



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

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# Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

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Literacy Instruction Standards

*S.L. 2021-8, sec. 5(a)*

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**Date Due: May 15, 2022**  
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2021-2022

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# JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS

## S.L. 2021-8, SEC. 5(A)

### PART V. ALIGN LITERACY CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION WITH READ TO ACHIEVE

(a) The State Board of Education shall develop literacy instruction standards to ensure that instruction methods throughout the State are consistent and closely aligned with the objectives of Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes (Read to Achieve). The State Board shall incorporate only the most effective literacy instruction methods aligned with the Science of Reading into the standards developed. No later than May 15, 2022, the State Board of Education shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the literacy instruction standards developed. No later than June 30, 2022, the State Board shall provide to local boards of education the standards developed.

The Department of Public Instruction shall develop a literacy implementation plan that would implement the standards developed by the State Board of Education. No later than June 30, 2022, the Department shall provide to local boards of education (i) a model literacy implementation plan that implements the standards developed and (ii) an example of a literacy implementation plan that would not implement the standards developed and explanatory guidance on why it would not implement the standards.

Each local school administrative unit shall evaluate its literacy curriculum and instruction methods and shall modify as necessary to adhere to the standards developed by the State Board and align with the model literacy implementation plan provided by the Department. No later than December 15, 2022, and in a form prescribed by the State Board, each local school administrative unit shall submit to the State Board a concise explanation of its literacy curriculum and instruction, as aligned with the standards and model literacy implementation plan.

(b) Regional case managers, or other appropriate staff as determined by the Department of Public Instruction, shall work to ensure that the standards developed by the State Board are implemented statewide by reviewing the curriculum and instruction methods of each local school administrative unit in each service area and by consulting with each local school administrative unit as needed to bring literacy instruction into compliance. Review and modification of all literacy instruction statewide shall be complete no later than November 15, 2023. Modifications shall be implemented into curriculum and instruction as soon as possible, and all curriculum and instruction as modified under this section shall be in place beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

## METHODOLOGY

In May 2021, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) began the process of creating literacy instruction standards (LIS). While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The LIS are defined as a level of expectation; a definite, established way of teaching literacy aligned to the Science of Reading. They are those essential, non-negotiables that set a level of quality for instruction, to be used consistently statewide in every classroom, every day.

While the Read to Achieve legislation focuses on early literacy, the Section V working teams recognized the need to span the entire PreK through 12 literacy continuum. The Office of Early Learning and Division of Academic Standards collaborated on planning and creating the LIS. Both divisions engaged experts in the field to provide insight and feedback throughout the process.

Once the grade bands of PreK, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 were set, the teams conducted extensive research. They identified and studied multiple meta-analyses on literacy. The team also performed hand searches of high-quality empirical journals to study the latest research and findings. The working groups reviewed over 225 meta-analyses and studies over the span of two months. From there they created a spreadsheet with annotated bibliographies and synopses of the findings. That information was used to identify and flesh out

trends. The next step was to cross walk the trends with multiple reliable sources and initiatives including the IES Guides, the UNC Literacy Framework, LETRS®, and the NC Standard Course of Study. Once the standards were in an early draft form, the NCDPI working groups examined the LIS from PreK-12 to ensure vertical alignment, staying true to the research.

The final LIS were approved by the NC State Board of Education in October 2021. In March 2022, the PreK working group brought minor changes back to the NC State Board of Education. Those PreK LIS changes were approved in April 2022.

## **ORGANIZATION**

The LIS are organized in five grade bands: PreK, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. There are twelve PreK standards, twelve K-2 standards, eleven 3-5 standards, eight 6-8 standards, and eight 9-12 standards. The LIS are anchored by research-informed literacy components. Each literacy instruction standard has a set of corresponding research-informed practices. While the literacy instruction standards are broad, overarching statements, the practices give detail and provide with how to implement the literacy instruction standard with fidelity. These practices can be found in the appendix following this report.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the English Language Arts NCSCOS.

This LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices and may not fully capture all instructional practices that have the potential to positively impact students' literacy achievement. New literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

### **PREK**

The PreK LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction with research-informed practices. The literacy instruction standards for PreK, when used with the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development 2013*, define the quality of early language and literacy teaching and learning.

The literacy instruction standards for PreK are anchored by twelve components: 1) Engagement, 2) Reading Materials & Print Awareness, 3) Oral Language & Vocabulary, 4) Phonological Awareness, 5) Phonics, 6) Fluency, 7) Comprehension: Discussion, 8) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 9) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 10) Writing, 11) Small Group Instruction, and 12) Observation & Assessment.

### **GRADES K-2**

The Grades K-2 LIS are anchored by twelve components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Phonological Awareness, 3) Phonics, 4) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 5) Fluency, 6) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 7) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 8) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 9) Writing, 10) Observation & Assessment, 11) Small Group Instruction, and 12) Engagement. Grounded in these twelve components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all K-2 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

In addition to guiding English Language Arts instruction, many of these practices can be integrated into content area instruction to assist students in acquiring the literacy skills and disciplinary knowledge they need as they move through the elementary grades. While the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction in K-2, they include instructional practices that may support K-2 teachers to address the specific literacy demands of the different disciplines.

The K-2 and 3-5 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 3-5 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the K-2 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 3-5 LIS.

### **GRADES 3-5**

The Grades 3-5 LIS are anchored by eleven components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Phonics, 3) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 4) Fluency, 5) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 6) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 7) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 8) Writing, 9) Observation & Assessment, 10) Small Group Instruction, and 11) Engagement. Grounded in these eleven components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 3-5 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

In addition to guiding English Language Arts instruction, many of these practices can be integrated into content area instruction to assist students in acquiring the literacy skills and disciplinary knowledge they need as they move through the elementary grades. While the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction in 3-5, they include instructional practices that may support 3-5 teachers to address the specific literacy demands of the different disciplines.

The K-2 and 3-5 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 3-5 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the K-2 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 3-5 LIS.

### **GRADES 6-8**

The Grades 6-8 LIS are anchored by eight components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 3) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 4) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 5) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 6) Writing, 7) Observation & Assessment, and 8) Engagement. Grounded in these eight components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 6-8 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

These practices should be integrated into content-area instruction to assist students in acquiring the advanced literacy skills they need as they move toward career and college readiness. While the LIS and their accompanying practices offer content area teachers instructional methods they can use to improve content-area literacy, they also include practices that should be adapted and focused on addressing the specific literacy demands of different disciplines. Please note that the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction, but instead be used to enhance and support.

The 6-8 and 9-12 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 9-12 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the 6-8 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 9-12 LIS.

### **GRADES 9-12**

The Grades 9-12 LIS are anchored by eight components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 3) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 4) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 5) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 6) Writing, 7) Observation & Assessment, and 8) Engagement. Grounded in these eight components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 9-12 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

These practices should be integrated into content-area instruction to assist students in acquiring the advanced literacy skills they need as they move toward career and college readiness. While the LIS and their accompanying practices offer content area teachers instructional methods they can use to improve content-area literacy, they also include practices that should be adapted and focused on addressing the specific literacy demands of different disciplines. Please note that the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction, but instead be used to enhance and support.

The 6-8 and 9-12 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 9-12 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the 6-8 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 9-12 LIS.

