



Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium Senior Years English Language Arts Essential Learning Overview

1. Acknowledgements
2. Introduction –
 - What is literacy?
3. Senior Years ELA Essential Learning
 - Enduring Understandings – ELA Processes
 - Enduring Understandings – Content
 - Essential Skills
 - Specific Learning Outcomes
 - Assessment and Reporting Strategies
4. Grade Book Sample



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Introduction

This draft document is intended to support Senior Years teachers in planning, teaching, assessing, and reporting on their English Language Arts programs. The document has been designed to correlate the categories from the new provincial report card with the clusters, essential learning (big ideas), and specific learning outcomes from the Manitoba English Language Arts curriculum. It is important to note that the attached templates are intended to serve as an example of how teachers might identify essential learning and cluster specific learning outcomes. Therefore, the templates may be viewed as a pathway and support document to help teachers in implementing the English Language Arts curriculum and the new provincial report card. Teachers are encouraged to continue to innovate their practice and inspire their students.

The document should be used alongside the Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes for English Language Arts, as well as the Foundation for Implementation documents.

What is literacy? (*Dispositions, Values & Attitudes*)

A literate student is one who:

- takes risks in language learning.
- is tenacious about language learning.
- listens to others and shares own insights into language learning.
- reads, hears, views, and understands a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- grows in ability to glean literal and inferential information from oral, literary, and media text.
- is a strategic learner – uses strategies effectively and flexibly to read, understand, and respond to texts.
- is curious about words, ideas, and concepts – plays with language; shows a language “spirit.”
- works effectively in groups and cooperates/collaborates with others.
- expresses experiences, ideas, knowledge, and feelings both formally and informally.
- effectively and flexibly engages the writing process.
- expresses ideas and information using a variety of forms/genres and techniques.

Senior Years ELA – Essential Learning

Report Card Categories		Enduring Understandings	Essential Skills	Essential Questions	Specific Learning Outcomes	Assessment and Reporting Strategies
Comprehension Suggested course weight 35 – 40%	↓	1. Enduring Understandings – ELA processes See pages 5-6	See pages 9-10	To Be Determined	See page 11	See pages 12-13
	Reading, Listening and Viewing					
Communication Suggested course weight 35 – 40%	Writing, Speaking and Representing	2. Enduring Understandings – Content See pages 7-8				
Critical Thinking Suggested course weight 20 – 30%						

Enduring Understandings:

1. Enduring understandings (as they relate to *ELA processes*)

Enduring understandings are what matter most in a program of studies. It is what one year's coursework contributes to the next; it is what is sustained from one year to the next, regardless of whether a student is studying in a literary- or transactional-focus course. The report card sets up the enduring understanding framework as a set of three key points: comprehension (reading, listening, and viewing), communication (writing, speaking, and representing), and critical thinking. A student, upon graduation, should be able to comprehend varied forms of texts, and how the selected form is effective in achieving the purposes for which they were produced and for the audience for whom they were produced. That student should also be able to critically examine any and all ideas presented in those texts and then communicate about that wide range of ideas using multiple forms, as appropriate for their intended purpose and audience.

Comprehension

- **Students actively make sense of what they are reading, connect what they are reading to their lives, and judge what they think of ideas.**
 - UNDERSTAND (UN): Can actively think and interact with texts and others to understand what the text says (on the lines)
 - INTERPRET (IN): Can go beyond summary to connect personal knowledge and experiences, and interpret the meaning of the text (between the lines)
 - RESPOND CRITICALLY (RC): Can consider the ideas of text in a broader context, making informed judgements about their relative importance, artistry, validity, relevance ... (beyond the lines)
 - [Texts = oral, written, and media texts]

Communication

- **Students can generate, develop, and present ideas clearly and effectively for an audience and purpose.**
 - IDEAS (ID): Can express and develop ideas; maintain focus within a specific form
 - ORGANIZATION (OR): Can organize ideas – structure, sequence, techniques, and transitions appropriate to audience and purpose
 - LANGUAGE USE (LU): Can communicate with clarity and artistry (word choice, syntax, arrangement of ideas)
 - CONVENTIONS (CV): Can use conventions appropriate to audience, purpose, and form (especially standard, edited Canadian English)

