

The ability to communicate through reading, writing, speaking, and listening makes humans unique. These means of communication allow us to learn from the experiences of others through the messages they impart. As North Dakota students grow and learn, the messages they encounter enlighten and empower them to meet life’s challenges. The standards and benchmarks set forth in this document create a framework whereby educators will provide the atmosphere and opportunity for all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, LEP status, socioeconomic status, or disability, to succeed in essential literacy learning. In creating literacy-rich conditions and opportunities, our students will be exposed to a variety of cultures, human experiences, and a common literary foundation.

Students must understand the power of language and how to use that power ethically and creatively in an increasingly complex world. Students will learn to explore and articulate ever-changing issues and ideas in a diverse culture. The purpose of this document is to provide our students the tools needed to become skilled writers, fluent readers, effective communicators, and thoughtful listeners. This document is a useful resource for educators in a standards-based educational system as they align their curricula and design instruction to meet students’ needs. As they play an integral part in helping students learn, parents, community members, and state and local policy-makers are encouraged to consult this document.

These standards were designed to inform, assist, and advise stakeholders in the educational development of our children. Stakeholders include: (1) teachers and students in all subjects and in all grades or special settings; (2) school and district curriculum planners, designers, or writers; (3) school administrators and board members at school sites and central office levels; (4) parents and community members. When planning instruction, teachers will refer to current grade-level benchmark expectations as well as previous and following grade level expectations.

In accordance with federal and state legislation, educators need clearly defined benchmark expectations for literacy learning at all grade levels. A writing team comprised of K-12 teachers and administrators from all regions of the state developed The North Dakota English Language Arts (NDELA) Content and Achievement Standards document. To ensure continuity and representation, team members incorporated features and language from the 2003 preparatory materials and the 1996 document which was aligned with national English Language Arts documents. In addition, team members consulted locally developed standards documents.

This document is organized around a core of fundamental English Language Arts standards for all students in the state of North Dakota. Benchmark expectations for each standard were written for every grade level, kindergarten through grade twelve. These expectations reflect what every student at the completion of each grade level should know and be able to do. This document is organized in the following way:

**Content Standard:** A broad description of what students should know and be able to do within a particular content discipline or subject.

**Subtopic:** A category within a content standard that aids in the organization of benchmark expectations and that may carry across grade levels.

**Benchmark Expectation:** A translation of a standard into what students should know and be able to do at developmentally appropriate levels, clearly specifying and itemizing the content of a standard at a specific grade level. When referenced, “i.e.” means “including these things,” and “e.g.” means “for example.”

**Achievement Standard:** Also known as a performance standard, a description of what a student knows and can do to demonstrate proficiency on a content standard. Descriptors for achievement are set at four levels including advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and novice.

**Qualifiers/ Quantifiers:** The qualifiers and quantifiers (effectively, frequently, etc.) used in this document change according to the benchmark and grade level. For example, “frequently” may mean advanced proficient at one grade level, but it may mean proficient at a higher grade level. Proficiency levels (Advanced Proficient, Proficient, Partially Proficient, Novice) at each benchmark need to be examined as a whole to understand the intent of the qualifiers/ quantifiers.

This document is intended to be an interdisciplinary tool for all parties involved in the literacy education of North Dakota’s children.

## Standard 1: Students engage in the research process

Standard 1: Students Engage in the Research Process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 12</p> <p><b>RESEARCH PLANNING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan a research strategy</li> <li>• Determine purpose; e.g., inform, persuade</li> <li>• Develop a research question</li> </ul> <p><b>ACCESSING INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See previous grade level benchmarks and apply</li> </ul> <p><b>ORGANIZING AND PRESENTING RESEARCH INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defend research paper or project</li> </ul>	<p>Students thoroughly plan a research strategy, determine purpose, and develop a research question.</p>	<p>Students effectively plan a research strategy, determine purpose, and develop a research question.</p>	<p>Students plan an inadequate research strategy, purpose, and research question.</p>	<p>Students plan a research strategy, determine purpose, and develop a research question, but it is ineffective.</p>
	Students effectively use previous knowledge.			
	<p>Students competently and thoughtfully defend research paper or project.</p>	<p>Students competently defend research paper or project.</p>	<p>Students defend research paper or project, but overlook critical details.</p>	<p>Students defend research paper or project with significant errors and/or inaccuracies.</p>

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Standard 1: Students Engage in the Research Process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
EVALUATING RESEARCH INFORMATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the research process and apply strategies to a variety of writing purposes; e.g., correct use of research format, accuracy of research, organization of information and use of sources</li> </ul>	Students demonstrate mastery in evaluating the research process and applying strategies to a variety of writing purposes.	Students demonstrate competent performance in evaluating the research process and applying strategies to a variety of writing purposes.	Students demonstrate adequate performance in evaluating the research process and applying strategies to a variety of writing purposes.	Students demonstrate limited performance in evaluating the research process and applying strategies to a variety of writing purposes.

## Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process

Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 12</p> <p>LITERARY GENRES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify satire and allegory</li> </ul> <p>INFORMATIONAL GENRES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critique details, facts, and concepts from nonfiction genres</li> </ul> <p>READING STRATEGIES FOR INTERPRETING MEANING OF TEXTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify techniques used in persuasive writing such as fallacies of logic, faulty reasoning, and manipulative language</li> </ul>	<p>Students correctly identify and interpret characteristics of literary forms and genres.</p> <p>Students critique details, facts, and concepts from nonfiction genres with new insight.</p> <p>Students identify and interpret techniques used in persuasive writing.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify characteristics of literary forms and genres.</p> <p>Students effectively critique details, facts, and concepts from nonfiction genres.</p> <p>Students correctly identify techniques used in persuasive writing.</p>	<p>Students identify characteristics of literary forms and genres with some errors.</p> <p>Students critique details, facts, and concepts from nonfiction genres without drawing accurate conclusions.</p> <p>Students identify techniques used in persuasive writing with some errors.</p>	<p>Students rarely identify characteristics of literary forms and genres.</p> <p>Students critique details, facts, and concepts from nonfiction genres with significant errors.</p> <p>Students identify techniques used in persuasive writing with significant errors.</p>

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Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>PURPOSES FOR READING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read for a variety of purposes and intents; e.g., to become life-long readers, to model forms of writing, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Students independently select and read substantive texts for a variety of purposes and intents.</p>	<p>Students regularly read substantive texts for a variety of purposes and intents.</p>	<p>Students occasionally read substantive texts for a variety of purposes and intents.</p>	<p>Students rarely read substantive texts for a variety of purposes and intents.</p>
<p>LITERARY ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret author’s use of figurative language including allusion, imagery, and symbolism</li> <li>Interpret author’s use of syntax and word choice/diction</li> </ul>	<p>Students insightfully interpret author’s use of figurative language, syntax and word choice/diction.</p>	<p>Students effectively interpret author’s use of figurative language, use of syntax and word choice/diction.</p>	<p>Students interpret author’s use of figurative language, use of syntax and word choice/diction., but overlook critical details.</p>	<p>Students interpret author’s use of figurative language, use of syntax and word choice/diction with significant errors.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critique literary merit of a work of literature</li> </ul>	<p>They thoroughly critique the literary merit of a work of literature.</p>	<p>They effectively critique the literary merit of a work of literature.</p>	<p>They critique the literary merit of a work of literature without complete understanding.</p>	<p>They fail to critique the literary merit of a work of literature.</p>

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Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
VOCABULARY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use technical language/jargon to decipher meaning</li> </ul>	Students critically use technical language/jargon to decipher meaning.	Students effectively use technical language/jargon to decipher meaning.	Students use technical language/jargon to decipher meaning without complete understanding.	Students ineffectively use technical language/jargon to decipher meaning.

### Standard 3: Students engage in the writing process

Standard 3: Students engage in the writing process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 12</p> <p><b>INFORMATIVE WRITING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write business or other formal documents, including resumes, scholarship letters, and letters of inquiry or complaint</li> </ul> <p><b>LITERARY/NARRATIVE WRITING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See previous grade level expectations and apply</li> </ul> <p><b>PERSUASIVE WRITING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write persuasive compositions, including structuring arguments logically, using rhetorical devices, defending positions with evidence, and addressing readers’ concerns and biases (e.g., editorials, critical reviews)</li> </ul> <p><b>PREWRITING</b></p>	<p>Students write business or other formal documents with few, if any, errors.</p>	<p>Students write business or other formal documents with only minor errors.</p>	<p>Students write business or other formal documents with some errors.</p>	<p>Students write business or other formal documents with significant errors.</p>
	Students effectively use prior knowledge.			
	<p>Students write persuasive compositions, including structuring arguments logically, using rhetorical devices, defending positions with evidence, and addressing readers’ concerns and biases with few, if any, errors.</p>	<p>Students write persuasive compositions, including structuring arguments logically, using rhetorical devices, defending positions with evidence, and addressing readers’ concerns and biases with only minor errors.</p>	<p>Students write persuasive compositions, including structuring arguments logically, using rhetorical devices, defending positions with evidence, and addressing readers’ concerns and biases with some errors.</p>	<p>Students write persuasive compositions, including structuring arguments logically, using rhetorical devices, defending positions with evidence, and addressing readers’ concerns and biases with significant errors.</p>

