



Essential Standards Extended Guide

English Language Arts Grade 4

Guiding Information:

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

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

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

Given the skills-based nature of ELA, the standards can be grouped flexibly to meet student needs and support various instructional materials. To assist educators, the committees created a step-by-step process, outlined on page 7 of this document. This guide can help educators develop scope and sequence for their instructional time and district-specific courses and provide a starting point for building formative and summative assessments around the standards.

Teacher Guidance Standards

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

4.RC.V.2: Regularly engage in a volume of reading, independently, with peers, or with modest support related to the topics and themes being studied to build knowledge and vocabulary.

4.VD.AV.3: Acquire and use accurately general academic and content-specific words and phrases occurring in grade level reading and content, including those that signal precise actions or states of being (e.g., frustrated, puzzled, stammered) and vocabulary essential to a particular topic (e.g., heroes, villains, quest, fate when discussing myths). Use these words in discussions and writing.

4.RS.DR.2: Read a series of texts organized around a variety of conceptually related topics to build knowledge about the world. (These texts should be at a range of complexity levels so students can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.)

4.ODC.OC.1: Engage in collaborative discussions about grade-level topics and texts with peers by carrying out assigned roles; making comments that build on and link to others' remarks; clarifying or following up on information; and reviewing key ideas expressed and explaining one's understanding.

Essential Standards

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

4.FR.PH.3: Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (roots and affixes to read accurately unfamiliar grade-appropriate multisyllabic words (e.g., depart, beneficial, recycle) in context and out of context.

4.RC.TE.3: Refer to details and examples in grade-level texts when explaining what texts say explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.

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

4.RC.L.5a: Determine the central themes in stories (including myths and legends), poems, and plays and explain how they are supported by key details.

4.RC.L.5b: Describe a character, setting, or event in depth in stories and plays, drawing on specific details in the texts (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Essential Standards

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

4.RC.L.5d: Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

4.RC.NF.6a: Determine the central ideas of texts and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize texts.

4.RC.NF.6e: Combine information from two texts on the same topic, noting important similarities and differences in focus and the information provided.

4.VD.WB.1b: Use common Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of words (e.g., thermometer, thermos, thermostat).

4.VD.WB.2a: Recognize and explain the meaning of idioms, adage, and proverbs in context.

4.W.RW.2: Write arguments that introduce the topic; express a clear opinion supported with facts, details and reasons; and provide a concluding statement or section.

4.W.RW.3: Write informational texts that introduce the topic; develop the focus with facts, details or other information; and provide a concluding statement or section.

4.W.RW.4: Write personal or fictional narratives that organize the writing around a central problem, conflict, or experience; use descriptions or dialogue to develop the characters or event(s); and provide a sense of closure.

4.ODC.OC.2: Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud, or information presented in diverse media (audio, visual, and quantitative).

4.GC.GU.1g: Ensure subject-verb agreement.

4.GC.GU.1h: Produce complete sentences; recognize and correct inappropriate fragments and run-ons.

4.GC.M.2b: Use quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.

4.GC.M.2c: Use correct capitalization.

4.GC.M.3: Spell grade level words correctly, including commonly confused words (e.g., there/their/they're).

Supporting Standards

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

4.RC.TC.1: Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the lower end of the grades 4–5 band.

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

4.RC.L.5c: Explain the overall structures of stories, plays, and poems and how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

4.RC.L.5e: Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and patterns of events in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

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

4.RC.NF.6b: Explain events, procedures, steps, ideas, or concepts found in historical, scientific, or technical texts, including what happened and why.

4.RC.NF.6c: Explain the overall structure of informational texts (e.g., description, sequence, comparison, problem solution, cause-effect) and how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

4.RC.NF.6d: Explain how authors use evidence and reasons to support specific points in texts.

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

4.VD.WB.1a: Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as clues to the meaning of words or phrases.

4.VD.WB.1c: Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), print or digital, to find the pronunciation and clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

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

4.VD.WB.2b: Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe subtle differences (e.g., shook, trembled, wavered, quivered).

4.RS.IP.1: Conduct short research tasks to take some action or share findings orally or in writing by identifying what information is needed to answer a research question, using text features and search tools to gather relevant information efficiently; and taking notes, categorizing that information, and providing a list of sources.

Supporting Standards

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

4.W.RW.1: Develop flexibility in writing by routinely engaging in the production of shorter and longer pieces for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. This could include, among others, summaries, reflections, descriptions, letters, and poetry, etc.

4.W.RW.5: Organize related information together in paragraphs using precise language and linking words and phrases to connect details and ideas.

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

4.W.HWK.7: Write legibly and fluently in cursive by hand, forming letters and words that can be easily read by others.

4.W.HWK.8: Use technology to produce and publish writing, demonstrating sufficient command of keyboarding skills.

4.ODC.OC.3: Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points being made.

4.ODC.OC.4: Report orally on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

4.ODC.DC.5: Evaluate whether a digital source is factual or opinion-based by considering its use of evidence and whose point-of-view is represented or missing.

4.ODC.DC.6: Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, or interactive elements) on Web pages.

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

4.GC.GU.1a: Recognize subject-predicate relationship in sentences.

4.GC.GU.1b: Use principal modals to convey various conditions (e.g., can, may, must).

4.GC.GU.1c: Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns.

4.GC.GU.1d: Use relative pronouns and relative adverbs.

4.GC.GU.1e: Form and use prepositional phrases.

Supporting Standards

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

4.GC.GU.1f: Correctly use frequently confused common words (e.g., to/too/two).

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

4.GC.M.2a: Commas in a series.

Additional Standards

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

4.GC.GU.1i: Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation.

Unit Planning with Standards

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

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

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

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

Sample Unit Outline 1

Essential Standards	Supporting Standards	Teacher Guidance/Additional Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.W.RW.3 • 4.FR.PH.3 • 1.GC.GU.1h 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.RS.IP.1 • 4.RC.NF.6c • 4.ODC.DC.5 • 4.W.HWK.8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.RC.V.2 • 4.RS.DR.2 • 4.VD.AV.3 • 4.ODC.OC.1

Potential Assessment(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.W.RW.3: LEA or school-based writing rubric • 4.FR.PH.3 : Core, Assessing Reading: Multiple Measures • 1.GC.GU.1h: LEA or school-based writing rubric

Rationale
<p>The standards in this grouping were carefully selected to help students develop essential skills for accessing information through reading and research, synthesizing that knowledge, and producing well-structured informational writing. A key component of this process is the ability to read and determine the meaning of unfamiliar multisyllabic words they will encounter during their research. By applying their understanding of syllabication and morphology (roots and affixes), students will be able to decode complex vocabulary, allowing them to fully comprehend the technical texts they engage with.</p>

Rationale

Additionally, students will refine their ability to evaluate digital sources, learning to distinguish between factual information and opinion, a critical skill in today's media landscape. As they research, students will be required to incorporate topic-specific vocabulary, deepening their understanding of the subject matter. These skills work together to enable students to seamlessly integrate their research into well-organized informational texts, utilizing structures such as cause-effect, sequence, and problem-solution, ultimately enhancing their ability to communicate ideas clearly and logically.

For Questions Contact

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