



Essential Standards Extended Guide

ELA Grade 6

Guiding Information:

In response to requests from schools and districts for guidance on essential standards, committees of educators from around Idaho collaborated in the summer of 2024 to categorize ELA standards into four groups:

- **Essential standards** are explicitly taught, assessed multiple times, and receive targeted interventions for students who have not yet reached proficiency.
- **Supporting standards** are taught to reinforce essential standards and may or may not be formally assessed.
- **Additional standards** extend learning and are incorporated as time allows within course units, with assessment being optional.
- **Teacher Guidance standards** provide direction for teachers in developing instructional materials, designing units, and creating learning opportunities.

This guidance helps LEAs prioritize the most critical standards, recognizing that not all standards are of equal importance. This document serves as a resource—not a mandate—to assist local efforts. Importantly, this work did not remove or revise any of the adopted Idaho Content Standards and is intended to refocus time and effort.

Given the skills-based nature of ELA, the standards can be grouped flexibly to meet student needs and support various instructional materials. To assist educators, the committees created a step-by-step process, outlined on page 6 of this document. This guide can help educators develop scope and sequence for their instructional time and district-specific courses and provide a starting point for building formative and summative assessments around the standards.

Teacher Guidance Standards

These standards provide direction for teachers in developing instructional materials, designing units, and creating learning opportunities.

RC.6.1. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the lower end of the grades 6–8 band. (See the Quantitative Analysis Chart for Determining Text Complexity in the Resource Reference.)

RC.6.2. Regularly engage in a volume of reading, independently, with peers, or with modest support related to the topics and themes being studied to build knowledge and vocabulary.

Teacher Guidance Standards

These standards provide direction for teachers in developing instructional materials, designing units, and creating learning opportunities.

RC.6.4. Read grade-level text with accuracy, automaticity, appropriate rate, and expression in successive readings to support comprehension (see the 2017 Hasbrouck and Tindal norms listed in Resource Reference).

RS.6.2. Read a series of texts organized around a variety of conceptually related topics to build knowledge about the world. (These texts should be at a range of complexity levels so students can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.)

W.6.1. Develop flexibility in writing by routinely engaging in the production of shorter and longer pieces for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. This could include, among others, summaries, reflections, descriptions, critiques, letters, and poetry, etc.

Essential Standards

Standards are to be explicitly taught, assessed more than once, and intervened upon in this cluster of standards.

RC.6.3. Draw several pieces of evidence from grade-level texts to support claims and inferences, including quoting and paraphrasing from texts accurately.

RC.6.5a. Explain stated or implied themes of texts, including how they are developed using specific details from the texts.

RC.6.5b. Describe how characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

RC.6.6a. Explain stated or implied central ideas from texts, including how they are developed using specific details from the texts; provide a summary of texts distinct from personal opinions.

RC.6.6b. Explain in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in texts through examples or anecdotes.

RC.6.6d. Trace the argument and specific claims in texts, distinguishing claims that are supported by evidence and reasons from claims that are not.

VD.6.1a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

RS.6.1. Conduct brief as well as multi-day research tasks to take some action or share findings orally or in writing by formulating research questions and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate; gathering and assessing the relevance and usefulness of information from multiple reliable sources; and paraphrasing or quoting the data and conclusions of others, providing basic bibliographic information for sources, and respecting copyright guidelines for use of images.

Essential Standards

Standards are to be explicitly taught, assessed more than once, and intervened upon in this cluster of standards.

W.6.2. Write arguments that introduce and support a distinct point of view with relevant claims, evidence and reasoning; demonstrate an understanding of the topic; and provide a concluding section that follows from the argument presented.

W.6.3. Write informational texts that introduce the topic, develop the focus with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples from multiple sources using appropriate strategies, such as description, comparison, and/or cause-effect; and provide a concluding section that follows from the information presented.

W.6.4. Write personal or fictional narratives that establish a situation and narrator; engage and orient the reader to the context; use narrative techniques such as description, dialogue, pacing, concrete words and sensory details to develop the characters, event(s), or experience(s); and provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated event(s).

ODC.6.1. Engage in collaborative discussions about grade-level topics and texts with peers by following agreed-upon rules for collegial discussions, setting specific goals, and carrying out assigned roles; making comments and posing and responding to specific questions with elaboration and detail; and demonstrating understanding of various perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

ODC.6.2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

ODC.6.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

GC.6.1a. Identify the eight basic parts of speech (noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, interjection).

GC.6.2a. [Use] Commas, parentheses, and dashes to set off nonrestrictive or parenthetical elements.

Supporting Standards

Standards that support the Essential Standards. These standards will be taught but may or may not be formally assessed.

RC.6.5c. Describe how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of texts and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

RC.6.5. Use evidence from literature to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts.

RC.6.5d. Explain how authors develop the point of view of the narrator or speaker in texts.

Supporting Standards

Standards that support the Essential Standards. These standards will be taught but may or may not be formally assessed.

RC.6.6. Use evidence from nonfiction works to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts.

RC.6.6c. Explain how a specific sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of texts and contributes to the development of the ideas.

RC.6.6e. Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

VD.6.1. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

VD.6.1b. Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., in readings on pioneers of space, determine the meanings of the words astronaut and nautical).

VD.6.1c. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), print or digital, to find the pronunciation of a word and determine and clarify its precise meaning and its part of speech.

VD.6.1d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

VD.6.2. Determine how words and phrases provide meaning and nuance to grade-level texts.

VD.6.2a. Interpret figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms) in context.

VD.6.2b. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.

VD.6.2c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., house versus home, cheap versus affordable)

VD.6.2d. Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning, tone (author's attitude toward the subject), or mood (emotional atmosphere).