Critical Thinking

- **Students can use language to make sense of experiences, navigate information, know themselves, and build community.**
 - EXPLORE and EXTEND (EE): Can engage in exploratory talk – discover/explore AND clarify/extend
 - PLAN and FOCUS (PF): Can plan and focus (e.g. ask thoughtful questions to focus inquiry, considering the parameters of time, purpose, and resources)
 - SELECT and PROCESS (SP): Can select and process (assess and select from sources, especially critical thinking of online texts) and organize, record, and evaluate (in a creative or critical process)
 - WORK in COMMUNITY (WC): Can work productively with others in language learning
 - SELECT, DEFINE, and DEVELOP the values and attitudes that will assist them first with understanding the discipline with some depth, and then to meaningfully connect ideas from the course content to themselves, their community, and society at large around them. Being able to communicate effectively (to comprehensively explain the topic and achieve the purpose for the intended audience) also shows appropriate levels of critical thinking.

Some possible/additional questions regarding *enduring understandings for ELA processes* might include:

- Who/what determines the standards regarding comprehension, communication, and critical thinking that should describe students when they complete the course?
- Must all students achieve the same standards in comprehension, communication, and critical thinking?
- How do we incorporate success for all learners (adapting for specific needs; modifying with the appropriate supports) into varied classrooms?

2. Enduring understandings (as they relate to *content*)

The key concepts or big ideas will be determined or dictated by the themes that are studied in a class. There are no required texts, either to be read or to be produced, identified within the curricular structure, so every text – any text – is a legitimate option for use within a course. The course designations of Foundational, Literary, Comprehensive, or Transactional will provide the direction for resource selection and assignment design. Providing students with as much choice as possible seems the logical way of engaging the full range of ideological foundations, cultures, ethnicities, and other differences found within class demographics. Teachers would do well to consider topics, resources, and response methods that align with student interest, as a higher level of interest among the students often translates into a more engaged student (the Grade 12 provincial ELA exam attempts to honour this research by the pursuit of topics relevant for students).

Building units around themes seems to effectively encourage teachers to not be bound exclusively to resources or activities. A “resource-focused teacher” is one who always teaches Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in Grade 10, *Macbeth* in Grade 11, and *Hamlet* in Grade 12. Other Grade 10 resources would include *April Raintree*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Tapestry* (short story anthology). Resources determine what will be taught. An “activities-focused teacher” is one who assigns questions, debates, essay writing, short-story writing, poster production, mask-making, collages, reading journals, one-act plays, monologues, and speeches, with quizzes, tests, and exams to conclude. Activities fill the lesson plans. Neither the resource- nor activity-based approach makes the same clear, logical connection between the curriculum, the student, and what is to be assessed and reported. A theme-based approach can be helpful in keeping teachers on track to develop lessons that teach reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing, rather than getting caught up in teaching resources or planning one-after-another engaging activity.

Some themes that are engaging for teenagers include (this list has been generated through conversation with students in Grade 10 through 12, and represents only some options to get you started):

Ambition	Body image	Child labour	Consumerism
Coming of age	Community	Crime	Discrimination – for any reason
Entertainment	Environmental issues	Family	Friendship
Holocaust	Homelessness	Human rights	Justice system
Political despots	Poverty	Privilege	Responsibility
Technology	Social justice	Travel	Media influence
Multiculturalism	Values/beliefs	Violence	War

Some possible additional questions regarding *enduring understandings* for *ELA content* might include:

- Which reading strategies will I teach/use in this unit?
- What range of response options will I build into this unit for the students?
- Which response forms will fulfill this unit's requirements?
- What complementary resources can I use to develop a clearly developed central idea for the theme?
- What teaching strategies will I use in this unit?
- Are there specific skills – writing, representing, speaking – that I will incorporate and have the students develop in this unit?
- Is this topic relevant and potentially engaging for my students?
- How can I use this unit to move students from resources/texts they already know and appreciate, to new, different, potentially more advanced or sophisticated ones?

