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English Language Arts  
and Reading

Pass the  
TEXES

4-8

Third Edition

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FOR TEXAS TEACHERS.  
A TEST PREP MANUAL FOR THE TEXES  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND  
READING EXAM FOR  
GRADES 4-8 (#113).

# Domain I:

## Language Arts, Part I: Oral Language, Early Literacy Development, Word Identification, and Reading Fluency

### Competencies 1-3

(33% of the test)

#### **English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard I:**

Oral Language: Teachers of students in grades 4-8 understand the importance of oral language, know the developmental processes of oral language, and provide a variety of instructional opportunities for students to develop listening and speaking skills.

#### **English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard II:**

Foundations of Reading: Teachers of students in grades 4-8 understand the foundations of reading and early literacy development.

#### **English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard III:**

Word Analysis Skills and Reading Fluency: Teachers understand the importance of word analysis skills (including decoding, blending, structural analysis, sight word vocabulary) and reading fluency and provide many opportunities for students to practice and improve their word analysis skills and reading fluency.

#### **English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard VIII:**

Assessment of Developing Literacy: Teachers understand the basic principles of assessment and use a variety of literacy assessment practices to plan and implement instruction.





# 1. Oral Language

## Competency 1:

The teacher understands the importance of oral language, knows the developmental processes of oral language, and provides a variety of instructional opportunities for students to develop listening and speaking skills.

### A. Basic Linguistic Concepts

- Phonemes, represented by letters, are the smallest sound units within spoken words.
- Phonemes combine to create syllables, and syllables combine to create words. Strings of words can be connected and manipulated to create spoken language.
- Segmentation breaks language into these smaller units and allows students to analyze new words and ideas.

### B. Developmental Stages

- Phonological awareness-Understands words are made of sounds; notices differences and similarities between sounds.
- Semantics-Understands that groups of sounds create words with specific meanings.
- Syntax-Understands how words are combined to create phrases and sentences with meaning.
- Pragmatics-Understands how relationships and placements of words affect the meaning of a phrase or sentence.

### C. Risk Factors

Within a student's oral language development, there will be individual variations. The teacher must be able to recognize when these differences are serious enough to require intervention. Factors which may cause delays include:

- Diagnosis of early language impairment or other learning impairment
- Family history of reading difficulties
- Unwelcoming home literacy environment
- Limited verbal interaction opportunities
- Home language other than English, or a non-standard English dialect
- Socioeconomic status
- Lack of age appropriate knowledge or skills

- Medical diagnosis in which reading or language difficulties tend to occur as a secondary symptom

### D. Assessments should be multiple and ongoing so that development can be accurately evaluate

- Informal assessments include reading inventories, class discussion, cooperative activities, and observation
- Formal assessments include curriculum-based assessments, norm referenced tests, and state assessments
- Results of assessments can be used to create materials and instructional plans that:
  1. Build on current skills
  2. Address strengths and interests
  3. Are culturally diverse
  4. Focus on correcting problems
  5. Include group and one on one activities
  6. Are meaningful and purposeful
  7. Build on cultural linguistic and home backgrounds

There is a strong relationship between oral language and reading skills students must be skilled in one to succeed in the other. Ways in which skills can be improved:

Use of activities such as previewing, reviewing, discussion and questioning will reinforce the relationship and increase skills in both areas.

Activities such as retelling an oral or written narrative helps improve oral skills and creates further connection between spoken and printed language.



## 2. Literacy Development

### Competency 2:

The teacher understands the foundations of literacy development.

