



Office of Teaching and Learning

Literacy Instruction Standards

Grades 3-5

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Introduction

On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide.

While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The Grades 3-5 LIS are anchored by eleven components: 1) Reading Materials, 2) Phonics, 3) Academic Language & Vocabulary, 4) Fluency, 5) Comprehension: Discussion & Writing, 6) Comprehension: Strategy Instruction, 7) Comprehension: Knowledge-building, 8) Writing, 9) Observation & Assessment, 10) Small Group Instruction, and 11) Engagement. Grounded in these eleven components of literacy instruction, the LIS can be used to ensure that all 3-5 teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

The purpose of this document is to outline research-informed practices for each LIS for grades 3-5. In addition to guiding English Language Arts instruction, many of these practices can be integrated into content area instruction to assist students in acquiring the literacy skills and disciplinary knowledge they need as they move through the elementary grades. While the LIS should not take the place of robust content area instruction in 3-5, they include instructional practices that may support 3-5 teachers to address the specific literacy demands of the different disciplines.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the English Language Arts NCSCOS.

This LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices and may not fully capture all instructional practices that have the potential to positively impact students' literacy achievement in 3-5. New literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

The K-2 and 3-5 LIS and associated instructional practices are designed to be read in concert with one another. Some students in grades 3-5 may benefit from some of the standards and instructional practices included in the K-2 LIS, based on their observed and assessed needs. Similarly, some students in the early grades may demonstrate readiness for instructional practices that are included in the grades 3-5 LIS.

Reading Materials

Intentional opportunities and instructional support for students to access, read, and interpret a variety of types and modes of text

The teacher:

Creates and maintains an inviting, well-resourced, and purposefully organized classroom library that contains a variety of

- Texts and media that reflect the diversity of students' interests, backgrounds, languages, and experiences
- Texts that expose students to academic language across content areas
- Text sets that include multiple genres, used to support students to build knowledge about particular content area topics
- Texts and media that students can self-select to take home and/or access digitally

Provides and supports daily opportunities for students to select, read, and interpret text by

- Engaging students in interactive read alouds
- Providing guidance and feedback related to selecting texts
- Providing opportunities for scaffolded silent reading of both assigned and self-selected text
- Guiding and providing feedback on students' oral reading and their use of a variety of reading strategies for comprehension
- Engaging students in higher-order discussions of text

Selects high-quality text with features appropriate to teachers' instructional goals and students' observed and assessed needs, including

- Selecting texts for instruction that are tightly-aligned to learning goals for foundational reading and reading comprehension
- Intentionally pairing increasingly complex texts and tasks for a variety of purposes
- Creating text sets that include multiple genres, modalities, and media
- Incorporating a variety of disciplinary-specific texts that support students to build disciplinary knowledge and language
- Ensuring the text is appropriately complex for the student and his/her grade-level

“Exposure to different types of text builds the capacity to understand the large variety of reading material that students will encounter as they move from grade to grade.”

– T. Shanahan, et al., 2010

Phonics

Explicit instruction in sound-spelling patterns and common word parts

The teacher:

Provides systematic and explicit word reading and spelling instruction based on students' observed and assessed needs by

- Teaching common sound-spelling patterns, aligned with students' decoding and encoding needs
- Teaching students to recognize common word parts through morphology instruction
- Teaching students to recognize and blend common sound-spelling patterns and word parts to accurately read and pronounce increasingly complex, multisyllabic words
- Modeling the use of word reading knowledge and strategies during read alouds
- Providing and supporting opportunities for students to apply knowledge of taught sound-spelling patterns and common word parts while reading individual words and connected texts
- Supporting students to apply knowledge of taught common sound-spelling patterns and word parts while writing



Providing feedback to students while reading to promote successful decoding of increasingly complex and multisyllabic words by

- Prompting students to pay attention to individual letters, groups of letters, and words parts
- Prompting students to recognize and apply taught common sound-spelling patterns and word parts
- Prompting students to monitor for meaning as they apply knowledge of common sound-spelling patterns and word parts

