

**LEAD THE WAY
WITH**

ELA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



A Parent Report on What's NEW in English Language Arts

● **DEAR PARENTS:**

This Parent Report is designed to share important new developments in English language arts.

The first is the way the new curriculum for English language arts has been developed. The curriculum framework is based on outcomes defined in a project called the Western Canadian Protocol (WCP) for Collaboration in Basic Education, K-12.

Educators worked together to identify the knowledge, skills, strategies and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate at the end of each grade. Their work is complete for English language arts and mathematics but is continuing on other subjects.

The English language arts student learning outcomes are contained in a document called *The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts (K - 12)*. Informally known as the common curriculum framework, this document is the basis for curriculum developed by each of the WCP partners, Manitoba included.

Those involved in the project believe that having a common curriculum framework will greatly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in schools across the West. It will also make it easier for students to move from school to school and province to province or territory.

The new frameworks set high expectations for teachers and students of English language arts. They include more material to be used at greater depth than earlier curricula. Most importantly, they make the development of thinking skills the central focus of all learning experiences.

This Parent Report highlights some features of Manitoba's new English language arts curriculum frameworks and describes ways parents can help their child learn. By working together, we can help ensure that every child can enjoy and experience success in English language arts.

If we work together, we can ensure that every Manitoban is a literate Manitoban.

- *In this document, the term "parents" refers to both parents and guardians and is used with the recognition that, in some cases, only one parent may be involved in a child's education.*
- *Visit the Education, Training and Youth Web site at: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca>*

WHY NEW ELA CURRICULUM?

The new English Language Arts curriculum frameworks

- continue to teach the basic skills and strategies to listen, speak, read and write effectively
- include view and represent as language arts
- apply the newest research to improve the teaching of the language arts
- place greater emphasis on information literacy skills to prepare students for the information age
- emphasize the need to learn and work co-operatively in groups
- ensure that Manitoba students have the skills to compete in the global economy

The new Senior Years curriculum frameworks provide students with choices. For their compulsory core credit, students must choose one of the following at each of Senior 3 and Senior 4:

Senior 3	Senior 4
Senior 3 ELA: Comprehensive Focus (30S)	Senior 4 ELA: Comprehensive Focus (40S)
Senior 3 ELA: Literary Focus (30S)	Senior 4 ELA: Literary Focus (40S)
Senior 3 ELA: Transactional Focus (30S)	Senior 4 ELA: Transactional Focus (40S)
	Senior 4 ELA: Language and Technical Communication (40S)

Students may select from this list additional courses at Senior 3 and Senior 4 to fulfill compulsory and optional requirements.

For more information, check out the Web site at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/docs/parents/elaleads>

THE LANGUAGE ARTS ARE

listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

We use language arts every day

- to share ideas, information and feelings
- to think about our experiences
- to think, explore and make meaning of our own and others' experiences
- as an art
- to understand and work with others
- to participate in our community – local, provincial, national, world
- to learn about things that interest us

Students who are successful in English language arts

- understand how images and language communicate ideas, values and beliefs
- acquire and process information and appreciate the ideas and experiences of others
- gather and learn information
- consider the ideas and experiences of others
- use charts, posters, drama, visual art and video presentations, as well as writing, to communicate their ideas
- understand how the media influences people's lives
- communicate ideas clearly
- appreciate a variety of points of view and the importance of building community
- contribute to building a healthy learning community
- make informed decisions
- experience the joy of communicating clearly and well
- are literate in knowledge and skills that go beyond reading and writing
- have more opportunities available to them in a rapidly changing world



BUILDING THE TEAM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

To be ready for the 21st century, the information age, students need to



WHAT ARE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES?

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do in a specific subject area by the end of a course or grade.

Each general learning outcome includes specific learning outcomes. Students are expected to show that they have attained the specific learning outcomes for a particular course or grade while building on and maintaining previous outcomes. They are cumulative.

There are five general learning outcomes for the English language arts.

Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to



explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences



comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts



manage ideas and information



enhance the clarity and artistry of communication



celebrate and build community

Learning outcomes are not taught in isolation of one another. Since they overlap, effective teaching strives to address several at the same time, often using one or more of the language arts.



A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF ELA OUTCOMES

GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOME 2:

Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Grade 3

Set a purpose for listening, reading and viewing; make and confirm predictions, inferences and conclusions; reread to check meaning.

