

# Introduction

## Background

Within the last two decades, English language arts educators have redefined the instruction of English language arts. At all grades, the focus has shifted from reading, writing, and the study of literary texts to an emphasis on acquiring language and literacy skills through listening, speaking, viewing, and representing, as well as reading and writing. In keeping with the literacy demands placed on them, students now learn to read and produce a wide range of texts, including media, transactional, and literary texts.

This transformation of English language arts was prompted by social and technological change and by new research in learning. It parallels a general shift in education to learner-centred classrooms, with instruction built around learning outcomes rather than goals and objectives. Across Canada and in much of the Western world, similar changes have resulted in initiatives to create new curricula in many subject areas.

## Collaboration in Education

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) was established with the aim of developing curricula and resources with a western Canadian perspective. Under the WCP, educators from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories collaborate to identify learning outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Senior 4) in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. As learning outcomes are completed through the WCP process, they are released simultaneously to all participating jurisdictions in a Common Curriculum Framework. The learning outcomes are used in jurisdictional curriculum development throughout western Canada, ensuring consistency for students who move from one province or territory to another.

## Curriculum Development in Manitoba

The Common Curriculum Framework documents developed in collaboration with the western Canadian provinces and territories form the basis of further curriculum development in Manitoba. The following chart describes the curriculum documents that result from the curriculum development process outlined in *A Foundation for Excellence* (1995).

### Types of Curriculum Documents

#### Common Curriculum Framework

The Common Curriculum Framework documents state student learning outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Senior 4) in specific subject areas. They form the basis of three other types of documents:

- **Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Standards**

These documents incorporate the student learning outcomes identified in the Common Curriculum Framework documents for specific subject areas. These learning outcomes are mandated for all Manitoba schools (*The Action Plan*, 1995).

Standards of performance for Grade 3, Grade 6, Senior 1, and Senior 4 are included where applicable.

- **Foundation for Implementation**

These documents state the prescribed student learning outcomes and assist teachers in implementing the learning outcomes by providing suggestions for instruction and assessment and suggesting learning resources.

- **Teacher Support**

These documents provide specific support in various areas.

## English Language Arts Curriculum Framework

*The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Grades 10–12 Draft)*, developed in collaboration with the western Canadian provinces and territories, was released in 1996. It is the foundation for Manitoba's English language arts curriculum framework of outcomes and standards documents for Kindergarten to Senior 1 (1996). *Senior 2 English Language Arts: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes* (1998) extends this development. This Senior 2 document (hereafter referred to as the ELA Framework) is based on *The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (1998). The course designation for Senior 2 English Language Arts is 20F.

## Purposes of the ELA Framework

The ELA Framework identifies general and specific English language arts learning outcomes for students in Manitoba:

- *General outcomes* describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate from Kindergarten to Senior 4.
- *Specific outcomes* identify the component knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to the general outcomes and that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of a grade.

The general and specific outcomes assist educators as they

- set goals for learning
- plan learning experiences that support the achievement of student learning outcomes
- monitor the progress of individual students
- communicate with parents and guardians about student progress
- develop a literacy plan for the school

- select learning resources
- establish assessment practices
- establish staff development plans

In the English language arts curriculum, as in all new curricula developed for Manitoba schools, the student learning outcomes integrate the four foundational skill areas identified in *A Foundation for Excellence* (1995): literacy and communication, problem solving, human relations, and technology.

## Contents of the Senior 2 ELA Framework

This document contains the following sections:

- *Introduction*: A brief discussion of the purposes of the ELA Framework document and the process by which it was developed.
- *Language and Language Learning*: A discussion of the aims and principles of English language arts instruction, and of the theory and research on which language instruction is based.
- *Student Learning Outcomes*: A profile of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of Senior 2, organized as five general learning outcomes. The general learning outcomes are further elaborated through specific outcomes. To provide context, the student learning outcomes for Grade 8 and Senior 1, 3, and 4 are also provided.
- *References*: A list of print resources used in developing the ELA Framework.