

**Learning Standards for  
English Language Arts**

Revised Edition  
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**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**  
**Regents of The University**

<b>Carl T. Hayden, <i>Chancellor</i>, A.B., J.D.</b> .....	<b>Elmira</b>
<b>Louise P. Matteoni, <i>Vice Chancellor</i>, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.</b> .....	<b>Bayside</b>
<b>Jorge L. Batista, B.A., J.D.</b> .....	<b>Bronx</b>
<b>J. Edward Meyer, B.A., LL.B.</b> .....	<b>Chappaqua</b>
<b>R. Carlos Carballada, <i>Chancellor Emeritus</i>, B.S.</b> .....	<b>Rochester</b>
<b>Norma Gluck, B.A., M.S.W.</b> .....	<b>New York</b>
<b>Adelaide L. Sanford, B.A., M.A., P.D.</b> .....	<b>Hollis</b>
<b>Walter Cooper, B.A., Ph.D.</b> .....	<b>Rochester</b>
<b>Diane O'Neill McGivern, B.S.N., M.A., Ph.D.</b> .....	<b>Staten Island</b>
<b>Saul B. Cohen, B.A., M.A., Ph. D.</b> .....	<b>New Rochelle</b>
<b>James C. Dawson, A.A., B.A., M.S., Ph.D.</b> .....	<b>Peru</b>
<b>Robert M. Bennett, B.A., M.S.</b> .....	<b>Tonawanda</b>
<b>Robert M. Johnson, B.S., J.D.</b> .....	<b>Lloyd Harbor</b>
<b>Peter M. Pryor, B.A., LL.B., J.D., LL.D.</b> .....	<b>Albany</b>
<b>Anthony S. Bottar, B.A., J.D.</b> .....	<b>Syracuse</b>
<b>Merryl H. Tisch, B.A., M.A.</b> .....	<b>New York</b>

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**Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education**

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**Deputy Commissioner for Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Continuing  
Education**

JAMES A. KADAMUS

**Assistant Commissioner for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Innovation**

EDWARD T. LALOR

**Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction**

ROSEANNE DEFABIO

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## **CONTENTS**

Acknowledgments **iv**

Introduction **v**

LEARNING STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AT THREE LEVELS **1**

SAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK RELATED TO THE STANDARDS **19**



# Introduction

This revised edition of the *Learning Standards for English Language Arts* incorporates changes to the content standards and performance indicators based on extensive review by the public. It should be considered a working document; as educational practice improves, these standards will continually be revised.

In this document, the format for displaying the standards includes the following:

- the **label** for the standard (e.g., Language for Information and Understanding)
- the **key ideas** that define the standard (preceded by [1] or [2])
- the **performance indicators** that describe the required expectations for students at elementary, intermediate, and commencement levels (preceded by bullets [•]) and
- sample tasks that suggest **evidence** of appropriate progress toward the standard at a given level (preceded by triangles [▲]).

For each standard, the key ideas, performance indicators, and examples of evidence are listed first for the receptive language skills of listening and reading, then for the expressive language skills of speaking and writing. Within each of these categories, listening or speaking is listed first to acknowledge the usual order of development in the learner.

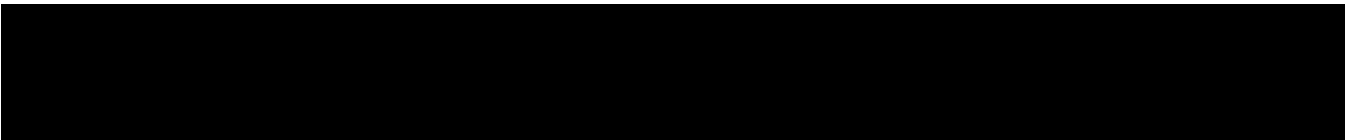
At different levels of the same standard, performance indicators incorporate five dimensions of growth that increase in complexity at successive levels. Those dimensions are *range*, *flexibility*, *connections*, *conventions*, and *independence*. The *At a Glance* charts on pages 5, 9, and 17 provide an overview of the kinds of language activities that best support the standards, the criteria that characterize the language function represented by the standard, and specific application of the dimensions of growth to that standard.

