

English / Language Arts

Fourth Grade

The fourth-grade curriculum represents an important transformation for students. When students advance from the third grade to the fourth grade, they make a critical transition from learning to read to reading to learn in subject-matter content. This changeover requires students to be fluent and automatic readers by the end of the third grade so that they are prepared to read and comprehend complex narrative and expository texts in such content areas as history–social science and science. An instructional priority for grades four through six is a continuing focus on ensuring that all students are able to read fluently and accurately. In addition, students are beginning a technological adventure of acquiring a new set of skills, such as basic keyboarding and familiarity with computer terminology.

Curriculum Outline

Below are the Montana content standards for the English / Language Arts and the local Ronan School District #30 standards that further explain the goals of our program:

MONTANA STANDARDS FOR READING

Reading is essential to learning. It is the pathway to lifelong learning and the key to life's opportunities. Reading is a strategic problem-solving process of gaining personal meaning from text. Students use a range of skills and strategies in the process of reading to comprehend what they read. Reading is not only a basic skill, it is an indispensable tool for critical and creative thinking. There are a diversity of purposes for which readers read a variety of materials. Reading literacy allows students to make connections between their own and others' experiences, to inquire systematically, to access, analyze, synthesize, and critically evaluate information. Early reading achievement is a reliable predictor of later school performance. Success in school is often determined by student proficiency in reading. Proficient readers monitor and evaluate their own progress in reading.

Montana Standard 1—Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, and respond to what they read.

Montana Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies to read.

Montana Standard 3—Students set goals, monitor, and evaluate their progress in reading.

Montana Standard 4—Students select, read, and respond to print and nonprint material for a variety of purposes.

Montana Standard 5—Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.

MONTANA STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE

Literature, a primary vehicle for teaching reading, attempts to show life in its uncertainties, complexities, and imperfections, offering many insights for the reader. Responding to print and nonprint media allows participants to experience vicariously other lives and to measure their own experiences against those of others. The exploration of literature and films encourages students to become critical and reflective thinkers and to develop personal aesthetic standards for print and nonprint media as art forms.

Montana Standard 1—Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, analyze and respond to literary works.

Montana Standard 2—Students recognize and evaluate how language, literary devices, and elements contribute to the meaning and impact of literary works.

Montana Standard 3—Students reflect upon their literary experiences and purposefully select from a range of works.

Montana Standard 4—Students interact with print and nonprint literary works from various cultures, ethnic groups, traditional and contemporary viewpoints written by both genders.

Montana Standard 5—Students use literary works to enrich personal experience and to connect to the broader world of ideas, concepts and issues.

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

Word Recognition

1.1 Read narrative and expository text aloud with grade-appropriate fluency and accuracy and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.2 Apply knowledge of word origins, derivations, synonyms, antonyms, and idioms to determine the meaning of words and phrases.

1.3 Use knowledge of root words to determine the meaning of unknown words within a passage.

1.4 Know common roots and affixes derived from Greek and Latin and use this knowledge to analyze the meaning of complex words (e.g., *international*).

1.5 Use a thesaurus to determine related words and concepts.

1.6 Distinguish and interpret words with multiple meanings.

2.0 Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources). The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition to their regular school reading, students read one half million words annually, including a good representation of grade-level-appropriate narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information).

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Identify structural patterns found in informational text (e.g., compare and contrast, cause and effect, sequential or chronological order, proposition and support) to strengthen comprehension.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).

2.3 Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, and foreshadowing clues.

2.4 Evaluate new information and hypotheses by testing them against known information and ideas.

2.5 Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.

2.6 Distinguish between cause and effect and between fact and opinion in expository text.

2.7 Follow multiple-step instructions in a basic technical manual (e.g., how to use computer commands or video games).

Evaluation of Progress in Reading.

2.8 Set fluency goals for use with SRI sub-category.

2.9 Participate in a home/school program to promote value and enjoy books and reading.

2.10 Maintain a record of books read at home

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between the structural features of the text and the literary terms or elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, characters). The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Structural Features of Literature

3.1 Describe the structural differences of various imaginative forms of literature, including fantasies, fables, myths, legends, and fairy tales.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Identify the main events of the plot, their causes, and the influence of each event on future actions.

3.3 Use knowledge of the situation and setting and of a character's traits and motivations to determine the causes for that character's actions.

3.4 Compare and contrast tales from different cultures by tracing the exploits of one character type and develop theories to account for similar tales in diverse cultures (e.g., trickster tales).