Grade 6

Use comprehension strategies [such as asking questions, making notes, adjusting reading rate...] appropriate to the type of text and purpose [including summarizing, outlining, remembering ideas and responding personally].

Senior 1

Use comprehension strategies [including recognizing main ideas and significant supporting details, and paraphrasing ideas] appropriate to the type of text and purpose; enhance understanding by rereading and discussing relevant passages.





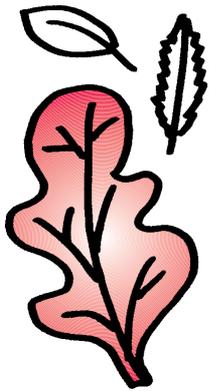
HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD SUCCEED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS?

You can help your child meet the five general learning outcomes with activities such as the following.



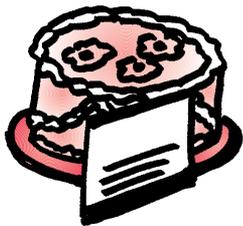
EXPLORE THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES.

- Help your child relate new information to what he or she already knows.
- Make your home a place that is full of interesting conversation, daily language and shared viewing: books, photographs, interesting objects such as rocks, leaves, birds' nests.
- Plan time together to share ideas and review the experiences of the day.
- Encourage your child to take a risk and explore experiences using all the language arts.
- Respect your child's choices in books, tapes or CDs. Encourage him or her to expand some of those choices. Share your own favourites.
- Help your child set realistic academic goals. Celebrate his or her efforts, progress and achievements.



COMPREHEND AND RESPOND PERSONALLY AND CRITICALLY TO ORAL, LITERARY AND MEDIA TEXTS.

- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Encourage your child to respond to what he or she sees or hears on television, radio and recordings and conversations (a process called making meaning).
- Help your child develop listening and memory skills.
- Have fun reading to your child daily. Choose fiction and non-fiction. Read a how-to manual together or follow a recipe.
- Visit the library together to take out a variety of books and videos.
- Watch television together. Discuss what you see and hear.
- Help your child understand how the things we see and hear shape the way we think of ourselves and others. Help him or her understand the difference between what is real and what is make believe.



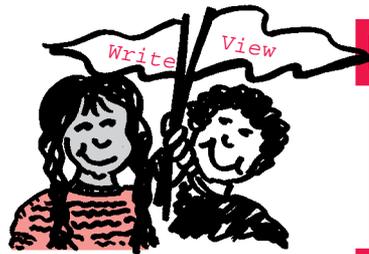
MANAGE IDEAS AND INFORMATION.

- Curiosity plays a key role in learning. Encourage your child to ask and answer questions about the world.
- Search for answers together.
- Encourage your child to take charge of his or her own inquiries or research projects. This will help him or her develop independence.



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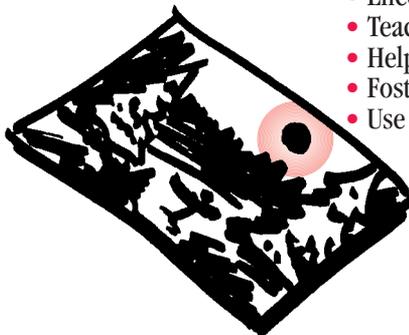
- Share your interests and how you gather and organize information on a variety of topics.
- Go to the library together often. Get to know the librarian.
- Encourage your child to use information technology; monitor Internet use for unacceptable Websites.
- Ask your child to talk about how he or she is approaching research projects.
- Help your child pace work on a research project so it can be finished on time, without rushing to finish the night before.
- Encourage your child to share new information with others.

ENHANCE THE CLARITY AND ARTISTRY OF COMMUNICATION.



- Make pencils, pens, crayons, modelling clay or plasticine, paint and paper available for your child to compose and create very day.
- Encourage your child to communicate by talking, drawing, writing, e-mailing and through the arts.
- Encourage your child to keep a diary or journal. Read published diaries such as Anne Frank's.
- Give positive feedback to your child on his or her efforts to communicate. Concentrate on the positive. Recognize that your child may be trying to communicate in a new way.
- Write a note to your child and put it in his or her lunchbox or other unexpected places.
- Write family letters and cards together.
- Encourage your child to spell as well as he or she can in informal communication. Play spelling and other word games together.
- Help your child revise and edit work that will be presented or published in class.
- Help your child develop confidence in sharing and presenting work.
- Post your child's work on the refrigerator or bulletin board.

