

## Feedback on the English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

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1. Does each grade level or course follow a complete and logical development of English language arts and reading concepts?

In order to provide specific opportunities related to the logical development of Collaboration skills. This strand could provide more specific guidelines across the grade levels. For example, K.4 A currently states that students are expected to “follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including taking turns and speaking one at a time.

Suggestion: change to “follow agreed-upon rules for discussion including taking turns and speaking one at a time in small interactive structures including pairs and triads”.

In first grade, pairs and triads could be combined or followed by larger groups. Currently, it is not clear how students will be prepared to participate in “diverse interactions” as stated in the proposed objective.

2. Have the correct vocabulary and terminology been used throughout the TEKS?

The objectives included under the Developing and Sustaining Foundational Skills strand across the different grade levels include phrases such as: “in text and independent of text” (Kindergarten), “in context and in isolation” (First grade) when making reference to decoding and encoding consonants, words, etc.

Suggestion: select one consistent phrase

3. Is the level of rigor appropriate for each grade level?

The Inquiry and Research strand at the Kindergarten level indicates that students are “expected to decide what sources or people in the classroom, school, library, or home can answer their questions.” Subsequently, students are expected to “gather evidence from **provided text sources**”.

Suggestion: change to “gather evidence from **a variety of sources including texts, and people**”. It makes sense to widen the possibilities as children engage in data collection.

4. Are the student expectations (SEs) clear and specific?

It is not clear if the intent of the “Composition and Presentation” strand is to focus on both, writing and presentation skills. The Kindergarten objectives included under this strand for example, focus mainly on written conventions of language. Only K.7 E and possibly G make reference to some form of oral component.

5. Are the TEKS aligned horizontally and vertically? If not, what gaps should be addressed?

Beginning in third grade 3.1B vi, students are expected to use “print and digital reference materials to determine meaning...”

Suggestion: incorporate the use of print and digital reference materials in first grade. The current 1.1D objective indicates that students are expected to “use a dictionary or glossary to find words...” Change to “use a dictionary, glossary, and digital or web-based sources find words...”

6. Can all student expectations reasonably be taught within the amount of time typically allotted for the grade level or high school course prior to the end of the school year or prior to a state assessment? Yes, if redundancy is addressed.
7. Are there student expectations that can be eliminated in order to streamline the standards?

SUGESSTION: I suggest that the following two strands included within the Framework can be combined: Comprehension and Response. There seems to be redundancy in both strands. There is no significant difference in the way they currently read. Another idea is to infuse all strands with opportunities to respond as it has been done with the Multiple Genres strand. The Multiple Genres strand for example, already includes objectives that require students to “read and respond”.

Rationale: It is unclear how certain skills included under “Response” such as 3.3 (A) “discuss and record predictions”, 3.3 (B) “share questions...”, 3.3 (E) “explain inferences...” are not already embedded in other strands.

8. Are there specific areas that need to be updated to reflect current research?

I propose that the skill of “cursive writing” be addressed consistently across grade levels. There should be a rationale for the omission of this skill in the lower grades and its insertion in grades 3-5.

9. Are the College and Career Readiness Standards adequately and appropriately addressed throughout the TEKS? Yes
10. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the English language arts and reading TEKS can be improved?

Suggestion:

The revised TEKS emphasize the importance of verbal engagement (oral language). I see an opportunity to infuse this aspect of language development in a more intentional

way through out the TEKS and across grade levels. Additionally, the aspect of 'student' choice to promote self-generated projects and independent thinking in language arts can be incorporated in a more deliberate way.

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In first and second grade, the following wording is used in reference to vocabulary:

“develop vocabulary skills by” and “develop vocabulary to”. There needs to be consistency.

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In grades 3-5, Cursive writing expectations indicate that: “students are expected to write legibly in print and cursive”. Suggestion: “students are expected to write legibly” ~~in print and cursive~~.

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Integration of skills can make sense if content is relevant and authentic. We should be cautious about integrating skills for English Language learners who are placed in regular classrooms.

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### ✓✓ Skills integration

Although it may seem appropriate for the general English dominant student, integration of skills must be cautiously adopted as an approach to teach language arts and reading to bilingual learners. English language learners benefit from targeted, deliberate instruction in each one of the domains of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). If the strands proposed are to stay, then it would be useful to clearly indicate which objectives address each one of the language domains.