Academic Language & Vocabulary

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to learn and use academic language skills, including vocabulary knowledge, across content areas

The teacher:

Provides multiple opportunities for students to encounter and actively engage with new vocabulary by

- Creating content-rich, conceptually coherent text sets that align to content area standards
- Supporting students in interacting with words across a variety of contexts and modalities, including reading, text-based and content-area discussion, and writing
- Engaging students in reviewing and using new vocabulary over time through repeated reading of texts, writing, and oral language activities
- Planning opportunities for students to engage in wide reading of high-quality texts that expose them to academic language and to general and discipline-specific vocabulary in the context of reading

Explicitly teaches high-utility academic words and strategies for figuring out the meaning of unknown words in text by

- Carefully selecting a variety of high-quality literary and informational texts for interactive read alouds and independent reading
- Selecting a small set of high-utility general-academic and discipline-specific words from texts for instruction that are important for comprehending the text and building knowledge
- Providing child-friendly definitions of selected words during interactive read alouds and other reading activities
- Teaching strategies to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words, including context clues, morphology, and using reference materials
- Supporting students in actively processing word meanings through answering questions about taught words, using the words in writing and discussion, and representing word relations through semantic mapping
- Planning reading, writing, and discussion activities that provide multiple opportunities for students to encounter and interact with taught words and academic language

**Academic language is the oral and written language of school that is necessary for thinking about and communicating content within and across disciplines (Nagy & Townsend, 2012)*

Fluency

Intentional and authentic instructional opportunities to build oral reading fluency and silent reading proficiency to support comprehension of increasingly complex, grade-appropriate text

The teacher:

Fosters students' oral reading fluency with a variety of increasingly complex texts by

- Selecting texts for fluency instruction that increase in complexity and length based on ongoing observation and assessment
- Providing regular and varied opportunities for students to hear fluent oral reading of literary and informational texts
- Modeling oral reading fluency, including accuracy, automaticity, and prosody with a variety of texts
- Using multiple approaches and participation structures to foster oral reading fluency, including repeated reading of familiar texts, partner reading, and echo reading to support comprehension
- Supporting students in setting and monitoring progress toward goals for oral reading fluency related to accuracy, automaticity, and prosody
- Providing multiple and varied opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback from more proficient readers on their oral reading accuracy, automaticity, and prosody
- Supporting students to select and engage in wide reading of connected text, for increasing amounts of time

Fosters students' silent reading fluency with a variety of increasingly complex text by

- Scaffolding opportunities for students to engage in silent reading of increasingly complex texts for a variety of purposes
- Supporting students in setting and monitoring progress toward goals for silent reading fluency
- Supporting students to select and engage in wide reading of connected text, for increasing amounts of time

“In its fullest and most authentic sense, fluency is reading with and for meaning.”

– T. Rasinski, 2012

Comprehension: Discussion & Writing

Intentional instructional opportunities for students to construct meaning through higher-order discussion and writing about/in response to the ideas within and across texts

The teacher:

Engages and supports students in discussions of text meaning and interpretation by

- Intentionally selecting complex texts that contain rich content and language worthy of discussion
- Analyzing the features, structures, and content of selected texts to identify affordances and challenges of the text
- Identifying and sharing learning goals to set the purpose for the discussion
- Constructing a variety of initial and follow-up questions to engage students in higher-order discussion before, during, and after reading
- Creating, introducing, and using discussion routines and structures
- Incorporating talk moves that students can use to extend the discussion and build upon one another's ideas
- Facilitating extended whole-group discussions
- Providing opportunities for student-led small-group discussions

Engages and supports students in writing about ideas within and across texts by

- Intentionally planning explicit instruction and a variety of opportunities for students to write in response to reading across content areas
- Implementing writing activities and tasks to support text interpretation that include opportunities for extended writing, summary writing, note taking, and answering questions
- Providing meaningful purposes and tasks that engage students in writing in response to a variety of literary and informational texts
- Engaging students in discipline-specific writing to communicate their learning as they read about and investigate the natural, social, and designed world



