

Minnesota's English Language Arts Standards

A Family and Caregiver Guide to Supporting Your Child's Learning

What Are Academic Standards?

Academic standards are learning goals that describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject by the end of each grade. These standards ensure all Minnesota students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for careers, college, and life.

In Minnesota, we have academic standards for many subjects, including English Language Arts (ELA). These standards are reviewed and updated every 10 years by a committee of teachers, community members, and subject experts. The ELA standards were last updated in 2020 and are required to be taught in all grades in school year 2025-26.

How Are the 2020 ELA Standards Different?

Foundational Building Blocks

Reading and writing foundational skills are emphasized as essential building blocks.

Broadened Definition of "Text"

Text now includes both traditional print (books, articles) and digital formats like podcasts, videos, and websites.

Diverse Perspectives

Students read texts that reflect diverse perspectives, including Dakota and Anishinaabe perspectives.

Media Literacy

Media literacy skills are woven throughout the standards, helping students actively understand, analyze, and create digital content.

Student Choice in Learning

Students have increased opportunities for choice in their learning and make purposeful decisions when reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

What Will My Child Be Learning?

The 2020 Minnesota ELA Standards are organized into three strands, or groups: (1) reading, (2) writing, and (3) listening, speaking, viewing, and exchanging ideas.

1. Reading: *Making meaning with information from many different sources*

- ✓ Build strong foundational reading skills like phonics and fluency
- ✓ Read books, articles, websites, and other materials with understanding
- ✓ Think deeply and critically about what they read and ask thoughtful questions
- ✓ Read materials that represent different viewpoints and cultures
- ✓ Tell the difference between reliable and unreliable information

2. Writing: *Sharing ideas and information with others*

- ✓ Build strong foundational writing skills such as grammar and punctuation
- ✓ Write for different real-world purposes—to inform, persuade, argue, or create
- ✓ Use a process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing their work
- ✓ Express their own voice and perspective in their writing
- ✓ Research topics and use evidence to support their ideas



3. Listening, Speaking, Viewing, and Exchanging Ideas: *Communicating and working with others*

- ✓ Listen carefully and speak clearly in discussions
- ✓ Share their own ideas while respecting others' viewpoints
- ✓ Work collaboratively with classmates on projects
- ✓ Present information to different audiences
- ✓ Navigate digital media safely, critically, and thoughtfully



What Does This Look Like in My Child's Classroom?

Minnesota sets the academic standards for all students across the state. However, your local school makes the important decisions about how to teach the standards. This includes:

Curriculum: The specific books, programs, and materials teachers use.

Teaching Methods: How teachers help students learn ELA content and skills.

Assessment: The tasks or tests used to measure student learning of the standards.

Talk with your child's teacher or principal for more information about how the ELA standards are taught in your school and to share your thoughts about your child's learning.

Understanding State Testing: The Reading MCA Test

Students in grades 3-8 and 10 take the Reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) each spring. This test is aligned to the Reading strand of the new ELA standards and provides a snapshot of student learning. Results are used to help schools determine how well they are teaching the standards. Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions about the MCA or your child's results.

How Can I Support My Child's Learning?



- Connect with your child's teacher to share what your child loves as well as their strengths and needs
- Get involved with your school to help shape curriculum decisions
- Read with your child and talk about what you read
- Play with language through songs, rhymes, and word games
- Write together for real-life purposes, such as thank you notes, grocery lists, or family stories
- Talk about current events and different perspectives
- Model good digital citizenship and safe technology use

For additional early literacy supports for children birth to age 9, check out the [Families READ Toolkit](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/READ/eng/toolkit/) at <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/READ/eng/toolkit/> or via the QR code:



For more information about Minnesota's ELA standards, visit the [Minnesota Department of Education ELA webpage](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/ela/) at <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/ela/> or via the QR code:

