ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Standards Alignment Toolkit

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Jan. 24, 2025

Contents

CONTENTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT TOOLKIT

The Four Fundamentals of School Improvement

In Kansas, building capacity to elevate and unlock opportunities for all students and reduce limitations involves the Four Fundamentals at the district, school building, and classroom levels:

Structured Literacy

Structured Literacy refers to the explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and cumulative approach to teaching literacy that acknowledges the value of both word recognition and oral and written language comprehension as evidenced in all grades and disciplines.

Standards Alignment

Standards Alignment has clearly defined student learning expectations aligned to Kansas State English Language Arts (ELA) Standards and supported with evidence-based instruction and materials. Content, lessons, instruction, and materials should support the ELA standards.

Balanced Assessment

A Balanced Assessment System refers to a collection of varying types of assessments that provide feedback regarding instruction and student learning with a variety of assessment types, such as formative and summative assessments. This system utilizes assessment as a measure for learning and of learning. The Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) is designed to measure student understanding of the ELA standards, benchmarks, and skills.

High Quality Instruction

High-Quality Instruction refers to implementation of evidence-based lesson design that reflects high expectations, meaningful student engagement, and learning activities aligned to the Kansas ELA Standards. Inquiry-based ELA work encourages students to analyze complex questions to build knowledge that is deep and lasting. A data-driven system of differentiated supports is necessary to help each student meet rigorous state standards.

Standards Alignment

Curriculum/Standards alignment involves several key steps to ensure that educational content being taught is coherent, relevant, and effectively representative of what students at each grade level should know and be able to do. It involves three-way alignment among standards (the expectation we hold), curriculum (the intentional plan and resources we have for guiding students to learn what is necessary to meet the standard), and assessment (an examination of to what extent the student meets the standard).

Carefully aligning curriculum to standards is a process that takes time. It also requires intentionality, communication, and a desire to closely reflect on the effectiveness of our practices and our resources. It is a process that is most successful when teachers are fully engaged. Carefully planned professional learning will be needed. The following steps will lead educators through the process:

1. **Define Learning Outcomes** by close examination of the standards:
    a. Articulate the details of the desired learning outcomes for students.
    b. Build educator knowledge related to the rigor and text complexity necessary for students to meet grade level expectations.
2. **Vertical Alignment**:
    a. Clarify content across grade levels/grade bands (vertical alignment) recognizing the specific expectations for the level of understanding students are expected to have at that grade level, the grade above, and the grade below.
    b. Identify how skills and knowledge are sequentially built from one grade to the next.
3. **Horizontal Alignment**:
    a. Identify how/when the content standards are addressed within a grade level (horizontal alignment).
    b. Ensure district-wide instructional scope and sequence aligns with Kansas ELA standards.
    c. Intentionally collaborate to coordinate instruction of grade level content across subjects (e.g., integrated units).
    d. Review standards and the assessment blueprint.
4. **Analyze Existing Curriculum**:
    a. Review the current curriculum adopted and used; in review, consider any required or recommended learning objectives, content, and assessments.
    b. Focus on the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and text complexity for each grade level to assure adequate rigor for grade level.
    c. Identify any gaps, redundancies, or outdated resources, and address them.
    d. Identify if core curriculum is aligned with the components of structured literacy (explicit, systematic, cumulative, scaffolded, highly interactive, multimodal, specific feedback, and data driven) and elements of structured literacy (phonemes and graphemes, morphemes, vocabulary, text structure, orthographic conventions, stress and syllable patterns, critical thinking, sentence structure/grammar).

5. **Assessments Alignment and Timeline**:
    a. Align all assessments (quizzes, tests, projects) with learning outcomes.
    b. Select continuing formative assessments that will inform instruction.
6. **Map Content and Skills**:
    a. Map existing content (lessons, units, activities) to the defined learning outcomes
    b. Consider nuances in reading, writing, and display of comprehension in building and measuring learning
    c. Ensure that text used in instruction is at the appropriate level of complexity
    d. Ensure curriculum is aligned with structured literacy. Identify specific gaps of content or skills that may exist and identify or create supplemental materials to fill the gaps
7. **Monitor and Revise**:
    a. Continuously monitor student performance and adjust as needed. Plan intentionally for educators to be actively involved in data analysis and interpretation to determine changes that should be made
    b. Regularly review and update the curriculum based on feedback and data

Remember that curriculum alignment is an ongoing process, and collaboration among teachers, administrators, and stakeholders is crucial for its success!

Understanding the Standards

The Kansas State ELA Standards provide guidance to teachers and students in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These pieces should provide clarity about what concepts and ideas are best taught at each level.

Reading Foundations focus on print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. These concentrations are exhausted by the end of the elementary grades.

Reading Literature and Reading Informational standards are similar in scope, with the focus on key ideas and details (standards 1-3), craft and structure (standards 4-6), integration of knowledge and ideas (standards 7-9), language in reading (standards 11-12), and range of reading and text complexity (standard 13). Standard 8 which addresses reasons, evidence, and claims – applies only to informational and not to literary text.

The Writing standards encompass text types and purposes (argument, description, and narrative), production, research, and language in writing (syntax and conventions).

The last set of standards are Speaking and Listening, which are divided into comprehension and collaboration (standards 1-3), presentation of knowledge and ideas (standards 4-6), and language in speaking and listening (standards 7 and 8).

Aligning our ELA instruction to our grade-level State Standards should ensure that Kansas students are equipped to develop their critical reading and their written and spoken expression.

Breaking Down the Standards

It is vital to look at each grade level standard both vertically and horizontally. Each grade level teacher needs to ensure that he or she is instructing students based on prior knowledge as well as on future standards. Through analyzing **each** standard by grade level, teachers will be more cognizant of what they need to teach in their classrooms and be able to determine if their curriculum is lacking in any areas. In addition, teachers also need to be aware of the standard both above and below their grade level to ensure progression is being made at each grade level. Often progression becomes stagnant when teachers fail to push students to the next grade level.

Vertical Alignment

Guidance Steps

Below you will find the 2023 Kansas ELA Standards aligned vertically. This document can help teachers, teams, and schools analyze how the standards progress vertically through grade levels and guide teacher instruction to verify instruction is on grade level.

Follow these steps to help break down the vertical alignment document to ensure classroom efficacy.

1. Identify a key area or areas for alignment evaluation. Focus on a specific ELA domain and strand. For example, Writing Standard Text Types and Purposes.
2. Analyze progression of skills.
    a. As a team, circle the verbs showing what students need to be able to show what students know and can do.
    b. Identify the similarities and differences between one grade and the next. Pay close attention to both the grade level below and above to understand where the student should be and how to progress.
    c. Analyze how the vocabulary, syntax, ideas, and/or structure progress.
3. Discuss how the standards impact instructional planning, assessment, and intervention.
4. Discuss how instruction should also align with Webb's Depth of Knowledge.
5. Identify resources and strategies to support transitions between grades.
6. Create cross-grade-level plans for addressing any identified gaps or overlaps.
7. Use student performance data to assess the effectiveness of the vertical alignment.
8. Revise instructional approaches as needed to align with findings.

Kansas Standards for English Language Arts Vertical Alignment[1]

1 KSDE. (2023). *Kansas Standards for English Language Arts Vertical Alignment*. [pdf] https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jvoJO2IXTog%3d&tabid=5559&mid=16497

Horizontal Alignment

Guidance Steps

In the Kansas Standards for English Language Arts, a clear distinction exists between horizontal and vertical alignment documents. The KSDE ELA Vertical Standards emphasize the progression of skills and knowledge across grade levels, fostering a continuum of learning from one year to the next. This alignment ensures foundational skills are built upon systematically, preparing students for increasingly complex texts, tasks, and critical thinking as they advance through their education.

In contrast, the horizontal alignment outlines skills and expectations by specific grade levels, ensuring consistency across classrooms and schools. The horizontal standards establish what students should know and be able to do within that grade throughout the school year.

Together, horizontal and vertical standards create a cohesive framework that supports both immediate learning goals and long-term academic growth.

Below you will find the link to the KSDE ELA Standards aligned horizontally. The following steps can help teachers, teams, and schools analyze the standards needed for foundational reading, reading for literature, reading for information, writing skills, and speaking and listening skills through each grade level.

Identify a specific grade level in which you teach. Use the table of contents to locate your specific grade level

1. Understand the structure of the standards. Pay attention to how they are grouped by categories such as, Key Ideas, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge in Reading categories, or Text Types and Purposes in the Writing category.
2. Carefully read each standard to understand its expectations and focus. Note any academic vocabulary or key skills emphasized within that standard.
3. Analyze connections across each strand. Consider how the standards for different strands (e.g., reading and writing) complement each other to support student learning in your grade level.
4. Align standards with high quality instructional practices, strategies, and scaffolding to explicitly teach the standard throughout the school year. Remember this should be seen as a recursive practice and not as a list to check off.
5. Plan for assessment and feedback. Determine how you and your team will measure student progress in meeting the horizontal standards. Use formative and summative assessments aligned to the grade-level expectations.
6. Identify areas where you may need to adjust or enhance your instruction to meet the outlined expectations by grade level.
7. Reflect and Adjust. Use student data to refine your approach and address any gaps in instruction.

Kansas Standards for English Language Arts (horizontal alignment K-12)[2]

2 KSDE. (2023). *Kansas Standards for English Language Arts.* [pdf] https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=IRPEqFzIgQA%3d&tabid=5559&mid=16497

Webb's Depth of Knowledge

As teachers are selecting texts for appropriate complexity, this Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) chart should assist them in planning their instruction. Webb's DOK largely refers to reader and task demands.

Analyzing background knowledge needed and motivation to determine the level of challenge for students, as well as looking at how they will use and be expected to interact with a given text, is key. Teachers should aim for the application of skills, concepts and strategic thinking (DOK levels 2 and 3) in their planning and execution. They should also reach toward extended thinking measures (DOK level 4) as appropriate. **The Kansas English Language Arts (ELA) Standards are written with the expectation of being assessed at a DOK level of 2 and 3.** Classroom instruction and formative assessments should reflect the correct DOK to assure students are meeting the standard for grade level work.

Cognitive Engagement: Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level

KSDE Aligned with Kansas Assessment for ELA and Math

DOK	Title	Description
1	Recall and Reproduction	Recall a fact, term, definition, principle, or concept; perform a single procedure.
2	Basic Application of Skills and Concepts	Apply conceptual knowledge; use provided information to select appropriate procedures for a task; perform two or more steps with decision points along the way; solve routine problems; organize or display data; interpret or use simple graphs.
3	Strategic Thinking	Apply reasoning, using evidence, and developing a plan to approach or solve abstract, complex, or nonroutine problems; interpret information and provide justification when more than one approach is possible.
4	Extended Thinking	Perform investigations or apply concepts and skills that require research and problem solving across content areas or multiple sources.

Standard Alignment Documents and Examples

In addition to analyzing standards by grade level, teachers and teams should also break down standards to best understand learning targets, learning progressions, who benefited and who did not benefit, as well as potential vocabulary students need to understand for each particular standard.

- **Standard Alignment: Instruction**[3]
- **Standard Alignment Form**[4]

The following documents can be used as an example of what teachers and schools should do when analyzing a standard. It demonstrates how to break down a standard for each grade level from kindergarten to grade10 in the Writing Standard 1-3 covering Text Types and Purposes.

Standards 1-3 Writing Texts and Purposes examples:

- **Kindergarten**[5]
- **Grade 1**[6]
- **Grade 2**[7]
- **Grade 3**[8]
- **Grade 4**[9]
- **Grade 5**[10]
- **Grade 6**[11]
- **Grade 7**[12]
- **Grade 8**[13]
- **Grades 9-10**[14]

3 KSDE. (2024). *Standards Alignment Instruction*. [pdf] https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VUyDbxcRSDg%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16494

4 KSDE. (2024). *Standards Alignment Form*. [pdf] https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=33D-1LxKeVE%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16494

5 KSDE. (2024). *Kindergarten: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* [pdf] https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=p42X_Rm8XRg%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

6 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 1: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=vNNS6CDjoRI%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

7 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 2: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=42nQm6xdX50%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

8 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 3: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VoRfKZFsPPk%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

9 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 4: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=5nNZx8cwPHo%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

10 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 5: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8tXDgctRyRg%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

11 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 6: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=dR5kLWrhZh8%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

12 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 7: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=NdUwfYKAnQY%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

13 KSDE. (2024). *Grade 8: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qlz1Ir1Qqw4%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

14 KSDE. (2024). *Grades 9-10: Writing Texts and Purposes Examples.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=y3TaLa8nQiI%3d&tabid=5280&mid=16493

Writing Guidance Documents

The KSDE Writing Tenets

Kansas educators are invested in students' growth and development in writing. It is imperative for every teacher to begin with a clear definition of effective writing so that they can more smoothly instruct, guide, and assess student work. Here are components of effective writing that should guide educators:

- Effective writing achieves the writer's purpose. These are goals set by the writer, the teacher, and/or peers.
- Effective writing clearly communicates the writer's intended meaning and organizes the content to provide structure for the intended audience and context.
- Effective writing elicits the intended response from readers.
- Effective writing is key to being productive citizens; it is also a tool that students can leverage for success in their personal and professional lives (Kim & Olson, Nov. 2016).

Without doubt, reading and writing reinforce each other. As literacy expert Timothy Shanahan notes, "about 70% of the variation in reading and writing abilities are shared" (2017). Therefore, reading and writing go hand in hand as complementary skills that students need to master as they mature. While a focus centered on reading instruction is clearly warranted, the use of writing to cement and transfer the learning will yield a greater positive effect than reading alone.

The tenets below will assist Kansas teachers in providing quality writing instruction. Moreover, these tenets will support Kansas students in learning to write clearly, express themselves with intentionality, and communicate effectively with their targeted audience.

1. Writing is an inclusive discipline and should be practiced daily across all curricular areas.

Writing is a specialized skill, encompassing all disciplines. The National Commission on Writing (2003) has advised that schools double the amount of time students currently spend writing.

Students need to write more frequently and more broadly in all classes in order to grow their skills. Growing critical thinking relies upon practicing skills across many disciplines, audiences, and situations. Therefore, what constitutes a quality piece of writing "varies from situation to situation, and from content area to content area . . . The educator is the person in the classroom who knows the most about how to write in their particular subject area. That alone is qualification for teaching writing" (Graham, 2019). To further prove its value, Steve Graham and other researchers note that "writing about [each] content reliably enhances learning" (Graham, et al., 2016). Students can learn as much from writing about their subjects outside of English as they do in English class. There is increasing evidence that students who are asked to write about what they are learning master the material better – even in number-filled subjects like math and science (Barshay, 2020, March 30).

2. Writing is indelibly linked to comprehension.

Many teachers see reading and writing as two discrete tasks; however, research indicates reading and writing often draw from the same background knowledge. The two tasks are synergistic, as "writing with a reader in mind and reading with the writer in mind strengthens both skills" (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Therefore, teaching only one in the absence of the other will not encourage effective growth in either domain.

Writing is a great way for students to build reading comprehension. Increasing how much students write improves their comprehension of texts (Graham & Hebert, 2010).

Writers and readers use similar strategies, knowledge, and skills to create meaning. Writing about what they have read allows students to determine what is most important in the text. For students, "writing about a text improves comprehension, as it helps students make connections between what they read, know, understand, and think" (Carr, 2002). Moreover, writing enriches students' ideas as they learn to "practice capturing and connecting complex ideas with precision in writing" (Hochman & Wexler, 2017). Allowing students the practice of adding new information to previously learned topics offers them the opportunity to revise, elaborate, and/or connect evidence. Indeed, "writing about a text should enhance comprehension because it provides students with a tool for visibly and permanently recording, connecting, analyzing, personalizing, and manipulating key ideas in text" (Graham & Hebert, 2010). In addition, teaching students how to write strengthens their comprehension, fluency, and word reading skills. It stands to reason that, as Graham and Hebert assert, "increasing how much students write improves how well they read" (Graham & Hebert, 2010).

Writing to learn offers students the ability to read, extract information, and combine the ideas of others. Readers form a mental representation of thoughts written by someone else, writers formulate their own thoughts, organize this and create a written record of using the conventions of spelling and grammar (Graham & Perrin, 2007).

Students writing about subject-specific matter write to gain knowledge and experience to prepare for something new. They also write to reformulate and extend ideas and experiences. Langer and Applebee (1987) claim that "newer and better understandings of textual material are likely to occur when students write about text in extended ways involving analysis, interpretation, or personalization. Yet when students write only to review and consolidate known material and concepts, it does not lead to as much complex reasoning (Langer & Applebee, 1987, p. 136) as does writing that incorporates new knowledge. Therefore, increasing the amount of writing to include examining subject-specific matter will be a boon to student knowledge.

3. Writing instruction must be intentional and explicit.

Just as students do not naturally know how to read, they do not naturally know how to write. We cannot afford to assume that simply because students read, they will pick up writing skills "through a kind of osmosis. Writing is the hardest thing we ask students to do, and the evidence is clear that very few students become good writers on their own" (Hochman & Wexler, 2017).

The majority of K-12 teacher preparation has lacked instruction in how to intentionally teach writing. While teachers are largely good at assigning writing, they may not typically teach it in a logical, systematic, or recursive progression. The Kansas ELA Writing Standards should be a guideline for teachers to recognize the learning progressions to explicitly teach the standards. Explicit teaching encompasses the gradual release of responsibility (e.g. "I Do. We Do. You Do." or "Me. We. Two. You") until students can master the skill independently found in the standard.

To help with explicit instruction in writing, students must be exposed to strong mentor texts. Allowing students to "study [mentor texts] gives students opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing" (Graham & Perrin, 2007). Evaluating mentor text as a class allows the teacher to demonstrate specific performance criteria. Students then apply the criterion and decide how and where to incorporate it into their own writing. Using strong "mentor texts . . . help[s] teachers move the whole writer, rather than each individual piece of writing, forward. Writers can imitate the mentor text and find new ways to grow" (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2017). Accordingly, the targeted feedback teachers give students will allow them to move their writing forward and eventually meet performance criteria, increasing the effectiveness of the writing.

Demystifying the act of writing requires it to be explicitly and methodically taught at all grade levels. Ensuring all students have access to high quality instruction within this platform is a key to advancing meaningful communication.

4. Planning and Revision most impact student writing.

Before students produce a final draft, they will go through the recursive processes of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Graham and Harris (2011) state that specific strategy instruction in planning and revising has a positive and strong effect on writing performance. These two, separate steps are the most valuable and deserve the most attention during the writing process.

When writing, students often need to juggle several components at the same time: word choice, spelling, syntax, background information or content knowledge, the audience, and understanding the purpose of why they are writing. Research shows these tasks cognitively overload students (Graham, et al., 2016). This is why it is particularly important for students to develop a clear, written plan before they begin writing. Although some experienced students can compose a paragraph or essay without an outline, most students find it overwhelming. And as content becomes more rigorous, planning is a valuable skill for all students to maintain clear, coherent writing. According to Paul Deane, effective writing teachers recognize that "even skilled writers can be limited by working-memory capacity so that they cannot handle all aspects of the writing tasks simultaneously" (Deane, P., et al., 2008).

When planning to compose, students identify the main idea or theme of their writing, the points they will make, and the order of them. As they do this work, students discover what further information or clarification they need, making the necessary connections between ideas or claims and relevant details or evidence. Planning helps organize and structure students' thinking. The valuable step of planning ensures students don't have irrelevant information or repetition. Planning before writing, and

as needed during the recursive process of writing, allows students to take control of their compositing initiatives (Graham, et al., 2016). Teachers need to help students learn how to choose appropriate planning strategies based on the writing task and understand the value of this step in developing effective writers.

In addition, many teachers still view the revising and editing as one step; however, the revising step always demands "the lion's share" of instructional time. The primary reason that students have difficulty revising is they do not know how to evaluate their own writing (Hillocks, 1986). The most effective approaches to teaching revision involve direct instruction in student evaluation of their writing. Most studies of instruction include strategies for revision that include multiple components. It is important to teach students specific criteria on how to evaluate and revise their own writing (Graham, et al., 2016). Most effective approaches to teaching revision involve instruction in evaluation, and teachers have the strongest opportunity to teach students about good writing when evaluating and revising a student's own writing.

A further note: Without good reading skills, students will struggle with revision of their work. Student writers may read into the text their own intended meaning and fail to see problems with the text as it actually exists. Reading comprehension skills parallel revision skills at all levels of text. It is valuable to integrate reading comprehension instruction with instruction in evaluation and revising. Critical reading is similar in many ways to reading for revision; the main difference is in the purpose: reading to understand versus reading to identify problems and revise (Hillocks, 1986).

5. Feedback is essential to effective writing.

Feedback from both teachers and students is a key part of effective writing instruction. Students need ample feedback about their writing to make improvements in content, organization, and form. "Monitoring student progress throughout the writing process provides useful information for planning instruction and providing timely feedback to students. By regularly assessing student performance–not just students' final written products–teachers learn about student progress on key learning objectives and can tailor their writing instruction accordingly" (Graham, 2019, p. 43).

Formatively, feedback, in general, has been shown to have positive effects on student writing (Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2011). Moreover, feedback on writing needs to be received, understood, and purposely move learning forward (Ferlazzo, 2018). The actionable information from the feedback provided should help the student writer progress toward goals-–first in the short term and later in the long term (Wiggins, 2012). As feedback specificity increases, so does its capability to perform its information role (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). There is a clear body of evidence which shows that specific, objective feedback that is matched to the performance criterion leads to higher performance than less specific, more subjective feedback (Goodman, Wood, & Hendrickx, 2004; Kopleman,1986).

In particular, verbal feedback and frequent dialogue throughout the writing process will yield a more successful piece of writing and prove to have greater positive effects (Trolia, 2014). Although written feedback from teachers may be generally less effective, teachers should be mindful of how to deliver feedback such that it can be readily received, in a timely and ongoing fashion (Brookhart, 2008). Written feedback may be effective if it is targeted towards performance criterion, is timed appropriately, is focused on the task, subject, and/or self-regulations, and is then used by students.

6. Syntax and usage must be taught as key components to effective writing.

Syntax is the arranging of words and phrases to create meaning, using well-formed sentences. It is word order that makes communication effective and manageable, whereas usage is the way in which words and phrases are actually and customarily used in a language community. This language affects particular contexts, especially with regard to meaning.

Because writing is not a natural activity unlike speaking, syntax instruction is necessary for the intentional positioning of words, phrases and sentences. This instruction should be authentic and flow with the overall writing endeavors of students, and it should be taught in a way that gives students models to follow, along with a great deal of expanding, combining, and creating exercises (Van Cleave, 2020) to boost student confidence. Students need to have many opportunities to generate their own writing and thereby demonstrate their understanding of function. Relegating instruction to worksheets, where students passively and receptively identify what is incorrect, does not qualify as quality syntax instruction. Students must experience the creation of text far more often than correcting pieces of text written by someone else.

Syntax is best taught and best remembered through its function in the sentence more so than through labeling all the parts. If students learn the function of the words they write, they will be better able to manipulate their sentences to communicate their message clearly. A thorough understanding of how words and phrases function to make meaning in a given piece of prose is warranted so that teachers can better and more precisely assist in developing student writers. Syntax taught as it applies to writing has a strong positive effect on writing (Myhill et al. as cited in Hudson 296, (Hillocks, 1986). This process of embedding syntax instruction with student-generated text as well as mentor texts yields better writers.

Usage refers to a set of writing conventions that writers adhere to in order to communicate most effectively. Using conventions skillfully confers credibility and professionalism, so students demonstrate that they take the writing task seriously. Mastering usage and conventions impacts the audience through engaging the reader. While usage can sometimes be contested and change over time, it is incumbent upon teachers to know prevailing conventions and explicitly teach them to students in conjunction with their writing in different contexts (Graham & Perrin, 2007). Students need the flexibility and skills to shift their writing as they engage different audiences and purposes (Wheeler & Swords 2004) as well as time to practice.