Essential Skills

Breaking down the enduring understandings into their component parts identifies the essential skills: what a student needs to be able to do in order to demonstrate they “get it,” that they look like what a graduate of the course is supposed to look like. Essential skills incorporate a diverse range of skills, each of which develop within the individual and grow in sophistication over time.

Comprehension and communication, identified as two of the enduring understandings, can be reduced into essential skills sets which represent the six strands of the ELA program – reading, listening, viewing, writing, speaking, and representing. Further deconstructing each of those skill sets allows a teacher to plan strategies to address the learning needs of students, regardless of their assessed learning levels when they enter the class.

The following is a breakdown of some specific skill elements connected to one comprehension area (reading) and one communication area (writing). There will be slight adjustments and additions for the other two areas linked to comprehension and communication; teachers can then complete similar charts for listening, viewing, speaking, and representing.

Reading			
<i>What is it?</i>	<i>Types of ...</i>	<i>Purposes for ...</i>	<i>Strategies for ...</i>
Decoding Phonics Whole language Meaning-making Interpretive lenses	Close Skimming Hyper-text links Speed Scanning Oral Silent	Information Pleasure Academic Entertainment Instructions/complete a task Vicarious experiences	Predicting Making connections to self Pre-reading scaffolding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • word lists • complementary images • surrounded by supplemental texts • identify the purpose for reading • explaining what the response requirements will be Use of cues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • index, table of contents, cover, title, secondary titles Vocabulary highlights Interpretive stance(s) required or possible for this text

Writing			
<i>What is it?</i>	<i>Types of ...</i>	<i>Purposes for ...</i>	<i>Strategies for ...</i>
Coding Symbols Words Sentences Paragraphs Extended texts	Letters Commands Stories Essays Short-hand Long-hand Computer-generated Texting	Message Informing Persuading Entertaining Therapy Manipulation Community-building Encouragement	Central idea Form Purpose Intended audience(s) Development of ideas/details Organization – micro and macro Genre Create effect/desired impact Techniques and elements

Some possible additional questions regarding *essential skills* for ELA might include:

- When does a student use which reading strategy?
- What type of connections should students' work reveal between their central idea, selected response form, intended audience, purpose, and the context in which they will encounter the text?
- Does writing need to be the default response form?
- How do I adapt to acknowledge differences between students' past experiences, cultures, values, and existing skills sets?
- How do we assess these categories? (Assessment is not by assignment, but by outcomes.)

Specific Learning Outcomes

Outcomes are the most specific elements that allow students the opportunity to demonstrate that they are developing their skills and attitudes throughout their school training and experiences. Each of the 56 specific outcomes can be linked to one or more of the essential skills areas (see below for some examples and then again on the assignment planning sample sheets), and those are the building blocks of assessment. Any individual outcome might well fit into more than one category, and is then assessed by a teacher's discretion. As instructors, we should be assessing whether or not a student is demonstrating these outcomes, rather than assessing whole assignments for their record books. Clustering outcomes for assignments makes assignment design easier, as well as assessment of student performance on those outcomes as found within assignments.

Examples:

<i>Reading:</i>	2.1.1; 2.1.2; 2.1.3; 2.1.4
<i>Writing:</i>	2.3.1; 2.3.2; 2.3.3; 2.3.4; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3
<i>Speaking:</i>	1.1.3; 2.3.3; 2.3.4; 4.4.2; 5.1.3
<i>Listening:</i>	1.1.2; 1.2.1; 1.2.3; 1.2.4; 4.4.3
<i>Viewing:</i>	2.2.1; 2.3.2; 4.1.1; 2.2.3
<i>Representing:</i>	1.1.3; 2.2.1; 2.3.1; 4.2.4; 4.2.5
<i>Critical thinking:</i>	1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.1.4; 2.2.2; 2.2.3; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 5.2.2

Some possible additional questions regarding *outcomes* for ELA might include:

- Do I have to assess all 56 outcomes separately? (Create outcome clusters for assignments and recording.)
- How many times should I assess each outcome or outcome cluster? (Look for patterns: most common, most recent.)
- Do all 56 outcomes need to be separately identified in my records book?
- How frequently do I have to use an outcome during the course?
- Do I have to use an equal number of outcomes in each of the ELA strands? (Remember that, although writing and reading may be the two strands that are the most common default approaches to ELA, they are not the only two strands. The additional strands allow for many easy adaptations for students who need additional approaches and opportunities to support their learning.)

