



Essential Standards Extended Guide

English Language Arts Grade 3

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 more than once, and intervened upon** if students have not yet reached proficiency.
- **Supporting standards** are taught to support the learning of essential standards and may or may not be formally assessed.
- **Additional standards** deepen learning and may be included as time allows throughout course units of study and may or may not be assessed.
- **Teacher Guidance standards** are core processes that should be used as guidance for teachers in the development and choice of instructional materials, unit design, and learning opportunities. An example of a learning opportunity would be infusing oral language into daily instruction, providing a rich oral language environment where students engage in meaningful and collaborative discussions, asking and answering questions, and making connections. These conversations help build foundational literacy skills by fostering vocabulary development, comprehension, and critical thinking, all of which support positive reading and writing outcomes.

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 7 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.

3.RC.V.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.

3.VD.AV.3: Acquire and use general academic and content-specific words and phrases occurring in grade-level reading and content, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., She stood behind the door before she entered the room). Use these words in discussions and writing.

3.RS.DR.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.)

3.ODC.OC.1: Engage in collaborative discussions about grade-level topics and texts with peers by staying on topic; linking comments to the remarks of others; asking questions to check understanding of information being discussed; and reviewing ideas expressed.

Essential Standards

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

3.FR.PH.3a: Decode words when known affixes are added to a known word (e.g., visit/revisit, appear/disappear, lead/mislead, care/careful).

3.FR.PH.3c: Decode multisyllable words.

3.FR.PH.3d: Read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words (e.g., come, friend, today).

3.RC.TE.3: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts, referring explicitly to textual evidence as the basis for the answers.

3.RC.RF.4: Read grade-level text with accuracy, automaticity, appropriate rate, and expression in successive readings to support comprehension.

3.RC.L.5a: Describe key details from stories (including folktales, fables, and tall tales) from diverse cultures and explain how they support the central lesson, moral, or theme.

Essential Standards

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3.RC.NF.6a: Describe key details from texts and explain how they support the central idea.

3.RC.NF.6c: Describe major structural differences between the organization of different informational texts (e.g., description, sequence, comparison, problem-solution, cause-effect).

3.VD.WB.1b: Determine the meaning of new words formed when known affixes are added to a known word (e.g., expensive/ inexpensive, lock/unlock, help/helpless, care/ careless).

3.VD.WB.1c: Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., transport, portable).

3.W.RW.2: Write arguments that introduce the topic, express an opinion supported with facts, details, and reasons, and provide a concluding statement.

3.W.RW.3: Write informational texts that introduce the topic, develop the focus with facts and details, and provide a concluding statement.

3.W.RW.4: Write personal or fictional stories that recount an event or experience, include details to develop the characters or event(s) and provide a sense of closure.

3.ODC.OC.4: Report orally on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

3.GC.GU.1d: Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns (e.g., fish, teeth).

3.GC.GU.1g: Produce, expand, and rearrange simple and compound sentences.

3.GC.M.2b: Commas and quotation marks in dialogue.

3.GC.M.3a: Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words.

Supporting Standards

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

3.FR.PH.3: Use knowledge of grade-level phonics and word analysis skills to decode words.

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3.FR.PH.3b: Decode words with common Greek and Latin roots (e.g., trans, port, bio).

3.RC.TC.1: Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the higher end of the grades 2–3 band. (See the Quantitative Analysis Chart for Determining Text Complexity in the Resource Reference).

3.RC.L.5: Use evidence from literature to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts.

3.RC.L.5b: Explain how characters develop (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) throughout the text.

3.RC.L.5c: Explain major structural differences between poems, plays, and prose.

3.RC.L.5d: Explain the difference between a narrator’s point of view and various characters’ perspectives in stories.

3.RC.L.5e: Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters.

3.RC.NF.6: Use evidence from nonfiction works to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts.

3.RC.NF.6b: Describe the relationship between a series of events, concepts, steps, or procedures in historical, scientific, or technical texts, using words that pertain to comparison, sequence, or cause/effect.

3.RC.NF.6d: Explain the logical connection between particular facts and reasons in texts.

3.RC.NF.6e: Compare and contrast important points and key supporting details presented in two texts on the same topic.