- A. The stage is set for literacy development in infancy.
- Grammar and syntax—an understanding of proper word order and usage develops next
  - Soon they are able to understand and communicate abstract ideas
  - Conventional literacy is achieved when they are able to use language appropriately in a variety of settings
- B. Elements of the alphabetic principle
- The idea that written spellings represent spoken words. By learning letters that correspond to sounds, words can be written down or read.
  - Not all languages are alphabetic—some use pictographs
  - Some alphabetic languages are more phonetically regular than English
  - Differences in regularity of phonetics can cause problems for some English language learners
- C. Literacy acquisition
- Language exposure begins as infants tune into the sounds of language, particularly their native language. Even before they begin speaking and reading, children increase their vocabulary daily. Stages of acquisition include:
- Pre-reading, in the form of pretend reading is an essential stage in development.
  - Preschoolers develop phonemic awareness and segmentation skills as they become aware of “letter sounds” and are able to segment the sounds from one another.
  - As students learn to combine sounds and groups of letters to make spoken or written words, they develop an understanding of semantics.
  - When students understand syntax, they are able to correctly combine words and phrases to create sentences.
  - Comprehension is marked by an understanding of both concrete and abstract ideas, and being able to communicate them adequately.
- D. Literacy acquisition occurs in a variety of situations:
- Reading
  - Writing
  - Speaking
  - Listening
- All of these contexts must be addressed to create true literacy in students.
- E. A variety of assessments should be used to monitor and evaluate performance and development
- Informal assessments include reading inventories, class discussion, cooperative activities, and observation
  - Formal assessments include curriculum-based assessments, norm referenced tests, and state assessments
  - The results can be used to determine if the student needs additional help or intervention to bring literacy comprehension to grade level.
- F. Specific evaluation tools can assist the teacher in analyzing errors in reading. In this way the teacher is able to
- Respond to individual needs with focused instruction
  - Create instructional materials that build on current skills
  - Include activities that will assist English Language Learners
  - Promote development from emergent literacy to conventional literacy



# 3. Word Identification Skills and Reading Fluency

## Competency 3:

The teacher understands the importance of word identification skills (including decoding, blending, structural analysis, and sight word vocabulary) and reading fluency and provides many opportunities for students to practice and improve word identifications skills and reading fluency.

### A. Word identification skills include:

- Sight recognition.
- Decoding and blending. Using the phonemes and phoneme groups to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Structural analysis. Recognizing the roots, prefixes and suffixes in the word.

### B. Word analysis skills include knowledge of:

- Phonics-sound-symbol relationships. Each symbol or group of symbols stands for a particular sound.
- Structural analysis—gives the denotative meaning. Breaking apart the meaning bearing units (roots, prefixes, suffixes, possessives, plurals). Context clues can signal a different connotative meaning. Conceptual clues can offer additional associations.
- Dictionary skills. Diacritical markings can tell the pronunciation. The proper meaning can be chosen according to context. As students become more proficient in the use of the above skills, they will be able to effectively decode increasingly more complex words. They will also be able to use syntax and semantics to support word identification and confirm word meaning.

### C. Increased skill in word identification and analysis leads to reading fluency and comprehension.

Several factors can affect the development of word identification and analysis skills

- Home language other than English
- Vocabulary development
- Learning disability
- Socioeconomic factors

- Parent education
- Family attitude toward language
- Exposure to a variety of language uses
- Understanding of phonetic elements and conventions of English
- Cultural ideas about language

### D. Elements of reading fluency

Rate-reading at a comfortable rate with only necessary hesitations

Accuracy-correct pronunciation and expression

Intonation-correct emphasis and stress

### E. Informal assessments such as journal entries and discussion, and formal assessments such as tests of letter knowledge, phonics surveys and state-based assessments can be used to compare student knowledge with TEKS grade levels and identify the need for intervention.

### F. As evaluation continues, lessons should be tailored to the needs of the students and should focus on increasing skills. Lesson content should:

- Assist in recognizing high frequency-irregular words
- Promote the ability to decode complex words
- Enhance word identification skills for a variety of students reading at different levels

### G. Activities should improve fluency through:

- Independent-level texts
- Repeated reading activities
- Self-correction activities
- Cooperative learning



# 8. Media

## Competency 8:

The teacher understands skills for interpreting, analyzing, evaluating and producing visual images and messages in various media and provides students with opportunities to develop skills in this area.

- A. Different types of media serve different functions.
- Print media include books, magazines and newspapers.
    - These offer a longstanding record of thoughts and events.
    - The audience is somewhat limited, as it is necessary to know how to read.
  - Broadcast media include radio and television.
    - These provide quick dissemination of information.
    - The audience is often worldwide and includes a wide scope and age range of individuals, both literate and illiterate.
  - Films and sound recordings can be considered broadcast media, but are usually delivered less quickly.
    - They also provide a longstanding record of thoughts and events.
    - They are offered to a broad audience, like other broadcast media.
  - Electronic media includes computer software and the internet.
    - These can provide a longstanding record of thoughts and events.
    - There is a possibility of quick dissemination of information.
    - These media have a potential for a broad audience.
- Posting written information, sound recordings, or real-time visual feeds on the internet offers the media worldwide.
- However, a computer is required, and those accessing the information need to know how to use the computer, and how to discern the best information.
- B. Types of visual image makers are as varied as media types
- Illustrators (for books, magazines, and other print media)
  - Graphic designers (for computer software and multimedia presentations)
  - News photographers
  - Political cartoonists
  - Documentary filmmakers
  - Advertising designers
- C. Students should be given opportunities to view and evaluate a variety of visual media. Items to consider in evaluation include purpose of presentation, choice of media form, accuracy of information, effectiveness of message, and presence of bias. Special attention should be given to the ways in which language, medium and presentation contribute to or detract from the message.
- D. Evaluation techniques should be practiced:
- As a class group through discussion
  - In cooperative learning groups
  - Individually
- E. Once students have learned how to recognize an effective visual message, they should be given multiple opportunities to create their own visual media.
- Use various types of technology to collect information
  - Select and organize information
  - Collect or create visuals
  - Use information and visuals to create various types of media