The instruction in grammar and usage should never be in isolation as that would be a "deterrent to the improvement of students' speaking and writing," as championed by the National Council of Teachers of English. To improve both, NCTE firmly states that "class time at all levels must be devoted to opportunities for meaningful listening, speaking, reading and writing." (NCTE, 1985).

7. Emerging writers must have a solid development of handwriting, letter formation, and spelling conventions as key foundational skills.

Writing is one of the most complex tasks we ask students to complete. Writing requires students to hold in their working memory their ideas, the vocabulary they want to use to express those ideas, and how to spell it, the appropriate syntax, paragraph structure (if applicable), proper spacing (of letters, words, and paragraphs), as well as how to form the letters, all at the same time as they compose their ideas into coherent thoughts on paper. "Because written composition is complex and demanding, students will be more successful if they have learned the foundational skills so automatically that they no longer have to devote all their attention to transcription" (Graham, Harris, & Fink-Chorzempa, 2002; McCutchen, 1996 as cited in Moats & Tolman, 2019).

Letter formation must be taught explicitly and corrected where it has been previously neglected. Research shows that proper letter formation can increase both the amount and quality of student writing. As Moats and Tolman assert, "It is important to establish correct strokes from the outset of letter formation instruction. If students 'invent' letter formation, they can quickly develop habits that interfere with fluid, left-to-right motions" (2019). "When students automatize correct letter formation early in writing development, their spelling improves and their written compositions are longer and of higher quality" (Berninger & Wolf, 2009; Graham, 1999; Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, & Whitaker, 1997 as cited in Moats & Tolman, 2019).

Successful writers are taught and guided through development phases. Students begin at the pre-alphabetic stage, where they string letters together and assign meaning without the sound representation in words. Pictures and symbols dominate the writing. Students move to a partial (early) alphabetic stage, where some sounds are represented–mostly beginning and ending consonants–and other random letters are filled in. Students' progress to the full (later) alphabetic stage when they are phonetically accurate and begin incorporating conventional letter sequences and patterns. Here students increase the number of words that are known automatically, as if by sight. As students enter the consolidated alphabetic stage, they are able to learn and use knowledge of morphemes, root words, and affixes, as well as ending rules for words (Ehri, 1995, 2004).

The Kansas Handwriting Curricular Standards adopted in 2020 outline the progression of handwriting development by grade level. Teachers of emerging writers must evaluate student skills, plan and provide explicit instruction, and give students opportunities to practice with feedback and encouragement to help students attain automaticity with foundational writing skills. Providing students with experiences that involve the visual, kinesthetic, and auditory channels improves results of the independent formation of letters.

The more automatic the foundational skills of writing become, the more a student's working memory is freed up to attend to composing and transcribing ideas.

Grammar and Syntax Instructional Guidance

As teachers teach writing, it is important to remember that grammar/syntax is essential to clear, comprehensible communication and should be embedded into instruction. To assist teachers, the IECC (Identify, Expand, Combine, Create) document could be used as a way to weave in expressive practice through instruction insistently focused on function. This document provides a framework and flexibility for students to improve their writing.

Identify, Expand, Combine, Create Blueprint for Grammar Scaffolding

IECC is actually a combination of four different activities related to sentence-level structure and syntax. **These four levels include: Identify, Expand, Combine, Create.**

This combination requires students to identify the target that they are learning (e.g., adjectives [W.3.10.b], or gerunds [W.8.10.b], or parallel structure [W.9-10.b]), expand upon simple sentences, combine sentences, and create new sentences (VanCleave 2010).

A reason that many grammar programs do not yield growth in student achievement has to do with relying on students to, after looking at what is incorrect, fix the error(s) in a text. This is not increasing their success on two counts:

1. Students are constantly seeing sentences that are formed incorrectly or need fixed vs. seeing, appreciating, and internalizing sentences written well. What students see most often is what they will likely internalize.
2. Students are receptively getting information about sentence construction from a sentence that is random. Rather, they need to spend the majority of their time in grammar and syntax instruction expressively in generation and manipulation of their own sentences in order to internalize correct processes.

This IECC process combines sentence deconstruction with sentence construction. This scaffolding can work at any grade level because teachers can use mentor text that is both appropriate for the grade level and appropriate rigor level to help students model how to develop stronger sentences using appropriate syntax. Challenging students to create sentences with complex parts (modifiers, phrases, dependent clauses, nonessential information, etc.) assists students in internalizing the types of complex sentences they will encounter in their reading. This activity can easily be broken up into its individual parts, and any combination of the four subparts can be utilized.

IDENTIFY: Identify the part to be taught, preferably according to your grade level standards. Find and use a mentor text which contains the sentence(s) with the part to be taught. Discuss how that author has used that part in the sentences. If no mentor text can be found, then the teacher should create the sentence(s) with the part to be taught. Find/prepare other sentences that contain parts that you want students to label. This can be done on individual worksheets, in groups on chart paper/white board, etc. Teach/remind students of the parts you want them to label, and then have students identify those parts. Students should express the meaning (function) of each part of the sentence they are asked to identify. (e.g., "this adjective describes the dog," or "this -ing phrase acts as a long description/adjective describing the swimmer."). This should be the only receptive piece of the process.

EXPAND: In the expansion activities, start with basic sentences or sentence-beginners. Ask students to add the element(s) you have previously discussed. Students can start these activities in groups but should get to where they do them individually. (e.g., "The cupcake was ready to eat." Add adjectives to the sentence to elaborate [pink, two, large, delicious, moist]) (e.g., "The dog walked." Add -ing phrases, subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases, etc.)

COMBINE: For the combining activities, students take two basic sentences and combine them into a more sophisticated sentence. Often this involves taking two simple sentences and turning them into one compound or complex sentence. When creating compound or complex sentences, students should be taught punctuation rules regarding these forms.

CREATE: Students create their own sentences containing the part they are specifically learning. Give students a topic and the components they need to have in their sentence. Students construct their own sentences with the previously discussed parts. They discuss these with their peers and manipulate or correct as needed.

You may wish to end with more mentor texts to cement the new knowledge.

Developing a First Draft

First drafts are challenging but foundational to better products. As teachers continue to develop young writers, referring to a system of questioning concerning all of the moving parts is beneficial. To assist teachers, this document, For Developing Ideas in a First Draft, provides structured questions in several categories that can be used to guide writing development. Better questions lead to providing better reader information–remembering the purpose of writing is to make information clear to the reader.

Teach self-questioning and look for ways to provide the reader more information.

IMPORTANCE

- What is your point?
- So what?
- What are the ideas/thoughts important?
- What is the purpose of the information?

EXPLANATION

- Where could you insert some interesting facts/ detail?
- Where might you add a because explanation?
- Can your restate a point or idea differently?
- What else can you say about the situation or problem?
- Can you add an illustration or text feature?

DESCRIPTION

- What does it smell like, taste like, sound like, feel like?
- What does it look like? What is its shape? Is it symmetrical?
- How does it move?
- Can you add figurative language: similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia?
- Where could you describe the color or shade of color?
- How could you make a connection to another text?

PROOF

- What number of statistics can you include?
- Do you have a real-life scenarios that supports the topic that is a universal truth or reasonably true?
- Can you add an anecdote or analogy?
- Do you have any expert quotes you could use?
- Where could you include a personal connection, aha, or synthesis?

SITUATION

- What is the context or background?
- What is the tone or attitude?
- What are other perspectives or opinions on this topic?
- Are there feelings or emotions associated with this topic?

VOCABULARY

- What vocabulary could I use for audience appeal?
- Where might I use more precise active verbs and more specific nouns?
- Should I add a topic - or domain specific word (tier 3)?
- Where might I insert an expert definition?
- Might I add a synonym, antonym, or analogy?
- Where could my vocabulary match the tone of my composition?