Standard 3: Students engage in the writing process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose</li> <li>• Use variety of sources for supporting details</li> </ul>	Students easily identify an appropriate pattern for organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.	Students identify an appropriate pattern for organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.	With some guidance, the students identify an appropriate pattern for organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.	With substantial guidance, the students identify an appropriate pattern for organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.
	<p>DRAFTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate grade-level appropriate vocabulary in writing</li> <li>• Organize and write compositions for nation and world</li> </ul>	Students demonstrate complexity of thought when incorporating vocabulary, using supporting details, organizing, and writing compositions for nation and world.	Students accurately incorporate grade level appropriate vocabulary, use supporting details, organize, and write compositions for nation and world.	Students attempt to use grade level appropriate vocabulary, use few supporting details in organizing and writing compositions for nation and world.

Standard 3: Students engage in the writing process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>LITERARY ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use techniques to convey an individual voice and style (e.g. tone, syntax, diction, figurative language)</li> </ul>	<p>Students demonstrate complexity of thought when using techniques to convey an individual voice and style.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate competent performance when using techniques to convey an individual voice and style.</p>	<p>Students attempt to use techniques to convey an individual voice and style.</p>	<p>Students fail to convey an individual voice and style.</p>
<p>REVISING AND EDITING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edit and revise compositions for standard writing conventions and appropriate tone</li> <li>Edit and revise compositions for unity, coherence, clarity, and fluency</li> <li>Edit and revise compositions with an awareness of parallel structures and proper verb tense and agreement</li> <li>Edit and revise compositions for the use of proper clausal and phrasal patterns</li> </ul>	<p>Students edit and revise compositions for appropriate tone, unity, coherence, clarity, fluency, parallel structure, proper verb tense and agreement, proper clausal and phrasal patterns with few, if any, errors.</p>	<p>Students edit and revise compositions for appropriate tone, unity, coherence, clarity, fluency, parallel structure, proper verb tense and agreement, proper clausal and phrasal patterns with only minor errors.</p>	<p>Students edit and revise compositions for appropriate tone, unity, coherence, clarity, fluency, parallel structure, proper verb tense and agreement, proper clausal and phrasal patterns with some errors.</p>	<p>Students edit and revise compositions for appropriate tone, unity, coherence, clarity, fluency, parallel structure, proper verb tense and agreement, proper clausal and phrasal patterns with significant errors.</p>
<p>PUBLISHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue previous expectations</li> </ul>	<p>Students effectively use previous knowledge.</p>			

## Standard 4: Students engage in the speaking and listening process

Standard 4: Students engage in the speaking and listening process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 12</p> <p><b>PLANNING FOR AN AUDIENCE/PURPOSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate audience based on characteristics such as religion, culture, and gender</li> </ul> <p><b>VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use tone, inflection, pitch, and emphasis effectively in oral presentations</li> </ul> <p><b>CONVERSATION, GROUP DISCUSSION, AND ORAL PRESENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the audience and adjust message and wording to suit the audience while speaking</li> </ul>	<p>Students insightfully evaluate audience based on social characteristics.</p> <p>Students use tone, inflection, pitch, and emphasis effectively in oral presentations.</p> <p>Students are highly effective in analyzing the audience and adjusting the message and wording to suit the audience while speaking.</p>	<p>Students effectively evaluate audience based on social characteristics.</p> <p>Students use tone, inflection, pitch, and emphasis competently in oral presentations.</p> <p>Students accurately analyze the audience and adjust message and wording to suit the audience while speaking.</p>	<p>Students evaluate audience based on social characteristics with limited understanding.</p> <p>Students use tone, inflection, pitch, and emphasis in oral presentations with general understanding.</p> <p>Students analyze the audience and adjust message and wording with few errors to suit the audience while speaking.</p>	<p>Students ineffectively evaluate audience based on social characteristics.</p> <p>Students ineffectively use tone, inflection, pitch, and emphasis in oral presentations.</p> <p>Students inaccurately analyze the audience and fail to adjust message and wording to suit the audience while speaking.</p>