Assessment and Reporting Strategies

Allowing students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, their ability to handle the different outcomes that make up the course requirements, is important. Teaching, using **formative assessment** (checklists, anecdotal comments, first-draft feedback from peers and teachers with specific directives about improvements possible), provides students the opportunity to practise before having to perform with a **summative task** (assessed with a rubric – Manitoba Education uses a five-point scale, or pass/fail). Assessment *as education* (on-going formative feedback), assessment *of education* (on-going reflection of the teacher about what is happening, combined with dialogue with students and professional colleagues), and assessment *for education* (recording and reporting student progress) are all phases that apply to the work a teacher does while planning a unit, while orchestrating the unit with the students, and upon completion of the unit.

Descriptors commonly associated with Manitoba Education’s five-point scale are as follows:

Out of Range	Below Level		At Level		Above Level
0	1	2	3	4	5
Off topic No connections made to the assignment Did not understand the assignment	Limited Undeveloped Vague Illogical Superficial <i>Very</i> – Place the word <i>very</i> in front of the terms to differentiate between a 1 and a 2, e.g. <i>very limited</i>		Clear Developed Logical Coherent Specific <i>Somewhat</i> – Place the word <i>somewhat</i> in front of the terms to differentiate between a 3 and a 4, e.g. <i>somewhat developed</i>		Sophisticated Insightful Thorough Perceptive Precise

The Grade Book *(see attached samples)*

The Grade Book is used to record the wide range of information useful to a teacher when reflecting on the progress of each student by identifying their performance for each of the outcomes or outcome clusters. A teacher might hope to be able to identify the most common results for an outcome cluster or the patterns in student performance, revealing how well a student is progressing (What is the learning curve? Is the last result better than previous results?). Observation (of student work by the teacher), conversation (between the teacher and the student), and product assessment can all translate into a collection of anecdotal references, check lists, and rubric-assessed performances to produce a rich, thick collection used for determining a student's grade.

Phrases incorporating the key elements of an outcome can be used to identify both a student's strengths and challenges in the ELA program as per the expectations for the Report Card Comments. Plans for the next steps a student might take to improve in one or more of their challenges grow out of the specific needs a student demonstrates regarding outcome clusters.

Some possible additional questions regarding *assessment and reporting* for ELA might include:

- How much formative feedback should occur before a summative task?
- Is there a certain amount, or number of entries, that should appear in the grade book?
- How does one keep track of so many elements (formative, summative, anecdotal – observations, conversations, 56 outcomes reduced into outcome clusters), for so many students in one grade book?
- How often should the teacher be reporting about student performance to the student, to administration, or to the parents?
- Is there a role for collaboration in assessment?

Possible mark sheet (per student) for **Senior Years – English Language Arts**

Name: _____

Course: _____

Date	Assignment	Outcome Clusters	Comprehension			Communication			Critical Thinking
			Reading	Listening	Viewing	Writing	Speaking	Representing	

Possible mark sheet for English Language Arts – Grade 11

Name: _____

Course: _____

Date	Assignment	Outcome Clusters	Comprehension			Communication			Critical Thinking
			Reading	Listening	Viewing	Writing	Speaking	Representing	
	Experience texts - brochures - magazines - newspapers - radio & TV - on-line sites	2.1 2.2 2.3 3.2.5 5.1.2	<i>Record observations about students about</i> <i>Create questionnaires to discover in</i>	<i>tions & conversations regarding reflect the ideas these texts.</i>	<i>sations with have chosen. the texts or the students</i>				Interpret the messages from the various texts; evaluate how language choices connect to their intended audience and possible purpose.
	Create an ethical travel package	4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4				brochure	explain ethical angle	with pictures	Assess how ethics can be applied to the travel world.