



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Grade 6 to Grade 9

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CURRICULUM

DRAFT

January 2009

Acknowledgements

The 6-9 Northwest Territories (NWT) English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum was developed through the cooperative effort of the District Education Councils, the District Education Authorities, and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. These regions acknowledge the following contributors to the Subject Advisory Committee:



Bill Gowans

Fanny Swartzentruber

Deborah Maguire

Joe Ritchie

Janice Fehr

Lawrie McKeith

Claudia Parker

Jacqueline Béland

Allan Gillis

Greg Reardon

Brian Devison

Lorraine Kuer

Pam Walsh

Erin Sproule

Lori Bailey

Peg Pardy

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ELA Curriculum At A Glance

<p style="text-align: center;">ELA Curriculum</p> <p>The following are found in this introductory section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acknowledgements, ▪ Table of Contents, and ▪ Curriculum at a Glance 	<p style="text-align: center;">Philosophy (Front Matter)</p> <p>The purpose of this section is to explore the guiding principles of NWT curricula. Seven key features are highlighted throughout the NWT ELA Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture Based Education / Prior Knowledge, ▪ Metacognition / Self-Assessment / Reflection, ▪ Language Across the Curricula, ▪ The Process of Language Acquisition, ▪ Choice and Differentiation, ▪ Inquiry, and ▪ The Infusion of Technology.
<p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum Structure</p> <p>The purpose of this section is provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a visual representation of the 5 General Outcomes (found on the Organizational Framework), and ▪ the information necessary to read the Continuum (found on the Continuum Visual). 	<p style="text-align: center;">Continuum</p> <p>The purpose of the Continuum is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ describe the measurable Learning Outcomes from one grade level to the next, and ▪ assist in planning for differentiation. <p>The Continuum includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 5 General Outcomes, ▪ Specific Outcomes and corresponding General Examples, ▪ Learning Outcomes and corresponding Illustrative Examples, and ▪ the Specific Outcome Links.

<p style="text-align: center;">6-9 Writing Assessment Section Under development</p> <p>The purpose of this assessment section is to illustrate the NWT standards expected of the students who complete each grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The rubric criteria (measurables) represent year-end standards. ▪ The <u>meets</u> column is the grade standard, but the approaches or the exceeds columns do not necessarily correspond with other grades. ▪ The explanatory comments beside the samples further explain what is evident in the samples. ▪ The sample rubrics are but one component of a comprehensive assessment. ▪ The need to continually create further context specific rubrics is highly recommended. ▪ Multiple assessments of numerous writing samples are critical to document growth over time. ▪ The writing process must be assessed as well as the product. 	<p style="text-align: center;">6-9 Collection of Writing Samples Under development</p> <p>The purpose of the section is to assist students, teachers, and parents with goal setting and encourage conversations. It is an instructional tool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The samples do not necessarily represent year-end standards, but rather are examples over time within a given grade. ▪ There is a limited number of Specific Outcomes highlighted beside the samples. ▪ The criteria beside the samples are Specific Outcomes rather than the Learning Outcomes found in the Assessment section. ▪ The samples show all of the stages of the writing process. ▪ Multiple writing samples are needed to complete a student's writing profile.
<p style="text-align: center;">6-9 Reading Assessment Section</p> <p>Under development</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Appendices</p> <p>Under development</p>



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Grade 6 to Grade 9

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Philosophy

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English Language Arts History with WNCP

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education states that the ministers of Education in the four western provinces and two territories agree to collaborate in basic education because of the importance they place on four major goals:

- a high standard of education,
- common educational goals,
- removing obstacles to the access of educational opportunities for students, including improving the ease of transfer from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and
- the optimum use of educational resources.

The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12, hereafter called the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework, was developed by the ministries of Education in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory, in cooperation with teachers and other educators from these provinces and territories. Reaction panels composed of teachers, administrators, parents, post-secondary educators, business representatives, and members of community organizations made important contributions.

The Specific Outcomes (SO) and high learning standards in the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework are designed to prepare students for present and future language requirements. Changes in society and technology have affected, and will continue to affect, the ways in which students use language to think, to communicate, and to learn. Students must be prepared to meet new literacy demands in Canada and the international community. The ability to use language effectively enhances students' opportunities to experience personal satisfaction and to become responsible, contributing citizens and lifelong learners.

English Language Arts in the NWT

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education detailed The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12, (hereafter called the WNCPELA Curriculum Framework.) In the spring of 2002, the collaborative team including: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory adapted their title to: The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, (hereafter referred to as the WNCPELA).