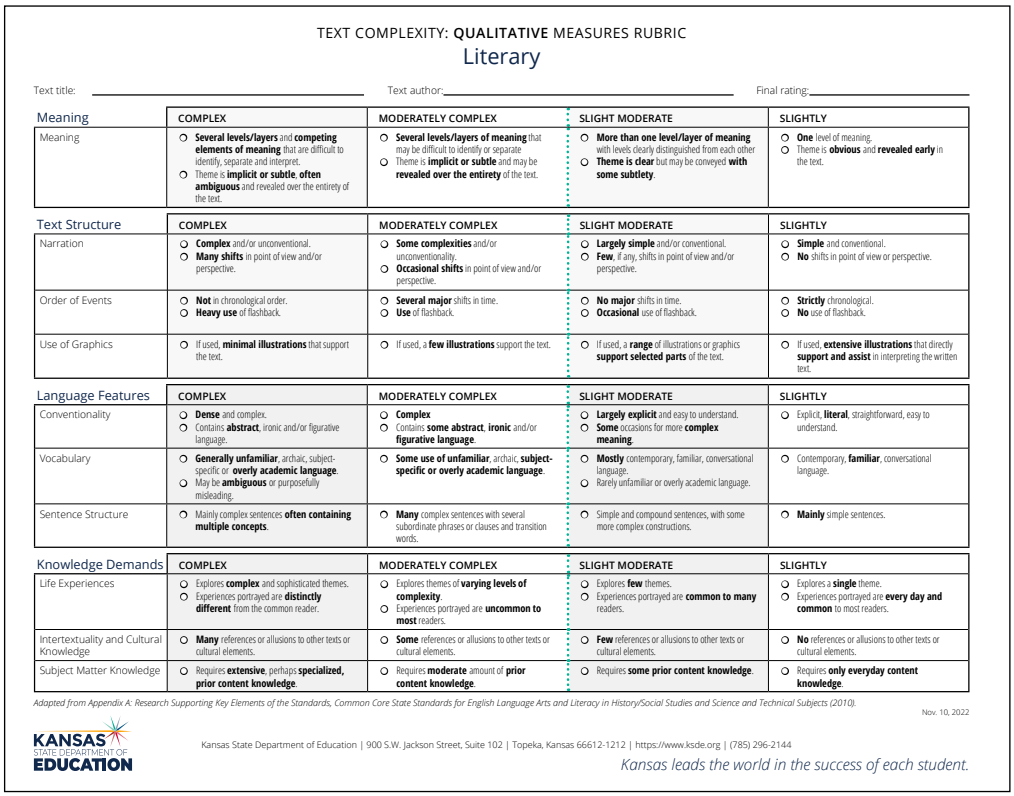
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT TOOLKIT

Reading Guidance Documents

The following documents have been created as guidance documents to use to help develop lesson plans or curriculum planning. These can be used for all grade level bands.

Text Complexity (Literary)

Teachers should select literary texts of appropriate complexity. While that encompasses quantitative and reader and task (Depth of Knowledge) measures, qualitative measures are just as important. This means examining its purpose and meaning along with the structure of the text and the knowledge demand it will put on students. The Literary Text Complexity Rubric should assist teachers in evaluating the complexity of text along these measures. Ideally, passages from the chosen text should be evaluated by a teacher or team of teachers in the several (16) components as mostly "moderately complex" or "slightly complex," with a few outliers in "slightly" or "complex."



TEXT COMPLEXITY: **QUALITATIVE** MEASURES RUBRIC

Literary

Text title: _____ Text author: _____ Final rating: _____

Meaning	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Meaning	○ **Several levels/layers** and **competing elements of meaning** that are difficult to identify, separate and interpret. ○ Theme is **implicit or subtle**, **often ambiguous** and revealed over the entirety of the text.	○ **Several levels/layers of meaning** that may be difficult to identify or separate. ○ Theme is **implicit or subtle** and may be **revealed over the entirety** of the text.	○ **More than one level/layer of meaning** with levels clearly distinguished from each other ○ **Theme is clear** but may be conveyed **with some subtlety**.	○ **One** level of meaning. ○ Theme is **obvious** and **revealed early** in the text.

Text Structure	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Narration	○ **Complex** and/or unconventional. ○ **Many shifts** in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Some complexities** and/or unconventionality. ○ **Occasional shifts** in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Largely simple** and/or conventional. ○ **Few**, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Simple** and conventional. ○ **No** shifts in point of view or perspective.
Order of Events	○ **Not** in chronological order. ○ **Heavy use** of flashback.	○ **Several major** shifts in time. ○ **Use** of flashback.	○ **No major** shifts in time. ○ **Occasional** use of flashback.	○ **Strictly** chronological. ○ **No** use of flashback.
Use of Graphics	○ If used, **minimal illustrations** that support the text.	○ If used, a **few illustrations** support the text.	○ If used, a **range** of illustrations or graphics **support selected parts** of the text.	○ If used, **extensive illustrations** that directly **support and assist** in interpreting the written text.

Language Features	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Conventionality	○ **Dense** and complex. ○ Contains **abstract**, ironic and/or figurative language.	○ **Complex** ○ Contains **some abstract**, **ironic** and/or **figurative language**.	○ **Largely explicit** and easy to understand. ○ **Some** occasions for more **complex meaning**.	○ Explicit, **literal**, straightforward, easy to understand.
Vocabulary	○ **Generally unfamiliar**, archaic, subject-specific or **overly academic language**. ○ May be **ambiguous** or purposefully misleading.	○ **Some use of unfamiliar**, archaic, **subject-specific or overly academic language**.	○ **Mostly** contemporary, familiar, conversational language. ○ Rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language.	○ Contemporary, **familiar**, conversational language.
Sentence Structure	○ Mainly complex sentences **often containing multiple concepts**.	○ **Many** complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words.	○ Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions.	○ **Mainly** simple sentences.

Knowledge Demands	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Life Experiences	○ Explores **complex** and sophisticated themes. ○ Experiences portrayed are **distinctly different** from the common reader.	○ Explores themes of **varying levels of complexity**. ○ Experiences portrayed are **uncommon to most** readers.	○ Explores **few** themes. ○ Experiences portrayed are **common to many** readers.	○ Explores a **single** theme. ○ Experiences portrayed are **every day and common** to most readers.
Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge	○ **Many** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **Some** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **Few** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **No** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.
Subject Matter Knowledge	○ Requires **extensive**, perhaps **specialized, prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **moderate** amount of **prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **some prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **only everyday content knowledge**.

Adapted from Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects (2010).

Nov. 10, 2022

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas State Department of Education | 900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102 | Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212 | https://www.ksde.org | (785) 296-2144

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Text Complexity Rubrics Literary[1]

1 KSDE. (2022). *Text Complexity: Literacy.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mQO9-U5hVVU%3d&tabid=5575&mid=16495

Text Complexity (Informational)

Teachers should select informational texts of appropriate complexity. While that encompasses quantitative and reader and task (Depth of Knowledge) measures, qualitative measures are just as important. This means examining its purpose and meaning along with the structure of the text and the knowledge demand it will put on students. The Informational Text Complexity Rubric should assist teachers in evaluating the complexity of text along these measures. Ideally, passages from the chosen text should be evaluated by a teacher or team of teachers in the several (14) components as mostly "moderately complex" or "slightly complex", with a few outliers in "slightly" or "complex."

TEXT COMPLEXITY: **QUALITATIVE** MEASURES RUBRIC

Informational Texts

Text title: _____ Text author: _____ Final rating: _____

Purpose	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Purpose	○ **Subtle**, implied. ○ **Difficult** to determine. ○ **Many** theoretical or abstract elements.	○ Implied ○ **Fairly** easy to infer. ○ **More theoretical or abstract** than concrete.	○ Implied. ○ **Easy to identify.** ○ **Based upon context** or source.	○ **Explicitly stated**, clear, concrete. ○ Narrowly focused.