New in this edition are samples of student work, along with teachers' comments on the work. The examples are intended to provide some ideas of tasks that support attainment of the performance standards. They are not models of excellence. Rather, they represent various levels of acceptable work. It is important to remember that these are just suggestions of ways that students can demonstrate progress toward achieving the standards.

The State Education Department will continue to collect and publish samples of student work. As teachers become more familiar with the standards and students become more proficient in meeting them, the level of the performance standards and content standards will continue to rise.

Taken together, the content standards and the performance standards define the learning standards for students in English language arts.

The Board of Regents recognizes the diversity of students in New York State, including students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, gifted students, and educationally disadvantaged students, and has made a strong commitment to integrating the education of all students into the total school program. The standards in the framework apply to all students, regardless of their experiential background, capabilities, developmental and learning differences, interests, or ambitions. A classroom typically includes students with a wide range of abilities who may pursue multiple pathways to learn effectively, participate meaningfully, and work towards attaining the curricular standards. Students with diverse learning needs may need accommodations or adaptations of instructional strategies and materials to enhance their learning and/or adjust for their learning capabilities.



# Learning Standards for English Language Arts at Three Levels

**Standard 1:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

**Standard 2:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

Students will read and listen to oral, written, and electronically produced texts and performances, relate texts and performances to their own lives, and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language for self-expression and artistic creation.

**Standard 3:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented

# Standard 1—Language for Information and Understanding

Elementary

## Listening and Reading

**1. Listening and reading to acquire information and understanding involves collecting data, facts, and ideas; discovering relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and using knowledge from oral, written, and electronic sources.**

**Students:**

- gather and interpret information from children's reference books, magazines, textbooks, electronic bulletin boards, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, and from such forms as charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams
- select information appropriate to the purpose of their investigation and relate ideas from one text to another
- select and use strategies they have been taught for note-taking, organizing, and categorizing information
- ask specific questions to clarify and extend meaning
- make appropriate and effective use of strategies to construct meaning from print, such as prior knowledge about a subject, structural and context clues, and an understanding of letter-sound relationships to decode difficult words
- support inferences about information and ideas with reference to text features, such as vocabulary and organizational patterns.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ accurately paraphrase what they have heard or read
- ▲ follow directions that involve a few steps
- ▲ ask for clarification of a classmate's idea in a group discussion
- ▲ use concept maps, semantic webs, or outlines to organize information they have collected.

## Speaking and Writing

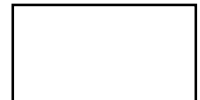
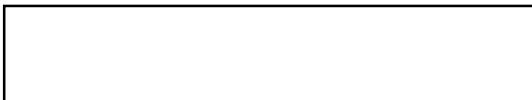
**2. Speaking and writing to acquire and transmit information requires asking probing and clarifying questions, interpreting information in one's own words, applying information from one context to another, and presenting the information and interpretation clearly, concisely, and comprehensibly.**

**Students:**

- present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms such as summaries, paraphrases, brief reports, stories, posters, and charts
- select a focus, organization, and point of view for oral and written presentations
- use a few traditional structures for conveying information such as chronological order, cause and effect, and similarity and difference
- use details, examples, anecdotes, or personal experiences to explain or clarify information
- include relevant information and exclude extraneous material
- use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading (the "writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts
- observe basic writing conventions, such as correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as sentence and paragraph structures appropriate to written forms.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ write a short report on a topic in social studies using information from at least two different sources
- ▲ demonstrate the procedures for caring for a classroom pet using props or other visual aids as well as oral explanation
- ▲ revise early drafts of a report to make the information clearer to the audience
- ▲ use the vocabulary from their content area reading appropriately and with correct spelling
- ▲ produce brief summaries of chapters from text books, clearly indicating the most significant information and the reason for its importance.





**Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.**

Intermediate

## Listening and Reading

**1. Listening and reading to acquire information and understanding involves collecting data, facts, and ideas; discovering relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and using knowledge from oral, written, and electronic sources.**

**Students:**

- **interpret and analyze information from textbooks and nonfiction books for young adults, as well as reference materials, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, graphs, charts, diagrams, and electronic data bases intended for a general audience**
- **compare and synthesize information from different sources**
- **use a wide variety of strategies for selecting, organizing, and categorizing information**
- **distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion**
- **relate new information to prior knowledge and experience**
- **understand and use the text features that make information accessible and usable, such as format, sequence, level of diction, and relevance of details.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ produce a summary of the information about a famous person found in a biography, encyclopedia, and textbook
- ▲ use facts and data from news articles and television reports in an oral report on a current event
- ▲ compile a bibliography of sources that are used in a research project
- ▲ take notes that record the main ideas and most significant supporting details of a lecture or speech.

## Speaking and Writing

**2. Speaking and writing to acquire and transmit information requires asking probing and clarifying questions, interpreting information in one's own words, applying information from one context to another, and presenting the information and interpretation clearly, concisely, and comprehensibly.**

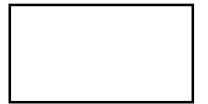
**Students:**

- **produce oral and written reports on topics related to all school subjects**
- **establish an authoritative stance on the subject and provide references to establish the validity and verifiability of the information presented**
- **organize information according to an identifiable structure, such as compare/contrast or general to specific**
- **develop information with appropriate supporting material, such as facts, details, illustrative examples or anecdotes, and exclude extraneous material**
- **use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading ( the "writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts**
- **use standard English for formal presentation of information, selecting appropriate grammatical constructions and vocabulary, using a variety of sentence structures, and observing the rules of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ write an essay for science class that contains information from interviews, data bases, magazines, and science texts
- ▲ participate in a panel discussion on population trends in the United States in recent years, using graphics, and citing the source of the data
- ▲ use technical terms correctly in subject area reports
- ▲ survey student views on a school issue and report findings to the class.

STANDARD 1



# Language for information and understanding

AT A GLANCE

INFORMATIONAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES	CRITERIA FOR INFORMATIONAL LANGUAGE	EVIDENCE OF GROWTH
<p><i>(Examples only, not an exhaustive list)</i></p> <p><b>READING of:</b> essays textbooks newspapers and magazines encyclopedias history books nonfiction books scientific journals technical manuals electronic data bases</p> <p><b>WRITING of:</b> essays lists and outlines summaries research reports feature articles technical reports instructional manuals</p> <p><b>LISTENING to:</b> classroom instructions group discussions lectures documentary films news broadcasts panel discussions</p> <p><b>SPEAKING for:</b> group discussion panel presentation giving directions for projects presenting research findings</p> <div data-bbox="147 1776 328 1875" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 47px; width: 111px; margin-top: 20px;"></div>	<p><i>Focus on the message being communicated and the purpose of the information</i></p> <p><b>PUBLIC</b> - The information must be clear and understandable to a public audience.</p> <p><b>EFFICIENT</b> - The information should be presented concisely.</p> <p><b>VALID</b> - The facts and data must be accurate, precise, and relevant to the purpose.</p>	

# Standard 2—Language for Literary Response and Expression

Elementary

Listening and Reading

Speaking and Writing

**1. Listening and reading for literary response involves comprehending, interpreting, and critiquing imaginative texts in every medium, drawing on personal experiences and knowledge to understand the text, and recognizing the social, historical and cultural features of the text.**

**Students:**

- **read a variety of literature of different genres: picture books; poems; articles and stories from children's magazines; fables, myths and legends; songs, plays and media productions; and works of fiction and nonfiction intended for young readers**
- **recognize some features that distinguish the genres and**

**Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.**

Intermediate

## Listening and Reading

**1. Listening and reading for literary response involves comprehending, interpreting, and critiquing imaginative texts in every medium, drawing on personal experiences and knowledge to understand the text, and recognizing the social, historical and cultural features of the text.**

**Students:**

- read and view texts and performances from a wide range of authors, subjects, and genres
- understand and identify the distinguishing features of the major genres and use them to aid their interpretation and discussion of literature
- identify significant literary elements (including metaphor, symbolism, foreshadowing, dialect, rhyme, meter, irony, climax) and use those elements to interpret the work
- recognize different levels of meaning
- read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work
- evaluate literary merit based on an understanding of the genre and the literary elements.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ read or recite poems of their own selection to the class, clearly conveying the meaning of the poem and the effect of the rhythm and rhyme patterns
- ▲ produce lists of recommended readings for their peers, grouping the works according to some common elements (e.g., theme, setting, type of characters)
- ▲ use references to literature they have read to support their position in class discussion.

