

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 9</p> <p><b>RESEARCH PLANNING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose a broad topic, state the problem, or question</li> <li>• Formulate a preliminary thesis statement</li> </ul>	<p>Students demonstrate mastery in choosing a broad topic, stating the problem or question, and formulating a preliminary thesis statement.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate competent performance by frequently choosing a broad topic, stating the problem or question, and formulating a preliminary thesis statement.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate competent performance by occasionally choosing a broad topic, stating the problem or question, and formulating a preliminary thesis statement.</p>	<p>Students rarely demonstrate competent performance in choosing a broad topic, stating the problem or question, and formulating a preliminary thesis statement.</p>
<p><b>ACCESSING INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See previous grade level benchmarks and apply</li> </ul>	<p>Students apply previous knowledge.</p>			
<p><b>EVALUATING RESEARCH INFORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-reference information</li> <li>• Evaluate relevancy of information</li> </ul>	<p>Students nearly always cross-reference information and effectively evaluate relevancy of information.</p>	<p>Students frequently cross-reference information and effectively evaluate relevancy of information.</p>	<p>Students occasionally cross-reference information and evaluate relevancy of information.</p>	<p>Students rarely cross-reference information and never evaluate relevancy of information.</p>

Standard 1: Students Engage in the Research Process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>ORGANIZING AND PRESENTING RESEARCH INFORMATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize information from a variety of sources; e.g., chronological</li>   <li>• Summarize information</li>   <li>• Identify and avoid plagiarism</li>         <li>• Use primary and secondary sources</li> </ul>	<p>Students use multiple methods to effectively organize information from a variety of sources.</p> <p>Students demonstrate an in-depth understanding of summarizing information and identifying and avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>Students nearly always use secondary sources.</p> <p>Students frequently use primary sources.</p>	<p>Students effectively organize information from a variety of sources.</p> <p>Students demonstrate a substantial understanding of summarizing information and identifying and avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>Students frequently use secondary sources.</p> <p>Students sometimes use primary sources.</p>	<p>Students organize information from a variety of sources with minor errors.</p> <p>Students demonstrate a partial understanding of summarizing information and identifying and avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>Students occasionally use secondary sources.</p> <p>Students rarely use primary sources.</p>	<p>Students organize information from a variety of sources with substantial errors.</p> <p>Students demonstrate a minimal understanding of summarizing information and identifying and avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>Students occasionally use secondary sources but omit important facts, concepts, and details.</p> <p>Students use primary sources with incomplete connections.</p>

NORTH DAKOTA  
DRAFT—LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS FOR GRADES K-12—DRAFT

Standard 1: Students Engage in the Research Process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use graphic organizer</li>   <li>• Write research papers and presentations using a thesis and organized information</li> </ul>	Students automatically use graphic organizers.	Students effectively use graphic organizers.	Students use graphic organizers with limited understanding.	Students ineffectively use graphic organizers.
	Students competently write research papers and presentations using a thesis and organized information.	Students write research papers and presentations using a thesis and organized information.	Students write research papers and presentations with an ineffective thesis and partially organized information.	Students write research papers and presentations without a thesis and with poorly organized information.

## 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 9</p> <p>LITERARY GENRES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify characteristics of a variety of fiction genres including novels, short stories, plays, and poetry</li> <li>Identify the organizational features of fiction, drama, and poetry including stanza, act, scene, chapter, verse, and article</li> </ul> <p>INFORMATIONAL GENRES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate between a variety of nonfiction genres including newspapers, magazines, electronic texts, biographies, reference materials, essays, and speeches</li> </ul>	<p>Students identify and describe in detail the characteristics of a variety of grade level genres.</p> <p>They also identify and describe in detail the organizational features of fiction, drama, and poetry.</p> <p>Students have mastered the difference between nonfiction genres.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify the characteristics of a variety of grade level genres.</p> <p>They also correctly identify the organizational features of fiction, drama, and poetry.</p> <p>Students correctly differentiate between nonfiction genres.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify the characteristics of a variety of grade level genres with some errors.</p> <p>They also correctly identify the organizational features of fiction, drama, and poetry with some errors.</p> <p>Students differentiate between nonfiction genres with some errors.</p>	<p>Students rarely identify the characteristics of a variety of grade level genres.</p> <p>They also rarely identify the organizational features of fiction, drama, and poetry.</p> <p>Students rarely differentiate between nonfiction genres.</p>