CELEBRATE AND BUILD COMMUNITY.



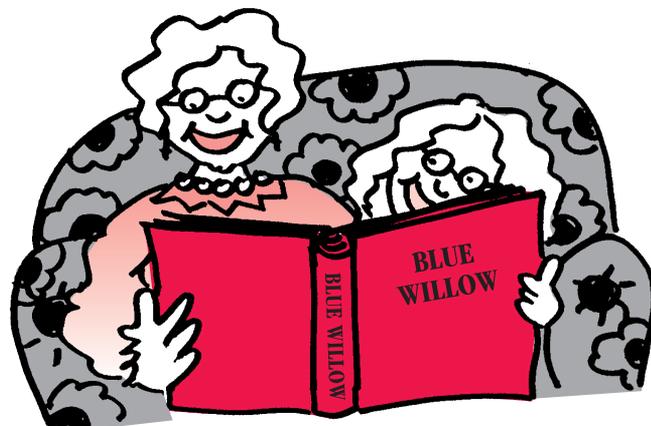
- Foster a sense of belonging to your community.
- Explore your own cultural traditions.
- Explore the cultural traditions of others.
- Explore the language and cultures of others.
- Explore your neighbourhood together and find examples of how people work together.
- Encourage your child to co-operate with others.
- Teach your child how to present a point of view.
- Help your child appreciate the role of language in celebrating special occasions.
- Foster a sense of caring and responsibility for others.
- Use language to build team spirit.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL?

Language learning is
a shared responsibility.

1. Take time to read with your child every day. Just 15 minutes a day will make a world of difference to how well your child does in language arts.
2. Make time to talk about what matters to your child. Talk at meal time to share ideas and experiences. Follow up on his/her interests.
3. Show you care about your child's school success. Praise effort and persistence in homework and projects.
4. Communicate with the school with notes, phone calls and visits. Celebrate successes!
5. Make sure your child has access to pencils, paper, markers and a quiet place. Encourage creativity in drawings, stories, experiments and research.
6. Help your child develop healthy routines and habits. Good nutrition, enough sleep, plenty of fresh air and exercise help your child develop a healthy body and an alert mind.
7. Explore language learning in your community. Use your library card to access books and videos. See a play. Visit an art gallery or a museum. Find the treasures in your community.
8. Tame the TV. Shut the TV off for some time every day, so the whole family can have some quiet time to think, read and talk.
9. Help your child learn to manage time and develop time lines. Keep a family calendar for everyone's big events. Help Middle Years and Senior Years students use their daytimer or agenda book.
10. Have fun with literacy learning. Show how you enjoy using your literacy skills and strategies to explore the world every day. Follow a recipe together. Read a "how to" manual to learn a new craft or skill.

Literacy is lifelong language learning!



LEARNING LINKS



To help children achieve success in English language arts, it is important to create learning links. These are activities designed to help students make connections among real-life experiences, background knowledge and information in books, films, videos and posters.

New information is more meaningful and easier to understand if students connect it to something they already know. Prior knowledge is the beginning of understanding. Building learning links is essential. Help your child make important connections to his/her own life experiences and what he/she has heard, read or viewed.



THE THREE A'S OF ELA



ACTIVATE
what you already know

ACQUIRE
new information,
skills and strategies

APPLY
your learning

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS?

Listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing –
these are the language arts.

Viewing and representing are new additions to the English language arts. They are included because so much information now comes to us in visual form, through television, information technology, billboards and photos. Whether viewing visual information or presenting their own information in visual form, students learn skills and strategies that are valuable in an information age.

Although the language arts are sometimes treated as though they are separate, they are really very closely related and seldom occur in isolation. To give you an example, writing may involve students in discussing their ideas with others, listening to their responses, reading for more information, viewing a video and creating a poster.

The language arts, then, are often taught together, not just as separate sets of skills. Students will be immersed in language experiences in English language arts and other subjects since language learning occurs everywhere.