3.5 Define figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification) and identify its use in literary works.

Cultural Reading

Read grade appropriate American Indian Text

Read Text from various cultures and ethnic groups.

Read texts written by both genders.

Read about traditional and contemporary viewpoints.

Listen and discuss.

Literary works from various cultures, ethnic groups, traditional and contemporary viewpoints written by both genders will be used.

MONTANA STANDARDS FOR WRITING

The standards set in this document represent what research and experience have described as important in the process of writing. Writing is essential to thinking and learning. As a strategic, problem-solving process, writing is a key element of communication and a critical part of comprehension. In addition to being a developmental basic skill, writing is also indispensable to critical, ethical, and creative thinking. Writers use a range of skills and strategies in the process of writing to communicate with diverse audiences and for diverse purposes. Writing proficiency enables individuals to learn, make connections between their own and others' experiences, create meaning, and evaluate information.

Montana Standard 1—Students write clearly and effectively.

Montana Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies in the writing process.

Montana Standard 3—Students evaluate and reflect on their growth as writers.

Montana Standard 4—Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Montana Standard 5—Students recognize the structures of various forms and apply these characteristics to their own writing.

Montana Standard 6—Students use the inquiry process, problem-solving strategies, and resources to synthesize and communicate information.

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

- 1.1 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements.
- 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph compositions:
 - a. Provide an introductory paragraph.
 - b. Establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph.
 - c. Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations.
 - d. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points.
 - e. Use correct indentation.
- 1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).

Penmanship

1.4 Write fluidly and legibly in cursive or joined italic.

Research and Technology

1.5 Quote or paraphrase information sources, citing them appropriately.

1.6 Locate information in reference texts by using organizational features (e.g., prefaces, appendixes).

1.7 Use various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, card catalog, encyclopedia, online information) as an aid to writing.

1.8 Understand the organization of almanacs, newspapers, and periodicals and how to use those print materials.

1.9 Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills and familiarity with computer terminology (e.g., cursor, software, memory, disk drive, hard drive).

Evaluation and Revision

1.10 Edit and revise selected drafts to improve coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, and rearranging text.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0. Using the writing strategies of grade four outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write narratives:

a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience.

b. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.

c. Use concrete sensory details.

d. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

2.2 Write responses to literature:

a. Demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.

b. Support judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge.

2.3 Write information reports:

a. Frame a central question about an issue or situation.

b. Include facts and details for focus.

c. Draw from more than one source of information (e.g., speakers, books, newspapers, other media sources).

2.4 Write summaries that contain the main ideas of the reading selection and the most significant details.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The curriculum for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Use simple and compound sentences in writing and speaking.

1.2 Combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.

Grammar

1.3 Identify and use regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions in writing and speaking.

Punctuation

- 1.4 Use parentheses, commas in direct quotations, and apostrophes in the possessive case of nouns and in contractions.
- 1.5 Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to identify titles of documents.

Capitalization

- 1.6 Capitalize names of magazines, newspapers, works of art, musical compositions, organizations, and the first word in quotations when appropriate.

Spelling

- 1.7 Spell correctly roots, inflections, suffixes and prefixes, and syllable constructions.

Evaluation and Reflection of Writing

Dialog with the teacher to identify strengths and weaknesses in their writing.

MONTANA STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Oral communication is the bridge to the future. It provides the basis of language development, thinking, gathering information, and shaping how we see ourselves and how others see us. Studies show that over 80 percent of communication is spent in speaking and listening, which lends credence to the belief that teaching these skills is not just desirable, but critical. It is the responsibility of education to ensure that students are prepared for their roles as family members, workers, and citizens through oral communication instruction. The National Communication Association defines speaking as “the uniquely human act or process of transmitting and exchanging information, ideas, and emotions using oral language” while listening is “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages.”

Montana Standard 1—Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the communication process.

Montana Standard 2—Students distinguish among and use appropriate types of speaking and listening for a variety of purposes.

Montana Standard 3—Students apply a range of skills and strategies to speaking and listening.

Montana Standard 4—Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.

MONTANA STANDARDS FOR MEDIA LITERACY

We have long understood the importance of literacy to becoming productive citizens in a democratic society. In our world of powerful images, sounds and words, students must be media literate. Studies show that students view an average of 3,000 or more hours of television prior to graduation from high school than they spend in class. Media literacy is the tool students need to access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a

variety of forms. Students need to understand the ways words, images and sounds influence the way meanings are created and shared in our contemporary global society.