Text Structure	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Organization	○ **Connections** between an extensive range of ideas, processes or events are deep, **intricate and often ambiguous**. ○ Organization is **intricate** or discipline-specific.	○ **Connections between an expanded range** ideas, processes or events are **often** implicit or subtle. ○ Organization may contain multiple pathways or may **exhibit some discipline-specific traits**.	○ **Connections between some** ideas or events are implicit or subtle. ○ Organization is **evident** and/or generally sequential or chronological.	○ **Connections** between ideas, processes or events are **explicit and clear**. ○ Organization of text is **clear** or **chronological** or **easy to predict**.
Text Features	○ If used, are **essential** in understanding content.	○ If used, **greatly enhance** the reader's understanding of content.	○ If used, **enhance** the reader's understanding of content.	○ If used, help the reader **navigate content** but they are **not essential to understanding** content.
Use of Graphics	○ If used, extensive, intricate, essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, etc., **are necessary** to make meaning of the text. ○ May **provide information not otherwise conveyed** in the text.	○ If used, graphics, tables, charts, etc., **support or are integral to understanding** the text.	○ If used, graphic, pictures, tables, and charts, etc., **are mostly supplementary to understanding** the text.	○ If used, graphic, pictures, tables, and charts, etc., **unnecessary to understanding** the text.

Language Features	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Conventionality	○ **Dense** and complex. ○ Contains **considerable** abstract, ironic and/or figurative language.	○ **Complex**. ○ Contains **some abstract, ironic and/or figurative language**.	○ **Largely explicit** and easy to understand. ○ **Some** occasions for more **complex meaning**.	○ Explicit, **literal**, straightforward, **easy** to understand.
Vocabulary	○ **Generally unfamiliar**, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; **may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading**.	○ **Somewhat complex** language that is sometimes **unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific or overly academic**.	○ **Mostly** contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely overly academic.	○ Contemporary, **familiar**, conversational language.
Sentence Structure	○ Mainly complex sentences **often containing multiple concepts**.	○ **Many complex sentences** with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words.	○ Simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions.	○ **Mainly** simple sentences.

Knowledge Demands	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Subject Matter Knowledge	○ **Extensive**, perhaps specialized of even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge. ○ Range of **challenging** abstract and theoretical concepts.	○ **Moderate** levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; **some theoretical knowledge** may enhance understanding. ○ Range of recognizable ideas and **challenging abstract concepts**.	○ Everyday practical knowledge and **some discipline-specific** content knowledge. ○ **Both** simple and more complicated, abstract ideas.	○ Everyday, practical knowledge. ○ Simple, concrete ideas.
Intertextuality	○ **Many** references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	○ **Some** references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	○ **Few** references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	○ **No** references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc.

Adapted from Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects (2010).

Nov. 10, 2022

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas State Department of Education | 900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102 | Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212 | https://www.ksde.org | (785) 296-2144

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Text Complexity Rubrics Literary[2]

2 KSDE. (2022). *Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric, Informational Text.* https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Fb4j762Bh-4%3d&tabid=5575&mid=13625

Lexile® for Text Complexity

Teachers should select texts of appropriate complexity. While that encompasses qualitative and reader and task (Depth of Knowledge) measures, quantitative measures are just as important. This means looking at components that can be counted, such as sentence length, syntax, vocabulary and the number of rare words. Typically a computer analysis, this results in a numerical rating, such as Lexile® or Flesch-Kincaid. The Lexile® for Text Complexity chart should assist you in choosing appropriately lexiled texts. The range moves incrementally according to the time of year the text is to be taught. Aim for a lexile near the 90th percentile of the range for the time of year it is to be taught. A lexile above the 75th percentile may be acceptable, considering qualitative and reader and task demands.

QUANTITATIVE TEXT COMPLEXITY: LEXILE®

Grade	Beginning of year (Fall)		Middle of year (Winter)		End of year (Spring)	
	25th	90th	25th	90th	25th	90th
3	355L	885L	415L	935L	480L	985L
4	570L	1060L	635L	1110L	700L	1160L
5	745L	1210L	770L	1235L	795L	1260L
6	835L	1300L	855L	1320L	875L	1340L
7	910L	1375L	925L	1390L	940L	1410L
8	970L	1435L	985L	1455L	1000L	1410L
9	1025L	1495L	1040L	1505L	1050L	1520L
10	1075L	1545L	1085L	1555L	1095L	1570L
11	1115L	1590L	1130L	1600L	1140L	1610L
12	1115L	1590L	1130L	1600L	1140L	1610L

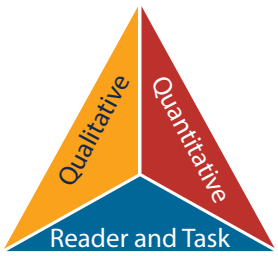
Kansas educators can sign up for a free account and use the tools available on the Lexile® Hub to support their work. You will note the district you are affiliated with when you register your account.

You can access the registration link here: **https://hub.Lexile.com/for-educators/**

Determining Text Complexity

As teachers are selecting texts for appropriate complexity, this Text Complexity Determination tool will assist teachers. This tool should provide rich dialogue and scrutiny of texts among teacher teams as they view how the proposed text fits with their students. It is imperative to evaluate passages from the text fairly according to the several categories.

Text Complexity and Professional Learning Communities



Complex text–what students should be reading academically–is not something teachers can determine just by looking at it. A text is complex when it has a challenging Lexile®–the quantitative measure–and has significant reader and task challenges.

This means that students work with the text at Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels 2 and 3. The third measure is qualitative; this is something that professional learning communities (PLCs) can determine together by considering the text in question in several areas.

Educators should use the Kansas State Department of Education's (KSDE) Text Complexity Rubrics to gauge the overall complexity of a given text.

TEXT COMPLEXITY: **QUALITATIVE** MEASURES RUBRIC

Literary

Text title: _____ Text author: _____ Final rating: _____

Meaning	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Meaning	○ **Several levels/layers** and **competing elements of meaning** that are difficult to identify, separate and interpret. ○ Theme is **implicit or subtle**, **often ambiguous** and revealed over the entirety of the text.	○ **Several levels/layers of meaning** that may be difficult to identify or separate ○ Theme is **implicit or subtle** and may be **revealed over the entirety** of the text.	○ **More than one level/layer of meaning** with levels clearly distinguished from each other ○ **Theme is clear** but may be conveyed **with some subtlety**.	○ **One** level of meaning. ○ Theme is **obvious** and **revealed early** in the text.

Text Structure	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Narration	○ **Complex** and/or unconventional. ○ **Many shifts** in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Some complexities** and/or unconventionality. ○ **Occasional shifts** in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Largely simple** and/or conventional. ○ **Few**, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Simple** and conventional. ○ **No** shifts in point of view or perspective.
Order of Events	○ **Not** in chronological order. ○ **Heavy use** of flashback.	○ **Several major** shifts in time. ○ **Use** of flashback.	○ **No major** shifts in time. ○ **Occasional** use of flashback.	○ **Strictly** chronological. ○ **No** use of flashback.
Use of Graphics	○ If used, **minimal illustrations** that support the text.	○ If used, a **few illustrations** support the text.	○ If used, a **range** of illustrations or graphics **support selected parts** of the text.	○ If used, **extensive illustrations** that directly **support and assist** in interpreting the written text.

Language Features	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Conventionality	○ **Dense** and complex. ○ Contains **abstract**, ironic and/or figurative language.	○ **Complex** ○ Contains **some abstract**, **ironic** and/or **figurative language**.	○ **Largely explicit** and easy to understand. ○ **Some** occasions for more **complex meaning**.	○ Explicit, **literal**, straightforward, easy to understand.
Vocabulary	○ **Generally unfamiliar**, archaic, subject-specific or **overly academic language**. ○ May be **ambiguous** or purposefully misleading.	○ **Some use of unfamiliar**, archaic, **subject-specific or overly academic language**.	○ **Mostly** contemporary, familiar, conversational language. ○ Rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language.	○ Contemporary, **familiar**, conversational language.
Sentence Structure	○ Mainly complex sentences **often containing multiple concepts**.	○ **Many** complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words.	○ Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions.	○ **Mainly** simple sentences.