NORTH DAKOTA  
DRAFT—LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS FOR GRADES K-12—DRAFT

Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>READING STRATEGIES FOR INTERPRETING MEANING OF TEXTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify persuasive writing</li>   <li>• Locate redundancies in written texts to clarify meaning</li>   <li>• Demonstrate oral reading fluency</li>   <li>• Access prior knowledge to interpret meaning.</li> </ul>	<p>Students have mastered the identification of persuasive writing.</p> <p>They accurately locate redundancies in written texts to clarify meaning.</p> <p>They always read with oral fluency.</p> <p>They thoroughly access prior knowledge.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify persuasive writing and locate redundancies in written texts to clarify meaning.</p> <p>They frequently read with oral fluency.</p> <p>They fully access prior knowledge.</p>	<p>Students sometimes identify persuasive writing and locate redundancies in written texts to clarify meaning.</p> <p>They generally read with oral fluency.</p> <p>They sometimes access prior knowledge.</p>	<p>Students rarely identify persuasive writing and locate redundancies in written texts to clarify meaning.</p> <p>They struggle to read with oral fluency.</p> <p>They rarely access prior knowledge.</p>
<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>

NORTH DAKOTA  
DRAFT—LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS FOR GRADES K-12—DRAFT

Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>LITERARY ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify character, setting, plot, stanza, act, scene, chapter, verse, article, fiction, nonfiction, point of view</li> <li>• Explain author’s use of literary techniques and devices including mood, foreshadowing, flashbacks, dialogue, and poetic license</li> <li>• Identify universal themes</li> <li>• Explain ways in which the setting affects the development of a story</li> <li>• Analyze author’s use of literary techniques and devices including foreshadowing and flashbacks</li> </ul>	<p>Students describe literary elements and universal themes in detail, and effectively explain techniques and devices as well as their effects.</p> <p>They thoroughly analyze foreshadowing and flashback.</p>	<p>Students competently identify literary elements and universal themes, and explain techniques and devices as well as their effects.</p> <p>They fully analyze foreshadowing and flashback.</p>	<p>Students identify literary elements and universal themes, and explain techniques and devices as well as their effects with help.</p> <p>They infrequently partially analyze foreshadowing and flashback.</p>	<p>Students identify literary elements and universal themes, but often fail to explain techniques and devices as well as their effects.</p> <p>They fail to analyze foreshadowing and flashback.</p>
<p>VOCABULARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use decoding/encoding, connotation, and denotation</li> </ul>	<p>Students decode and encode well and consistently use connotation and denotation for understanding.</p>	<p>Students decode and encode well and often use connotation and denotation for understanding.</p>	<p>Students occasionally decode and encode and occasionally use connotation and denotation for understanding.</p>	<p>Students struggle to decode and encode and rarely use connotation and denotation for understanding.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build vocabulary by reading a variety of grade-level texts and applying new vocabulary.</li> </ul>	<p>Students read a variety of advanced texts and apply the newly acquired words well.</p>	<p>Students read a variety of grade-level text and apply the newly acquired words well.</p>	<p>Students read a variety of grade-level text and sometimes apply the newly acquired words.</p>	<p>Students rarely read grade-level texts or apply the newly acquired words.</p>



NORTH DAKOTA  
DRAFT—LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS FOR GRADES K-12—DRAFT

