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# English Standards of Learning

for Virginia  
Public Schools

Secondary  
Courses



# English Standards of Learning

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## Goals

The goals of English education are to teach students to read and to prepare students to participate in society as literate citizens, equipped with the ability to communicate effectively in their communities, in the work place, and in postsecondary education. As students progress through the school years, they will become active and involved listeners and will develop a full command of the English language, evidenced by their use of standard English and their rich speaking and writing vocabularies.

Students will become familiar with exemplary authors and literary works through a sustained and structured study of literature. Students will read selections which encompass all literary types and exemplify universal themes, that transcend time and place, and encourage students to acquire a lifelong love of reading. A significant percentage of readings at each grade level will be literary classics, that is, poems, stories, essays, plays, and books that have withstood the test of time. Proficient use of the English language will enable students to explore and articulate the complex issues and ideas encountered in public and personal life. Students will acquire the ability to make full and effective use of the written language in their future educational, occupational, and personal endeavors.

## Organization

Standards for each grade level are organized in four related strands: oral language, reading/literature, writing, and research. Each grade level is preceded by an overview that describes the major concepts and skills that each student will be expected to understand and demonstrate. The standards reflect a balanced instructional program and document a progression of expected achievement in each of the four strands. English standards are organized by grade level because schools are typically organized by grade levels. This organization of standards also reflects the gradual progression in the development of skills.

Oral language includes speaking and listening. In the early grades, students will learn to participate in classroom discussion. Over the course of several grade levels, students will learn to prepare and to deliver presentations and to critique them in order to improve delivery. Students' homes and cultural languages are the starting point for all language learning; however, competency in the use of standard English is the goal for all students. Therefore, daily speaking opportunities, both formal and informal, should be a part of every English program.

Reading begins with an awareness of the concepts of print and the sounds and structure of language. Students acquire a strong foundation in phonetic principles in the primary grades. Students will use independent reading strategies to read fluently and with comprehension. Students study the structure of words and language

throughout all grades. Frequent interaction with a broad array of quality literature will engage the reading skills of students and invite them to develop an appreciation for the power and beauty of the written word.

Writing begins with letter formation. Students become increasingly aware of the structure of language and improve written communication through frequent opportunities to apply narrative, persuasive, and expository skills. Daily reading, writing, and oral language experiences are essential for all students. A combination of teacher-guided reading experiences and student reading choices is necessary in helping students develop a lifelong reading habit and an appreciation for literature. Developing this appreciation is a process that should be emphasized at every grade level.

Research standards also are developed across grade levels. Through these standards, students will learn to acquire information from a variety of sources. Information may be used in planning and delivering presentations and reports.

Although the strands are developed separately, they are integrated in the classroom. Students use speaking and listening as they read and write. Students use reading, writing, speaking, and listening as they work on research projects. The English strands also are critical if students are to be successful in learning other subjects. Students research topics in history and social science, write summaries of science experiments, and explain mathematical problem-solving strategies.

Student learning is enhanced through the use of computer technology. Data access, retrieval, and processing support instruction in reading, writing, and research. In composition, word processing programs allow students to check spelling, grammar, and style to revise drafts. Informational electronic databases are an integral part of student research and help students to produce effective written and oral presentations. However, use of computer-aided spelling and grammar are not substitutes for learning the rules of English. Please note the Computer/Technology standards following grade five and grade eight standards, respectively. The teaching

of these skills should be the shared responsibility of teachers of all disciplines.

Proficiency in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and research skills allows students to learn and use knowledge to make meaningful connections between their lives and academic disciplines. There should be a concerted effort to relate required reading selections in English to studies in other core subjects, including math, science, and, especially, history and social science. Standards that incorporate rigor in English will help students develop the expected performance competencies.

## Grade Nine

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The ninth-grade student will present and critique dramatic readings of literary selections and will continue to develop proficiency in making planned oral presentations. Knowledge of literary terms and forms will be applied in the student's own writing and in the analysis of literature. Students will be introduced to significant literary works from a variety of cultures and eras, from 1000 A.D. to the present. Increased requirements for research and reporting in all subjects are supported by the use of electronic databases and a standard style sheet method to cite reference sources. Writing will encompass narrative, literary, expository, and technical forms, with particular attention to analysis.