*Continued*

## 8. Media, cont'd.

1. Class newspapers
  2. Multimedia reports
  3. Video reports, etc.
- F. Assessments should use meaningful activities to evaluate students' skills in:
- a. Interpreting
    - What is the imagemaker's message and purpose?
    - Is the language chosen for the message useful and effective?
  - b. Analyzing
    - Is the chosen form of medium appropriate for the task?
    - Are there other forms that might also be effective?
  - c. Evaluating
    - Is the message effective?
    - What types of language or presentation might improve the message?
  - d. Producing
    - Are students' media messages effective?
    - Do they adequately convey the intended message?
    - Do they use the best style of media?
    - Is the information accurate, organized and easy to understand?
- G. Assessments should also identify students' needs. If they are unable to communicate an effective message, the teacher must identify the source of the problem.
- a. Language barrier-the student may simply need coaching and individual assistance in framing the message he or she wishes to convey.
  - b. Developmental delays-the student may need additional time, or individual assistance to complete the message in an organized and effective format.
  - c. Lack of preparation-the student may have a lack of motivation, or may be experiencing home or social issues that are negatively affecting his or her schoolwork.
- Adequate assessment and evaluation can assist the teacher in planning activities that will increase motivation, aid in understanding, and create students who will become lifelong learners.



# 9. Study and Inquiry Skills

## Competency 9:

The teacher understands the importance of study and inquiry skills as tools for learning in the content areas and promotes students' development in applying study and inquiry skills.

- A. Study and inquiry skills are important in all content areas, and can form a basis for lifelong learning.  
Text organizers such as webs or mapping highlight important information and create visual cues.  
Taking accurate notes allows students to bring out facts from a text or presentation.  
Outlining can be used as a reading study tool, or as a research and inquiry tool.  
Test taking strategies should be taught and practiced as often as possible.  
Previewing text can prompt the reader to ask questions and prepare for upcoming information.  
Students should know how to collect, organize, evaluate and communicate information.  
Summarizing information is a tool that can be used to self-monitor students' understanding.  
Students should be required to utilize multiple sources of information (text, photos, electronic).  
Students should know how to use and interpret graphic sources of information (maps, charts).
- B. Though study skills should also be emphasized in other content areas, the language arts classroom provides a uniquely practical setting for study skills instruction.
  - a. The major goal of the language arts classroom is to create literate individuals who are able to interpret, evaluate and use information.
  - b. The development of study skills will result in the ability to interpret, evaluate and use information.
- C. The teacher should create meaningful and varied opportunities for students to use study skills across the curriculum. Some examples might be:
  - a. Practicing outlining skills using a passage from a science textbook.
  - b. Using multiple information sources to research historical events that are part of the social studies curriculum.
  - c. Writing summaries of information in a health textbook, and sharing it among small groups.
  - d. Studying maps, charts, or other graphic information sources that are connected to the social studies curriculum.
- D. The teacher can use assessments to evaluate students' use of study and inquiry skills.
  - Observing student study habits
  - Questioning students directly
  - Evaluating student performance on tests
  - Comparing test performance with demonstrated knowledge
- E. The teacher can use information from these evaluations to identify students who need additional assistance with inquiry and study skills. Some intervention strategies may include:
  - a. For English Language Learners, text organizers, outlines, or summaries could sometimes be completed in their native language. Creating shortened forms of the information can help them to interpret the information and then translate it into English.
  - b. Form study groups in which English Language Learners and language delayed students are combined with students who already perform well. The groups can be responsible for collectively creating a study tool that can be used by the whole class.
  - c. Provide additional practice with some of the more difficult concepts. For example, outlining practice might consist of a text passage with a partially completed outline. The student can then use the text to fill in the blanks. Subsequent assignments would have fewer words and more blanks to fill in.