3.VD.WB.1: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

3.VD.WB.1a: Use sentence-level context as clues to the meaning of words or phrases.

3.VD.WB.2: Determine how words and phrases provide meaning and nuance to grade-level texts.

3.VD.WB.2a: Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).

3.VD.WB.2b: Distinguish shades of meaning among grade-appropriate, related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered).

Supporting Standards

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

3.RS.IP.1: Conduct short research tasks to take some action or share findings orally or in writing by gathering and recording information on a specific topic from reference texts or through interviews, and using text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information efficiently.

3.W.RW.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, letters, and poetry, etc.

3.W.RW.5: Group related information within a paragraph, using common linking words and phrases to connect ideas and information.

3.W.RW.6: With support from adults and peers, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing should demonstrate command of grade-level Grammar and Conventions.)

3.W.HWK.7: Write legibly in cursive, leaving space between letters in a word, in a sentence, and at the edges of the paper.

3.W.HWK.8: Use keyboarding skills to produce and publish writing.

3.ODC.OC.2: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in a variety of media (audio, visual, and quantitative).

3.ODC.OC.3: Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

3.ODC.DC.5: With support, evaluate whether a digital source is factual or not by considering its use of evidence.

3.ODC.DC.6: Use information gained digitally to determine where, when, why, and how key events occur.

3.GC.GU.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

3.GC.GU.1a: Form and use the progressive and perfect verb tenses.

3.GC.GU.1b: Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs.

3.GC.GU.1c: Use collective nouns (e.g., family, crew, assembly) matched to plural verb forms.

3.GC.GU.1e: Use common, proper, and possessive nouns.

3.GC.GU.1f: Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

Supporting Standards

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3.GC.GU.1h: Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation to provide requested detail or clarification.

3.GC.M.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of English punctuation and capitalization when writing and reading aloud to create meaning.

3.GC.M.2a: Commas in addresses and dates.

3.GC.M.2c: Forming and using possessives.

3.GC.M.2d: Capitalize appropriate words in titles.

3.GC.M.3: Use knowledge of spelling in writing.

3.GC.M.3b: Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) when pronouncing and writing words.

3.GC.M.3c: Spell high-frequency irregular words correctly (e.g., who, what, why).

Additional Standards

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

3.VD.WB.1d: Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, print or digital, to clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

3.GC.M.3d: Consult reference materials to check and correct spelling.

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	Teacher Guidance/Additional Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.W.RW.4 • 3.GC.M.2b • 3.ODC.OC.4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.RC.L.5b • 3.W.RW.1 • 3.W.RW.6 • 3.GC.M.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.RC.V.2 • 3.VD.AV.3

Potential Assessment(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.W.RW.4: LEA or school-based writing rubric (includes character development, dialogue writing, plot structure and storyline, oral presentation, etc.) • 3.GC.M.2b: LEA or school-based writing rubric (includes character development, dialogue writing, plot structure and storyline, oral presentation, etc.) • 3.ODC.OC.4: LEA or school-based writing rubric (includes character development, dialogue writing, plot structure and storyline, oral presentation, etc.)

Rationale
<p>The rationale for grouping these standards is to guide students in writing a fictional story that incorporates characters and dialogue, both key elements of the fictional genre. The grouping allows students to explore how characters evolve and interact within a story, while also improving their narrative writing and oral communication skills.</p>

Rationale

The addition of standard 3.ODC.OC.4 focused on having students discuss challenges they faced during the writing process, such as crafting dialogue or other story elements. By reflecting on these difficulties, students engaged in metacognitive practices, deepening their understanding of effective writing strategies. This reflection process encouraged them to think critically about their choices as writers, fostering a stronger grasp of narrative techniques. Through these discussions, students also developed their oral language skills by clearly articulating their writing process and explaining how they overcame obstacles, with a focus on clarity, pacing, and descriptive detail.

By integrating creative writing, character analysis, the writing process, and oral communication, this unit helps students build stronger literacy skills. The integrated approach reinforces a student's ability to apply spelling, grammar, and vocabulary while effectively communicating their ideas in both written and oral forms.

For Questions Contact

Content & Curriculum

Idaho Department of Education

650 W State Street, Boise, ID 83702

208 332 6800 | www.sde.idaho.gov