Knowledge Demands	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Life Experiences	○ Explores **complex** and sophisticated themes. ○ Experiences portrayed are **distinctly different** from the common reader.	○ Explores themes of **varying levels of complexity**. ○ Experiences portrayed are **uncommon to most** readers.	○ Explores **few** themes. ○ Experiences portrayed are **common to many** readers.	○ Explores a **single** theme. ○ Experiences portrayed are **every day and common** to most readers.
Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge	○ **Many** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **Some** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **Few** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **No** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.
Subject Matter Knowledge	○ Requires **extensive**, perhaps **specialized, prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **moderate** amount of **prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **some prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **only everyday content knowledge**.

Adapted from Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects (2010).

Nov. 10, 2022

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas State Department of Education | 900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102 | Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212 | https://www.ksde.org | (785) 296-2144

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Using the Literary Qualitative Rubric, choose three sections of the text your team is considering. In reviewing those pieces, focus on the vertical line between "Moderately Complex" and "Slight Moderate." Discuss with your team each component (Meaning, Text Structure, Language Features, Knowledge Demands) by way of each subcomponent. Identify for each subcomponent where the text lands in the vertical quadrant, starting from the middle and working your way out. Make a mark in the agreed-upon quadrant. Repeat the process for each subcomponent. Then for each component, generalize where that text lands based on the marks given for their subcomponents.

Here is what should occur: rich discussion and examination of the level of complexity of the text based on the components, consensus as to how complex those components are, and then considering those components together to make a final rendering of the complexity of the text as a whole. Ideally for your grade level, most marks and the final assessment of the examination should place the text just to the left of the midline–the "Moderately Complex" designation. You'll know you have a good candidate for your class if most of your marks fall close to the midline, even on the "Slight Moderate" side. "Complex" and "Slightly" marks should be few.

See the sample below for George Orwell's Animal Farm.

TEXT COMPLEXITY: **QUALITATIVE** MEASURES RUBRIC

Literary

Text title: **Animal Farm** Text author: **Orwell** Final rating: **1170L**

Meaning	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY MC
Meaning MC	○ **Several levels/layers** and **competing elements of meaning** that are difficult to identify, separate and interpret. ○ Theme is **implicit or subtle**, **often ambiguous** and revealed over the entirety of the text.	○ **Several levels/layers of meaning** that may be difficult to identify or separate ☒ Theme is **implicit or subtle** and may be **revealed over the entirety** of the text.	○ **More than one level/layer of meaning** with levels clearly distinguished from each other ☒ **Theme is clear** but may be conveyed **with some subtlety**.	○ **One** level of meaning. ○ Theme is **obvious** and **revealed early** in the text.

Text Structure	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Narration SM	○ **Complex** and/or unconventional. ☒ **Many shifts** in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Some complexities** and/or unconventionality. ○ **Occasional shifts** in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Largely simple** and/or conventional. ☒ **Few**, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective.	○ **Simple** and conventional. ○ **No** shifts in point of view or perspective.
Order of Events	○ **Not** in chronological order. ○ **Heavy use** of flashback.	○ **Several major** shifts in time. ○ **Use** of flashback.	○ **No major** shifts in time. ○ **Occasional** use of flashback.	☒ **Strictly** chronological. ☒ **No** use of flashback.
Use of Graphics	○ If used, **minimal illustrations** that support the text.	○ If used, a **few illustrations** support the text.	○ If used, a **range** of illustrations or graphics **support selected parts** of the text.	○ If used, **extensive illustrations** that directly **support and assist** in interpreting the written text.

Language Features	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Conventionality MC	○ **Dense** and complex. ○ Contains **abstract**, ironic and/or figurative language.	☒ **Complex** ☒ Contains **some abstract**, **ironic** and/or **figurative language**.	○ **Largely explicit** and easy to understand. ○ **Some** occasions for more **complex meaning**.	○ Explicit, **literal**, straightforward, easy to understand.
Vocabulary	○ **Generally unfamiliar**, archaic, subject-specific or **overly academic language**. ○ May be **ambiguous** or purposefully misleading.	☒ **Some use of unfamiliar**, archaic, **subject-specific or overly academic language**.	○ **Mostly** contemporary, familiar, conversational language. ○ Rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language.	○ Contemporary, **familiar**, conversational language.
Sentence Structure	○ Mainly complex sentences **often containing multiple concepts**.	○ **Many** complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words.	○ Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions.	○ **Mainly** simple sentences.

Knowledge Demands	COMPLEX	MODERATELY COMPLEX	SLIGHT MODERATE	SLIGHTLY
Life Experiences MC	○ Explores **complex** and sophisticated themes. ○ Experiences portrayed are **distinctly different** from the common reader.	☒ Explores themes of **varying levels of complexity**. ☒ Experiences portrayed are **uncommon to most** readers.	○ Explores **few** themes. ○ Experiences portrayed are **common to many** readers.	○ Explores a **single** theme. ○ Experiences portrayed are **every day and common** to most readers.
Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge	☒ **Many** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **Some** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **Few** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.	○ **No** references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements.
Subject Matter Knowledge	☒ Requires **extensive**, perhaps **specialized, prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **moderate** amount of **prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **some prior content knowledge**.	○ Requires **only everyday content knowledge**.

Adapted from Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects (2010).

Nov. 10, 2022

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas State Department of Education | 900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102 | Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212 | https://www.ksde.org | (785) 296-2144

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

For informational texts, apply the same process in your PLC with three sections of your informational text and the Informational Qualitative Rubric.

If your PLC finds that your chosen text does not yield the desired results when analyzed in this manner, it would be in your students' best interests for your team to choose another, more appropriate text.Directed Reading Thinking Activity

Setting complex text before students necessitates teaching students how to read them. To assist teachers, this Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) document outlines a step by step process that can demystify reading for students. Investing the time to practice DRTA in a gradual release manner is an evidence-based practice that can help to scaffold understanding of reading through targeted questioning, answering, wondering, predicting, and confirming.

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity

The following is a blueprint for guiding students in tackling complex text.

1. Whenever students begin to read something of any bulk for class, teachers and students work on pre-reading strategies this way: aloud, they wonder at the title, enumerating what the title evokes for them, consider any artwork if they are given that, and then consider the publication date. Students and teachers should remind themselves of the time period in which the author was constructing the text.
2. After that, teachers begin to read aloud to the class, freely stopping themselves to ask and answer questions. They wonder aloud as it were, modeling their wonderings as not completely understanding all the information at a first go. They model that their wanderings and questions are important and they will be answered in due time.
3. Students, even secondary ones, like to be read to. But they also get to see the teacher's own call and response method, which is there to make visible the teacher's thinking as the teacher reads. It reinforces that these wonderings are what good readers enact for themselves in their heads when they are reading for an academic purpose.
4. After some time--a paragraph or a few--depending on the complexity of the text, teachers tell the class they will still read, but as they stop in sentences or phrases, they want to hear students' own wonderings chorally. Teachers should ask specific why questions first. The goal is to hear what they are specifically thinking and that they are specifically thinking about the text. So the specific questions teachers ask are important and should be thought out beforehand.. Then, when the class is feeling comfortable, teachers continue reading, this time asking more abstract questions, e.g., "what's going on here?", hoping still for specific answers. Teachers should not move to the next step until they get specific (choral) answers.
5. This "we do" part following the "I do" is to set them up for success. As a car burns more fuel backing out of the garage than from going to 30 to 40 mph, readers burn more cognitive energy going from not knowing anything to reading at all than already being in the thick of text (already reading).
6. Then it is time for students to take over the reading. Teachers set them in partners and have them whisper read the next paragraphs of reading with each other, and teachers roam the room listening to students demystifying the texts with each other. This part may take about five or ten minutes. Teachers are listening to see that students are asking and answering questions and wonderings about the text with each other.
7. At last, teachers should feel confident that these students can be fully released to read the text on their own, with ways to keep them engaged with the text.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are from the Standards Alignment document under the Breaking Down the Standards section. These terms are from the Text Types and Purpose analysis examples provided by KSDE.

Acknowledge
Admitting awareness that different sides to an issue exist.

Alternate
Taking another position; could be an opposition to claim.

Analysis
The process of breaking down a complex topic or substance into smaller parts to gain a better understanding of it.

Argument
A series of reasons to persuade an audience to believe in the validity of an idea.

