

Fourth Grade ELA Curriculum Frameworks

Language:

GENERAL STANDARD 1: Discussion*

Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.

Group discussion is effective when students listen actively, stay on topic, consider the ideas of others, avoid sarcasm and personal remarks, take turns, and gain the floor in appropriate ways. Following agreed-upon rules promotes self-discipline and reflects respect for others.

Grades 3–4

For example, in literature discussion groups, students take on roles of leader, scribe, and reader as they discuss questions they have generated in preparation for class.

Language:

GENERAL STANDARD 2: Questioning, Listening, and Contributing*

Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

Group discussions may lead students to greater complexity of thought as they expand on the ideas of others, refine initial ideas, pose hypotheses, and work toward solutions to intellectual problems. Group work helps students gain a deeper understanding of themselves as they reflect upon and express orally their own thinking in relation to that of others.

Grades 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed.)

2.2: Contribute knowledge to class discussion in order to develop ideas for a class project and generate interview questions to be used as part of the project.

For example, students interview community helpers, using questions the class has generated, and report the results to the class.

Language:

GENERAL STANDARD 3: Oral Presentation*

Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.

Planning an effective presentation requires students to make an appropriate match between their intended audience and the choice of presentation style, level of formality, and format. Frequent opportunities to plan presentations for various purposes and to speak before different groups help students learn how to gain and keep an audience's attention, interest, and respect.

Grades 3–4

Continue to address earlier standards as needed.

3.3: Adapt language to persuade, to explain, or to seek information.

3.4: Give oral presentations about experiences or interests using eye contact, proper place, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

For example, students give a presentation of information they have acquired from a class visit to the Children's Museum.

3.5: Make informal presentations that have a recognizable organization (*sequencing, summarizing*).

3.6: Express an opinion of a literary work or film in an organized way, with supporting detail.

3.7: Use teacher-developed assessment criteria to prepare their presentations.

Language:

GENERAL STANDARD 4: Vocabulary and Concept Development

Students will understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly in reading and writing.

Our ability to think clearly and communicate with precision depends on our individual store of words. A rich vocabulary enables students to understand what they read, and to speak and write with flexibility and control. As students employ a variety of strategies for acquiring new vocabulary, the delight in finding and using that perfect word can heighten interest in vocabulary itself.

GRADES PREK–2

3.1: Give oral presentations about personal experiences or interests, using clear enunciation and adequate volume.

3.2: Maintain focus on the topic.

For example, students explain to the class why an object they bring from home is important to them.

Grades 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult text.)

4.9: Identify the meaning of common prefixes (*un-, re-, dis-*).

4.10: Identify the meaning of common Greek and Latin roots to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

For example, students discuss the meaning of the common Greek root, graph, to help them understand the meaning of the words telegraph, photograph, and autograph.

4.11: Identify the meaning of common idioms and figurative phrases.

For example, students collect and illustrate idioms, such as:

“It’s raining cats and dogs”; “It’s only the tip of the iceberg”; and

“That happens once in a blue moon.”

4.12: Identify playful uses of language (*puns, jokes, palindromes*).

4.13: Determine the meaning of unknown words using their context.

4.14: Recognize and use words with multiple meanings (*sentence, school, hard*) and be able to determine which meaning is intended from the context of the sentence.

4.15: Determine meanings of words and alternate word choices using a dictionary or thesaurus.

4.16: Identify and apply the meaning of the terms *antonym, synonym, and homophone*.

Language:

GENERAL STANDARD 5: Structure and Origins of Modern English

Students will analyze standard English grammar and usage and recognize how its vocabulary has developed and been influenced by other languages.

The English language has changed through time and through contact with other languages. An understanding of its history helps students appreciate the extraordinary richness of its vocabulary, which continues to grow. The study of its grammar and usage gives students more control over the meaning they intend in their writing and speaking.

GRADES PREK–2

- 5.1: Use language to express spatial and temporal relationships (*up, down, before, after*).
- 5.2: Recognize that the names of things can also be the names of actions (*fish, dream, run*).
- 5.3: Identify correct capitalization for names and places (*Janet, I, George Washington, Springfield*), and correct capitalization and commas in dates (*February 24, 2001*).
- 5.4: Identify appropriate end marks (*periods, question marks*).