The intent of the WNCPELA was to provide a scaffolding of General and Specific Outcomes (GO and SO). Each jurisdiction would then develop the descriptive Learning Outcomes (LO) with which the classroom teacher, students, and parents could measure student success. This enabled the learning communities of each jurisdiction to have a stronger voice to acknowledge their unique characteristics. As a result of this process, the Learning Outcomes (LO) developed, by each jurisdiction, would maintain the integrity of the WNCPELA Curriculum Framework while highlighting their contexts. The context of the Northwest Territories is detailed in the Northwest Territories English Language Arts Curriculum.

Education in the Northwest Territories fosters practices based on some fundamental beliefs about children and learning. It is our belief that practices that recognize and value diversity are beneficial to all children. We believe:

- **All children are unique.**
- **All children can learn and experience success.**
- **Children come to school with a vast potential for learning.**
- **Children bring life experiences and knowledge with them.**
- **Children have common needs; they also have many differences.**
- **All children have the right to quality learning opportunities that are challenging and suited to their individual strengths, needs, and learning styles.**
- **Education must be relevant and meaningful for each individual.**
- **Learning is a life long process that occurs in the classroom, in the home, and in the community.**
- **Educating our children is a shared responsibility.**

(Adapted from Educating All Our Children, Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling, 1996, 4-5)

To honour the cultural diversity of our Territories as well as to celebrate the success of our students, our jurisdiction developed a working team to develop clear measurable Learning Outcomes (LO) for each Specific Outcome (SO) of the WCP (WNCPELA) ELA Curriculum Framework. As a result, **common educational standards are provided for all NWT students**. The team was composed of teachers, administrators,

consultants, and curriculum coordinators, representative of the District Education Authorities, District Education Councils, and Education, Culture and Employment of the Northwest Territories.

English Language Arts

The Nature of Language

Language is the basis of all communication and the primary instrument of thought. Composed of interrelated and rule-governed symbol systems, language is a social and uniquely human way of exploring and communicating meaning. As well as being a defining feature of culture, language is an unmistakable mark of personal identity, and is essential for forming interpersonal relationships, extending experience, reflecting on thought and action, and contributing to a democratic society.

Language Acquisition and Development

Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Children learn language as they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, establish relationships with family members and friends, and strive to make sense and order of their world. They may come to school speaking one or more language or learn another language in school. It is important to respect and build upon a child's first language. Experience in one language will benefit the learning of other languages.

In their early years, children develop language informally. Long before they understand explicit rules and conventions, children reproduce the language they hear, and use language to construct and to convey new meaning in unique ways. Later language learning occurs in specific contexts for specific purposes such as learning about a specific subject, participating in the community, and pursuing work and leisure activities.

Language development is continuous and recursive throughout students' lives. Students enhance their language abilities by using what they know in new and more complex contexts and with increasing sophistication. They reflect on and use prior knowledge to extend and enhance their language and understanding. By learning and incorporating new language structures into their repertoire and using them in a variety of contexts, students develop language fluency and proficiency. Positive learning experiences in language-rich environments enable students to leave school with a desire to continue to extend their knowledge, skills and interests.

Language Learning: A Shared Responsibility

Students, parents, teachers, and the community share the responsibility for language learning. Students require ongoing opportunities to use language in its many forms. Opportunities to learn language occur first at home and are extended as children move into larger community. Schools provide environments where students continue to

develop language knowledge, skills, and strategies to achieve personal, social, and academic goals.

Language development is the responsibility of all teachers. For example, subject area teachers teach the specialized language and forms of each subject. English language arts teachers, however, have a special role because of their focus on language, its forms, and functions. They help students develop and apply strategies for comprehending, composing, and responding in a variety of situations.

The Importance of Language

All children come to school with rich experiences and language. Language learning is an active process. Valuing the use of both the heritage and second languages is essential for strengthening personal identities and enhancing interpersonal relationships. The cultural diversity of our Territories offers the school system a wealth of starting points for classroom activities and language emanating from authentic experiences: our children are richer for the multiple languages of our Territories. The Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories recognizes: Chipewyan, Cree, Gwich'in, Inuktitut (including Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuqtun), Slavey (including North Slavey and South Slavey), and Tłıchǵ in addition to English and French. Other rich cultures enhance our Territories with their languages and traditions too. The key to the celebration of each individual is to begin from his or her experience base and build a learning community together.

Just as children come to school with language, they also come as members of multiple learning communities, including the family and the extended community. The school system is another learning community that welcomes our children with their rich backgrounds. The relationship between home and school is a reciprocal one. In building a school community, the learning environment naturally extends beyond the physical walls of any school reaching out into various communities. The dialogue between the communities shapes the learning environment. Creating the learning environment is a shared responsibility.

