**English Language Arts**

Grades 3-10 Curriculum Vetting Rubric



**Maryland State Department of Education**

Division of Career and College Readiness

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**Overview**

The Maryland State Department of Education’s [curriculum vetting rubrics](https://www.marylandresourcehub.com/curriculum-vetting-resources) are designed to serve as a support for school system leaders in identifying high-quality, standards-based curriculum. [Code of Maryland Regulation 13A.04.14](http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=13A.04.14.*) requires each public school system to use curriculum that is aligned with the Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards. The English language arts (ELA) curriculum vetting rubric can be used to evaluate curriculum for grades 3-10.

Curriculum defines the essential content to be taught and how deeply to teach it so that each student has access to rigorous academic experiences and instructional supports to meet academic standards ([Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum](https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/Curriculum%20Framework%20First%20Edition%20Final.pdf)). Curriculum is not a textbook or a set of instructional materials. It is the comprehensive academic content and assessments aligned to standards. Curriculum builds instructional coherence within and across grade levels and reflects a clear vision about student learning and achievement. Curriculum includes but is not limited to a scope and sequence; measureable goals and student learning outcomes; instructional scaffolds and benchmarks; supporting instructional materials; and formative and summative assessments.

The development of the ELA curriculum vetting rubric was informed by [Achieve's *Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products* (EQuIP)](https://www.achieve.org/our-initiatives/equip/equip) rubrics, the [*Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool- Quality Review*](https://achievethecore.org/page/1096/grade-level-instructional-materials-evaluation-tool-quality-review-gimet-qr)(GIMET-QR), [Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum](https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/Curriculum%20Framework%20First%20Edition%20Final.pdf), and peer-reviewed research.

The 3-10 ELA curriculum vetting rubric is designed to support a holistic view of curriculum with a focus on:

* alignment with Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards;
* evidence of key shifts;
* instructional supports to build proficiency and independence, and
* assessment design and purpose.

The ELA curriculum vetting rubric provides school system leaders with a resource to facilitate a review of their kindergarten through grade ten ELA curriculum. The vetting process will highlight areas of strength and opportunities for growth in the curriculum to inform improvements. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will provide training to support the implementation of the rubric and vet the curriculum of school systems to ensure alignment to standards. A list of vetted curriculum can be found on the [Maryland Resource Hub](https://www.marylandresourcehub.com/evidence-based-curriculum-review).

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| **Criteria I Background:** Curriculum and instructional materials must reflect a wide range of text types and genres, as required by the standards. Knowledge built at one grade level should be expanded in other grade levels as indicated in the [Vertical Progressions](https://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/INSTRUCTION/curriculum/ela/Pages/EnglishHomePage.aspx). |
| I: **Alignment to** **Maryland** **College- and** **Career- Ready** **Standards** (MCCRS) *Criteria* | **Strengths***Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations.* | **Challenges or Concerns***Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement.* |
| **Curriculum-*** **Measurable Alignment:** includes a clear and specific purpose between MCCRS and the behavioral (measurable) objective.

Click graphic for website* **Text Complexity:** consistently provides opportunities to read both literary and informational texts in the text complexity grade band, which include a mix of short and full selections.
* **Vocabulary Acquisition:** provides strategies for vocabulary acquisition.
* **Variety of Text:** There is a range of materials, both print and digital, which feature diverse cultures, represent high quality, and are appropriate in topic and theme for the grade level.