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed.)

- 5.4: Recognize the subject-predicate relationship in sentences.
- 5.6: Identify the four basic parts of speech (*adjective, noun, verb, adverb*).
- 5.7: Identify correct mechanics (*end marks, commas for series, capitalization*), correct usage (*subject and verb agreement in a simple sentence*), and correct sentence structure (*elimination of sentence fragments*).
- 5.8: Identify words or word parts from other languages that have been adopted into the English language. *For example, students discuss some of the common foods they eat and discover how many of the names come from other languages: pizza, yogurt, spaghetti, sushi, tacos, and bagels. They use a map to locate countries where these words originated.*

Language:

GENERAL STANDARD 6: Formal and Informal English

Students will describe, analyze, and use appropriately formal and informal English.

Study of different forms of the English language helps students to understand that people use different levels of formality in their writing and speaking as well as a variety of regional and social dialects in their conversational language.

PREK–2

- 6.1: Identify formal and informal language in stories, poems, and plays.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

- 6.2: Recognize dialect in the conversational voices in American folk tales.
- 6.3: Identify formal and informal language use in advertisements read, heard, and/or seen.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 7: Beginning Reading

Students will understand the nature of written English and the relationship of letters and spelling patterns to the sounds of speech.

Phonemic awareness, knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters, and an understanding of the features of written English texts are essential to beginning reading, and should be taught, continually practiced, and carefully monitored in the early grades. Students who gain a strong grounding in these skills are ready to take on the concurrent tasks of comprehension and communication. (See Standards 4, 8, 9, 19, and 22.)

Grades 1–2

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

*7.4: Demonstrate understanding of the various features of written English:

- know the order of the letters in the alphabet;
- understand that spoken words are represented in written English by sequences of letters;
- match oral words to printed words;
- recognize that there are correct spellings for words;
- use correct spelling of appropriate high-frequency words, whether irregularly or regularly spelled;
- recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (*capitalization, end punctuation*) and a paragraph (*indentation, spacing*);
- identify the author and title of a book, and use a table of contents.

*7.5: Demonstrate orally that phonemes exist:

- generate the sounds from all the letters and letter patterns, including consonant blends, long- and short-vowel patterns, and onsets and rimes and combine these sounds into recognizable words;
- use knowledge of vowel digraphs, vowel diphthongs, and r-controlled letter-sound associations (*as in star*) to read words.

*7.6: Recognize common irregularly spelled words by sight (*have, said, where*).

*7.7: Use letter-sound knowledge to decode written English:

- decode accurately phonetically regular one-syllable and multi-syllable real words and nonsense words;
- read accurately many irregularly spelled words, special vowel spellings, and common word endings;
- apply knowledge of letter patterns to identify syllables;
- apply independently the most common letter-sound correspondences, including the sounds represented by single letters, consonant blends, consonant digraphs, and vowel digraphs and diphthongs;
- know and use more difficult word families (*-ought*) and known words to decode unknown words;
- read words with several syllables;
- read aloud with fluency and comprehension at grade level.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

*7.8: Use letter-sound knowledge to decode written English.

7.9: Read grade-appropriate imaginative/literary and informational/expository text with comprehension (see General Standard 8).

*7.10: Read aloud grade-appropriate imaginative/literary and informational/expository text fluently, accurately, and with comprehension, using appropriate timing, change in voice, and expression.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 8: Understanding a Text

Students will identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.

(For vocabulary and concept development see General Standard 4.)

When we read a text closely, we work carefully to discern the author's main ideas and the particular facts and details that support them. Good readers read thoughtfully and purposefully, constantly checking their understanding of the author's intent and meaning so that their interpretations will be sound.

GRADES 1–2

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

For imaginative/literary texts:

8.6: Make predictions about what will happen next in a story, and explain whether they were confirmed or disconfirmed and why.

8.7: Retell a story's beginning, middle, and end.

8.8: Distinguish cause from effect.