Standard 3: Students engage in the writing process				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p><b>PREWRITING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a focus for a composition; e.g. a theme or unifying idea</li> <li>• Organize the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose</li> </ul>	<p>Students demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of prewriting by developing a focus for a composition and organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a substantial understanding of prewriting by developing a focus for a composition and organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a general understanding of prewriting by developing a focus for a composition and organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a limited understanding of prewriting by developing a focus for a composition and organizing the ideas and details of a composition according to purpose.</p>
<p><b>DRAFTING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate grade-level appropriate vocabulary in writing</li> <li>• Organize and write compositions for self and family</li> <li>• Use supporting details</li> </ul>	<p>Students demonstrate complexity of thought when incorporating vocabulary, using supporting details, organizing, and writing compositions for self and family.</p>	<p>Students accurately incorporate grade level appropriate vocabulary, use supporting details, organize, and write compositions for self and family.</p>	<p>Students attempt to use grade level appropriate vocabulary, use few supporting details in organizing and writing compositions for self and family.</p>	<p>Students fail to incorporate grade level appropriate vocabulary, use supporting details, organize, and write compositions for self and family.</p>

NORTH DAKOTA  
DRAFT—LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS FOR GRADES K-12—DRAFT

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 of characterization in compositions e.g. description, dialogue, interior monologue</li> </ul>	<p>Students extensively use techniques of characterization in compositions.</p>	<p>Students correctly use techniques of characterization in compositions.</p>	<p>Students use techniques of characterization in compositions with few errors.</p>	<p>Students make an incomplete attempt to use techniques of characterization in compositions.</p>
<p>REVISING AND EDITING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edit and revise compositions for proper mechanics and grammar, syntax, diction, and order</li> <li>Arrange paragraphs in a logical progression</li> </ul>	<p>Students effectively edit and revise compositions for proper mechanics and grammar, syntax, diction, and paragraph order.</p>	<p>Students edit and revise compositions for proper mechanics and grammar, syntax, diction, and paragraph order with minimal errors.</p>	<p>Students edit and revise compositions for proper mechanics and grammar, syntax, diction, and paragraph order with significant errors.</p>	<p>Students fail to edit and revise compositions for proper mechanics and grammar, syntax, diction, and paragraph order</p>
<p>PUBLISHING/ PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use technology such as publishing software and graphic programs, to present written work</li> </ul>	<p>Students demonstrate extensive knowledge in using technology to present written work.</p>	<p>Students competently use technology to present written work.</p>	<p>Students use basic technology to present written work.</p>	<p>Students use technology to present written work with assistance.</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 9</p> <p>PLANNING FOR AN AUDIENCE/PURPOSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify audience and tailor message to fit purpose</li> </ul> <p>VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use visual aids effectively in oral presentations</li> <li>Use notes and manuscripts to make oral presentations</li> </ul> <p>CONVERSATION, GROUP DISCUSSION, AND ORAL PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in a group discussion</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use critical listening skills including reflection</li> </ul>	<p>Students demonstrate mastery in identifying audience and tailoring messages to fit the purpose.</p> <p>Students effectively and creatively use visual aids, notes, and manuscripts in oral presentations.</p> <p>Students demonstrate complexity of thought when engaging in a group discussion.</p> <p>Students almost always use critical listening skills.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify audience and tailor message to fit purpose.</p> <p>Students effectively use visual aids, notes, and manuscripts in oral presentations.</p> <p>Students effectively engage in a group discussion.</p> <p>Students frequently use critical listening skills.</p>	<p>Students possess basic knowledge to identify audience and tailor message to fit purpose.</p> <p>Students use visual aids, notes, and manuscripts in oral presentations without effectively tying them to the presentation.</p> <p>Students engage in a group discussion with limited insight.</p> <p>Students sometimes use critical listening skills.</p>	<p>Students incorrectly identify audience and tailor message to fit purpose.</p> <p>Students ineffectively use visual aids, notes, and manuscripts in oral presentations.</p> <p>Students engage in a group discussion with limited focus.</p> <p>Students rarely use critical listening skills.</p>