## LITERACY INSTRUCTION STANDARDS

### PREK

Engagement - Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students participate in reading, writing, and oral language activities

Reading Materials & Print Awareness - Intentional opportunities for students to access and use literacy materials and print throughout the learning environment

Oral Language & Vocabulary - Intentional and meaningful conversations with students, providing context and vocabulary that builds upon students' existing knowledge and word usage

Phonological Awareness - Intentional and systematic opportunities for students to identify and play with sounds of spoken language

Phonics - Intentional and systematic instruction in letter names, letter shapes, and letter sound relationships

Fluency - Intentional opportunities for students to hear models of fluent reading through interactive read-aloud routines

Comprehension: Discussion - Intentional opportunities for students to construct meaning through interactive read-aloud routines

Comprehension: Strategy Instruction - Intentional opportunities for students to gain exposure and experience with various texts to support comprehension through interactive read aloud routines

Comprehension: Knowledge-building - Intentional opportunities for students to build connections to prior experiences and ideas through interactive read aloud routines

Writing - Intentional opportunities for students to engage in written expression on meaningful topics

Small Group Instruction - Personalized small group instruction, integrating guided play experiences, that targets students' needs in early literacy skills utilizing formative assessment during daily classroom routines

Observation & Assessment - Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills

### GRADES K-2

Reading Materials - Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

Phonological Awareness - Explicit instruction and intentional opportunities to develop awareness of the segments of sound in oral language

Phonics - Systematic and explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships and sound-spelling patterns

Academic Language & Vocabulary - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including vocabulary knowledge, across content areas

Fluency - Intentional opportunities for students to hear models of fluent reading and to develop oral reading fluency

Comprehension: Discussion & Writing - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within and across texts before, during, and after interactive read-alouds

Comprehension: Strategy Instruction - Explicit instruction and modeling of how to use text structure and strategies to support comprehension during interactive read-alouds

Comprehension: Knowledge-building - Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across texts before, during, and after interactive read-alouds

Writing - Explicit writing instruction and meaningful opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences

Observation & Assessment - Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

Small Group Instruction - Personalized small group instruction, integrating a variety of grouping approaches, that targets students' needs in specific literacy skills and grade-level standards based on observation and assessment

Engagement - Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within ELA and content-area instruction

## **GRADES 3-5**

Reading Materials - Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

Phonics - Explicit instruction in sound-spelling patterns and common word parts

Academic Language & Vocabulary - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including vocabulary knowledge, across content areas

Fluency - Intentional and authentic instructional opportunities to build oral reading fluency and silent reading proficiency to support comprehension of increasingly complex, grade-appropriate text

Comprehension: Discussion & Writing - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within and across texts

Comprehension: Strategy Instruction - Explicit instruction in text structure and strategies to support comprehension

Comprehension: Knowledge-building - Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

Writing - Explicit writing instruction and meaningful opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences

Observation & Assessment - Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

Small Group Instruction - Personalized small group instruction, integrating a variety of grouping approaches, that targets students' needs in specific literacy skills and grade-level standards based on observation and assessment

Engagement - Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within ELA and content-area instruction

## **GRADES 6-8**

Reading Materials - Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

Academic Language & Vocabulary - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including discipline-specific vocabulary

Comprehension: Discussion & Writing - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within disciplines

Comprehension: Strategy Instruction - Explicit comprehension strategy instruction, including text structure and metacognitive strategies, both general and discipline-specific

Comprehension: Knowledge-building - Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

Writing - Explicit writing instruction that includes writing processes and meaningful writing opportunities for students to apply and practice strategies

Observation & Assessment - Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

Engagement - Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within content-area instruction

## **GRADES 9-12**

Reading Materials - Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

Academic Language & Vocabulary - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including discipline-specific vocabulary

Comprehension: Discussion & Writing - Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within disciplines

Comprehension: Strategy Instruction - Explicit comprehension strategy instruction, including text structure and metacognitive strategies, both general and discipline-specific

Comprehension: Knowledge-building - Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

Writing - Explicit writing instruction that includes writing processes and meaningful writing opportunities for students to apply and practice strategies

Observation & Assessment - Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

Engagement - Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within content-area instruction



Office of Early Learning

# Literacy Instruction Standards

Pre-Kindergarten

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## Introduction

In October 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as the instructional methods necessary for meeting the expectations of Section V of SB387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS for Preschool reflect the level of expectation for teaching early language and literacy to be used within core instruction.

The LIS for Preschool serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction with research-informed practices. The LIS for Preschool, when used with the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development 2013*, define the quality of early language and literacy teaching and learning. The LIS for Preschool are anchored by:

- Engagement
- Reading Materials & Print Awareness
- Oral Language and Vocabulary
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Writing
- Small Group
- Observation & Assessment

The LIS for Preschool provide guidance to early childhood educators on essential, evidence-based early language and literacy practices that lead to improved literacy outcomes. It is widely recognized that early language and literacy skills developed during the preschool years build the foundation for later literacy success and can mitigate disparities in achievement. The LIS for Preschool are designed to build consistency in effective classroom practices across the state that are grounded in both developmentally appropriate practice and the latest research in the Science of Reading. The LIS for Preschool are written as core practices that teachers will intentionally integrate into their daily instructional plan. Children require opportunities to engage in high-quality early literacy experiences **every day**.

These practices are expected to be incorporated into the various structures, activities, and routines of the preschool day and through a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated experiences. The LIS for Preschool do not support an isolated instructional block for “English Language Arts” or “Literacy” and are not specific to any particular approach, program, or curriculum. Practitioners create opportunities to integrate these core practices with high-quality instructional activities that support whole-child development.

Please note that this framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices. Practices included in this framework are representative of methods that have the strongest research support and are appropriate for young children. Additionally, new literacy research could alter and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

## Engagement

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Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students participate in reading, writing, and oral language activities

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The teacher provides intentional opportunities to foster literacy engagement as children participate in reading, writing and oral language activities by:

- modeling and scaffolding children’s engagement in literacy related activities throughout the learning environment and across daily routines.
- incorporating meaningful and authentic literacy experiences within the context of play.



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## Reading Materials & Print Awareness

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Intentional opportunities for students to access and use literacy materials and print throughout the learning environment

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The teacher provides ample literacy-related materials and print throughout the learning environment and across daily routines by:

- selecting and including
  - texts of various types and genres.
  - meaningful environmental print.
  - items for writing.
  - materials to incorporate literacy into play.
- intentionally engaging, modeling, and scaffolding children’s use of the provided literacy-related materials and print.
- incorporating and interacting with environmental print that is
  - meaningful to children and functionally used.
  - co-created with children and is inclusive of their print.
  - posted at eye-level.
- purposefully including and functionally using children’s printed names.

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## Oral Language & Vocabulary

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Intentional and meaningful conversations with students, providing context and vocabulary that builds upon students' existing knowledge and word usage

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The teacher engages children in intentional and meaningful conversations by:

- utilizing play-based interactions with scaffolding through talking, singing, and interacting with children throughout the day, during routines and play.
- embedding language interactions intentionally throughout daily routines.
- decontextualizing language through conversations about the past and the future.
- rephrasing and extending the child's words, asking clarifying questions, modeling more complex vocabulary or sentence structure, and asking open-ended questions.

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*“The quality of children’s early experiences influences their language and literacy and, therefore, their lifelong outcomes. Adults foster young children’s developing language when they talk, sing, read, and interact with them throughout the day, during routines, and during play. Early childhood educators need to model, facilitate, and use language all day long.”*

***LETRS for Early Childhood Educators***

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## Phonological Awareness

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Intentional and systematic opportunities for students to identify and play with sounds of spoken language

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The teacher provides intentional and systematic oral language activities, which progress from recognition, to matching, and then to production by:

- allowing children to explore and play with
  - words.
  - rhymes.
  - syllables including, segmentation, and blending.
  - first sounds.



## Phonics

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### Intentional and systematic instruction in letter names, letter shapes, and letter sound relationships

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The teacher plans and provides systematic, intentional, and explicit instruction in letter names, letter shapes, and letter-sound relationships by:

- using the developmental sequence and stages of letter knowledge acquisition to inform, scaffold, and individualize instruction.
- considering the various characteristics of letters to inform the selection of target letters, instructional methodologies, and pace of instruction.
- utilizing a multi-component approach in letter knowledge instruction, where at minimum, the letter name, letter shape, and letter sound are taught together.

## Fluency

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Intentional opportunities for students to hear models of fluent reading through interactive read-aloud routines

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The teacher utilizes read aloud experiences to promote fluent reading by:

- modeling appropriate pace and accuracy.
- demonstrating expression that mimics the characters or content in the selected text.
- engaging children in repeated readings of familiar texts.



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## Comprehension: Discussion

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Intentional opportunities for students to construct meaning through interactive read-aloud routines

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The teacher utilizes read aloud routines to support literacy development by:

- planning for opportunities to embed instruction on print concepts, phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and comprehension.
- teaching new vocabulary intentionally selected from read aloud texts.
- engaging children in oral discussion while the text is read.

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*“Children’s language skills expand because of what they learn from having adults read books to and with them.”*

***LETRS for Early Childhood***

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## Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

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Intentional opportunities for students to gain exposure and experience with various texts to support comprehension through interactive read aloud routines

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The teacher implements read aloud routines to support children by:

- targeting identified skills where children need additional practice.
- capitalizing on the use of repeated readings of a familiar text so students can more effectively manage their cognitive load/cognitive demands.
- engaging children in oral discussion while the text is read.