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Standard 4: Students engage in the speaking and listening process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	<b>ADVANCED PROFICIENT</b>	<b>PROFICIENT</b>	<b>PARTIALLY PROFICIENT</b>	<b>NOVICE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use critical listening responses such as refutation and commentary, to critique the accuracy of messages</li> </ul>	Students insightfully use critical listening responses to critique the accuracy of messages.	Students effectively use critical listening responses to critique the accuracy of messages.	Students use critical listening responses to critique the accuracy of messages with few errors.	Students ineffectively use critical listening responses to critique the accuracy of messages.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use oral composition techniques to perform speeches such as memorized speeches, impromptu and extemporaneous, persuasive/ argumentative, and expository speeches</li> </ul>	Students use oral composition techniques to perform speeches in a highly effective way.	Students competently use oral composition techniques to perform speeches.	Students use oral composition techniques to perform speeches with general understanding.

## Standard 5: Students understand media

Standard 5: Students understand media				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 12</p> <p><b>MEDIA GENRES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify existing and developing media</li> </ul> <p><b>USING MEDIA FOR A PURPOSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a media project for a purpose</li> </ul> <p><b>INTERPRETING MEDIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate instances of gender equity and political correctness in media messages</li> </ul>	<p>Students correctly identify existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students demonstrate mastery in creating a media project.</p> <p>Students draw insightful conclusions in evaluating instances of gender equity and political correctness in media messages.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students imaginatively create a media project.</p> <p>Students draw accurate conclusions in evaluating instances of gender equity and political correctness in media messages.</p>	<p>Students identify some existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students create a pedestrian media project.</p> <p>Students draw limited conclusions in evaluating instances of gender equity and political correctness in media messages.</p>	<p>Students identify few existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students incomplete create a media project.</p> <p>Students fail to recognize instances of gender equity and political correctness in media messages.</p>

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Standard 5: Students understand media				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	<b>ADVANCED PROFICIENT</b>	<b>PROFICIENT</b>	<b>PARTIALLY PROFICIENT</b>	<b>NOVICE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate media messages in their historical and/or cultural contexts and intended audience</li> </ul>	Students insightfully evaluate media messages in their historical and/or cultural contexts and intended audiences.	Students adequately evaluate media messages in their historical and/or cultural contexts and intended audiences.	Students marginally evaluate media messages in their historical and/or cultural contexts and intended audiences.	Students fail to evaluate media messages in their historical and/or cultural contexts and intended audiences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine advanced media techniques such as music and sound, camera angles, lighting, aesthetic effects, and production strategies</li> </ul>	Students thoughtfully analyze advanced media techniques.	Students adequately examine advanced media techniques.	Students narrowly examine advanced media techniques.

## Standard 6: Students understand and use principles of language

Standard 6: Students understand and use principles of language				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 12</p> <p>LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS/MECHANICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation to edit and revise</li> </ul> <p>LITERARY ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply figurative language (i.e., allusion, analogy, hyperbole, irony, personification, oxymoron, and paradox)</li> <li>Interpret the use of language in different literary forms (i.e., satire and parody)</li> <li>Recognize allegory</li> </ul>	<p>Students use conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation to edit and revise with few, if any, errors.</p> <p>Students demonstrate effective performance in applying figurative language.</p> <p>Students insightfully interpret the use of language in different literary forms.</p> <p>Students accurately identify allegory.</p>	<p>Students use conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation to edit and revise with only minor errors.</p> <p>Students demonstrate competent performance in applying figurative language.</p> <p>Students adequately interpret the use of language in different literary forms.</p> <p>Students accurately identify basic allegory.</p>	<p>Students use conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation to edit and revise with noticeable errors.</p> <p>Students demonstrate limited performance in applying figurative language.</p> <p>Students interpret the use of language in different literary forms with some guidance.</p> <p>Students identify allegory with guidance.</p>	<p>Students use conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation to edit and revise with significant errors.</p> <p>Students fail to demonstrate performance in applying figurative language.</p> <p>Students interpret the use of language in different literary forms with significant.</p> <p>Students fail to identify allegory.</p>

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Standard 6: Students understand and use principles of language				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
LANGUAGE CONTEXT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See previous grade level expectations and apply</li> </ul>	Students effectively use previous expectations.			