## Speaking and Writing

**2. Speaking and writing for literary response involves presenting interpretations, analyses, and reactions to the content and language of a text. Speaking and writing for literary expression involves producing imaginative texts that use language and text structures that are inventive and often multilayered.**

**Students:**

- present responses to and interpretations of literature, making reference to the literary elements found in the text and connections with their personal knowledge and experience
- produce interpretations of literary works that identify different levels of meaning and comment on their significance and effect
- write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice
- use standard English effectively.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ take part in class productions of short plays
- ▲ write a sequel to a story continuing the development of the characters, plot, and themes
- ▲ write reviews of literature from different cultural settings and point out similarities and differences in that literature
- ▲ write stories or poems for their peers or younger children.

STANDARD 2

# Standard 2—Language for Literary Response and Expression

## Commencement

### Listening and Reading

**1. Listening and reading for literary response involves comprehending, interpreting, and critiquing imaginative texts in every medium, drawing on personal experiences and knowledge to understand the text, and recognizing the social, historical and cultural features of the text.**

#### Students:

- read and view independently and fluently across many genres of literature from many cultures and historical periods
- identify the distinguishing features of different literary genres, periods and traditions and use those features to interpret the work
- recognize and understand the significance of a wide range of literary elements and techniques, (including figurative language, imagery, allegory, irony, blank verse, symbolism, stream-of-consciousness) and use those elements to interpret the work
- understand how multiple levels of meaning are conveyed in a text
- read aloud expressively to convey a clear interpretation of the work
- evaluate literary merit based on an understanding of the genre, the literary elements, and the literary period and tradition.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ read a selection of poems of different forms, including sonnets, lyrics, elegies, narrative poems, and odes, and recognize the effect of the structure and form on the meaning
- ▲ act out scenes from a full length play in class
- ▲ read literary pieces on a common theme from several literary periods (such as Renaissance, Neo-Classical, Romantic, Realistic, Naturalistic, and Contemporary) and compare the treatments of the theme in those periods
- ▲ read and interpret works of recognized literary merit from several world cultures and recognize the distinguishing features of those cultural traditions
- ▲ view stage or film productions of a major play or novel and discuss the interpretation of the work that is evident in the production.

### Speaking and Writing

**2. Speaking and writing for literary response involves presenting interpretations, analyses, and reactions to the content and language of a text. Speaking and writing for literary expression involves producing imaginative texts that use language and text structures that are inventive and often multilayered.**

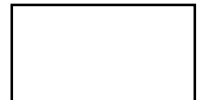
#### Students:

- present responses to and interpretations of works of recognized literary merit with references to the principal features of the genre, the period, and literary tradition, and drawing on their personal experiences and knowledge
- produce literary interpretations that explicate the multiple layers of meaning
- write original pieces in a variety of literary forms, correctly using the conventions of the genre and using structure and vocabulary to achieve an effect
- use standard English skillfully and with an individual style.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ write stories or poems using such literary structures and devices as stanzas and chapters, metaphors, foreshadowing, symbolism, and different forms of dialogue and narration
- ▲ take part in productions of full length plays
- ▲ put together a collection of literature from different cultures around a common theme and write the introduction to the collection explaining the similarities and differences
- ▲ write an interpretation of a major nineteenth-century novel discussing the features of the novel that reflect the conventions of the genre in that time period.
- ▲ write interpretations of works of recognized literary merit including a discussion of the principal features of the genre, the period, and the tradition.

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).  
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).  
Sample tasks are identified by triangles (▲).