### Oral Language

9.1 The student will present and critique dramatic readings of literary selections.

- Choose literary form for presentation, such as poems, monologues, scenes from plays, or stories.
- Adapt presentation techniques to fit literary form.
- Use verbal and nonverbal techniques for presentation.
- Evaluate impact of presentation.

9.2 The student will make planned oral presentations.

- Include definitions to increase clarity.
- Use relevant details to support main ideas.
- Illustrate main ideas through anecdotes and examples.
- Cite information sources.
- Make impromptu responses to questions about presentation.

### Reading/Literature

9.3 The student will read and analyze a variety of literature.

- Identify the characteristics that distinguish literary forms.
- Use literary terms in describing and analyzing selections.

- Explain the relationships between and among elements of literature: characters, plot, setting, tone, point of view, and theme.
- Explain the relationship between author's style and literary effect.
- Describe the use of images and sounds to elicit the reader's emotions.
- Explain the influence of historical context on the form, style, and point of view of a written work.

9.4 The student will read and analyze a variety of print materials.

- Identify a hypothesis to be confirmed, disproved, or modified.
- Evaluate clarity and accuracy of information.
- Synthesize information from sources and apply it in written and oral presentations.
- Identify questions not answered by a selected text.
- Extend general and specialized vocabulary through reading and writing.
- Read and follow instructions to use computer software, assemble or construct models or equipment, or complete a project.

9.5 The student will read dramatic selections.

- Identify the two basic parts of drama.
- Compare and contrast the elements of character, set-

ting, and plot in one-act plays and full-length plays.

- Describe how stage directions help the reader understand a play’s setting, mood, characters, plot, and theme.

## Writing

9.6 The student will develop narrative, literary, expository, and technical writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.

- Plan and organize writing.
- Communicate clearly the purpose of the writing.
- Write clear, varied sentences.
- Use specific vocabulary and information.
- Arrange paragraphs into a logical progression.
- Revise writing for clarity.

- Edit final copies for correct use of language, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

## Research

9.7 The student will credit the sources of both quoted and paraphrased ideas.

- Define the meaning and consequences of plagiarism.
- Distinguish one’s own ideas from information created or discovered by others.
- Use a style sheet method for citing secondary sources, such as MLA or APA.

9.8 The student will use electronic databases to access information.

- Identify key terms.
- Narrow the focus of a search.
- Scan and select resources.

# Grade Ten

The tenth-grade student will become a skilled communicator in small-group learning activities. The student will read and critique literary works from a variety of eras and cultures, including those cultures studied in world geography.\* Attention will be given to the analysis of printed consumer information, such as labels, owners’ manuals, warranties, and contracts. Reading analysis skills also will be valuable in understanding geometric theorems. The student will critique the writing of peers and professionals, using analysis to improve his/her writing skills.

\* School divisions may elect to teach this body of literature at Grade 10 or 11.

## Oral Language

10.1 The student will participate in and report small-group learning activities.

- Assume responsibility for specific tasks.
- Participate in the preparation of an outline or summary of the group activity.
- Include all group members in oral presentation.

10.2 The student will critique oral reports of small-group learning activities.

- Evaluate one’s own role in preparation and delivery of oral reports.
- Evaluate effectiveness of group process in preparation and delivery of oral reports.

of all cultures.

- Describe cultural archetypes in short stories, novels, poems, and plays across several cultures.
- Examine a literary selection from several critical perspectives.

10.4 The student will read and interpret printed consumer materials.

- Identify essential information needed to operate specific tools, appliances, technology hardware, or other equipment.
- Analyze the information contained in warranties, contracts, job descriptions, and technical descriptions.
- Skim manuals or consumer texts to locate information.
- Compare and contrast product information contained in advertisements with instruction manuals and warranties.
- Apply the information contained in labels, warnings, manuals, directions, applications, and forms to complete simulated or real-world tasks.