For informational/expository texts:

8.9: Make predictions about the content of a text using prior knowledge and text features (*headings, table of contents, key words*), and explain whether they were confirmed or disconfirmed and why.

8.10: Restate main ideas.

For example, students brainstorm a list of animals they know. Then they read About Mammals: A Guide for Children, by Cathryn Sill. With their teacher, they list different traits of mammals (the main idea of the book) and decide which animals on their original list are mammals.

Grades 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

For imaginative/literary texts:

8.11: Identify and show the relevance of foreshadowing clues.

8.12: Identify sensory details and figurative language.

For example, students read The Cricket in Times Square, by George Selden, noticing passages that contain figurative language and sensory details, such as: "And the air was full of the roar of traffic and the hum of human beings. It was as if Times Square were a kind of shell, with colors and noises breaking in great waves inside it." Then students discuss the effect of the images and draw an illustration that captures their interpretation of one image.

8.13: Identify the speaker of a poem or story.

8.14: Make judgments about setting, characters, and events and support them with evidence from the text.

For informational/expository texts:

8.15: Locate facts that answer the reader's questions.

8.16: Distinguish cause from effect.

8.17: Distinguish fact from opinion or fiction.

8.18: Summarize main ideas and supporting details.

For example, students read Christopher Columbus, by Stephen Krensky. In pairs they summarize important facts about Columbus's voyage, arrival, search for gold, failure to understand the treasures on the islands, and return to Spain. Then students revise, edit, rewrite, and illustrate their reports and display them in the classroom or library.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 9: Making Connections

Students will deepen their understanding of a literary or non-literary work by relating it to its contemporary context or historical background.

By including supplementary reading selections that provide relevant historical and artistic background, teachers deepen students' understanding of individual literary works and broaden their capacity to connect literature to other manifestations of the creative impulse.

PREK–2

9.1: Identify similarities in plot, setting, and character among the works of an author or illustrator.

For example, students read (or hear read aloud) several picture books by one author/illustrator such as Beatrix Potter, Dr. Seuss, William Steig, Peter Spier, Eric Carle, or Marc Brown. They make a list of the similarities they notice in the books.

9.2: Identify different interpretations of plot, setting, and character in the same work by different illustrators (*alphabet books, nursery rhymes, counting books*).

Grades 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

9.3: Identify similarities and differences between the characters or events in a literary work and the actual experiences in an author's life.

For example, students read excerpts from a biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder and discuss how she drew upon her personal experiences when she wrote Little House on the Prairie.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 10: Genre

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres.

We become better readers by understanding both the structure and the conventions of different genres. A student who knows the formal qualities of a genre is able to anticipate how the text will evolve, appreciate the nuances that make a given text unique, and rely on this knowledge to make a deeper and subtler interpretation of the meaning of the text.

GRADES PREK–2

10.1: Identify differences among the common forms of literature: poetry, prose, fiction, nonfiction (*informational and expository*), and dramatic literature. (See Glossary for definitions.)

For example, the teacher and students read together an Aesop tale, a Thornton Burgess tale, and a magazine article about woodland animals. They fill in a graphic organizer that shows the similarities and differences in the fable, fiction, and nonfiction and discuss what they learned from each form of literature.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

10.2: Distinguish among forms of literature such as poetry, prose, fiction, nonfiction, and drama and apply this knowledge as a strategy for reading and writing.

For example, after reading a variety of materials on bats, students write a class magazine that includes poetry, fiction, and nonfiction articles on the subject.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 11: Theme

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in a literary work and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

Understanding and articulating theme is at the heart of the act of reading literature. Identification of theme clarifies the student's interpretation of the text. Providing evidence from the text to support an understanding of theme is, like a proof in algebra or geometry, the most essential and elegant demonstration of that understanding.

GRADES PREK–2

11.1: Relate themes in works of fiction and nonfiction to personal experience.

For example, students explore the theme, "A true friend helps us when we are in trouble" in poems, pictures, and stories, and compare their own experiences in original art and stories.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

11.2: Identify themes as lessons in folktales, fables, and Greek myths for children.

