholders. This section highlights the involvement of multiple stakeholders in Arizona in the process and illustrates how the standards were revised by Arizona educators for Arizona students. This has been present since the first draft of the education and is unchanged.

### What the Arizona English Language Arts Standards Are

The Arizona English Language Arts Standards are the foundation to guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment of English Language Arts programs throughout Arizona.

The Arizona English Language Arts Standards are:

- Focused in a coherent progression across grades K-12,
- Aligned with college and workforce expectations,
- Inclusive of rigorous content and applications of knowledge through higher-level thinking,
- Research and evidence based,
- Broad in nature allowing for the widest possible range of student learning, and
- Designed as an integrated approach to literacy.

### What The Arizona English Language Arts Standards Are NOT

#### The standards are neither curriculum nor instructional practices.

While the Arizona English Language Arts Standards may be used as the basis for curriculum, they are not a curriculum. Therefore, identifying the sequence of instruction at each grade - what will be taught and for how long- requires concerted effort and attention at the local level. Curricular tools, including textbooks, are selected by the district/school and adopted through the local governing board. The Arizona Department of Education defines standards, curriculum, and instruction as:

**Standards** are what a student needs to know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each grade. They build across grade levels in a progression of increasing understanding and through a range of cognitive demand levels. Standards are adopted at the state level by the Arizona State Board of Education.

**Curriculum** refers to resources used for teaching and learning the standards. Curricula are adopted at the local level.

**Instruction** refers to the methods or methodologies used by teachers to teach their students. Instructional techniques are employed by individual teachers in response to the needs of the students in their classes to help them progress through the curriculum in order to master the standards. Decisions about instructional practice and techniques are made at a local level.

#### The standards do not necessarily address students who are far below or far above the grade level.

No set of grade-specific standards can fully reflect the great variety in abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in any given classroom. The Arizona English Language Arts Standards do not define the intervention methods to support students who are well below or well above grade level

**Comment [RS3]:** The decision to create a bulleted list of what the standards are was based on public feedback.

**Comment [Q14]:** The initial round of public feedback illustrated that there was general confusion about the difference between standards, curriculum, and instruction. Also, the public feedback illustrated that there was confusion about what groups were responsible for standards, curriculum, and instruction. The Working Group felt it was important to include these definitions to help clarify this confusion.

**Comment [RS5]:** The working groups felt it was critical that a clear explanation of what the standards are, what they are used for, and what they are NOT used for was important information for all stakeholders. The Working Group especially felt that it was important to emphasize that standards need to be modified at the local level for students who are far above and far below grade level.

expectations. It is up to the teacher, school, and/or district to determine the most effective instructional methods and curricular resources to meet all students' needs.

## **Overview of the Standards**

### **Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension**

The Arizona Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Anchor Standard 10 (R.10) defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from, and make fuller use of text. This includes making an increasing number of connections among multiple ideas and texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts. An expanded definition of text complexity can be found in the glossary.

**Comment [RS6]:** The overview and explanation of text complexity in the introduction and glossary were directly impacted by the technical feedback of Dr. Stotsky, Dr. Abercrombie, and Dr. Pope. The decision was made to explain text complexity more thoroughly in the glossary. (See Glossary comments)

### **Reading: Foundational Skills (K-5)**

The Arizona Reading Foundational Skills standards are directed toward fostering students' understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions of the English writing system. These foundational skills are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines. Instruction should be differentiated; good readers will need much less practice with these concepts than struggling readers will. The point is to teach students what they need to learn and not what they already know- to discern when particular children or activities warrant more or less attention.

### **Writing: Text types, responding to reading, and research**

The Arizona Writing standards acknowledge the fact that while 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 all strands.

**Comment [RS7]:** The working groups wanted to clearly outline that the writing standards require a holistic approach that includes a wide variety of writing tasks, reading tasks, and considerations of task, purpose and audience.