# Language for Literary Response and Expressio

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**Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.**

Intermediate

Listening and Reading

Speaking and Writing

**1. Listening and reading to analyze and evaluate experiences, ideas, information, and issues requires**



# Standard 3—Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

## Commencement

### Listening and Reading

**1. Listening and reading to analyze and evaluate experiences, ideas, information, and issues requires using evaluative criteria from a variety of perspectives and recognizing the difference in evaluations based on different sets of criteria.**

#### Students:

- **analyze, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, organization, and language of a wide range of general and technical texts and presentations across subject areas, including technical manuals, professional journals, political speeches, and literary criticism**
- **evaluate the quality of the texts and presentations from a variety of critical perspectives within the field of study (e.g., using both Poe’s elements of a short story and the elements of “naturalist fiction” to evaluate a modern story)**
- **make precise determinations about the perspective of a particular writer or speaker by recognizing the relative weight they place on particular arguments and criteria (E.g., one critic condemns a biography as too long and rambling; another praises it for its accuracy and never mentions its length)**
- **evaluate and compare their own and others’ work with regard to different criteria and recognize the change in evaluations when different criteria are considered to be more important.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ compare the majority decision and the dissenting opinions on a Supreme Court case
- ▲ listen to speeches of two political candidates and compare their stands on several major issues
- ▲ read the writing of several critics on the same author and determine what literary criteria each used in evaluating the author and how that accounts for different judgments
- ▲ read a current article on a scientific issue, such as the greenhouse effect, and compare it to an earlier explanation of the same issue.

### Speaking and Writing

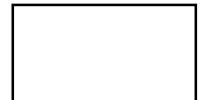
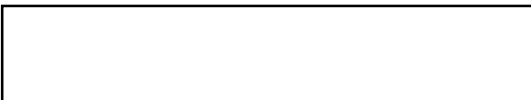
**2. Speaking and writing for critical analysis and evaluation requires presenting opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information, and issues clearly, logically, and persuasively with reference to specific criteria on which the opinion or judgment is based.**

#### Students:

- **present orally and in writing well-developed analyses of issues, ideas, and texts, explaining the rationale for their positions and analyzing their positions from a variety of perspectives in such forms as formal speeches, debates, thesis/support papers, literary critiques, and issues analyses**
- **make effective use of details, evidence, and arguments and of presentational strategies to influence an audience to adopt their position**
- **monitor and adjust their own oral and written presentations to have the greatest influence on a particular audience**
- **use standard English, a broad and precise vocabulary, and the conventions of formal oratory and debate.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ write two different analyses of a Supreme Court decision from the perspectives of a “strict-constructionist” and a judicial activist
- ▲



# Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

AT A GLANCE

ANALYTICAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES	CRITERIA FOR ANALYTICAL LANGUAGE	EVIDENCE OF GROWTH
<p><i>(Examples only, not an exhaustive list)</i></p> <p><b>READING of:</b> literature advertisements editorials book and movie reviews literary criticism public documents political speeches position papers professional journals listserves</p> <p><b>WRITING of:</b> persuasive essays book and movie reviews literary critiques editorials thesis/support papers analyses of issues college application essays</p> <p><b>LISTENING to:</b> advertising/commercials arguments political speeches debates</p> <p><b>SPEAKING for:</b> oral book and movie reviews persuasive speeches opinion surveys formal debates interviews</p> <div data-bbox="142 1774 328 1873" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 47px; width: 114px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<p><i>Focus on the point of view and</i></p>	

# Standard 4—Language for Social Interaction

Elementary

Listening and Speaking

Reading and Writing

**1. Oral communication in formal and informal settings requires the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures, to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect on how talk varies in different situations.**

**Students:**

- listen attentively and recognize when it is appropriate for them to speak
- take turns speaking and respond to others' ideas in conversations on familiar topics
- recognize the kind of interaction appropriate for different circumstances, such as story hour, group discussions, and one-on-one conversations.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ take part in “show and tell” sessions
- ▲ participate in group discussions during “circle time”
- ▲ greet visitors to their school or classroom and respond to their questions
- ▲ bring messages to the principal's office or to another teacher.