**Additional tool:** [Lexile Framework for Reading](https://lexile.com/educators/tools-to-support-reading-at-school/tools-to-help-teach-a-book/lexile-chapter-guides/) |  |  |
| Qualitative Summary of Evidence |
| **Rating Scale for Part I:** Select only one to support your summary above. [ ] **4-** Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. [ ] **3**- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.[ ] **2-** Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. [ ] **1-** Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak.[ ] **0-** Does not meet criteria.  |
| **Criteria II Background:** The Key shifts, as indicated in the adoption of the MCCRS (CCSS), are evident throughout. Thoughtful/Sustained focus on these shifts means students must have access to and regular practice with complex text and related academic language, reading, writing, and language standards. Instruction explicitly calls for students’ responses to be grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational. Lessons have a greater emphasis on informational texts in order to build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction, which includes literary non-fiction, historical documents, and scientific texts. ([corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/)) |
| II: **Key Shifts are Evident** *Criteria* | **Strengths***Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations.* | **Challenges and Concerns***Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement.* |
| **Curriculum-*** **Text-based evidence:** facilitates oral and written responses grounded in textual evidence and driven by higher-order thinking skills.
* **Writing from sources:** suggests that students routinely draw evidence from texts in writing to analyze, create, or argue.
* **Academic vocabulary:** focuses on building students’ vocabulary through instruction and context.
* **Balanced of Non-fiction to Literary text:** In K-5, there is a 50/50[[1]](#footnote-1) balance of nonfiction to literary texts, whereas in high school, nonfiction texts are to be more prominently featured in English classes as well as in science, history, and technical classes to maintain a 70/30\* balance of nonfiction to literary texts.
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| Qualitative Summary of Evidence |
| **Rating Scale for Part II:** Select only one to support your summary above. [ ] **4-** Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. [ ] **3**- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.[ ] **2-** Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. [ ] **1-** Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak.[ ] **0-** Does not meet criteria. |
| **Criteria III Background:** While scaffolds are not a part of the standards themselves, it is important to meet the range of student needs in the classroom. Supports and scaffolds should draw students back to the text and provide strategies for vocabulary acquisition. All scaffolding and supports require ongoing formal and informal assessments that provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency, both cooperatively and independently. Scaffolding is not just intended for struggling students, but also for students who are ready for above grade-level work.  |
| III: **Instructional Supports Build Proficiency and Independence***Criteria* | **Strengths***Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations.* | **Challenges or Concerns***Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement.* |
| **Curriculum-*** **Equal Access to Text:** provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level.
* **Close Reading Techniques:** focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engage students in productive struggle through academic discussion and text-dependent questioning techniques that build toward independence and proficiency.
* **Evidence of Differentiation:** Considers students with disabilities, English learners, and students who are performing at or below grade level.
* **Extensions are Appropriate:** Provides extensions for students who read well above grade level.
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| Qualitative Summary of Evidence |
| **Rating Scale for Part III:** Select only one to support your summary above. [ ] **4-** Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. [ ] **3**- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.[ ] **2-** Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. [ ] **1-** Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak.[ ] **0-** Does not meet criteria. |
| **Criteria IV Background:** Since assessment drives instruction, lessons include regular formative and summative measures to determine whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills.  |
| IV. **Assessment Design and Purpose***Criteria* | **Strengths***Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations* | **Challenges or Concerns***Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement* |
| **Curriculum-*** **Valid Measures**: elicits observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate mastery of the standards with appropriately complex text.
* **Success Criteria**: includes aligned rubrics and/or assessment guidelines sufficient for interpreting performance.
* **Accommodations and Accessibility:** includes assessments appropriate to all students.
* **Reliable Measures:** includes assessments, whether formal or informal, designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency.
 |  |  |
| Qualitative Summary of Evidence |
| **Rating Scale for Part IV:** Select only one to support your summary above. [ ] **4-** Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. [ ] **3**- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.[ ] **2-** Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. [ ] **1-** Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak.[ ] **0-** Does not meet criteria. |

Sources:

<https://www.achieve.org/files/EQuIP-ELArubric-06-24-13-FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/72/ELA_Rubric_Grades%209-10.pdf>

<https://parcc-assessment.org/content/uploads/2017/11/PARCCMCFELALiteracyAugust2012_FINAL.pdf>

<http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf>

<http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/curriculum/reading/includes/AdditionalFiles/Vertical%20Progressions%20-%20Reading%20Informational%20Texts.pdf>

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1. \**The balance of non-fiction and fiction should be evident over the course of the unit; however, breakdown may not necessarily be seen in each lesson. For example, over the course of a unit, literary text explicitly connected to standards-based lessons as well as non-fiction text should reflect the 50/50 or 70/30 split.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)