For example, students read Aesop fables, folktales from several countries, and Greek myths and discuss the lessons the stories demonstrate.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 12: Fiction

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

We learn from stories. They are vehicles for a student's development of empathy, of moral sensibility, and of understanding. The identification and analysis of elements of fiction—plot, conflict, setting, character development, and foreshadowing—make it possible for students to think more critically about stories, to respond to them in more complex ways, to reflect on their meanings, and to compare them to each other.

GRADES PREK–2

12.1: Identify the elements of plot, character, and setting in a favorite story.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

12.2: Identify and analyze the elements of plot, character, and setting in the stories they read and write.

For example, after reading several adventure tales, students identify elements of the adventure story (leaving home, growing stronger through facing difficulty, returning home), and find individual examples of other adventure stories to present to the class.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 13: Nonfiction

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the purpose, structure, and elements of nonfiction or informational materials and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

Most students regularly read newspapers, magazines, journals, or textbooks. The identification and understanding of common expository organizational structures help students to read challenging nonfiction material. Knowledge of the textual and graphic features of nonfiction extends a student's control in reading and writing informational texts.

GRADES PREK–2

- 13.1: Identify and use knowledge of common textual features (title, headings, captions, key words, table of contents).
- 13.2: Identify and use knowledge of common graphic features (illustrations, type size).
- 13.3: Make predictions about the content of a text using prior knowledge and text and graphic features.
- 13.4: Explain whether predictions about the content of a text were confirmed or disconfirmed and why.
- 13.5: Restate main ideas and important facts from a text heard or read.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

13.6: Identify and use knowledge of common textual features (*paragraphs, topic sentences, concluding sentences, glossary*).

13.7: Identify and use knowledge of common graphic features (*charts, maps, diagrams, illustrations*).

13.8: Identify and use knowledge of common organizational structures (*chronological order*).

For example, as they study European colonization of America, students examine an annotated map that shows the colonies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. As a class project, they use the information from the map to construct a timeline showing the names, founding dates, and significant facts about each colony.

13.9: Locate facts that answer the reader's questions.

13.10: Distinguish cause from effect.

13.11: Distinguish fact from opinion or fiction.

13.12: Summarize main ideas and supporting details.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 14: Poetry

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the theme, structure, and elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. (See also Standard 15.)

From poetry we learn the language of heart and soul, with particular attention paid to rhythm and sound, compression and precision, the power of images, and the appropriate use of figures of speech. And yet it is also the genre that is most playful in its attention to language, where rhyme, pun, and hidden meanings are constant surprises. The identification and analysis of the elements generally associated with poetry—metaphor, simile, personification, and alliteration—have an enormous impact on student reading and writing not only in poetry, but in other genres as well.

GRADES PREK–2

14.1: Identify a regular beat and similarities of sounds in words in responding to rhythm and rhyme in poetry.

For example, students recognize and respond to the rhythm and rhyme in Mother Goose nursery rhymes and in poems by David McCord and John Ciardi.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

14.2: Identify rhyme and rhythm, repetition, similes, and sensory images in poems.

For example, during a study of animals, students read animal poems and songs, such as the following excerpt from “Jellicle Cats,” a poem in T. S. Eliot’s Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats:

“Jellicle Cats are black and white,

Jellicle Cats are very small;

Jellicle Cats are merry and bright,

And pleasant to hear when they caterwaul.

Jellicle Cats have cheerful faces,

Jellicle Cats have bright black eyes;

They like to practice their airs and graces

And wait for the Jellicle Moon to rise.”

Students write their own animal poems and recite or sing their own lyrics.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 15: Style and Language

Students will identify and analyze how an author’s words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. (See also Standard 14.)

Above all, authors are wordsmiths, plying their craft at the level of word and sentence—adding, subtracting, and substituting, changing word order, even using punctuation to shift the rhythm and flow of language. Much of a student’s delight in reading can come from identifying and analyzing how an author shapes a text.

GRADES PREK–2

15.1: Identify the senses implied in words appealing to the senses in literature and spoken language.

For example, students respond to a poem read aloud and decide what senses they use to understand images such as “The sky is wrinkled.”