**2. Written communication for social interaction requires using written messages to establish, maintain, and enhance personal relationships with others.**

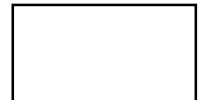
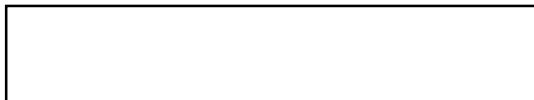
**Students:**

- exchange friendly notes, cards, and letters with friends, relatives, and pen pals to keep in touch and to commemorate special occasions
- adjust their vocabulary and style to take into account the nature of the relationship and the knowledge and interests of the person receiving the message
- read and discuss published letters, diaries, and journals to learn the conventions of social writing.

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ write thank you notes and invitations to friends
- ▲ exchange letters with pen pals in another country
- ▲ write letters to relatives who live in another city.

***n.b. Because the focus of language for social interaction is on direct communication between individuals (rather than communication to a more general and perhaps unknown audience), the performance indicators for this standard are arranged to reflect the immediacy of direct communication (Listening and Speaking; Reading and Writing).***



## Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

### Intermediate

### Listening and Speaking

**1. Oral communication in formal and informal settings requires the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures, to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect on how talk varies in different situations.**

**Students:**

- **listen attentively to others and build on others' ideas in conversations with peers and adults**
- **express ideas and concerns clearly and respectfully in conversations and group discussions**
- **learn some words and expressions in another language to communicate with a peer or adult who speaks that language**
- **use verbal and nonverbal skills to improve communication with others.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ act as hosts for open house at school
- ▲ participate in small group discussions in class
- ▲ give morning announcements over the public address system
- ▲ participate in school assemblies and club meetings.

### Reading and Writing

**2. Written communication for social interaction requires using written messages to establish, maintain, and enhance personal relationships with others.**

**Students:**

- **write social letters, cards, and electronic messages to friends, relatives, community acquaintances, and other electronic network users**
- **use appropriate language and style for the situation and the audience and take into account the ideas and interests expressed by the person receiving the message**
- **read and discuss social communications and electronic communications of other writers and use some of the techniques of those writers in their own writing.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ write letters to friends who are away
- ▲ send e-mail messages on a computer network
- ▲ send formal invitations for receptions or open houses.

# Standard 4—Language for Social Interaction

## Commencement

### Listening and Speaking

**1. Oral communication in formal and informal settings requires the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures, to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect on how talk varies in different situations.**

#### Students:

- **engage in conversations and discussions on academic, technical, and community subjects, anticipating listeners' needs and skillfully addressing them**
- **express their thoughts and views clearly with attention to the perspectives and voiced concerns of the others in the conversation**
- **use appropriately the language conventions for a wide variety of social situations, such as informal conversations, first meetings with peers or adults, and more formal situations such as job interviews or customer service.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ take part in and conduct meetings of student organizations
- ▲ interact with community members through community service experience or part-time jobs
- ▲ interview for a job or college acceptance
- ▲ greet visitors at school performances or sports banquets.

### Reading and Writing

**2. Written communication for social interaction requires using written messages to establish, maintain, and enhance personal relationships with others.**

#### Students:

- **use a variety of print and electronic forms for social communication with peers and adults**
- **make effective use of language and style to connect the message with the audience and context**
- **study the social conventions and language conventions of writers from other groups and cultures and use those conventions to communicate with members of those groups.**

*This is evident, for example, when students:*

- ▲ participate in electronic discussion groups (e.g., listserv)
- ▲ write letters and personal essays as part of college application
- ▲ write personal notes and letters that entertain and interest the recipient.

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).  
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).  
Sample tasks are identified by triangles (▲).

STANDARD 4

# Language for Social Interaction

AT A GLANCE

**SOCIAL  
LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES**

**CRITERIA FOR SOCIAL  
LANGUAGE**

**EVIDENCE OF GROWTH**







# Samples of Student Work

The samples of student work included in this section are intended to begin the process of articulating the performance standards at each level of achievement. This collection is not yet adequate for that purpose in either numbers or scope of examples. As New York State continues to collect work samples from the schools for inclusion in the document, we expect a much clearer understanding of the performance standards to be evident.

Neither are these samples presented as models of excellence. They vary in degree of achievement. Some are “acceptable;” others “more proficient.” All are meant to provide examples of the kind of work students might produce to demonstrate progress toward the standard.