Montana Standard 1—Students recognize that media messages are constructed using specific techniques which manipulate sound, image, text and movement to convey meaning.

Montana Standard 2—Students distinguish among and use appropriate types of media for a variety of purposes.

Montana Standard 3—Students apply knowledge, skills and strategies to design and create media messages.

Montana Standard 4—Students identify, analyze and evaluate the impacts of media on individuals and societies.

1.0 Speaking, Listening, and Media Strategies

Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas by using proper phrasing, pitch, and modulation.

Comprehension

- 1.1 Ask thoughtful questions and respond to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration in oral settings.
- 1.2 Summarize major ideas and supporting evidence presented in spoken messages and formal presentations.
- 1.3 Identify how language usages (e.g., sayings, expressions) reflect regions and cultures.
- 1.4 Give precise directions and instructions.

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

- 1.5 Present effective introductions and conclusions that guide and inform the listener's understanding of important ideas and evidence.
- 1.6 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- 1.7 Emphasize points in ways that help the listener or viewer to follow important ideas and concepts.
- 1.8 Use details, examples, anecdotes, or experiences to explain or clarify information.
- 1.9 Use volume, pitch, phrasing, pace, modulation, and gestures appropriately to enhance meaning.

Analysis and Evaluation of Oral Media Communication

- 1.10 Evaluate the role of the media in focusing attention on events and in forming opinions on issues.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests that are organized around a coherent thesis statement. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0. Using the speaking strategies of grade four outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

- 2.1 Make narrative presentations:
 - a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections about an event or experience.
 - b. Provide a context that enables the listener to imagine the circumstances of the event or experience.
 - c. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

2.2 Make informational presentations:

- a. Frame a key question.
- b. Include facts and details that help listeners to focus.
- c. Incorporate more than one source of information (e.g., speakers, books, newspapers, television or radio reports).

2.3 Deliver oral summaries of articles and books that contain the main ideas of the event or article and the most significant details.

2.4 Recite brief poems (i.e., two or three stanzas), soliloquies, or dramatic dialogues, using clear diction, tempo, volume, and phrasing.

Media

Use media to build background knowledge as another avenue of communication.

Use knowledge box clips to gain media information and knowledge.

Below is a narrative that describes and elaborates best practices research in English Language Arts and is the standard to which we strive.

Reading

Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development, Word Recognition

The continuing focus on decoding words fluently and accurately is both appropriate and necessary for the fourth grade. Students unable to decode words automatically will not be able to comprehend grade-appropriate narrative or expository text. Those who are not reading at grade level should receive continued systematic and explicit instruction in decoding, with particular attention being paid to the study of multisyllabic words and unfamiliar technical terminology as well as to systematic practice in reading fluency. Every effort should be made to ensure that students who are *not* reading at grade level will:

- Receive intensive decoding instruction.
- Be placed in small homogeneous groups for language arts instruction.
- Be given ample opportunities to practice reading in text designed to reinforce instruction and written at each student's level.
- Receive an additional period of reading instruction.
- Be offered a research-based reading curriculum.
- Be systematically monitored in reading progress throughout the school year.
- Be held to a high level of reading performance.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

Vocabulary and concept development has broad applications across the domains of reading, writing, and listening and speaking. Although the standards emphasize the use of external context cues at earlier grade levels, emphasis shifts strategically in the fourth grade (and continues through the tenth grade) to the use of internal, morphological, etymological, and historical word cues. Knowledge of affixes and roots—their meanings and origins—should be limited to the most common (and useful) morphological components; that is, those immediately applicable to the students' current level of vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the standards at this level target synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and words with multiple meanings (the vast majority of nontechnical words in English). Students should be required to use a dictionary and a thesaurus to determine related words and concepts. Instruction in new conceptual knowledge should include clear examples in addition to verbal definitions of words. Extensive independent reading is the primary means for increasing vocabulary knowledge (Nagy 1998). Students who read more learn more about words and their meanings. Although direct, explicit teaching of word meanings is effective and important, it cannot produce the needed growth in students' vocabulary knowledge that should occur in the fourth grade.

Students should be given ample opportunities to read in school and outside school. The teacher should (Baker, Simmons, and Kame'enui 1998):

- Specify for students a clear purpose for reading.
- Establish objectives for each reading activity.
- Assess students' independent reading to determine what material they can read.
- Target specific vocabulary words to be learned and clarify why they are important.
- Hold students accountable for the content of what they read and the unfamiliar but important vocabulary words they read.
- Ensure multiple exposure to unfamiliar vocabulary words.

