

English Language Arts

National Rankings of Essential Skills (as of July 31, 2007)

National Essential Skills Study (NESS) English Language Arts Topic Statements	National Rank	NESS Priority	Subgroup Rankings			
			Business/ Industry	Other Non- Educators	English LA Educators	Other Educators
Apply writing rules and conventions (grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling).	1	High	1	1	1	1
Read for main ideas and supporting details and discriminate important ideas from unimportant ideas to aid comprehension.	2	High	3	2	2	2
Follow oral directions.	3	High	4	4	7	3
Use resources (dictionary, grammar books, thesaurus, online references, etc.) as needed to edit.	4	High	7 *	3	6	4
Develop processes or techniques for building vocabulary, decoding unfamiliar words/texts, and understanding or remembering information by using such strategies as context clues, word structure, letter-sound relationships, word histories, and mnemonics.	5	High	12	6	4	5
Collect and focus thoughts about the writing activity (brainstorming, listing, drafting, etc.).	6	High	10	6	9	6
Research information from a variety of sources and draft a well-organized, accurate, and informative report or essay that engages an audience and addresses its needs.	7	High	5	5	5	7
Prepare and deliver individual speeches that address the needs of the target audience by gathering information, rehearsing, making eye contact, speaking loudly enough, and delivering information in a well-organized fashion.	8	High	7	8	11	8
Organize supporting detail in logical and convincing patterns that focus on audience and purpose.	9	High	11	10	3	9
Participate in (sometimes leading) one-on-one or group discussions by asking questions, asking for clarification, taking turns speaking, agreeing and/or disagreeing courteously, making informed judgments, and working toward a common goal.	10	High	7	15	8	13
Give clear and concise oral directions.	11	High	6	12	30	10
Preview (skim) informational text to anticipate content (title, chapter headings, Internet search results, illustrations, table of contents, etc.).	12	High	18	14	21	12
Assess the validity, reliability, authenticity, quality, and accuracy of an informational or literary text.	13	High	16	18	10	16
Write clear and concise directions or procedures.	14	High	2	9	34	11
Demonstrate ability to select and use appropriate technology or media for presenting information to the target audience for the specific purpose.	15	High	13	17	25	15

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Locate and gather information such as data, facts, ideas, concepts, and generalizations from oral sources.	16	High	14	11	28	14
Make informed judgments about the content, organization, and delivery (including non-verbal cues) of spoken communication.	17	High	17	16	17	17
Apply rules of appropriate diction and grammar in formal and informal speaking situations.	18	High	14	13	18	18
Analyze and evaluate a speaker's opinions, personal values, and persuasive techniques.	19	High	23	19	13	19
Understand the nature and purpose of a variety of technical formats (essays, business letters, memos, investigative reports, brochures, critiques, instructions, policy statements, technical proposals, lab reports, etc.) and write in these formats.	20	Medium	19	20	23	20
Critically appraise print and nonprint content and information in current events, popular media, and the Internet for accuracy, artistic or informational value, production quality, and entertainment value.	21	Medium	22	24	20	21
Use a variety of organizational formats (compare/contrast, cause/effect, inductive/deductive, most important to least important, and least important to most important) that support the purpose of a writing activity.	22	Medium	27	23	16	22
Create a connection to a text by understanding the personal, social, cultural, and historical significance of it.	23	Medium	33	21	14	25
Compare/contrast, summarize, synthesize, and evaluate ideas from various selections on similar topics or works by the same author.	24	Medium	35	32	18	26
Write in various formats such as learning logs, laboratory reports, note-taking, response journals, organizers, and portfolios.	25	Medium	29	26	32	23
Use ideas from different sources to write a paper that expresses a personal opinion or uses specific evidence from literary texts to support an opinion.	26	Medium	24	22	24	24
Use and cite documented research in both print and nonprint presentations.	27	Medium	30	33	22	28
Develop and use expository writing skills in all content areas.	28	Medium	38	37	12	32
Compare the role of print and nonprint sources, including advertising, in shaping public opinion, noting instances of unsupported inferences and fallacious reasoning.	29	Medium	28	28	28	29
Apply personal, ethical, or impartial criteria for evaluating informational, persuasive, and literary materials.	30	Medium	25	29	26	31
Apply an understanding of graphics, layout, white space, italics, graphs, charts, and other visual aids to enhance informational reading, writing, or presenting.	31	Medium	19	25	39	27
Evaluate the logic and organization of technical or other nonfiction texts for clarity and effectiveness in describing a set of directions or procedures.	32	Medium	21	31	36	30

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Define a position on a controversial topic and write an essay to persuade a specific audience to change an opinion or take a particular action.	33	Medium	25	27	15	34
Summarize essential information from a variety of oral sources such as speeches, plays, commercials, and political debates.	34	Medium	31	35	37	33
Compare, contrast, and synthesize ideas, concepts, and generalizations from a variety of literary sources in diverse writings.	35	Medium	37	39	31	35
Define a position on a controversial topic and make an oral presentation likely to persuade a specific audience to change an opinion or take a particular action.	36	Medium	32	34	35	36
Evaluate an author's uses of language, literary devices, and text characteristics (plot, setting, theme, character, point of view, genre, etc.) to evoke a response in a reader.	37	Medium	40	30	26	37
Evaluate an author's uses of language (metaphors, analogies, etc.) and text characteristics (boldface, italics, parentheses, etc.) to aid comprehension.	38	Medium	39	35	33	38
Identify and interpret vocal characteristics that influence meaning such as tone, volume, pitch, and rate.	39	Low	34	38	41	39
Prepare for and conduct an interview of a classmate, neighbor, or public figure and write a character sketch.	40	Low	35	40	45	40
Assess the significance and importance of themes in literary text.	41	Low	42	41	38	42
Compare/contrast literary genres (science fiction, romance, drama, etc.) or delivery systems (books, live performance, film, etc.).	42	Low	46	44	42	41
Identify and interpret idiomatic expressions and figures of speech that enhance oral communication.	43	Low	41	45	43	43
Understand the effect of sounds, words, imagery, repetition, rhyme, and rhythm patterns in language, including poetry and orations, on the speaker or audience.	44	Low	43	43	40	46
Create an original piece of literature or poetry for personal enjoyment or to share with other readers.	45	Low	43	42	43	45
Listen for language cues that demonstrate a speaker's patterns of organization in formal presentations.	46	Low	45	46	47	44
Write a biographical and autobiographical sketch.	47	Low	48	47	48	47
Interpret literature for an audience by reading out loud with appropriate expression.	48	Low	47	48	45	48
Research information about viewing by evaluating personal and societal viewing habits.	49	Low	49	49	49	49
Understand and apply film and theatrical terms and techniques to an analysis and evaluation of films and plays.	50	Low	50	50	50	50

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