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

15.2: Identify words appealing to the senses or involving direct comparisons in literature and spoken language.

*For example, after reading *The Great Yellowstone Fire*, by Carole G. Vogel and Kathryn A. Goldner, students discuss examples of an author’s use of vivid verbs that bring an idea to life (“the flames skipped across the treetops”), and use vivid verbs in their own writing.*

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 16: Myth, Traditional Narrative, and Classical Literature

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of myths, traditional narratives, and classical literature and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

Young students enjoy the predictable patterns, excitement, and moral lessons of traditional stories. In the middle grades, knowledge of the character types, themes, and structures of these stories enables students to perceive similarities and differences when they compare traditional narratives from different cultures. In the upper grades, students can describe how authors through the centuries have drawn on traditional patterns and themes as archetypes in their writing, deepening their interpretations of these authors’ works.

GRADES PREK–2

16.1: Identify familiar forms of traditional literature (*Mother Goose rhymes, fairy tales, lullabies*) read aloud.

16.2: Retell or dramatize traditional literature.

16.3: Identify and predict recurring phrases (*Once upon a time*) in traditional literature.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

16.4: Identify phenomena explained in origin myths (*Prometheus/fire; Pandora/evils*).

16.5: Identify the adventures or exploits of a character type in traditional literature.

For example, students listen to and compare trickster tales across cultures such as the Anansi tales from Africa, the Iktomi stories of the Plains Indians, the Br’er Rabbit tales, and the pranks of Til Eulenspiegel.

16.6: Acquire knowledge of culturally significant characters and events in Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology and other traditional literature (See Appendix A).

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 17: Dramatic Literature

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of drama and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. (See also Standards 12, 18, 27, and the Theatre Strand of the *Arts Curriculum Framework*.)

Since ancient times, drama has entertained, informed, entranced, and transformed us as we willingly enter into the other worlds created on stage and screen. In reading dramatic literature, students learn to analyze the techniques playwrights use to achieve their magic. By studying plays, as well as film, television shows, and radio scripts, students learn to be more critical and selective readers, listeners, and viewers of drama.

GRADES PREK–2

17.1: Identify the elements of dialogue and use them in informal plays.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standards as needed and as they apply to more difficult texts.)

17.2: Identify and analyze the elements of plot and character, as presented through dialogue in scripts that are read, viewed, written, or performed.

Reading and Literature:

GENERAL STANDARD 18: Dramatic Reading and Performance*

Students will plan and present dramatic readings, recitations, and performances that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience and purpose. (See also Standards 17, 19, 27, and the Theatre Strand of the *Arts Curriculum Framework*.)

Rehearsal and performance involve memorization and the use of expressive speech and gestures. Because of their repetitive nature, they demand of student actors a level of active engagement that surpasses that of reading. The excitement and satisfaction of performing in front of an audience should be part of every student's school experience.

GRADES PREK–2

18.1: Rehearse and perform stories, plays, and poems for an audience using eye contact, volume, and clear enunciation appropriate to the selection. (See Standard 3.)