VD.6.3. Acquire and use accurately general academic and content-specific words and phrases occurring in grade-level reading and content; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. Use these words in discussions and writing.

W.6.5. Produce clear and coherent organizational structures of multiple paragraphs in which facts and ideas are logically grouped; headings, as applicable are included to support the purpose; and words, phrases, and clauses clarify the relationships between and among ideas and concepts.

W.6.6. With support from adults and peers, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach appropriate to audience and purpose. (Editing should demonstrate command of grade-level Grammar and Conventions.)

Supporting Standards

Standards that support the Essential Standards. These standards will be taught but may or may not be formally assessed.

W.6.7. Write by hand or with technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

ODC.6.4. Report orally on a topic or text or present an argument, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use adequate volume and clear pronunciation.

ODC.6.7. Compare and contrast a written story to a digital version, contrasting what is “seen” and “heard” when reading the text with what is perceived when listened to or watched.

GC.6.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

GC.6.1b. Recognize that a word performs different functions according to its position in the sentence.

GC.6.1c. Use pronouns correctly regarding case, number, and person, including intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).

GC.6.1d. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).

GC.6.1e. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

GC.6.1f. Expand, combine, or reduce sentences (e.g., adding or deleting modifiers, combining, or breaking up sentences) for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

GC.6.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of English punctuation and capitalization when writing and reading aloud to create meaning.

GC.6.2b. Colons to separate hours and minutes and to introduce a list.

GC.6.3. Spell derivatives correctly by applying knowledge of bases and affixes.

Additional Standards

If time allows, these standards may be taught and/or assessed

RC.6.5e. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

ODC.6.5. Consider the source of information gathered digitally through such means as domains (e.g., .gov; .edu vs.com or .tv) and the quality of evidence presented.

Additional Standards

If time allows, these standards may be taught and/or assessed

ODC.6.6. Follow safety practices and ethical guidelines when gathering, sharing, and using information.

ODC.6.8. Include digital components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) in presentations to clarify information.

GC.6.1g. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.

Unit Planning with Standards

The Idaho Content Standards for English Language Arts have been grouped into four standard categories to acknowledge that the abundance of standards must be broken down for use in a classroom with students. This document provides guidance for educators to begin developing unit plans around the categorized standards.

Pre-Planning: Read through all the Teacher Guidance standards. These standards are necessary for teachers to consider and remember while completing the steps below.

Step	Description
Step 1	Begin by choosing 3-4 essential standards that can be grouped into a cohesive unit. You should choose these essential standards from different strands (writing, reading comprehension, research, oral and digital communication, vocabulary development, and grammar and conventions). You also need to consider the text(s) you have available or might use with your students to teach, support, practice, and assess these standards.
Step 2	Choose supporting standards. After identifying your essential standards, you should choose 2-3 supporting standards to use and potentially assess alongside your essential standards. When choosing these supporting standards, consider which ones might lend themselves to the work your students will do with the essential standards and what skills might be necessary to complete assessments. Remember, these standards may or may not be formally assessed in your classroom as you work through the unit.
Step 3	Create or find summative assessments for each essential standard. For every essential standard, you need to have a goal in mind and then work backward to meet that goal. Daily lessons and practice, formative assessments, and interventions should work towards these summative assessments of your essential standards. At this point, you should have 3-4 summative assessments that directly assess each of your essential standards.
Step 4	At this point, you should have 3-4 essential standards identified, 2-3 supporting standards identified, and 3-4 summative assessments tied to essential standards with potential connections to your supporting standards. You should now work to create formative assessments for all essential standards while using the supporting standards to help guide students and their learning. Consider creating/finding formative assessments that will lead to or practice the same types of work as your summative assessment. What might your students need to try and receive feedback on from your essential standards before they reach their summative assessment?

Step	Description
Step 5	Identify which additional standards you will use when/if there is time or need in your unit. These should be standards that might extend or enhance the grouping of standards and assessments you have already identified. Consider what blends well with the type of assessment you have created/found and what might benefit your students from learning once they are proficient with your essential and supporting standards.

Sample Unit Outline 1

Essential Standards	Supporting Standards	Additional Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS.6.1. • RC.6.6a. • RC.6.3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GC.6.1. • ODC.6.4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODC.6.8.

Potential Assessment(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS.6.1: Research Tracker with Annotated Bibliography • RC.6.6a: Annotated Research Articles • RC.6.3. Graphic organizer with cited evidence to support a research topic

Rationale
<p>The essential standards in this sample were chosen on the premise that the research process standard (RS.1) naturally includes the reading comprehension standard of comparing non-fiction texts on a similar topic (RC.6a). Students will be asked to cite relevant evidence (RC.3) to support their research.</p> <p>While completing the research process, the supporting grammar and conventions standards (GC.1) can support their overall writing. The supporting communication standard (ODC.4) could be included so students may present their research while including digital media elements in their presentations (ODC.8).</p>

Sample Unit Outline 2

Essential Standards	Supporting Standards	Additional Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W.6.2.• RC.6.5a.• ODC.6.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W.6.6.• GC.6.1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

Potential Assessment(s)

- W.6.2: Argument paragraph on the theme of a short story
- RC.6.5a: Hexagonal thinking activity to determine theme statement for paragraph
- ODC.6.1: Philosophical Chairs on theme statements or Fishbowl Discussion on theme statements for short story

Rationale

The essential standards in this sample were chosen on the premise that the argument task (W.2) could be written at the end of the discussion assessments (ODC.1) which would be focused on the identified theme statements created through a hexagonal thinking activity for the reading comprehension standard (RC.5a). The grammar and convention supporting standard (GC.1c) would be a natural fit to assess a final writing task from the writing essential standard. The supporting writing standard (W.6) was chosen to support the overall writing process.

For Questions Contact

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