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## Comprehension: Knowledge-building

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Intentional opportunities for students to build connections to prior experiences and ideas through interactive read aloud routines

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The teacher implements read aloud routines to develop content knowledge by:

- selecting texts across disciplines.
- capitalizing on expressed student interests.
- selecting texts that children cannot read independently, allowing them to learn from the content before being able to read it themselves.
- exposing children to higher level, content related vocabulary.
- engaging children in oral discussion while the text is read.

## Writing

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Intentional opportunities for students to engage in written expression on meaningful topics

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The teacher provides multiple opportunities each day for children to observe and engage in meaningful writing activities by:

- using knowledge of the developmental sequence and stages of writing to inform, scaffold, and individualize instruction.
- integrating writing into natural classroom routines and throughout all learning centers.
- providing authentic experiences to incorporate instruction and practice in writing their own name.
- modeling and engaging children in writing experiences that are intentional, individualized, and include
  - correct writing examples.
  - generating what to write.
  - transcribing ideas to paper (or other writing surfaces/materials).
  - identifying sounds in words.
  - matching letters to sounds.
  - appropriate letter formation/mechanics.
  - correct pencil grip.



## Small Group Instruction

Personalized small group instruction, integrating guided play experiences, that targets students' needs in early literacy skills utilizing formative assessment during daily classroom routines

The teacher utilizes small group instruction to target specific needs in early literacy by:

- providing personalized instruction for skill-based learning with groups of 2-4 children.
- integrating guided play experiences into literacy instruction.
- engaging children in developmentally appropriate practice of letter naming, letter sounds, phonemic awareness, initial sound knowledge and sound-focused activities.
- assessing progress formatively during instruction to guide decisions about next steps.
- using conversations and open-ended questions to foster oral language skills.



## Observation & Assessment

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### Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills

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The teacher uses a variety of observation and formative assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by:

- intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative learning tasks to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use.
- using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction across over time.

The teacher organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by:

- providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards.
- analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes.
- providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis.
- collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed.
- collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support.
- providing small group intervention sessions for students who need more intensive support, working with a specialist as needed

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*Literacy Instruction Standards are a critical component of the North Carolina Read • Lead • Succeed program.*



Division of Academic Standards

# Literacy Instruction Standards

Grades K-2

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## Introduction

On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide.

While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The Grades K-2 LIS are anchored by twelve components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Phonological Awareness, 3) Phonics, 4) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 5) Fluency, 6) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 7) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 8) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 9) Writing, 10) Observation & Assessment, 11) Small Group Instruction, and 12) Engagement. Grounded in these twelve components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all K-2 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

The purpose of this document is to outline research-informed practices for each LIS for grades K-2. In addition to guiding English Language Arts instruction, many of these practices can be integrated into content area instruction to assist students in acquiring the literacy skills and disciplinary knowledge they need as they move through the elementary grades. While the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction in K-2, they include instructional practices that may support K-2 teachers to address the specific literacy demands of the different disciplines.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the English Language Arts NCSCOS.

This LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices and may not fully capture all instructional practices that have the potential to positively impact students' literacy achievement in K-2. New literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

The K-2 and 3-5 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 3-5 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the K-2 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 3-5 LIS.

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## Reading Materials

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Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

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The teacher:

Creates and maintains an inviting, well-resourced, and purposefully organized classroom library that contains a wide-range of

- Texts and media that reflect the diversity of students' interests, backgrounds, languages, and experiences
- Texts that expose students to academic language across content areas
- Text sets that include multiple genres, used to support students to build knowledge about particular content area topics
- Texts and media that students can self-select to take home and/or access digitally

Provides and supports daily opportunities for students to select, read, and interpret text by

- Engaging students in interactive read alouds
- Providing support and feedback related to selecting texts
- Supporting students during independent reading of both assigned and self-selected text
- Supporting and providing feedback on students' oral reading and their use of a variety of reading strategies for comprehension
- Engaging students in higher-order discussions of text

Selects high-quality text with features appropriate to teachers' instructional goals and students' needs, by

- Selecting texts for instruction that are tightly-aligned to learning goals for foundational reading and reading comprehension
- Intentionally pairing increasingly complex texts and tasks for a variety of purposes
- Creating text sets that include multiple genres, modalities, and media
- Incorporating a variety of disciplinary-specific texts that support students to build disciplinary knowledge and language

---

*“The classroom library is not just for free time reading, but is a rich resource integrated into daily literacy instruction and practice as a place for peer-assisted or independent reading and for storing a variety of engaging reading materials.”*

*- D. Reutzel & S. Clark, 2011*

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## Phonological Awareness

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Explicit instruction and intentional opportunities to develop awareness of the segments of sound in oral language

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The teacher:

Supports students to build phonological and phonemic awareness in K-1, and as needed in later grades by

- Providing opportunities for students to listen for and play with sounds in words during read alouds and other instructional activities
- Explicitly teaching, modeling, and providing guided practice focused on recognizing segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters
- Explicitly teaching, modeling, and providing guided practice focused on manipulating segments of sounds in speech, including isolating and manipulating individual phonemes
- Engaging students in instructional activities that involve blending and segmenting sounds in words

## Phonics

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### Systematic and explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships and sound-spelling patterns

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The teacher:

Provides systematic and explicit word reading and spelling instruction, based on students' observed and assessed needs by

- Teaching letter-sound relationships and common sound-spelling patterns, aligned with students' decoding and encoding needs
- Teaching students to blend letter sounds and common sound-spelling patterns to accurately read and pronounce individual words and words in connected text
- Teaching students to recognize common word parts through morphology instruction
- Modeling the use of word reading knowledge and strategies during read alouds
- Providing and supporting opportunities for students to apply knowledge of taught letter-sound relationships and common word parts while reading individual words and connected texts
- Supporting students to apply knowledge of taught letter-sound relationships and common sound-spelling patterns while writing



Provides feedback to students while reading to promote successful decoding by

- Prompting students to pay attention to individual letters, groups of letters, and word parts in words
- Prompting students to recognize and apply taught letter-sound relationships, sound-spelling patterns, and word parts
- Prompting students to monitor for meaning as they apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships, sound-spelling patterns, and word parts



## Fluency

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Intentional opportunities for students to hear models of fluent reading and to develop oral reading fluency

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The teacher:

Fosters students' oral reading fluency with a variety of increasingly complex texts by

- Selecting texts for fluency instruction that increase in complexity and length across the school year
- Providing regular and varied opportunities for students to hear fluent oral reading of literary and informational texts
- Modeling oral reading fluency, including accuracy, automaticity, and prosody with a variety of texts
- Using multiple approaches and participation structures to foster oral reading fluency, including repeated reading of familiar texts, choral reading, partner reading, and echo reading to support comprehension
- Supporting students in setting and monitoring progress toward goals for oral reading fluency related to accuracy, automaticity, and prosody
- Providing multiple and varied opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback from adults on their oral reading accuracy, automaticity, and prosody
- Supporting students to select and engage in wide reading of connected text, for increasing amounts of time

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***“Our goal should be for readers to read the words in text accurately and automatically. When the words in text are identified automatically, readers can employ most of their limited cognitive energy to that all-important task in reading - text comprehension.”***

***- T. Rasinski, 2012***

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## Comprehension: Discussion & Writing

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within and across texts before, during, and after interactive read-alouds

The teacher:

Engages and supports students in discussions of text meaning and interpretation by

- Intentionally selecting complex texts that contain rich content and language worthy of discussion
- Analyzing the features, structures, and content of selected texts to identify affordances and challenges of the text
- Identifying and sharing learning goals to set the purpose for the discussion
- Constructing a variety of initial and follow-up questions to engage students in higher-order discussion before, during, and after reading
- Creating, introducing, and using discussion routines and structures
- Incorporating talk moves that students can use to extend the discussion and build upon one another's ideas
- Facilitating extended whole-group discussions
- Providing opportunities for student-led small-group discussions



Engages and supports students in shared and independent writing about ideas within and across texts by

- Intentionally planning explicit instruction and a variety of opportunities for students to write in response to reading across content areas
- Implementing writing activities and tasks to support text interpretation that include opportunities for extended writing, summary writing, note taking, and answering questions
- Providing meaningful purposes and tasks that engage students in writing in response to a variety of literary and informational texts
- Engaging students in discipline-specific writing to communicate their learning as they read about and investigate the natural, social, and designed world

## Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

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Explicit instruction and modeling of how to use text structure and strategies to support comprehension during interactive read-alouds

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The teacher:

Explicitly teaches and supports students to flexibly use a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that provide opportunities to use the comprehension strategy being taught
- Planning explicit comprehension strategy instruction that provides information about what the strategy is, how to use it, and when and why readers use the strategy
- Describing, modeling, and providing opportunities for students to practice using a variety of reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, activating prior knowledge, setting reading goals, visualizing, questioning, making inferences, and summarizing
- Modeling for and teaching students to monitor comprehension and to use strategies to repair comprehension when they do not understand what they read
- Modeling and teaching students to monitor their understanding and to flexibly use the metacognitive strategies they have been taught while reading increasingly complex texts

Describes, models, and provides opportunities for students to practice identifying a variety of text structures and features of increasingly complex text by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that reflect the text structure being taught
- Providing instruction on common structures of literary texts, including key story elements
- Teaching common structures of informational text, including cause-effect, description, sequence, compare-contrast, and problem-solution
- Building students' knowledge of features of informational text including captions, diagrams, index, and table of contents
- Engaging students in using a variety of tools and strategies to visualize and use text structure to support comprehension

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## Comprehension: Knowledge-building

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Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across texts before, during, and after interactive read-alouds

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The teacher:

Supports students in building and connecting conceptual knowledge by

- Creating and using text sets in instruction that are conceptually or topically related
- Providing knowledge-building experiences before, during, and after reading to support text comprehension
- Supporting students to build knowledge within and across read alouds that provide repeated exposure to semantically related vocabulary
- Integrating reading, writing, and oral language into disciplinary instruction for a variety of purposes, including engaging in disciplinary practices

Supports students in extending and applying knowledge by

- Increasing students' exposure to a variety of informational texts to develop world and disciplinary knowledge
- Providing opportunities for students to engage in inquiry-based learning and problem solving across content areas
- Providing meaningful purposes and tasks for students to connect, communicate, and apply their knowledge through writing and structured academic discussions

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*“In a very real sense, we literally read and learn our way into greater knowledge about the world and greater comprehension capacity.”*

– N. Duke, D. Pearson, S. Strachan, & A. Billman, 2011

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## Writing

Explicit writing instruction and meaningful opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences

The teacher:

Creates a community of writers that is positive, supportive, and structured by

- Developing routines for writing instruction and practice that include daily time for students to write
- Providing opportunities for students to make interest-based choices about their writing
- Planning and supporting opportunities for students to collaborate on writing
- Making students' writing visible through supporting them to publish and share their writing, both within the classroom and for audiences beyond the classroom
- Supporting students in setting and achieving writing goals to begin developing independence
- Providing opportunities to give and receive feedback and self-reflect throughout the writing process

Provides explicit writing instruction by

- Providing opportunities for students to participate in interactive writing
- Explicitly teaching students how to correctly hold a pencil, handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, and typing (as appropriate) to support fluent writing
- Supporting students to understand different purposes for writing and providing opportunities for them to write for a variety of meaningful purposes and audiences across content areas
- Selecting and providing opportunities for students to study models of high-quality writing and supporting them to practice features of high-quality writing
- Teaching students components of the writing process, including researching, planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and supporting them to flexibly use those components when writing
- Teaching students strategies for different components of the writing process using a gradual release model
- Intentionally integrating writing across content areas to provide opportunities for students to use writing as a tool for building and communicating knowledge
- Providing opportunities for students to use digital tools as they engage in the writing process



## Observation & Assessment

---

Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

---

The teacher:

Uses a variety of observation and assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by

- Intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative learning tasks to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use
- Using screening data to identify students who need additional instructional support and/or enrichment
- Using diagnostic assessment tools, as needed to identify students' specific instructional needs
- Using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction over time

Organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by

- Providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards
- Analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes
- Supporting students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis
- Providing differentiated and/or individualized literacy instruction to target students' observed and assessed language and literacy needs
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support

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## Small Group Instruction

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Personalized small group instruction, integrating a variety of grouping approaches, that targets students' needs in specific literacy skills and grade-level standards based on observation and assessment

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The teacher:

Provides small group literacy instruction by

- Using ongoing observation and assessment data to create flexible small groups targeting students' demonstrated literacy needs
- Differentiating small group instruction by varying instructional time, content, and levels of support, based on students' observed and assessed needs
- Making sure students use small-group instructional time engaged in reading and writing, with multiple opportunities to practice and review targeted skills
- Providing cooperative learning structures and routines for students to read, write, and discuss texts
- Providing explicit instruction and feedback targeting students' observed and assessed needs in specific literacy skills

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*“Small-group instruction should include both instruction and application. Often, schools err too far on one side or the other: Either teachers spend all of the small group time on instruction and students don't get to apply what's being taught to the actual reading or writing of texts, or students spend all of the time reading or writing and don't get focused instruction that will help them progress.”*

– N. Duke & L. Varlas, 2019

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## Engagement

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Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within ELA and content-area instruction

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The teacher:

Creates and maintains a positive literacy learning environment by

- Engaging students in setting, monitoring, and achieving goals
- Providing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning
- Supporting students in seeing themselves as successful readers and writers
- Beginning to build students' independence and autonomy

Provides authentic and relevant literacy experiences by

- Selecting interesting texts and tasks that are meaningful to students
- Engaging students in solving meaningful problems, and answering questions about the social, natural, or designed world
- Providing opportunities for students to communicate with specific audiences for a variety of meaningful purposes
- Establishing and facilitating opportunities for students to collaborate with partners and small groups
- Presenting students with regular opportunities to make constrained choices about texts and reading and writing tasks
- Differentiating instruction based on individual learner needs of content, process, and product

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*Literacy Instruction Standards are a critical component of the North Carolina Read • Lead • Succeed program.*



Division of Academic Standards

# Literacy Instruction Standards

Grades 3-5

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## Introduction

On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide.

While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The Grades 3-5 LIS are anchored by eleven components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Phonics, 3) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 4) Fluency, 5) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 6) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 7) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 8) Writing, 9) Observation & Assessment, 10) Small Group Instruction, and 11) Engagement. Grounded in these eleven components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 3-5 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

The purpose of this document is to outline research-informed practices for each LIS for grades 3-5. In addition to guiding English Language Arts instruction, many of these practices can be integrated into content area instruction to assist students in acquiring the literacy skills and disciplinary knowledge they need as they move through the elementary grades. While the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction in 3-5, they include instructional practices that may support 3-5 teachers to address the specific literacy demands of the different disciplines.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the English Language Arts NCSCOS.

This LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices and may not fully capture all instructional practices that have the potential to positively impact students' literacy achievement in 3-5. New literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

The K-2 and 3-5 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 3-5 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the K-2 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 3-5 LIS.

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## Reading Materials

---

Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

---

The teacher:

Creates and maintains an inviting, well-resourced, and purposefully organized classroom library that contains a variety of

- Texts and media that reflect the diversity of students' interests, backgrounds, languages, and experiences
- Texts that expose students to academic language across content areas
- Text sets that include multiple genres, used to support students to build knowledge about particular content area topics
- Texts and media that they students can self-select to take home and/or access digitally

Provides and supports daily opportunities for students to select, read, and interpret text by

- Engaging students in interactive read alouds
- Providing guidance and feedback related to selecting texts
- Providing opportunities for scaffolded silent reading of both assigned and self-selected text
- Guiding and providing feedback on students' oral reading and their use of a variety of reading strategies for comprehension
- Engaging students in higher-order discussions of text

Selects high-quality text with features appropriate to teachers' instructional goals and students' observed and assessed needs, including

- Selecting texts for instruction that are tightly-aligned to learning goals for foundational reading and reading comprehension
- Intentionally pairing increasingly complex texts and tasks for a variety of purposes
- Creating text sets that include multiple genres, modalities, and media
- Incorporating a variety of disciplinary-specific texts that support students to build disciplinary knowledge and language
- Ensuring the text is appropriately complex for the student and his/her grade-level

---

*“Exposure to different types of text builds the capacity to understand the large variety of reading material that students will encounter as they move from grade to grade.”*

– T. Shanahan, et al., 2010

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## Phonics

### Explicit instruction in sound-spelling patterns and common word parts

The teacher:

Provides systematic and explicit word reading and spelling instruction based on students' observed and assessed needs by

- Teaching common sound-spelling patterns, aligned with students' decoding and encoding needs
- Teaching students to recognize common word parts through morphology instruction
- Teaching students to recognize and blend common sound-spelling patterns and word parts to accurately read and pronounce increasingly complex, multisyllabic words
- Modeling the use of word reading knowledge and strategies during read alouds
- Providing and supporting opportunities for students to apply knowledge of taught sound-spelling patterns and common word parts while reading individual words and connected texts
- Supporting students to apply knowledge of taught common sound-spelling patterns and word parts while writing



Providing feedback to students while reading to promote successful decoding of increasingly complex and multisyllabic words by

- Prompting students to pay attention to individual letters, groups of letters, and words parts
- Prompting students to recognize and apply taught common sound-spelling patterns and word parts
- Prompting students to monitor for meaning as they apply knowledge of common sound-spelling patterns and word parts

## Academic Language & Vocabulary

---

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including vocabulary knowledge, across content areas

---

The teacher:

Provides multiple opportunities for students to encounter and actively engage with new vocabulary by

- Creating content-rich, conceptually coherent text sets that align to content area standards
- Supporting students in interacting with words across a variety of contexts and modalities, including reading, text-based and content-area discussion, and writing
- Engaging students in reviewing and using new vocabulary over time through repeated reading of texts, writing, and oral language activities
- Planning opportunities for students to engage in wide reading of high-quality texts that expose them to academic language and to general and discipline-specific vocabulary in the context of reading

Explicitly teaches high-utility academic words and strategies for figuring out the meaning of unknown words in text by

- Carefully selecting a variety of high-quality literary and informational texts for interactive read alouds and independent reading
- Selecting a small set of high-utility general-academic and discipline-specific words from texts for instruction that are important for comprehending the text and building knowledge
- Providing child-friendly definitions of selected words during interactive read alouds and other reading activities
- Teaching strategies to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words, including context clues, morphology, and using reference materials
- Supporting students in actively processing word meanings through answering questions about taught words, using the words in writing and discussion, and representing word relations through semantic mapping
- Planning reading, writing, and discussion activities that provide multiple opportunities for students to encounter and interact with taught words and academic language

*\*Academic language is the oral and written language of school that is necessary for thinking about and communicating content within and across disciplines (Nagy & Townsend, 2012)*

## Fluency

---

Intentional and authentic instructional opportunities to build oral reading fluency and silent reading proficiency to support comprehension of increasingly complex, grade-appropriate text

---

The teacher:

Fosters students' oral reading fluency with a variety of increasingly complex texts by

- Selecting texts for fluency instruction that increase in complexity and length based on ongoing observation and assessment
- Providing regular and varied opportunities for students to hear fluent oral reading of literary and informational texts
- Modeling oral reading fluency, including accuracy, automaticity, and prosody with a variety of texts
- Using multiple approaches and participation structures to foster oral reading fluency, including repeated reading of familiar texts, partner reading, and echo reading to support comprehension
- Supporting students in setting and monitoring progress toward goals for oral reading fluency related to accuracy, automaticity, and prosody
- Providing multiple and varied opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback from more proficient readers on their oral reading accuracy, automaticity, and prosody
- Supporting students to select and engage in wide reading of connected text, for increasing amounts of time

Fosters students' silent reading fluency with a variety of increasingly complex text by

- Scaffolding opportunities for students to engage in silent reading of increasingly complex texts for a variety of purposes
- Supporting students in setting and monitoring progress toward goals for silent reading fluency
- Supporting students to select and engage in wide reading of connected text, for increasing amounts of time

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*“In its fullest and most authentic sense, fluency is reading with and for meaning.”*

– T. Rasinski, 2012

---

## Comprehension: Discussion & Writing

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within and across texts

The teacher:

Engages and supports students in discussions of text meaning and interpretation by

- Intentionally selecting complex texts that contain rich content and language worthy of discussion
- Analyzing the features, structures, and content of selected texts to identify affordances and challenges of the text
- Identifying and sharing learning goals to set the purpose for the discussion
- Constructing a variety of initial and follow-up questions to engage students in higher-order discussion before, during, and after reading
- Creating, introducing, and using discussion routines and structures
- Incorporating talk moves that students can use to extend the discussion and build upon one another's ideas
- Facilitating extended whole-group discussions
- Providing opportunities for student-led small-group discussions

Engages and supports students in writing about ideas within and across texts by

- Intentionally planning explicit instruction and a variety of opportunities for students to write in response to reading across content areas
- Implementing writing activities and tasks to support text interpretation that include opportunities for extended writing, summary writing, note taking, and answering questions
- Providing meaningful purposes and tasks that engage students in writing in response to a variety of literary and informational texts
- Engaging students in discipline-specific writing to communicate their learning as they read about and investigate the natural, social, and designed world



## Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

---

### Explicit instruction in text structure and strategies to support comprehension

---

The teacher:

Explicitly teaches and supports students to flexibly use a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that provide opportunities to use the comprehension strategy being taught
- Planning explicit comprehension strategy instruction that provides information about what the strategy is, how to use it, and when and why readers use the strategy
- Describing, modeling, and providing opportunities for students to practice using a variety of reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, activating prior knowledge, setting reading goals, visualizing, questioning, making inferences, and summarizing
- Modeling for and teaching students to monitor comprehension and to use strategies to repair comprehension when they do not understand what they read
- Modeling and teaching students to monitor their understanding and to flexibly use the metacognitive strategies they have been taught while reading increasingly complex texts

Describes, models, and provides opportunities for students to practice identifying a variety of text structures and features of increasingly complex text by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that reflect the text structure being taught
- Providing instruction on common structures of literary texts, including key story elements
- Teaching common structures of informational text, including cause-effect, description, sequence, compare-contrast, and problem-solution
- Building students' knowledge of features of informational text including captions, diagrams, index, and table of contents
- Engaging students in using a variety of tools and strategies to visualize and use text structure to support comprehension

---

## Comprehension: Knowledge-building

---

Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

---

The teacher:

Supports students in building and connecting conceptual knowledge by

- Creating and using text sets in instruction that are conceptually or topically related
- Providing knowledge-building experiences before, during, and after reading to support text comprehension
- Supporting students to build knowledge within and across texts (including those read aloud and independently) that provide repeated exposure to semantically related vocabulary
- Integrating reading, writing, and oral language into disciplinary instruction for a variety of purposes, including engaging in disciplinary practices

Supports students in extending and applying knowledge by

- Increasing students' exposure to a variety of informational texts to develop world and disciplinary knowledge
- Providing opportunities for students to engage in inquiry-based learning and problem solving across content areas
- Providing meaningful purposes and tasks for students to connect, communicate, and apply their knowledge through writing and structured academic discussions

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*“Readers use their knowledge to fill out meaning and make connections in text, and these connections help readers form local and global understandings about the text.”*

– G. Cervetti & E. Hiebert, 2018

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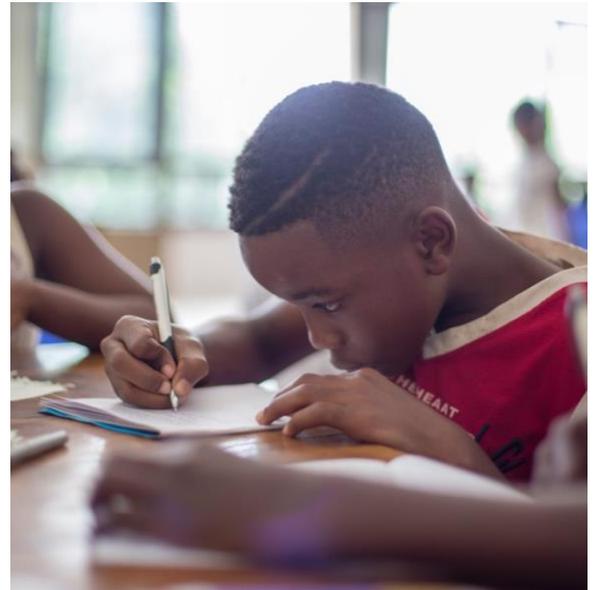
## Writing

Explicit writing instruction and meaningful opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences

The teacher:

Creates a community of writers that is positive, supportive, and structured by

- Developing routines for writing instruction and practice that include daily time for students to write
- Providing opportunities for students to make interest-based choices about their writing
- Planning and supporting opportunities for students to collaborate on writing
- Making students' writing visible through supporting them to publish and share their writing, both within the classroom and for audiences beyond the classroom
- Supporting students in setting and achieving writing goals to build independence
- Providing opportunities to give and receive feedback and self-reflect throughout the writing process



Provides explicit writing instruction by

- Explicitly teaching handwriting, spelling, sentence and paragraph construction, organization and text-structure, and typing to support fluent writing
- Supporting students to understand different purposes for writing and providing opportunities for them to write for a variety of meaningful purposes and audiences across content areas
- Selecting and providing opportunities for students to study models of high-quality writing and supporting them to practice features of high-quality writing
- Teaching students components of the writing process, including researching, planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and supporting them to flexibly use those components when writing
- Teaching students strategies for different components of the writing process using a gradual release model
- Intentionally integrating writing across content areas to provide opportunities for students to use writing as a tool for building and communicating knowledge
- Providing opportunities for students to use digital tools as they engage in the writing process

## Observation & Assessment

---

Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

---

The teacher:

Uses a variety of observation and assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by

- Intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative tasks to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use
- Using screening data to identify students who need additional instructional support and/or enrichment
- Using diagnostic assessment tools, as needed to identify students' specific instructional needs
- Using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction over time

Organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by

- Providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards
- Analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes
- Providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis
- Providing differentiated and/or individualized literacy instruction to target students' observed and assessed language and literacy needs
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support

## Small Group Instruction

---

Personalized small group instruction, integrating a variety of grouping approaches, that targets students' needs in specific literacy skills and grade-level standards based on observation and assessment

---

The teacher:

Provides small group literacy instruction by

- Using ongoing observation and assessment data to create flexible small groups targeting students' demonstrated literacy needs
- Differentiating small group instruction by varying instructional time, content, and levels of support, based on students' observed and assessed needs
- Making sure students use small-group instructional time engaged in reading and writing, with multiple opportunities to practice and review targeted skills
- Providing cooperative learning structures and routines for students to read, write, and discuss texts
- Providing explicit instruction and feedback targeting students' observed and assessed needs in specific literacy skills



## Engagement

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Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within ELA and content-area instruction

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The teacher:

Creates and maintains a positive literacy learning environment by

- Engaging students in setting, monitoring, and achieving goals
- Providing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning
- Supporting students in seeing themselves as successful readers and writers
- Building students' independence and autonomy

Provides authentic and relevant literacy experiences by

- Selecting interesting texts and tasks that are meaningful to students
- Engaging students in solving meaningful problems, and answering questions about the social, natural, or designed world
- Providing opportunities for students to communicate with specific audiences for a variety of meaningful purposes
- Establishing and facilitating opportunities for students to collaborate with partners and small groups
- Presenting students with regular opportunities to make constrained choices about texts and reading and writing tasks
- Differentiating instruction based on individual learner needs of content, process, and product

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*Literacy Instruction Standards are a critical component of the North Carolina Read • Lead • Succeed program.*



Division of Academic Standards

# Literacy Instruction Standards

Grades 6-8

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## Introduction

On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide.

While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The Grades 6-8 LIS are anchored by eight components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 3) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 4) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 5) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 6) Writing, 7) Observation & Assessment, and 8) Engagement. Grounded in these eight components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 6-8 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

The purpose of this document is to outline research-informed practices for each LIS for grades 6-8. These practices should be integrated into content-area instruction to assist students in acquiring the advanced literacy skills they need as they move toward career and college readiness. While the LIS and their accompanying practices offer content area teachers instructional methods they can use to improve content-area literacy, they also include practices that should be adapted and focused on addressing the specific literacy demands of different disciplines. Please note that the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction, but instead be used to enhance and support.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the English Language Arts NCSCOS.

The LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices. Practices included in this framework are representative of methods that have the strongest research support and are appropriate for adolescents. Additionally, new literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

The 6-8 and 9-12 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 9-12 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the 6-8 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 9-12 LIS.

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## Reading Materials

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Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

---

The teacher:

Carefully selects high-quality texts by

- Ensuring the text is appropriately complex for the student and his/her grade-level
- Using texts and media that reflect the diversity of student interests, backgrounds, languages, and experiences
- Using multi-modal texts, including prose, expository texts, and textbooks
- Incorporating genres of argumentation, informational writing, and narrative so students can see the relationships among content appropriate to each genre element
- Using exemplary, single-structured texts as model texts to prepare students to comprehend multiple structured texts
- Planning extensive reading instruction using grade-level complex texts

Plans for differentiated reading materials by

- Providing students with age-appropriate and engaging texts that are relevant to the learner
- Selecting appropriate literacy tools based on student need
- Providing students with opportunities to self-select grade-level complex texts for independent reading
- Assigning texts that allow students to read for a variety of purposes
- Providing complementary materials, including a set of reading materials on the same topic that range in complexity

Utilizes content and disciplinary literacy practices to inform instruction by

- Possessing knowledge of how texts work in their discipline
- Assigning increasingly complex disciplinary texts
- Choosing texts that build and enhance background knowledge
- Choosing texts that utilize specific syntactical and organizational structures
- Exposing students to content area texts (outside of textbooks) that include specialized vocabulary, jargon, and discipline-related concepts

---

*“When done well, a teacher differentiating instruction will focus on clear conceptual goals; consider a wide variety of assessment data; carefully plan lessons and units considering students’ needs, preferences, and strengths; and flexibly adapt the curriculum and instruction to suit his or her students.”*

– K. Puzio, G.T. Colby, & D. Algeo-Nichols, 2020

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## Academic Language & Vocabulary

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Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including discipline-specific vocabulary

---

The teacher:

Provides multiple opportunities for students to encounter and actively engage with new vocabulary by

- Integrating vocabulary instruction within reading comprehension instruction, discussion, and writing
- Selecting conceptually-related texts to use for instruction of content
- Supporting incidental word learning by providing students with opportunities to read
- Utilizing texts slightly above grade-level that include unknown words and target words
- Providing a purpose for reading to aid students in identifying and deciphering related words and their meanings
- Setting high expectations for vocabulary used during discussion and in writing

Explicitly teaches high-utility academic and domain-specific words by

- Teaching grammar strategies that incorporate activating vocabulary knowledge
- Selecting vocabulary using disciplinary knowledge and content area standards
- Investing instructional time in words that are closest to the key ideas and themes of the text
- Utilizing semantic mapping
- Supplying students with mnemonic devices
- Explicitly teaching students the definitions of words
- Teaching strategies to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words, including context clues, morphology, and utilization of reference materials

*\*Academic language is the oral and written language of school that is necessary for thinking about and communicating content within and across disciplines (Nagy & Townsend, 2012)*

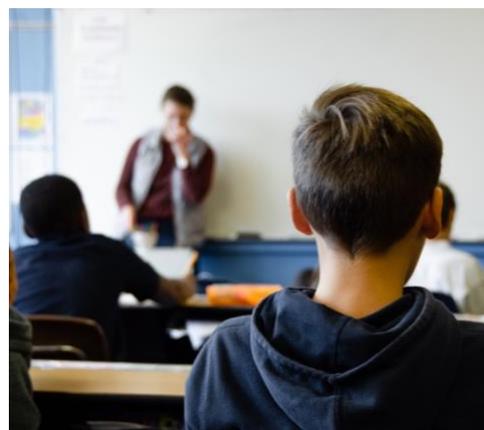
## Comprehension: Discussion & Writing

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within disciplines

The teacher:

Provides explicit instruction and opportunities for extended discussion on text meaning and interpretation by

- Using whole-class and teacher-led group discussions to support students' critical thinking
- Setting high expectations for classroom discourse
- Asking stimulating questions and follow up questions to maintain productive discussion
- Promoting high-level comprehension of the text through questioning the author, shared inquiry, and collaborative reasoning
- Having students use a discussion format or protocol to guide small and whole group discussion
- Using the problem-based learning model method, giving students time to think together to find information and develop problem-solving strategies



Engages and supports students in writing to analyze, interpret, and apply content information by

- Using journaling, informational writing, argumentative writing, and graphic representation to guide and reveal students' thinking processes
- Incorporating metacognition strategies into writing instruction
- Engaging students in writing activities to personalize information presented in text or write to defend a point of view related to the reading material and discuss how it helped to understand, remember, and apply information from the text
- Providing opportunities for students to write summaries and notes about the text or to review new material
- Incorporating oral discussion into writing tasks
- Matching writing tasks with the goals of content area instruction to facilitate learning and extend students' knowledge of material
- Asking students to synthesize, reflect, and assess validity of information in writing

## Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

---

Explicit comprehension strategy instruction, including text structure and metacognitive strategies, both general and discipline-specific

---

The teacher:

Explicitly teaches and supports students to flexibly use a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies by

- Utilizing a gradual release model of instruction
- Modeling and providing instruction on reading graphics, providing opportunities for students to evaluate, create, and redesign
- Modeling how to question and reflect during and after reading and apply newly learned strategies to text
- Using think alouds while reading a text and modeling reading strategies to use for understanding
- Providing an appropriate amount of modeling and guided practice until students show a level of proficiency
- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that provide opportunities to use the comprehension strategy being taught
- Planning explicit comprehension strategy instruction that provides information about what the strategy is, how to use it, and when and why readers use the strategy
- Describing, modeling, and providing opportunities for students to practice using a variety of reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, activating prior knowledge, setting reading goals, visualizing, questioning, making inferences, and summarizing
- Modeling and teaching students to monitor comprehension and to use strategies to repair comprehension when they do not understand what they read

Describes, models, and provides opportunities for students to practice identifying a variety of text structures and features of increasingly complex text by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that reflect the text structure being taught
- Planning explicit text structure instruction that provides information about what the structure is, how it is used, and when and why readers use text structure when comprehending
- Providing instruction on common structures of literary texts, including key story elements
- Teaching common structures of informational text, including cause-effect, description, sequence, compare-contrast, and problem-solution
- Building students' knowledge of features of informational text including captions, diagrams, index, and table of contents
- Engaging students in using a variety of tools and strategies to visualize and use text structure to support comprehension

Engages students to become actively involved in monitoring their comprehension by

- Asking students to plan and set goals to assist them in self-evaluation of their reading
- Supporting students in monitoring their understanding and processing of text meaning
- Encouraging students to apply comprehension strategies to other types of texts in all content areas
- Making the reading purpose clear to students
- Asking questions that elicit the awareness of the reading purpose
- Supporting students with setting reading goals related to the purpose for reading

---

## Comprehension: Knowledge-building

---

Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

---

The teacher:

Extends students' knowledge of content material by

- Planning activities that include a combination of answering questions, note-taking, summary writing, and extended writing about texts
- Intentionally structuring instruction around related informational texts to develop rich content knowledge
- Increasing students' exposure to informational text genres to develop discipline-specific and general world knowledge
- Providing inquiry-based assignments to increase student engagement in learning

Improves students' comprehension and application of content knowledge by

- Matching writing activities with goals for promoting content learning
- Supporting students in making connections between content and personal experiences and/or previous knowledge
- Asking students to predict, infer, and question new content
- Collaborating with students on setting reading goals or a purpose for reading
- Promoting structured academic discourse around content area topics

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*“...all teachers—despite their content area focus—should integrate a set of evidence-based literacy practices into their instruction.”*

– A. Shelton, J. Wexler, L.A. Kurz, & E. Swanson, 2020

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## Writing

Explicit writing instruction that includes writing processes and meaningful writing opportunities for students to apply and practice strategies

The teacher:

Engages students in meaningful writing opportunities by

- Extending student knowledge of content material through essay, summary, note-taking, and journal writing
- Offering regular opportunities for students to write across genres and content areas
- Providing opportunities for students to use digital tools as they engage in the writing process
- Engaging students in collaborative writing tasks
- Engaging students in inquiry-based writing tasks
- Having students complete writing-intensive assessments to measure their understanding of content
- Increasing time for writing
- Providing opportunities for students to make interest-based choices about their writing
- Making students' writing visible through supporting them to publish and share their writing, both within the classroom and for audiences beyond the classroom



Provides explicit writing instruction by

- Teaching students components of the writing process, including researching, planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and supporting them to flexibly use those components when writing
- Engaging students in prewriting to help students generate or organize ideas for their composition
- Utilizing grammar strategies to teach writing
- Ensuring students understand the purpose of writing strategies and how to select appropriate strategies for particular audiences and purposes
- Using the gradual release model when teaching writing strategies
- Providing students with mentor texts for modeling high-quality writing
- Supporting students in setting and achieving writing goals to build independence
- Providing opportunities to give and receive feedback and self-reflect throughout the writing process
- Creating a workshop environment that emphasizes writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and the writing process

## Observation & Assessment

---

Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

---

The teacher:

Uses a variety of observation and assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by

- Intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative learning to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use
- Using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction over time

Organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by

- Providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards
- Analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes
- Providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support
- Providing small group intervention sessions for students who need more intensive support, working with a specialist as needed

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## Engagement

---

Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within content-area instruction

---

The teacher:

Creates and maintains a positive literacy learning environment by

- Inviting students to work in independent or teacher-directed groups to complete literacy tasks
- Setting and sharing learning intentions and success criteria
- Understanding learners and how literacy activities shape the social context of the classroom
- Allowing for student choice in texts and tasks
- Giving students opportunities to write freely about a combination of self-reflective and thematic topics

Facilitates student use of metacognitive strategies to support independence by

- Engaging students in the metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating during instructional activities
- Engaging students in reflective practices using goal-setting tools

Provides authentic and relevant literacy experiences by

- Differentiating instruction based on individual learner needs of content, process, and product
- Selecting texts that are relevant to students
- Integrating reading skills into discipline-specific content instruction
- Providing content-based texts of varying levels
- Integrating direct reading skills instruction and individualized engagement strategies as needed

---

*“Literacy research has noted that to draw students into reading and ignite their desire for reading enjoyment, there needs to be a shift in focus from teacher-assigned texts to more student-driven reading classroom reading experiences.”*

– J.B. Allred & M.E. Cena, 2020

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Division of Academic Standards

# Literacy Instruction Standards

Grades 9-12

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## Introduction

On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide.

While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The Grades 9-12 LIS are anchored by eight components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 3) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 4) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 5) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 6) Writing, 7) Observation & Assessment, and 8) Engagement. Grounded in these eight components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 9-12 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

The purpose of this document is to outline research-informed practices for each LIS for grades 9-12. These practices should be integrated into content-area instruction to assist students in acquiring the advanced literacy skills they need as they move toward career and college readiness. While the LIS and their accompanying practices offer content area teachers instructional methods they can use to improve content-area literacy, they also include practices that should be adapted and focused on addressing the specific literacy demands of different disciplines. Please note that the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction, but instead be used to enhance and support.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the English Language Arts NCSCOS.

The LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices. Practices included in this framework are representative of methods that have the strongest research support and are appropriate for adolescents. Additionally, new literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

The 6-8 and 9-12 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 9-12 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the 6-8 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 9-12 LIS.

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## Reading Materials

---

Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

---

The teacher:

Carefully selects high-quality texts by

- Ensuring the text is appropriately complex for the student and his/her grade-level
- Using texts and media that reflect the diversity of student interests, backgrounds, languages, and experiences
- Using multi-modal texts, including prose, expository texts, and textbooks
- Incorporating genres of argumentation, informational writing, and narrative so students can see the relationships among content appropriate to each genre element
- Using exemplary, single-structured texts as model texts to prepare students to comprehend multiple structured texts
- Planning extensive reading instruction using grade-level complex texts

Plans for differentiated reading materials by

- Providing students with age-appropriate and engaging texts that are relevant to the learner
- Selecting appropriate literacy tools based on student need
- Providing students with opportunities to self-select grade-level complex texts for independent reading
- Assigning texts that allow students to read for a variety of purposes
- Providing complementary materials, including a set of reading materials on the same topic that range in complexity

Utilizes content and disciplinary literacy practices to inform instruction by

- Possessing knowledge of how texts work in their discipline
- Assigning increasingly complex disciplinary texts
- Choosing texts that build and enhance background knowledge
- Choosing texts that utilize specific syntactical and organizational structures
- Exposing students to content area texts (outside of textbooks) that include specialized vocabulary, jargon, and discipline-related concepts

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*“...Knowing the goal(s) of reading is necessary... especially for content-area teachers, asking their students to think about their reading goals might be a valuable addition to learning from texts.”*

– M. Okkinga et al., 2018

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## Academic Language & Vocabulary