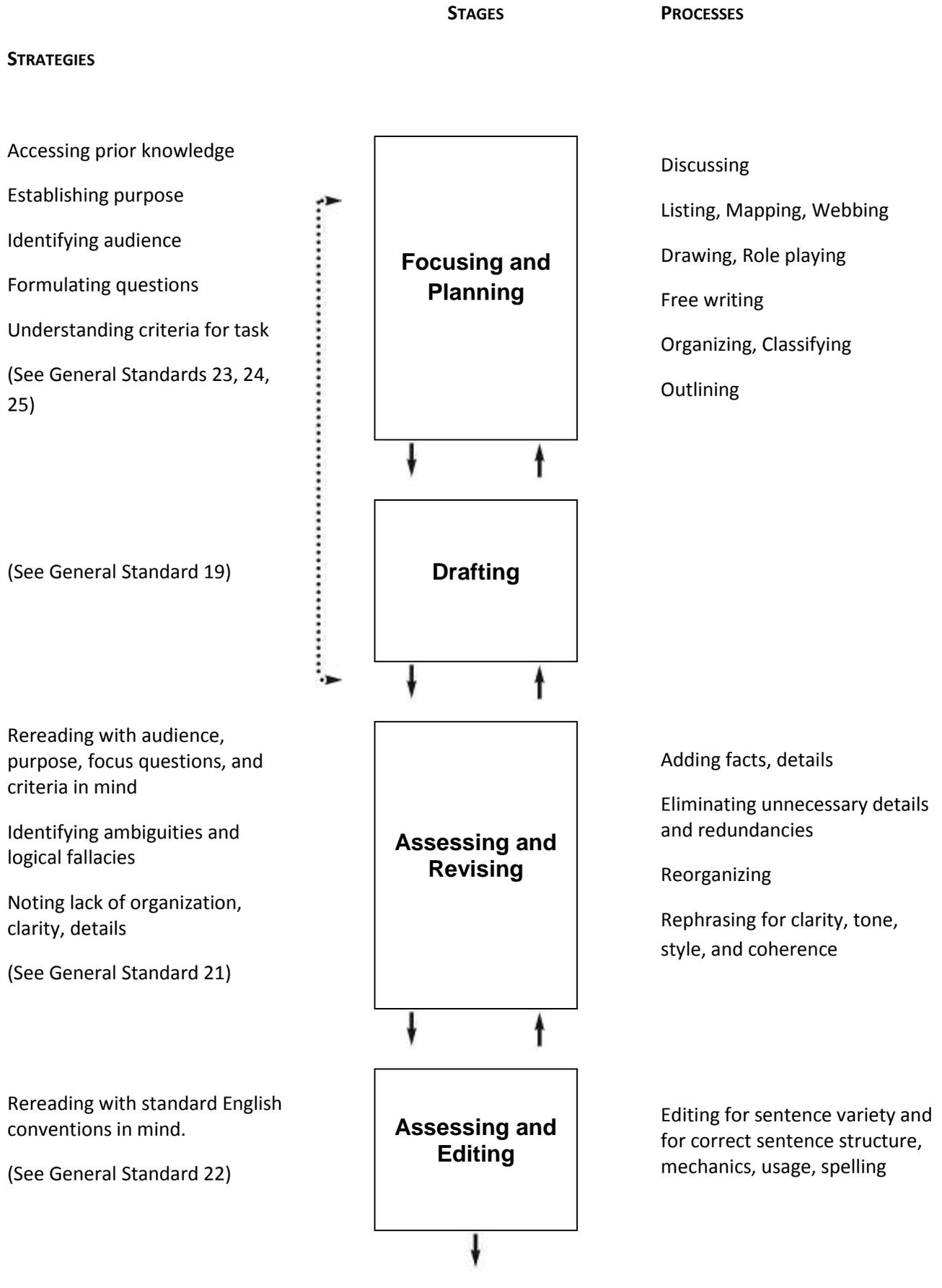
For example, students practice voice control and diction and give oral presentations of their favorite stories to their classmates.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts.)

18.2: Plan and perform readings of selected texts for an audience, using clear diction and voice quality (*volume, tempo, pitch, tone*) appropriate to the selection, and use teacher-developed assessment criteria to prepare presentations.

The Writing Process



Reviewing criteria, purpose of task, and needs of audience

Planning and preparing final product

Reflecting and planning for future writing tasks

(See General Standard 25)

**Publishing and
Evaluating**

Designing

Formatting

Rehearsing and presenting

Evaluating final product

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 19: Writing

Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

We write to tell stories, to record actual and imagined sights, sounds, and experiences, to provide information

and opinion, to make connections, and to synthesize ideas. From their earliest years in school, students learn to provide a clear purpose and sequence for their ideas in order to make their writing coherent, logical, and expressive.

GRADES 3–4

For imaginative/literary writing:*

19.9: Write stories that have a beginning, middle, and end and contain details of setting.

19.10: Write short poems that contain simple sense details.

For informational/expository writing:

19.11: Write brief summaries of information gathered through research.