## Reading/Literature

10.3 The student will read and critique literary works from a variety of eras in a variety of cultures.

- Explain similarities and differences of structures and images as represented in the literature of different cultures.
- Identify universal themes prevalent in the literature

- 10.5 The student will read and critique a variety of poetry.
- Compare and contrast the use of rhyme, rhythm, and sound to convey a message.
  - Compare and contrast the ways in which poets inspire the reader to share emotions expressed in poems.
  - Paraphrase the meaning of selected poems.
- 10.6 The student will read and critique dramatic selections.
- Explain the use of asides.
  - Explain the role of a director.
  - Compare and contrast character development in a play as compared to other literary forms.

### Writing

- 10.7 The student will develop a variety of writings with an emphasis on exposition.
- Plan and organize ideas for writing.
  - Elaborate ideas clearly through word choice and vivid description.
  - Write clear, varied sentences.
  - Organize ideas into a logical sequence.
  - Revise writing for clarity and content of presentation.

- Edit final copies for correct use of language, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
  - Use available technology.
- 10.8 The student will critique professional and peer writing.
- Analyze the writing of others.
  - Describe how writing accomplishes its intended purpose.
  - Suggest how writing might be improved.
  - Apply knowledge of critical analysis to writing.
- 10.9 The student will use writing to interpret, analyze, and evaluate ideas.
- Explain concepts contained in literature and other disciplines.
  - Translate concepts into simpler or more easily understood terms.

### Research

- 10.10 The student will collect, evaluate, and organize information.
- Organize information from a variety of sources.
  - Verify the accuracy and usefulness of information.
  - Use available technology.

## Grade Eleven

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The eleventh-grade student will be able to make and analyze persuasive oral presentations, with attention to the accuracy of evidence and the effectiveness of delivery. The student's appreciation for literature will be enhanced by the study of American literature, both classic and contemporary.\* The student will be able to identify the prevalent themes and characterizations present in American literature which are reflective of the history and culture; furthermore, the student will identify the contributions of other cultures to the development of American literature. The student will be able to write clear and accurate business and technical correspondence and reports for research and other applications in all subjects. The student will develop expository and persuasive compositions by locating, evaluating, synthesizing, and citing applicable information with careful attention to organization and accuracy.

\* School divisions may elect to teach this body of literature at Grade 11 or 12.

### Oral Language

- 11.1 The student will make persuasive presentations.
- Organize evidence to support a position.
  - Present evidence clearly and convincingly.
  - Support and defend ideas and thoughts in public forums.
- 11.2 The student will analyze and evaluate persuasive presentations.
- Critique the accuracy, relevance, and organization of evidence.
  - Critique the clarity and effectiveness of delivery.

### Reading/Literature

- 11.3 The student will read and analyze relationships among American literature, history, and culture.
- Describe contributions of different cultures to the development of American literature.
  - Describe the development of American literature in the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.
  - Contrast periods in American literature.
  - Differentiate among archetypal characters in American literature.
  - Describe the major themes in American literature.

- Describe how use of context and language structures conveys an author's point of view in contemporary and historical essays, speeches, and critical reviews.
- 11.4 The student will read a variety of print material.
- Use information from texts to clarify or refine understanding of academic concepts.
  - Read and follow directions to complete an application for college admission, a scholarship, or for employment.
  - Read and follow directions to complete a laboratory experiment.
  - Extend general and specialized vocabularies for reading and writing.
  - Generalize ideas from selections to make predictions about other texts.
- 11.5 The student will read and critique a variety of poetry.
- Analyze the poetic elements of classic poems.
  - Identify the poetic elements and techniques that are most appealing and that make poetry enjoyable.
  - Compare and contrast the works of contemporary and past American poets.
- 11.6 The student will read a variety of dramatic selections.
- Describe the relationship between farce and characterization.
  - Describe the dramatic conventions or devices used by playwrights to present selected plays.
  - Explain the use of monologue and soliloquy.
  - Explain the use of verbal and dramatic irony.
- Adapt content, vocabulary, voice, and tone to audience, purpose, and situation.
  - Revise writing for accuracy and depth of information.
  - Edit final copies for correct use of language, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- 11.8 The student will write, revise, and edit personal and business correspondence to a standard acceptable in the work place and higher education.
- Apply a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
  - Organize information to support the purpose of the writing.
  - Present information in a logical manner.
  - Revise writing for clarity.
  - Edit final copies for correct use of language, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
  - Use available technology.

