

# Sunshine State Standards Grade Level Expectations Language Arts

## Introduction

### Development of Grade Level Expectations

#### Sunshine State Standards

The Sunshine State Standards are the centerpiece of a reform effort in Florida to align curriculum, instruction and assessment. They identify what students should know and be able to do to for 21st century and are thus both content standards and performance standards. The standards are benchmarked at the developmental levels of PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 for the subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, health and physical education, and foreign languages. School districts are required to incorporate provisions for instruction of the Sunshine State Standards into their Pupil Progression Plan.

#### Tools for Implementing the Sunshine State Standards

Implementation of the Sunshine State Standards is both state and locally guided. Districts and schools have the responsibility of designing instruction to teach the state standards. To assist them, the Department of Education has developed a number of implementation tools.

- *Florida Curriculum Frameworks* present the content standards with sample performance descriptions and correlations to Florida Education Goal 3's SCANS-like process standards as well as overviews of best practices in instruction, curriculum development, interdisciplinary instruction, classroom assessment, and program improvement. The frameworks have been distributed to every district, school, college of education, universities, teacher-preparation institutions, community colleges, and others in print and on CD-ROM. A new curriculum framework for the elementary program addressing all subjects was distributed in early 1999.
- Selected state course descriptions for grades 6-12 incorporate the standards.
- The *Curriculum Planning Tools*, software for writing learning activities correlated to the standards have been distributed
- A multimedia best practices series on CD-ROM is under development.
- A number of training programs are available which address awareness of the standards initiative; local curriculum development; improving instruction; connections between curriculum, instruction and assessment; authentic assessment tools; assessing students with disabilities.
- Publishers are now required to correlate instructional materials submitted for state adoption to the standards.

Most of these products are accessible on the Internet at the DOE home page: [www.firn.edu/doe](http://www.firn.edu/doe)

The new High Quality Education initiative stresses accountability for student achievement at each grade. The original Sunshine State Standards were structured to be benchmarked at grade clusters. This was done to provide flexibility to districts in designing curriculum based on local

# **Sunshine State Standards Grade Level Expectations Language Arts**

needs. However, a number of things have resulted in the state's decision to produce statewide grade level expectations. These include:

- the expanding national trend toward standards-based reform and accountability;
- section 232.245, Florida Statutes, (SB1956) which mandates each district develop expectations and assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics at each grade;
- concern for fully addressing low-achieving students' needs;
- the widely expressed need for providing teachers at each grade more precise information about what is expected of their students and of them;
- the plan to develop an expanded state assessment program that tests at grades 3-10.

As a result, Commissioner of Education Tom Gallagher charged the Curriculum Services Section in the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to develop expectations for student achievement for each grade K-8. These Grade Level Expectations are based on the Sunshine State Standards and are organized by the Benchmarks. They have been developed in the subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In January 1999, committees of Florida educators met in Tallahassee to develop first drafts of the Grade Level Expectations based on work already done by Florida school districts and other states. During February and March, the Area Centers for Educational Enhancement (ACEEs) organized reviews of these drafts by focus groups that were representative of education stakeholders. In addition, district subject-area specialists, selected university faculty and other experts were sent copies to review. The Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL), nationally known as an expert in standards for education, also analyzed and made recommendations on the drafts before they were finalized by the Department of Education.

These Grade Level Expectations are recommended, not mandated, by the state, but they will eventually become the basis for state assessments at each grade 3-10 in reading and mathematics. Districts that have already developed grade level expectations may continue to use them, but should ensure they correlate to the new state Grade Level Expectations.

The following guidelines were used to develop and review the drafts of the Grade Level Expectations.

## **General Guidelines**

The Grade Level Expectations statements will

1. be based on current, accepted, and essential academic knowledge;
2. balance the mastery of important facts, ideas, and key terms with essential intellectual and practical skills that address present and future real-life needs of students;
3. require academic rigor of all students;
4. address the diversity of Florida's growing population as well as the international communities that make up the global society and economy;

# Sunshine State Standards Grade Level Expectations Language Arts

5. reflect current and accepted instructional practices that address how students best learn;
6. be understandable by all education stakeholders;
7. provide the basis for further local curriculum development;
8. provide the basis for state, district, school, teacher, and student accountability.