### **Writing: Foundational Skills (K-3)**

The Arizona Writing Foundational Skills standards provide guidance to support handwriting skills, sound-letter concepts, and spelling conventions and patterns. Through frequent experiences starting at a young age, students begin to discover why and how we write, to generate ideas about how written

**Comment [RS8]:** The Writing: Foundational Skills standards are new and are unique to Arizona. The Working Group felt that it was important to highlight that these standards help students progress from learning to write to writing to learn.

language works, and to explore its uses. Beginning with pictures and progressing through phonetic spelling to more conventional writing, students develop the core skills for written communication. By the end of third grade, students will demonstrate proficiency in cursive writing. Foundational skills are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are a necessary and important component of a comprehensive reading and writing program.

### **Speaking and Listening: Flexible communication and collaboration**

The Arizona Speaking and Listening standards, including, **but not limited to**, skills necessary for formal presentations, require students to develop a range of broad 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; evaluate what they hear; use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes; and adapt speech to context and task.

**Comment [QJ9]:** The working groups felt that stakeholders understand that there is flexibility and opportunity for expansion in the standards.

### **Language: Conventions, effective use, and vocabulary**

The Arizona Language standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English, approaching language as a matter of craft and informed choice. The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships and nuances, and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking and listening; in fact, they are inseparable from each other.

### **Description of a Successful Arizona English Language Arts Student**

The description that follows offers a portrait of Arizona students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language, they are able to exhibit with increasing depth and consistency these capacities of a literate individual:

**Comment [RS10]:** The Working Group felt that it was important to highlight the qualities of a student who has successfully met the standards, which work together to form a truly literate individual.

- Demonstrate academic independence;
- Build strong content knowledge;
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline;
- Comprehend as well as critique;
- Use technology and digital media strategically and capably;
- Understand other perspectives and cultures.

## Design Features of Arizona's English Language Arts Standards

### Anchor standards corresponding to individual grade-level standards

The skills in the Arizona English Language Arts Anchor Standards define what a student should be able to do when they leave secondary school. The standards for each grade follow the same Anchor standards for each content area: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Each grade-specific standard corresponds to the same-numbered Anchor standard. Anchor standards "anchor" the document and define general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations.

## Organization of the English Language Arts Standards

Standards for each grade follow the same Anchor standards for each content area: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Each grade specific standard corresponds to the same numbered Anchor standard. Put another way, each Anchor standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations. Anchor standards "anchor" the document and define general cross-disciplinary literacy expectations.

**Comment [RS11]:** This definition was expanded upon based on Dr. Pope's technical feedback, as well as the working groups desire to help all stakeholders understand how the standards are organized.

**Arizona English Language Arts Anchor Standards for Reading**

The standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. Each Anchor standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader statement in grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations.

**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 media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.\*
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 on topics and issues of personal, social, and academic interest.

**Grade Level Standards**

**Reading Standards for Literature**

Grade 3 students:	Grade 4 students:	Grade 5 students:
<b>Key Ideas and Details</b>		
1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. <b>(3.RL.1)</b>	1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. <b>(4.RL.1)</b>	1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. <b>(5.RL.1)</b>

**Each Anchor standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations.**

### K-12 vertical progression of the standards

A K-12 vertical progression of Arizona's English Language Arts Standards, guided by the Anchor standards, allows educators to recognize how all the standards are interconnected to develop the total literacy of a student. Mastery is implied when a skill is no longer included in the vertical progression. However, educators must support previous grade level skills according to the mastery level of their students.

### An integrated model of literacy

Although the Arizona English Language Arts Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout this document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.

### Standard coding (How to identify a standard)

In the Arizona English Language Arts Standards, grade levels are divided into four strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Each strand is headed by a strand-specific set of Anchor standards that is identical across all grades. Individual Anchor standards can be identified by their strand and number (W.6, for example). Additionally, individual grade-specific standards can be identified by their grade, strand, and number so that 5.RL.3, for example, stands for grade 5, Reading Literature (strand), standard 3.

**Comment [QJ12]:** The explanations underneath “strand” and “cluster” in the graphic below were added based on Dr. Pope’s technical feedback.