Comprehension: Strategy Instruction

Explicit instruction in text structure and strategies to support comprehension

The teacher:

Explicitly teaches and supports students to flexibly use a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that provide opportunities to use the comprehension strategy being taught
- Planning explicit comprehension strategy instruction that provides information about what the strategy is, how to use it, and when and why readers use the strategy
- Describing, modeling, and providing opportunities for students to practice using a variety of reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, activating prior knowledge, setting reading goals, visualizing, questioning, making inferences, and summarizing
- Modeling for and teaching students to monitor comprehension and to use strategies to repair comprehension when they do not understand what they read
- Modeling and teaching students to monitor their understanding and to flexibly use the metacognitive strategies they have been taught while reading increasingly complex texts

Describes, models, and provides opportunities for students to practice identifying a variety of text structures and features of increasingly complex text by

- Intentionally selecting increasingly complex texts that reflect the text structure being taught
- Providing instruction on common structures of literary texts, including key story elements
- Teaching common structures of informational text, including cause-effect, description, sequence, compare-contrast, and problem-solution
- Building students' knowledge of features of informational text including captions, diagrams, index, and table of contents
- Engaging students in using a variety of tools and strategies to visualize and use text structure to support comprehension

Comprehension: Knowledge-building

Intentional and ongoing instructional opportunities for students to build and connect knowledge to support their understanding of ideas within and across text

The teacher:

Supports students in building and connecting conceptual knowledge by

- Creating and using text sets in instruction that are conceptually or topically related
- Providing knowledge-building experiences before, during, and after reading to support text comprehension
- Supporting students to build knowledge within and across texts (including those read aloud and independently) that provide repeated exposure to semantically related vocabulary
- Integrating reading, writing, and oral language into disciplinary instruction for a variety of purposes, including engaging in disciplinary practices

Supports students in extending and applying knowledge by

- Increasing students' exposure to a variety of informational texts to develop world and disciplinary knowledge
- Providing opportunities for students to engage in inquiry-based learning and problem solving across content areas
- Providing meaningful purposes and tasks for students to connect, communicate, and apply their knowledge through writing and structured academic discussions

“Readers use their knowledge to fill out meaning and make connections in text, and these connections help readers form local and global understandings about the text.”

– G. Cervetti & E. Hiebert, 2018

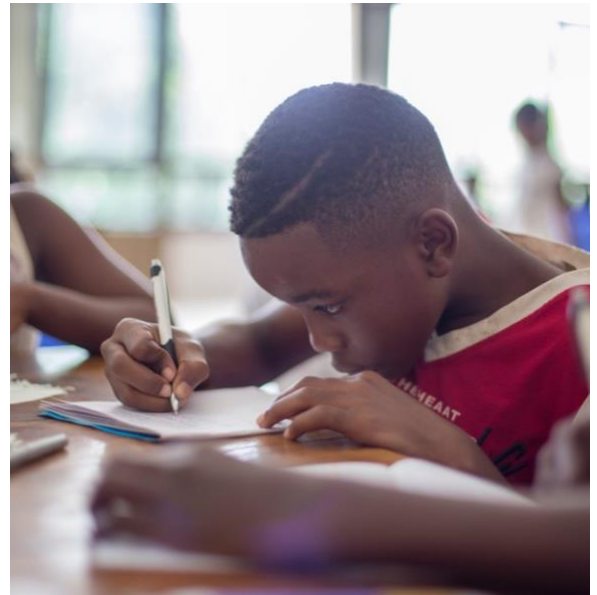
Writing

Explicit writing instruction and meaningful opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences

The teacher:

Creates a community of writers that is positive, supportive, and structured by

- Developing routines for writing instruction and practice that include daily time for students to write
- Providing opportunities for students to make interest-based choices about their writing
- Planning and supporting opportunities for students to collaborate on writing
- Making students' writing visible through supporting them to publish and share their writing, both within the classroom and for audiences beyond the classroom
- Supporting students in setting and achieving writing goals to build independence
- Providing opportunities to give and receive feedback and self-reflect throughout the writing process



Provides explicit writing instruction by

- Explicitly teaching handwriting, spelling, sentence and paragraph construction, organization and text-structure, and typing to support fluent writing
- Supporting students to understand different purposes for writing and providing opportunities for them to write for a variety of meaningful purposes and audiences across content areas
- Selecting and providing opportunities for students to study models of high-quality writing and supporting them to practice features of high-quality writing
- Teaching students components of the writing process, including researching, planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and supporting them to flexibly use those components when writing
- Teaching students strategies for different components of the writing process using a gradual release model
- Intentionally integrating writing across content areas to provide opportunities for students to use writing as a tool for building and communicating knowledge
- Providing opportunities for students to use digital tools as they engage in the writing process

Observation & Assessment

Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy skills to design responsive instruction

The teacher:

Uses a variety of observation and assessment tools to gather data to guide literacy instruction by

- Intentionally observing students during instruction and cooperative tasks to gather information about their reading, writing, and language use
- Using screening data to identify students who need additional instructional support and/or enrichment
- Using diagnostic assessment tools, as needed to identify students' specific instructional needs
- Using a variety of formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessment tools and practices to guide and adjust whole-class and small-group instruction over time

Organizes instruction and provides multiple forms of feedback based on ongoing observation and assessment by

- Providing timely, specific, and formal feedback on skills and standards
- Analyzing instructional practices and making needed adjustments to improve student outcomes
- Providing opportunities for students to actively engage in the formative assessment process through self-assessment and data analysis
- Providing differentiated and/or individualized literacy instruction to target students' observed and assessed language and literacy needs
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to conduct additional assessments, as needed
- Collaborating with additional school personnel, including specialists, to select, plan, and/or provide enrichment or intensive, systematic instruction for students who need additional support

Small Group Instruction

Personalized small group instruction, integrating a variety of grouping approaches, that targets students' needs in specific literacy skills and grade-level standards based on observation and assessment

The teacher:

Provides small group literacy instruction by

- Using ongoing observation and assessment data to create flexible small groups targeting students' demonstrated literacy needs
- Differentiating small group instruction by varying instructional time, content, and levels of support, based on students' observed and assessed needs
- Making sure students use small-group instructional time engaged in reading and writing, with multiple opportunities to practice and review targeted skills
- Providing cooperative learning structures and routines for students to read, write, and discuss texts
- Providing explicit instruction and feedback targeting students' observed and assessed needs in specific literacy skills



Engagement

Intentional efforts to foster literacy engagement as students learn and use reading, writing, and oral language within ELA and content-area instruction

The teacher:

Creates and maintains a positive literacy learning environment by

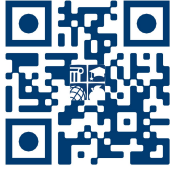
- Engaging students in setting, monitoring, and achieving goals
- Providing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning
- Supporting students in seeing themselves as successful readers and writers
- Building students' independence and autonomy

Provides authentic and relevant literacy experiences by

- Selecting interesting texts and tasks that are meaningful to students
- Engaging students in solving meaningful problems, and answering questions about the social, natural, or designed world
- Providing opportunities for students to communicate with specific audiences for a variety of meaningful purposes
- Establishing and facilitating opportunities for students to collaborate with partners and small groups
- Presenting students with regular opportunities to make constrained choices about texts and reading and writing tasks
- Differentiating instruction based on individual learner needs of content, process, and product

Contact Information

For more information about the Literacy Instruction Standards, contact NCDPI's English Language Arts team at <https://go.ncdpi.gov/4579f>



Literacy Instruction Standards are a critical component of the North Carolina Read • Lead • Succeed program.