Cause and Effect
A logical system using evidence to explain how something happened; often cause comes before effect but not always.

Civil Discourse
A way of discussing public issues that aims to build understanding and respect and identify common ground.

Claim
An arguable statement designed to persuade, prove, or suggest something for an audience to consider.

Classification
A pattern that organizes information by grouping items into categories based on shared characteristics.

Cohesion
The state of having ideas connected in a piece of writing to help the reader follow the argument or exposition.

Conclusion
The final part of an essay or speech that summarizes the analysis of the text of the essay or speech; this part may evaluate effectiveness or provide a call to action; this part may range from a sentence or two to a paragraph or more, depending on the task.

Context
The situation that surrounds and infuses a piece of reading or writing, including: author, purpose, audience, occasion, any constraints, and exigence (event prompting the text).

Counterclaim

A claim made to rebut a previous claim.

- **Fair Representation:** Depicts people, events, and experiences accurately and respectfully, ensuring that diverse voices have equal representation.

Credible Source
: A source for which the receiver of the information can trust the information it provides.

Dependent Clause
: A group of words that contains a subject, verb, and any and all modifiers for them that does not express a complete thought and can not stand alone in a sentence; not a complete sentence.

Domain Specific Vocabulary
: A set of words and phrases that are specific to a particular field or subject area.

Evidence
: Factual information that supports a claim

- **Accurate:** Factual and true.
- **Credible:** Reliable source; same information can be documented in various locations.
- **Relevant:** Evidence that directly supports the claim.

Fact
: A thing known or proved to be true uninfluenced by attitude or motive.

Formal Style
: A register of expression in which standard English, complex sentence structures, and serious tone convey a respectful and professional message.

Independent Clause
: A word grouping that contains a subject, verb, and any and all modifiers for them and expresses a complete thought; could be a sentence on its own.

Informative
: Text that serves to instruct, enlighten, or explain.

Logical Reasoning
: A method of thinking that involves using a set of facts or data to draw conclusions.

Multimedia
: The use of a variety of artistic or communicative media.

Narrative
: An account of connected events; a story.

Opinion
: A view or judgment of something that may or may not be informed by fact.

Opposing Claim
: A position which contradicts or runs counter to the thesis statement of an argument.

Pacing
: The speed or tempo at which text moves for the reader; it helps build tension, maintains interest, and

conveys the desired impact; achieved through syntactical structures.

Phrase
A group of words that has meaning but does not contain a subject or a verb.

Point of View
The perspective from which something is told, or who is doing the telling; helps to determine how the reader interprets the text.

Reasoning
The process by writers decide what to express about a topic and how to express those thoughts; choosing to use ethos, pathos, and logos effectively.

Relevant Evidence
Information directly related to the issue discussed; important in making a decision or reaching a conclusion.

Sensory Details
Descriptive words that appeal to the senses to create a mental image and to evoke emotion or sensation in the reader.

Signal Shift
A change in style, tone, or focus in a text.

Substantive
Considerable, important, or meaningful due to having a firm basis in reality.

Sufficient
Enough; adequate

Temporal Words and Phrases
Transitional words that refer to time and are used to help writing flow and connect ideas. (e.g., *"before," "during," "in the meantime," "shortly thereafter,"* etc.)

Text Types
Broad categories of writing or genres that present stories, ideas, and information in distinct ways; usually text types are governed by particular expectations or conventions.

Theme
The central or main idea that is conveyed through the work.

Thesis Statement
The main argument of a piece of writing; the laying out of an argument in a piece of writing; the point of a piece; can be:

- One or more sentences.
- Stated in text or implied and so inferred by audience.

Transitional Words and Phrases
Linking or connecting words that help readers follow a writer's ideas by connecting sentences and paragraphs.

Bibliography

Barshay, J. (2020, March 30). Three lessons from the science of how to teach writing. *The Hechinger Report*.

Brookhart, S. M. (2008). *How to give effective feedback to your students.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Carr, S. (2002). Self-Evaluation: Involving Students in Their Own Learning. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*.

Dorfman, L. R., & Cappelli, R. (2017). *Mentor texts: Teaching writing through children's literature, K-6*. Stenhouse Publishers.

Ehri, L. C. (1995). Phases of development in learning to read by sight. *Journal of Research in Reading*, pp. 18, 116-125.

Ehri, L. C. (2004). *Teaching phoemic awareness and phonics: an explanation for the National Reading Panel Meta Analyses*. In P. McCardle and V. Chhabra (Eds). The voice of evidence in reading research, pp. 153-186.

Ferlazzo, L. (2018, Nov. 27). From response: ways to give effective feedback on student writing: *Education Week.* https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-response-ways-to-give-effective-feedback-on-student-writing/2018/11

Goodman, J. S., Wood, R. E., & Hendrickx. (2004). Feedback specificity, exploration and learning. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 89(2), 248–262.

Graham, S. (2019). Changing how writing is taught. *Review of Research in Education*, 43(1).

Graham, S., & Hebert, M. (2010). *Writing-to-read: A meta-analysis of the impact of writing and writing instruction on reading*. Harvard Educational Review.

Graham, S., & Perrin, D. (2007). *Writing next: effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools.* Washington D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Graham, S., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Greene, K., Kim, J., & Olson, C. (2016, November). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse.

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Hebert, M. (2011). It is more than just the message: Presentation effects in scoring writing. *Focus on Exceptional Children* 44 (4).

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. From *Sage Journals*, Volume 77, Issue 1: https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Hillocks, G. (1986). *Research on written composition*. National Conference on Research in English. New York, NY.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hochman, J., & Wexler, N. (2017). *The Writing Revolution: A guide to advancing thinking through writing in all subjects and grades.* Jossey-Bass.

Kim, J. S., & Olson, C. B. (Nov. 2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse.

Langer, J., & Applebee, A. (1987). *How writing shapes thinking: Students of teaching and learning.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English .

Moats, L., & Tolman, C. (2019). *LETRS Vol. 2* (3rd Ed). Voyager Sopris Learning.

National Commission on Writing. (2003). *The neglected "R" the need for a writing revolution.* Washington, D.C.: College Board.

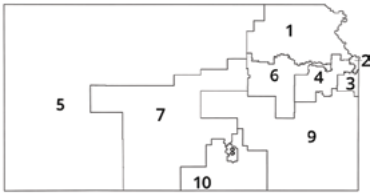
Van Cleave, W. (2020). *Syntax Matters: The Link Between Sentence Writing and Sentence Comprehending.* W. V. C. ED Resources Free Downloads. Greenville, SC: W. V. C. ED. From Resources Free Downloads: https://www.wvced.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Syntax-Presetation-for-Kendore.pdf

Wiggins, G. (2012, Sept. 1). *Seven keys to effective feedback. From Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD*): https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/seven-keys-to-effective-feedback

Kansas State Board of Education

BOARD MEMBERS

900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.gov/board



DISTRICT 1

Danny Zeck
Vice Chair
Danny.Zeck@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 2

Melanie Haas
Melanie.Haas@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 3

Michelle Dombrosky
Michelle.Dombrosky@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 4

Connie O'Brien
Connie.O'brien@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 5

Cathy Hopkins
Chair
Cathy.Hopkins@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 6

Dr. Beryl A. New
Beryl.New@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 7

Dennis Hershberger
Dennis.Hershberger@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 8

Betty Arnold
Betty.Arnold@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 9

Jim Porter
Jim.Porter@ksde.gov

DISTRICT 10

Debby Potter
Debby.Potter@ksde.gov

SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success

Kansans CAN

MISSION

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

MOTTO

Kansans Can

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Dr. Randy Watson
Randy.Watson@ksde.gov

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services

Dr. Frank Harwood
Frank.Harwood@ksde.gov

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
Division of Learning Services

Dr. Ben Proctor
Ben.Proctor@ksde.gov

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Jan. 25, 2025

For more information, contact:

Dr. Laurie Curtis
Early Literacy/Dyslexia Program Manager
Career, Standards and Assessment Services

(785) 296-2749
laurie.curtis@ksde.gov

Kansans CAN

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212

www.ksde.gov