- Teach students vocabulary-learning strategies for use during independent reading.

Reading

Reading Comprehension

Structural Features of Informational Materials

The standards focus primarily on the structural features of informational (expository) text. The features of informational discourse emphasized at this level are fundamental: patterns such as compare and contrast; central focus or theme; and use of facts, details, and examples. Many of the fundamentals are incorporated across other text structures and genres at later grade levels. Similarly, narratives that form the focus of literary reading at this level are the object of writing standards as well. The fundamentals of narratives are also emphasized: elements of plot, character traits and motivations, setting, and the interactions between the fundamentals.

Because some of the text forms will be new to students in the fourth grade, the structural features of text should be introduced systematically (i.e., from easy text structures to more complex) and judiciously (i.e., a text structure is taught for a substantial amount of time initially to foster understanding rather than for a day here or there). Once taught, text structures should be reviewed cumulatively.

We finally seem to be getting the message that kids learn what they are taught and get to practice. . . . The point is simple: When we identify a variable, including a text structure variable, that looks like it might make a difference in comprehension, we ought to adopt a frontal assault strategy when considering its instructional power—teach about it systematically and make certain students have a chance to practice it.

(Pearson and Camperell 1985, 339)

Text Appropriate to Grade Level

The features of reading comprehension in grade-level-appropriate text introduced in the fourth grade are extensions of comprehension instruction at earlier grade levels and include, for example: (1) identifying main idea and significant important details; (2) reading for different purposes; (3) making predictions; (4) distinguishing between fact and opinion and cause and effect; (5) comparing and contrasting information on the same topic; and (6) reading multiple-step directions in technical manuals. In the later grades students are required to apply those skills in more complex tasks and contexts (e.g., using information from a variety of consumer, workplace, or public documents).

Reading

Literary Response and Analysis

Students in the fourth grade will continue to learn about fundamental elements of literature that will allow them to appreciate the rich quality and complexity of materials they read. The elements include describing the structural differences between fables, myths, fantasies, legends, and fairy tales as well as defining and identifying simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification in literary works. To ensure that students are not overwhelmed or confused by the introduction of the complex range of literary elements specified in the standards, teachers should concentrate on:

- Identifying and introducing the least complex element of literature before the more complex elements

- Providing ample opportunities for students to understand, study, and apply the individual elements before testing them on a combination of elements
- Ensuring that the literature is not overly complex for the fourth-grade level (e.g., unfamiliar text structure, high density of unfamiliar vocabulary, complex syntactical structure)
- Using literature (e.g., fable, myth, legend) that is of manageable length to allow students to comprehend and understand the target element
- Providing explicit and guided instruction during the initial phases of learning and ensure that students are provided with the appropriate instructional supports (e.g., a think sheet or note sheet for the particular type of text) during initial opportunities for independent reading.

The elements of story grammar (e.g., plot, setting, characters, motivation) continue to be a priority.

Writing

Writing Strategies

Although students continue to use all stages of writing (i.e., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, postwriting) at this level, the standards specifically address revising and editing. They particularly emphasize the importance of revising and editing for coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, and rearranging text (see the fourth-grade curricular and instructional profile in a later section). Such a standard assumes that students are able to create multiple-paragraph compositions and use traditional structures (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference) for conveying information. It also assumes that students can select a focus, organizational structure, and point of view based on purpose, audience, and format. Fundamental to students progressing through the stages of writing as a process is their being able to write clear, coherent sentences and construct paragraphs that develop a central idea, focus on a particular audience, and reveal a clear purpose. Students plan their writing by creating outlines and using other organizational techniques. The conventions of written discourse, such as penmanship (i.e., writing fluidly and legibly in cursive or joined italic), continue to be emphasized. A new substrand is research and technology. Research introduces students to a variety of print and electronic reference materials and other sources of information, such as almanacs, newspapers, and periodicals. Students are also expected to demonstrate basic keyboarding skills and familiarity with the basics of computer usage (e.g., cursor, software, memory, disk drive, hard drive).

Writing

Writing Applications

Students are expected to demonstrate a command of standard English by writing narratives, responses to literature, information reports, and summaries. In doing so, they are required to illustrate a range of skills, such as using concrete sensory details, supporting judgments, drawing from multiple sources of information, and framing a central question about an issue or situation. Teachers should clarify the linkages between the students' reading and comprehending different types of text structures and composing the same types of texts.