## Research

- 11.9 The student will analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and organize information from a variety of sources into a documented paper dealing with a question, problem, or issue.
- Narrow a topic.
  - Develop a plan for research.
  - Collect information to support a thesis.
  - Evaluate quality and accuracy of information.
  - Synthesize information in a logical sequence.
  - Document sources of information using a style sheet format, such as MLA or APA.
  - Revise writing for clarity of content.
  - Edit final copy for correct use of language, format, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
  - Use available technology.

## Writing

- 11.7 The student will write in a variety of forms with an emphasis on persuasion.
- Develop a focus for writing.
  - Evaluate and cite applicable information.
  - Organize ideas in a logical manner.
  - Elaborate ideas clearly and accurately.

# Grade Twelve

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The twelfth-grade student will use organizational skills, audience awareness, appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and both verbal and nonverbal presentation skills to plan and deliver an effective 5-10 minute oral presentation. The student will analyze British literature and literature of other cultures, with attention to the many classic works which may be studied.\* To the extent feasible, selections will include those which relate to other subjects, such as the study of American and Virginia government. Writing will include the production of technical and expository papers, which are organized logically and contain clear and accurate ideas. The student also will produce a well-documented major research paper.

\* School divisions may elect to teach this body of literature at Grade 10 or 12.

## Oral Language

- 12.1 The student will make a 5-10 minute formal oral presentation.
- Choose the purpose of the presentation: to defend a position, to entertain an audience, or to explain information.
  - Use a well-structured narrative or logical argument.
  - Use details, illustrations, statistics, comparisons, and analogies to support purposes.
  - Use visual aids or technology to support presentation.
- 12.2 The student will evaluate formal presentations.
- Critique relationships among purpose, audience, and content of presentations.
  - Critique effectiveness of presentations.

## Reading/Literature

- 12.3 The student will analyze the development of British literature and literature of other cultures.
- Recognize major literary forms and techniques.
  - Recognize the characteristics of major chronological eras.
  - Relate literary works and authors to major themes and issues of their eras.
- 12.4 The student will read a variety of print material.
- Identify information needed to conduct a laboratory experiment or product evaluation.
  - Draw conclusions regarding the quality of a product based on analysis of the accompanying warranty and instruction manual.
  - Evaluate the quality of informational texts and technical manuals.
  - Read and follow instructions to install a software program.
- 12.5 The student will read and critique a variety of poetry.
- Explain how the choice of words in a poem fits the speaker.
  - Explain how the sound of a poem (rhyme, rhythm, onomatopoeia, repetition, alliteration, assonance, and parallelism) supports the subject and mood.
  - Explain how imagery and figures of speech (personification, simile, metaphor) appeal to the reader's senses and experience.
  - Compare and contrast traditional and contemporary works of poets from many cultures.

- 12.6 The student will read and critique dramatic selections from a variety of authors.
- Describe the conflict, plot, climax, and setting.
  - Compare and contrast ways in which dialogue and staging contribute to the theme.
  - Identify the most effective elements of selected plays.
  - Compare and contrast dramatic elements of plays from American, British, and other cultures.

## Writing

- 12.7 The student will develop expository and technical writings.
- Consider audience and purpose when planning for writing.
  - Present ideas in a logical sequence.
  - Elaborate ideas clearly and accurately.
  - Revise writing for depth of information and technique of presentation.
  - Edit final copies for correct use of language, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

## Research

- 12.8 The student will write documented research papers.
- Evaluate the accuracy and usefulness of information.
  - Synthesize information to support the thesis.
  - Present information in a logical manner.
  - Cite sources of information using a standard method of documentation.
  - Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in final copies.
  - Use available technology.