## Specific Guidelines

The Grade Level Expectations statements will

1. be new or more specific statements, when appropriate, of what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level to achieve the grade-cluster benchmark and ultimately the exit standard; this requires that specific incremental prerequisite skills be assigned to benchmarks to various grades; in some cases, however, when a benchmark is addressed at only one grade in a grade cluster, the benchmark may be incorporated as is into the Grade Level Expectation;
2. be written at levels appropriate to student developmental abilities at the specified grades;
3. provide, if appropriate, more specificity and/or focus on smaller clusters of content than the benchmarks.

## Using the Grade Level Expectations

The Sunshine State Standards provide direction for student learning of language arts content and processes. The Sunshine State Standards are divided into five strands categorizing broad areas of knowledge within language arts. This division does not mean that learning should be fragmented. The language arts strands and expectations are interdependent. In fact, several expectations might often be combined in a single teaching or assessment activity. Further, when used effectively, instructional activities will include grade level expectations from other language arts strands and from other subjects. Research indicates that learning is most effective when new information is related to previous knowledge and has some immediate application in the life of the learner.

The Grade Level Expectations are not intended to take the place of a curriculum guide, but rather to serve as the basis for curriculum development to ensure that the curriculum is rich in content and is delivered through effective instructional activities. The Grade Level Expectations are in no way intended to limit learning, but rather to ensure that all students across the state receive a good educational foundation that will prepare them for a productive life. Districts, schools, teachers, and students are encouraged to extend the content and achievement expected as they feel it is appropriate.

**Several approaches for wording and formatting are found in the Language Arts Grade Level Expectations.**

Language arts requires a spiraling curriculum; that is, in many instances, expectations remain the same or very similar across grades. As a student progresses from one grade to the next, increases

# Sunshine State Standards Grade Level Expectations Language Arts

should occur in the degree of text difficulty and the complexity of tasks and in the student's independent application of the expectation. In this document many language arts expectations that are important for students to know and use across grade levels are listed at more than one grade level.

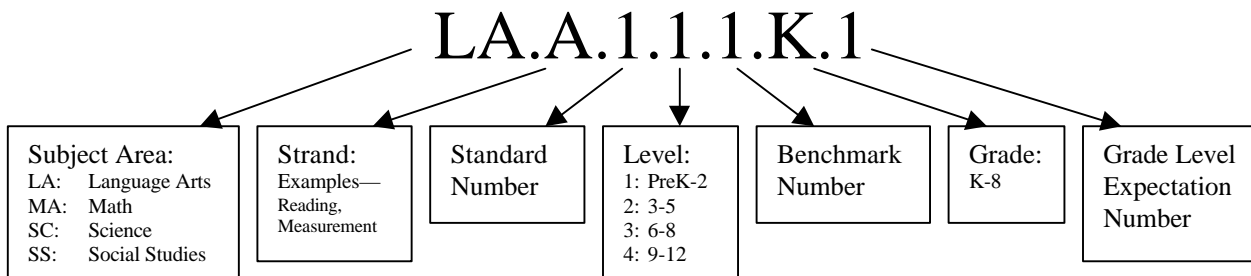
At some grade levels where the language arts expectations are repeated, the repeated expectations are written as extensions or refinements of the previous grade-level expectation. In other cases, the repeated expectation is differentiated through the use of examples, usually added through parenthetical information. Lastly, in some cases a grade level expectation is repeated word for word at another, higher grade level. In all cases, it is expected that students will be achieving each grade expectation using materials and tasks appropriate to that grade. The district, school, or classroom teacher or administrator must make the decision as to which instructional materials and activities to use and which tasks to assess.

Two types of parenthetical lists are used. When the parenthetical information uses the term *"including but not limited to,"* the student is expected to achieve the listed exemplars at that particular grade level. When the parenthetical information is introduced with the term *"for example,"* the content list is provided for guidance to teachers and curriculum developers and are not meant to define or limit instruction. Instruction at each grade should help prepare students to achieve the exit expectations at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade that comprises the language arts Sunshine State Standards.

At all grade levels, K-12, the language arts classroom should involve a community of learners in a language and literature-rich environment where students are often engaged in reading, writing, listening, viewing, or speaking, and where time is provided for students to be reflective, critical thinkers, and successful language arts users.

## Numbering System for the Grade Level Expectations

For easy reference, each Grade Level Expectation has been assigned a unique identification code. The numbering system used builds upon the already existing numbering system for the strands, standards, and benchmarks that make up the Sunshine State Standards.



Example: LA.A.1.1.1.K.1 The student uses titles and illustrations to make oral predictions.