For example, students plan a mini-encyclopedia on birds. As a group, they generate a set of questions they want to answer, choose individual birds to research, gather information, compose individual illustrated reports, and organize their reports for a classroom encyclopedia.

19.12: Write a brief interpretation or explanation of a literary or informational text using evidence from the text as support.

19.13: Write an account based on personal experience that has a clear focus and sufficient supporting detail.

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 20: Consideration of Audience and Purpose

Students will write for different audiences and purposes. (See also Standards 3, 6, and 19.)

When students adapt their writing for a variety of purposes, they learn that different organizational strategies, word choices, and tones are needed. They learn that this is also true when considering audience. Through this process students gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and grow in their ability to influence it.

GRADES 3–4

20.2: Use appropriate language for different audiences (*other students, parents*) and purposes (*letter to a friend, thank you note, invitation*).

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 21: Revising

Students will demonstrate improvement in organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone, and word choice (diction) in their compositions after revising them.

A flawless first draft is a rarity, even for the most gifted writer. Writing well requires two processes that sometimes appear to be in opposition: creating and criticizing. As they expand their imaginative thinking on paper, students must at the same time learn the patience and discipline required to reshape and polish their final work. Revising to get thoughts and words just right can be the most difficult part of writing, and also the most satisfying.

GRADES 3–4

21.2: Revise writing to improve level of detail after determining what could be added or deleted.

21.3: Improve word choice by using dictionaries.

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 22: Standard English Conventions

Students will use knowledge of standard English conventions in their writing, revising, and editing.

We write to make connections with the larger world. A writer's ideas are more likely to be taken seriously when the words are spelled accurately and the sentences are grammatically correct. Use of standard English conventions helps readers understand and follow the writer's meaning, while errors can be distracting and confusing. Standard English conventions are the "good manners" of writing and speaking that make communication fluid.

GRADES 3–4

22.3: Write legibly in cursive, leaving space between letters in a word and between words in a sentence.

22.4: Use knowledge of correct mechanics (*end marks, commas for series, capitalization*), usage (*subject and verb agreement in a simple sentence*), and sentence structure (*elimination of fragments*) when writing and editing.

22.5: Use knowledge of letter sounds, word parts, word segmentation, and syllabication to monitor and correct spelling.

22.6: Spell most commonly used homophones correctly in their writing (*there, they're, their; two, too, to*).

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 23: Organizing Ideas in Writing

Students will organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.

When ideas are purposefully organized to advance the writer's intentions, they have the greatest impact on the writer's audience. Writers who understand how to arrange their ideas in ways that suit their purposes for writing will achieve greater coherence and clarity.

GRADES 3–4

23.3: Organize plot events of a story in an order that leads to a climax.

23.4: Organize ideas for a brief response to a reading.

23.5: Organize ideas for an account of personal experience in a way that makes sense.

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 24: Research*

Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.

As the amount and complexity of knowledge increases, students need to understand the features of the many resources available to them and know how to conduct an efficient and successful search for accurate information.

GRADES 3–4

24.2: Identify and apply steps in conducting and reporting research:

- Define the need for information and formulate open-ended research questions.
For example, students read Rudyard Kipling’s account of how the alphabet came to be in the Just So Stories and ask, “Where did our alphabet really come from?”
- Initiate a plan for searching for information.
The class lists possible sources of information such as books to read, electronic media to read and view, or people to interview.
- Locate resources.
One group of students goes to the library/media center for books about the invention of writing; another group looks up “alphabet” in a primary encyclopedia CD; and a third group interviews speakers of languages other than English and upper-grade students who are studying Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, or German.
- Evaluate the relevance of the information.
Having collected information from three sources, students decide which information is most relevant, accurate, and interesting.
- Interpret, use, and communicate the information.
Students in one group sort information from library books into categories; the members of the second group organize information from the CD, and the members of the third group summarize what they have learned from students and speakers of other languages. The students organize and communicate the results of these different forms of research in a single coherent presentation with documented sources.
- Evaluate the research project as a whole.
Students determine how accurately and efficiently they answered the question, “Where did our alphabet really come from?”