Actively involved learners are responsible for their growth. Purposeful, meaningful involvement ensures opportunities to relate to authentic situations that create a challenging and motivating learning environment. Comfortable students become risk takers and active, responsible learners. Positive learning experiences encourage lifelong learning. The foundation for lifelong learning is the culture and language that each individual brings to any learning situation.

Thinking and Learning Through Language

Thinking, learning, and language are interrelated. From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students use language to make sense of and bring order to their world. They use language to examine new experiences and knowledge in relation to their prior knowledge, experiences, and beliefs. They make connections, anticipate possibilities, reflect upon ideas, and determine courses of action.

Language enables students to play an active role in various communities of learners within and beyond the classroom. As students, speak, write, and represent, they also listen to, read, and view the ideas and experiences of others. Critical and creative thinking and learning through language occur when students reflect, speculate, create, analyze, and synthesize.

In addition, language facilitates students' development of metacognitive awareness; that is, it enables them to reflect on and control their own thinking and learning process. Language helps students develop an awareness of the skills and strategies they need to complete learning tasks successfully and to communicate about themselves as learners.

The study of English language arts enables each student to understand and appreciate language, and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction, and learning. Students become confident and competent users of all six language arts through many opportunities to listen and speak, read and write, and view and represent in a variety of combinations and relevant contexts. **All the language arts are interrelated and interdependent; facility in one strengthens and supports the others.** In the outcomes of this WNCPELA Curriculum Framework, the six language arts are integrated.

Translating the ELA Curriculum into Practice

The WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework provides the pedagogical foundation for learning through language. The Learning Outcomes (LO) detailed in the NWT ELA Curriculum maintain the integrity of the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework. Those Learning Outcomes (LO) are the descriptive measurables with which classroom teachers, students, and parents assess learning. The NWT ELA Curriculum serves multiple purposes and multiple audiences.

The NWT ELA Curriculum reflects the philosophy that language acquisition is not a linear event; rather it is a continuum of learning. Learning is continuous and recursive. Translating that philosophy into the classroom requires that planning and assessment flow naturally from the students' strengths and challenges. Therefore, each learning context is unique and shapes the progression through the Learning Outcomes (LO) at a different pace and in varying sequences. Rather than being a "Scope and Sequence" checklist, the NWT ELA Curriculum is:

- A planning tool, and
- An assessment and evaluation tool.

The ELA Curriculum As A Planning Tool

The NWT ELA Curriculum serves as a planning tool. From the Learning Outcomes (LO), both teachers and students can build language rich experiences to explore the knowledge, skills, and strategies expected of students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Through on-going dialogue and on-going assessment, planning is a shared responsibility. The information garnered is used to create balanced instructional experiences and helps to define areas where teaching, practice, or maintenance is the main emphases. That becomes the foundation that builds competence and confidence within the integrated six language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. Planning together and integrating the language arts validates students' strengths, challenges, and interests.

Students and teachers set goals and make plans to support student achievement. Their plans reflect the learning outcomes of many curricula. Through a variety of instructional approaches, the Learning Outcomes (LO) are not kept separate and distinct; rather, many are integrated into all learning experiences, reaching beyond the language curriculum. A careful analysis of the learning experience determines the appropriate combination of Learning Outcomes and the series of instructional steps, which lead to proficiency and the achievement of the standards for each individual. Opportunities to revisit and practice, through a variety of authentic experiences, are necessary to maintain and refine previously learned knowledge, skills, and strategies as well as to consolidate new learnings. Planning for a balanced language experience is a shared responsibility: all students, all teachers, parents, and the community.

The standards (Learning Outcomes) for each grade are organized along a Continuum. Rather than being a "Scope and Sequence" checklist, a Continuum of learning shows the sophistication of knowledge, skills, and strategies acquired over time. When planning, the consideration of the children's varied learning experiences, their strengths, and their challenges helps to determine where each individual is along a Continuum. The structure of a Continuum acknowledges that individual learners have different beginning and end points: for instance, a student placed in a grade three classroom may be working on a combination of Learning Outcomes (LO) from grades two, three, and four. Learners can attain competencies at any time and continue to grow along a learning Continuum. Therefore, each learning context is unique and shapes the progression through the Learning Outcomes at a different pace and in varying sequences. When a Learning Outcome is attained, a learner progresses to its related Learning Outcome in the following grade; the progression is horizontal and more sophisticated across a Continuum. It is important to note that learners who are not yet proficient with specific skills need to continue with scaffolded instruction at their individual levels. It is that information that leads to informed instruction, either for the individual or for larger groups. It is necessary to consider the details of the Learning Outcomes of a grade as well as each individual's progression along the Continuum. Both assessment and evaluation inform instruction.