## Standard 5: Students understand media

Standard 5: Students understand media				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<p>Grade 9</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>Access media (e.g. television, film, music, electronic databases, videos, DVDs, comics, visual and performing arts, newspapers, and periodicals) for a variety of purposes</li> </ul> <p><b>INTERPRETING MEDIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and contrast a written work and a media version</li> </ul>	<p>Students correctly identify existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students creatively access media for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>Students compare and contrast with depth a written work and a media version.</p>	<p>Students correctly identify existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students independently access media for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>Students adequately compare and contrast a written work and a media version.</p>	<p>Students identify some existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students access media for a variety of purposes with guidance.</p> <p>Students superficially compare and contrast a written work and a media version.</p>	<p>Students identify few existing and developing media.</p> <p>Students require extensive help in accessing media for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>Students compare and contrast a written work and a media version with a limited understanding.</p>

## 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 9</p> <p>LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS/MECHANICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify conventions of grammar related to sentence structure (i.e., sentence reduction, parallel structure, elliptical clauses, conjunctions, and clausal and phrasal patterns)</li>   <li>• Use conventions of grammar related to parts of speech (i.e., verb tense and agreement)</li>   <li>• Use conventions of punctuation</li> </ul> <p>LITERARY ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify idiomatic language and figurative language (i.e., allusion, analogy, hyperbole, irony, personification, oxymoron, and paradox)</li>   <li>• Identify the use of sound patterns in language (i.e., alliteration, assonance and consonance)</li> </ul>	<p>Students almost always identify conventions of grammar related to sentence structure.</p> <p>Students correctly use conventions of punctuation and grammar related to parts of speech to enhance meaning.</p> <p>Students almost always identify figurative language and idiomatic language.</p> <p>Students accurately identify the use of sound patterns in language.</p>	<p>Students frequently identify conventions of grammar related to sentence structure.</p> <p>Students correctly use conventions of punctuation and grammar related to parts of speech.</p> <p>Students frequently identify figurative language and idiomatic language.</p> <p>Students frequently identify the use of sound patterns in language.</p>	<p>Students occasionally identify conventions of grammar related to sentence structure.</p> <p>Students use conventions of punctuation and grammar related to parts of speech with some errors.</p> <p>Students occasionally identify figurative language and idiomatic language.</p> <p>Students occasionally identify the use of sound patterns in language.</p>	<p>Students rarely identify conventions of grammar related to sentence structure.</p> <p>Students use conventions of punctuation and grammar related to parts of speech with guidance.</p> <p>Students rarely identify figurative language and idiomatic language.</p> <p>Students rarely identify the use of sound patterns in language.</p>

NORTH DAKOTA  
DRAFT—LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS FOR GRADES K-12—DRAFT

Standard 6: Students understand and use principles of language				
BENCHMARK EXPECTATION	PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTOR			
	ADVANCED PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	NOVICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret symbolism</li> </ul> <p>LANGUAGE CONTEXT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate cultural differences in language (i.e., colloquialisms, regional and ethnic dialects, and indigenous vocabulary)</li> <li>• Identify gender perspectives in language (i.e., biased language)</li> </ul>	<p>Students provide insightful interpretations of symbolism.</p> <p>Students automatically locate cultural differences in language.</p> <p>Students automatically identify gender perspective in language.</p>	<p>Students provide effective interpretations of symbolism.</p> <p>Students frequently locate cultural differences in language.</p> <p>Students frequently identify gender perspective in language.</p>	<p>Students provide cursory interpretations of symbolism.</p> <p>Students occasionally locate cultural differences in language.</p> <p>Students occasionally identify gender perspective in language.</p>	<p>Students provide superficial interpretations of symbolism.</p> <p>Students rarely locate cultural differences in language.</p> <p>Students rarely identify gender perspective in language.</p>