Composition:

GENERAL STANDARD 25: Evaluating Writing and Presentations*

Students will develop and use appropriate rhetorical, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing final versions of their compositions or research projects before presenting them to varied audiences.

Achieving a high standard of excellence in writing is a goal for all schools. It is important for students to recognize the hallmarks of superior work so that they know what they need to do in order to improve and polish their writing and speaking. Classrooms and schools that make standards of quality explicit help students learn to become thoughtful critics of their own work.

GRADES 3–4

25.2: Form and explain personal standards or judgments of quality, display them in the classroom, and present them to family members.

For example, before displaying on the bulletin board their reports on their visit to the Science Museum, students propose their own criteria for distinguishing more effective reports from less effective ones.

Media:

GENERAL STANDARD 26: Analysis of Media*

Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the conventions, elements, and techniques of film, radio, video, television, multimedia productions, the Internet, and emerging technologies, and provide evidence from the works to support their understanding. (See also Standards 17, 18, 24, 27, and the Theatre Standards of the Arts Curriculum Framework.)

The electronic mass media developed during the twentieth century—radio, film, video, television, multimedia, and the Internet—have the capacity to convey information, entertain, and persuade in ways that are distinctly different from print media. In English language arts classes, students have traditionally learned to analyze how an author chooses words and manipulates language. Given the prevalence of media in their lives, students also need to be able to analyze how images, sound, and text are used together effectively in the hands of a skillful director or website designer.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed and as it applies to more difficult texts or media productions.)

26.2: Compare stories in print with their filmed adaptations, describing the similarities and differences in the portrayal of characters, plot, and settings.

For example, students describe the differences and similarities in the way author E. B. White portrays Stuart Little in print and the way animators portray the character in a filmed version. They discuss the words White uses to describe Stuart and the degree to which the animators' visualization captures the spirit of the original text. Students discuss the advantages of reading a description and imagining how a character looks, speaks, and moves, and the advantages of viewing a film, where these details have been supplied by the director, animators, or actors.

Media:

GENERAL STANDARD 27: Media Production*

Students will design and create coherent media productions (audio, video, television, multimedia, Internet, emerging technologies) with a clear controlling idea, adequate detail, and appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and medium. (See also Standards 18, 24, 26, and the Theatre Standards of the Arts Curriculum Framework.)

Students grow up surrounded by television, movies, and the Internet. The availability in schools of recording and editing equipment and computers offers students opportunities to combine text, images, and sounds in their reports and creative works. Putting together an effective media production—whether a relatively simple radio play or a complex film documentary—entails as much discipline and satisfaction as writing a good essay. Both require clarity of purpose, selectivity in editing, and knowledge of the expressive possibilities of the medium used.

GRADES 3–4

(Continue to address earlier standard as needed as it applies to more difficult texts or media productions.)

27.2: Create presentations using computer technology.

For example, students make energy conservation pamphlets using elementary-level graphics software and digital photographs.

Grades 3–4:

In addition to the PreK-2 list, for reading, listening, and viewing:

Traditional literature:

Greek, Roman, or Norse myths

Myths and legends of indigenous peoples of North America

American folktales and legends

Stories about King Arthur and Robin Hood

The Bible as literature:

Tales listed above and: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, David and Jonathan,

the Prodigal Son, the visit of the Magi, well-known psalms (e.g., 23, 24, 46, 92, 121, and 150)

American authors and illustrators:

L. Frank Baum

Beverly Cleary

Elizabeth Coatsworth

Mary Mapes Dodge

Elizabeth Enright

Eleanor Estes

Jean George

Sterling North

Howard Pyle

Carl Sandburg

George Selden

Louis Slobodkin

E. B. White

Laura Ingalls Wilder

British authors:

Frances Burnett

Lewis Carroll

Kenneth Grahame

Dick King-Smith

Edith Nesbit

Mary Norton

Margery Sharp

Robert Louis Stevenson

P. L. Travers

Poets:

Stephen Vincent and Rosemarie Carr Benét

Lewis Carroll

John Ciardi

Rachel Field

Robert Frost

Langston Hughes

Edward Lear

Myra Cohn Livingston

David McCord

A.A. Milne

Laura Richards