As a planning tool the NWT ELA Curriculum welcomes the involvement of multiple partners, on multiple levels, in the development of the learning process. The process depends heavily on student involvement through planning and self-assessment. By understanding their strengths, challenges, learning styles, and interests, students play an active role in structuring learning experiences that best meet their ever-changing needs. The recursive nature of learning requires on-going assessment, by both student and teacher, to adjust the learning experiences accordingly along the Continuum.

The ELA Curriculum As An Assessment and Evaluation Tool

The Education All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting, 2001, defines assessment and evaluation.

- “Assessment is a systematic process of gathering and interpreting information about what a student knows, is able to do, and is learning to do.”
- “Authentic assessment provides students with descriptions of expected performance levels and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. Students are then requested to perform, produce, or otherwise demonstrate skills that represent their learning in real life settings in and out of the classroom. Learning is exhibited over time to show evidence of progress, achievement, and application of learning.”
- “Evaluation is the process of making judgments and decisions based on the interpretation of evidence gathered through assessment.”

Assessment and evaluation have different purposes; both are essential to inform instruction. Assessment refers to gathering and interpreting information for the purpose of informing teaching and to help students learn more. Assessment is the descriptive feedback used to interpret the learning. Assessment is authentic when it combines evidence of progress, achievement, and the application of learning. By seeing strengths, understanding challenges, and setting goals, learning is enhanced. Evaluation stems from assessment. Evaluation implies bringing meaning to that information through a complete examination of **all** of the assessment information. That analysis and reflection leads to informed instructional decisions based on the interpretation of evidence gathered through multiple assessments. Evaluation includes the collection of information, its interpretation, and informed decision-making. Through observation and interpretation of processes and products in meaningful contexts, test scores and grades have the potential to shape the plans for a balanced learning experience; separately, test scores and grades are just information. Both assessment and evaluation inform instruction through the assessment of learning, for learning, and as learning.

The NWT ELA Curriculum acknowledges the importance of assessment and evaluation. Opportunities for both are reflected through the Curriculum's Continuum and in the Assessment sections. All Language assessments in this document begin from the measurable Learning Outcomes detailed in the Continuum. The Learning Outcomes (LO) provide the scaffolding for frequent self, peer, parental, and teacher assessment. Planning for instruction is integral to balanced learning experiences and planning for assessment is integral to learning.

Student involvement is the key to empowerment and the establishment of self-reflection processes applicable to all learning situations within and beyond the traditional educational setting. Developing the metacognitive strategies and skills to understand, analyze, and reflect on one's growth over time, builds capacity within each individual.

The ultimate goal of evaluation is to develop empowered learners who assess their growth. Through authentic experiences, meaningful, classroom-based assessment provides frequent opportunities for feedback that allows teachers and students a framework for reflection and adjustment. The resulting dialogue enhances, empowers, and celebrates learning. Informed learners take ownership: they develop self-assessment strategies and skills, as they understand the assessment criteria and procedures. Empowered learners celebrate their identity: they build on the diverse knowledge, skills, and strategies valued in their cultural backgrounds. As learners become self-directed, their processing strategies and the quality of their product are enhanced.

English Language Arts **must** be viewed as assessing literacy through the six language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing. To guide educators, the English Language Arts Curriculum contains a variety of on-going assessment opportunities. The suggestions provided below, are but a few ways in which to collect data about both the processes and the products of a student's learning experiences:

- Rubrics for each of the six language arts,
- Observations and Anecdotal records,
- Running records,
- Performance samples,
- Performance assessments,
- Learning logs and Response logs,
- Self-assessments and Reflections,
- Parent assessments,
- Peer assessments,
- Questionnaires,
- Miscue analyses,
- Conferences and Interviews,
- Portfolios,
- Inventories and Surveys, and
- Individual Education Plans and Modified Education plans.



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Grade 6 to Grade 9

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Curriculum Structure

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Organizational Framework

Five General Outcomes (GO) serve as the foundation for the WNCP ELA Curriculum Framework and for the NWT English Language Arts Curriculum. General Outcomes (GO) are broad statements identifying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate with increasing competence and confidence from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The General Outcomes (GO) are interrelated and interdependent; each is to be achieved through a variety of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing experiences.



General Outcome 1: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to access and explore prior knowledge and experiences of self and others**



General 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, through a process**



General Outcome 3: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to plan and focus an inquiry or research and interpret and analyze information, through a process**



General Outcome 4: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to clarify and enhance oral, written, and visual forms of communication, through a process**



General Outcome 5: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent **to celebrate and build community within the home, school, workplace, and wider society**

NWT ELA Curriculum Organizational Framework

Specific Outcomes (SO) were derived from the General Outcomes (GO) of the WNCP ELA Framework. In the NWT ELA Curriculum, the Specific Outcomes are further detailed as the measurable Learning Outcomes (LO).





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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Continuum

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