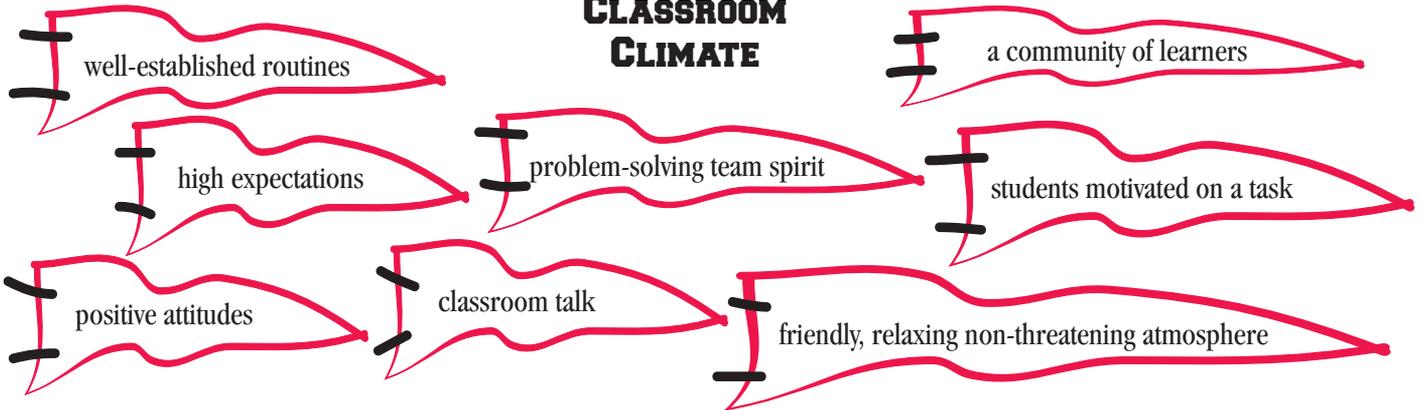
Language texts are many and varied. They can include storytelling, dialogue, conversations, speeches, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, radio, TV, sign language, CD-ROMs, charts, posters, diagrams, photographs, mime and plays.

In class, students learn language, continuing a process that began at birth. They also use language to learn other things and they learn about language.



WHAT MIGHT YOU EXPECT TO SEE IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASS?

CLASSROOM CLIMATE



GROUPINGS

- independent activities
- whole-class instruction
- teacher-directed groups
- self-directed groups
- learning groups with another class
- small co-operative groups
- peer partners
- centre activities

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- students' stories or essays and art on display
- interactive ELA bulletin boards where students are challenged to solve a problem or ask questions
- computers that students use frequently
- a variety of books, newspapers and magazines
- learning centres
- ELA displays in hallways

GOING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

- writers and speakers who come into the classroom
- field trips to theatres, libraries galleries, museums

LEARNING MATERIALS

- books, newspapers, magazines
- organized, accessible storage
- teacher-made and purchased materials
- tapes, CDs, computers
- paper and paints for representing ideas
- letter tiles
- games, puzzles, models
- clay, paper, paints
- found objects
- materials collected by kids and their families

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SPECIAL EVENTS

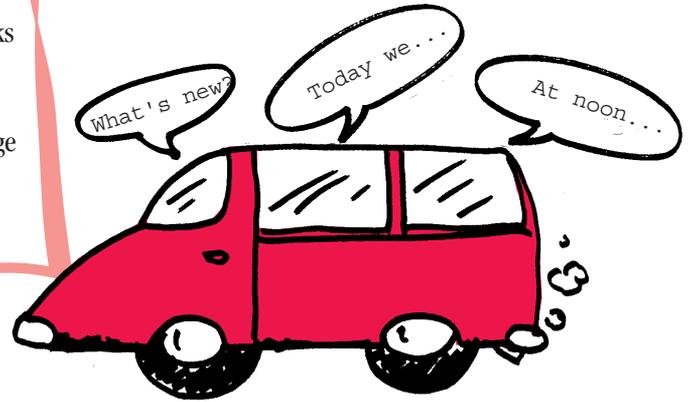
- drama nights
- poetry reading
- media club
- writers' club
- young authors events
- contests
- storytelling with an Aboriginal Elder
- I Love to Read celebrations
- drum dances
- festival events



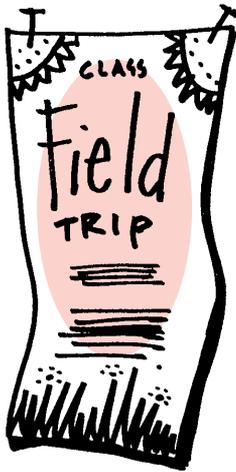
ELA IS EVERYWHERE

As your child's first teacher of language, you are already experienced in using daily experiences to help your child develop language skills. Talking at meals, reading daily, sharing and discussing favourite books or TV shows, making lists and drawing pictures are all good ways to develop language skills.