---

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including discipline-specific vocabulary

---

The teacher:

Provides multiple opportunities for students to encounter and actively engage with new vocabulary by

- Integrating vocabulary instruction within reading comprehension instruction, discussion, and writing
- Selecting conceptually-related texts to use for instruction of content
- Supporting incidental word learning by providing students with opportunities to read
- Utilizing texts slightly above grade-level that include unknown words and target words
- Providing a purpose for reading to aid students in identifying and deciphering related words and their meanings
- Setting high expectations for vocabulary used during discussion and in writing

Explicitly teaches high-utility academic and domain-specific words by

- Teaching grammar strategies that incorporate activating vocabulary knowledge
- Selecting vocabulary using disciplinary knowledge and content area standards
- Investing instructional time in words that are closest to the key ideas and themes of the text
- Utilizing semantic mapping
- Supplying students with mnemonic devices
- Explicitly teaching students the definitions of words
- Teaching strategies to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words, including context clues, morphology, and utilization of reference materials

*\*Academic language is the oral and written language of school that is necessary for thinking about and communicating content within and across disciplines (Nagy & Townsend, 2012)*

## Comprehension: Discussion & Writing

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within disciplines

The teacher:

Provides explicit instruction and opportunities for extended discussion on text meaning and interpretation by

- Using whole-class and teacher-led group discussions to support students' critical thinking
- Setting high expectations for classroom discourse
- Asking stimulating questions and follow up questions to maintain productive discussion
- Promoting high-level comprehension of the text through questioning the author, shared inquiry, and collaborative reasoning
- Having students use a discussion format or protocol to guide small and whole group discussion
- Using the problem-based learning model method, giving students time to think together to find information and develop problem-solving strategies



Engages and supports students in writing to analyze, interpret, and apply content information by

- Using journaling, informational writing, argumentative writing, and graphic representation to guide and reveal students' thinking processes
- Incorporating metacognition strategies into writing instruction
- Engaging students in writing activities to personalize information presented in text or write to defend a point of view related to the reading material and discuss how it helped to understand, remember, and apply information from the text
- Providing opportunities for students to write summaries and notes about the text or to review new material
- Incorporating oral discussion into writing tasks
- Matching writing tasks with the goals of content area instruction to facilitate learning and extend students' knowledge of material
- Asking students to synthesize, reflect, and assess validity of information in writing

## Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

---

Explicit comprehension strategy instruction, including text structure and metacognitive strategies, both general and discipline-specific

---

The teacher:

Explicitly teaches and supports students to flexibly use a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies by

- Utilizing a gradual release model of instruction
- Modeling and providing instruction on reading graphics, providing opportunities for students to evaluate, create, and redesign
- Modeling how to question and reflect during and after reading and apply newly learned strategies to text
- Using think alouds while reading a text and modeling reading strategies to use for understanding
- Providing an appropriate amount of modeling and guided practice until students show a level of proficiency
- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that provide opportunities to use the comprehension strategy being taught
- Planning explicit comprehension strategy instruction that provides information about what the strategy is, how to use it, and when and why readers use the strategy
- Describing, modeling, and providing opportunities for students to practice using a variety of reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, activating prior knowledge, setting reading goals, visualizing, questioning, making inferences, and summarizing
- Modeling and teaching students to monitor comprehension and to use strategies to repair comprehension when they do not understand what they read

Describes, models, and provides opportunities for students to practice identifying a variety of text structures and features of increasingly complex text by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that reflect the text structure being taught
- Planning explicit text structure instruction that provides information about what the structure is, how it is used, and when and why readers use text structure when comprehending
- Providing instruction on common structures of literary texts, including key story elements
- Teaching common structures of informational text, including cause-effect, description, sequence, compare-contrast, and problem-solution
- Building students' knowledge of features of informational text including captions, diagrams, index, and table of contents
- Engaging students in using a variety of tools and strategies to visualize and use text structure to support comprehension

Engages students to become actively involved in monitoring their comprehension by

- Asking students to plan and set goals to assist them in self-evaluation of their reading
- Supporting students in monitoring their understanding and processing of text meaning
- Encouraging students to apply comprehension strategies to other types of texts in all content areas
- Making the reading purpose clear to students
- Asking questions that elicit the awareness of the reading purpose
- Supporting students with setting reading goals related to the purpose for reading

---

## Comprehension: Knowledge-building

---

Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

---

The teacher:

Extends students' knowledge of content material by

- Planning activities that include a combination of answering questions, note-taking, summary writing, and extended writing about texts
- Intentionally structuring instruction around related informational texts to develop rich content knowledge
- Increasing students' exposure to informational text genres to develop discipline-specific and general world knowledge
- Providing inquiry-based assignments to increase student engagement in learning

Improves comprehension and application of content knowledge by

- Matching writing activities with goals for promoting content learning
- Supporting students in making connections between content and their personal experiences and/or previous knowledge
- Asking students to predict, infer, and question new content
- Collaborating with students on setting reading goals or a purpose for reading
- Promoting structured academic discourse around content area topics

---

*“...Writing-to-learn activities can be profitably integrated into science, social studies, and mathematics classes as a common and frequent element of instruction... We recommend that teachers carefully match writing activities with their goals for promoting content learning.”*

– S. Graham, S.A. Kihara, & M. MacKay, 2020

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## Writing

Explicit writing instruction that includes writing processes and meaningful writing opportunities for students to apply and practice strategies

The teacher:

Engages students in meaningful writing opportunities by

- Extending student knowledge of content material through essay, summary, note-taking, and journal writing
- Offering regular opportunities for students to write across genres and content areas
- Providing opportunities for students to use digital tools as they engage in the writing process
- Engaging students in collaborative writing tasks
- Engaging students in inquiry-based writing tasks
- Having students complete writing-intensive assessments to measure their understanding of content
- Increasing time for writing
- Providing opportunities for students to make interest-based choices about their writing
- Making students' writing visible through supporting them to publish and share their writing, both within the classroom and for audiences beyond the classroom



Provides explicit writing instruction by

- Teaching students components of the writing process, including researching, planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and supporting them to flexibly use those components when writing
- Engaging students in prewriting to help students generate or organize ideas for their composition
- Utilizing grammar strategies to teach writing
- Ensuring students understand the purpose of writing strategies and how to select appropriate strategies for particular audiences and purposes
- Using the gradual release model when teaching writing strategies
- Providing students with mentor texts for modeling high-quality writing
- Supporting students in setting and achieving writing goals to build independence
- Providing opportunities to give and receive feedback and self-reflect throughout the writing process
- Creating a workshop environment that emphasizes writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and the writing process

## Observation & Assessment

---

Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

---

The teacher:

Uses a variety of observation and assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by

- Intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative learning tasks to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use
- Using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction over time

Organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by

- Providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards
- Analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes
- Providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support
- Providing small group intervention sessions for students who need more intensive support, working with a specialist as needed

---

## Engagement

---

Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within content-area instruction

---

The teacher:

Creates and maintains a positive literacy learning environment by

- Inviting students to work in independent or teacher-directed groups to complete literacy tasks
- Allowing students to display their knowledge in a multitude of ways, orally and in writing
- Incorporating choice and individualization into literacy instruction
- Empowering students to make decisions about topics, forms of communication, and selection of learning materials
- Understanding learners and how literacy activities shape the social context of the classroom
- Giving students opportunities to write freely about a combination of self-reflective and thematic topics

Provides authentic and relevant literacy experiences by

- Engaging students in problem-solving and role-playing methods that expose them to authentic or situated problems and examples
- Integrating direct reading skills instruction and individualized engagement strategies, as needed
- Providing opportunities for students to read self-selected texts at an appropriate complexity level
- Differentiating instruction based on individual learner needs of content, process, and product

Facilitates student use of metacognitive strategies to support independence by

- Assisting students in self-regulating their tasks and performance and identifying gaps in their knowledge of the material
- Using a combination of self-regulatory instruction, interest-based practice, and autonomy-supportive practices

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*“Without question, designed differentiation flows primarily from in-depth knowledge of students... school leaders should consider how teachers come to understand their students; what thoughtful content, process, and product differentiation looks like; and when it is appropriate to incorporate choice and individualization.”*

– K. Puzio, G.T. Colby, & D. Algeo-Nichols, 2020

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*Literacy Instruction Standards are a critical component of the North Carolina Read • Lead • Succeed program.*