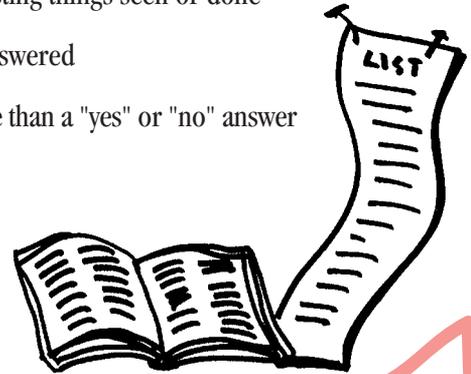
As a parent, you make a difference to your child's development, knowledge and skill in language arts. Everyday activities help develop ability and confidence in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing.



- table and carpool talk
 - about activities and events of the day
 - about books, news, trips and games
 - about information in newspapers, magazines and on the Internet
 - about school excursions



- make a list (together) of the most interesting things seen or done
- make a list of questions needing to be answered
- ask and answer questions calling for more than a "yes" or "no" answer
- express thoughts and feelings
- read aloud from time to time
- substitute talk for radio or TV



You can help your child by letting him know how well you expect him to do in language arts. Be reasonable. Make sure your child knows you believe in her. Be positive. Tell him and others when he does something well or better than before. Also let your child know that mistakes are part of learning, an opportunity to learn and try again.

Language learning involves risk taking. Making errors is a part of the process. Successful learners are not afraid to take risks and sometimes make mistakes.

Mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation are normal in the first drafts of work when your child is beginning to think on paper. Don't focus on these until the composition has been revised and polished. Help your child learn to edit and revise work.



STORY TIME

listen to stories together
predict what will happen next
retell stories to get a sense of the story
and order of events

PLAYTIME

use detail to describe things (a red plaid shirt, the smallest ball, jumping like a deer, walk quickly)
sing songs (another way to use words)
repeat new words, make up new words, stories, rhymes, riddles and skits
keep old clothes for dress-up time and imaginative play

COOKING

follow a recipe
make a shopping list

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

read instructions from a manual
use clues for a scavenger hunt
read music
follow a schedule
work through Internet menus

TELEPHONE BOOK

find the name of someone you know
make up names and find where they would fit
develop a family telephone directory

NOTES, LETTERS AND CARDS

write a thank you for a gift
compose a get-well message
draft a letter to a relative or someone who has moved
make a greeting card or invitation

NEWSPAPER

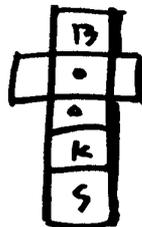
look for pictures of favourite athletes
write captions for favourite photos
find the temperature in the city where a relative lives
search for three words that begin with D
look for a movie or play to see
write new dialogue for a cartoon strip

REFRIGERATOR NEWS

write daily messages to each other
keep track of when school assignments are due
remind the family of upcoming events
list jobs to be done or put entries in a job jar
create riddles and jokes
add shopping reminders
post telephone messages

FAMILY JOURNAL/ALBUM

record interesting family happenings
describe special days, funny events
keep track of visitors
describe holiday trips or weekend excursions
write captions for photographs
read what you have written together



GAMES

I spy
crossword puzzles
magazine puzzles
alphabet game, using billboards
licence plate games
board games



GIFTS

special paper, pencils, crayons, pictures, felt pens, stamps and stamp pads for younger children
interesting stationery, envelopes, diaries, journals, novelty and calligraphy pens for older children
books, magazines addressed specifically to the child, comic books, collector cards



TV

look at new words, ideas, themes
compare a novel adapted for TV to the book
use documentaries, newscasts, wildlife presentations, historic events and science for information
examine commercials; discuss how they make you want to buy



NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES

look at print ads for clothes, shoes, cars and foods
and discuss how they make you want to buy
read the comics--do they offer more than laughs?



COMPUTER PROGRAMS/INTERNET/VIDEO GAMES

what makes information interesting?
should information be entertaining to be interesting?
how does music affect a presentation?
what difference does animation make?
what effect does colour/movement have?
ask if programs stimulate critical and creative thinking

TRIPS

visit craft and antique shops, museums and art galleries
draw what you find there
create a sculpture that could be found there
visit a fair and draw what you saw there
visit a local library or bookstore



DRAMA

watch a play
act out a scene from a movie or play
draw a picture of a character or a scene
mime a story
recreate a story in dance
play charades



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