During the *initial* stages of instruction for the fourth grade in which students are learning to write narratives, information

reports, summaries, or responses to literature, teachers should concentrate on:

- Presenting to students clear, simple, uncluttered models of narratives, information reports, summaries, and responses to literature
- Introducing one form of writing at a time

- Using prompts, such as a note sheet (i.e., an outline that students use to take notes) when appropriate that identifies the essential elements of the text structure and allows students to record the essential elements of a particular writing form (e.g., narrative) *before* they generate a written example on their own
- Introducing simpler forms of writing (e.g., narratives) before introducing more complex forms (e.g., responses to literature)
- Presenting a range of examples of a particular form of writing before introducing a new form
- Devoting extensive time and presenting multiple opportunities for students to develop proficiency with each form of writing

Written and Oral English- Language Conventions

The correct use of mechanics and the conventions of oral and written discourse continues to be emphasized at this level and include:

- Sentence structure—using simple and compound sentences and combining short sentences with appositives, participial phrases, and prepositional phrases
- Grammar—identifying and using regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions in writing and speaking
- Punctuation and capitalization— using parentheses, commas in direct quotations, apostrophes in the possessive case, underlining, quotation marks, and italics; capitalizing titles of magazines, newspapers, works of art, musical compositions, and the first word in quotations
- Spelling—spelling roots, inflections, prefixes, suffixes, and syllable constructions

Note: The fifth-grade instructional guidelines for written and oral conventions should also apply to the fourth grade. And the guidelines for spelling instruction presented for the first grade will be useful in the fourth grade and above for students who still have considerable difficulty in spelling correctly.

Listening and Speaking

Listening and Speaking Strategies

In the fourth grade students should continue to listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communications. The content standards require students to ask thoughtful questions, summarize major ideas, use supporting evidence to substantiate conclusions, identify how language usages reflect regional and cultural differences, and give precise directions and instructions. During their delivery of oral communications, students are expected to present effective introductions and conclusions; use traditional structures for conveying information; emphasize points that make clear to listeners or viewers the important ideas and concepts; and employ details, anecdotes, examples, volume, pitch, phrasing, pace, modulation, and gestures to explain, clarify, or enhance meaning. Finally, students are expected to evaluate the role of the news media in focusing attention on events and in forming opinions on issues.

Listening and Speaking

Speaking Applications

Fourth graders are expected to use speaking strategies to make narrative and informational presentations. In doing so, students should demonstrate their ability to relate ideas, frame a key question, provide a context for listeners to imagine an event or experience, provide insight

into why a selection is memorable, and incorporate more than one source of information. They are also expected to deliver oral summaries of articles and books and to recite brief poems, soliloquies, or dramatic dialogues, using clear diction, tempo, volume, and phrasing. Teachers should emphasize the linkages between the students' experiences in reading and composing different types of text structures and making oral presentations from those texts. For example, compositions that students have written can be used to create outlines they will work from in their oral presentations. Also needed will be an ample number of model presentations in which specific elements (e.g., volume, pace, gestures) are demonstrated. The models should focus on a few elements at a time rather than introduce all elements at once.

Content and Instructional Connections

The teacher can help students integrate mastery of standards across domains, strands, and academic disciplines by having students:

1. Read narrative and expository text aloud with grade-appropriate fluency and accuracy and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.
2. Use knowledge of root words to determine the meaning of unknown words within a passage and provide opportunities for students to use the words in written compositions.
3. Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment) and in a range of contexts.
4. Make connections between the main events of the plot, their causes, and the influence of each event on future actions.
5. Answer questions about their knowledge of the situation and setting and of a character's traits and motivations to determine the causes of the character's actions.
6. Make connections between the focus of a composition, its organizational structure, and its point of view according to purpose, audience, length, and format.
7. Create multiple-paragraph compositions.
8. Complete writing and oral assignments in the language arts that provide opportunities to attain content standards simultaneously in history–social science, science, and mathematics.
 - a. Introduce a dimension for revision (e.g., adding). No prescribed sequence exists for introducing the dimensions. However, the earlier dimensions should be easier to introduce and are commonly represented in students' writing.
 - b. Introduce a second dimension for revision (e.g., deleting) once students are successful with the first. Add other revision components as students develop competence.
 - c. Integrate new and previously taught revision components through instruction and examples that require students to discriminate and apply all taught components.

Note: Keep in mind the two related objectives in this standard—revising and editing. Students will need explicit instruction in both.

Prerequisite standards. **Third-Grade Writing Strategies:** Revise drafts to improve the coherence and logical progression of ideas by using an established rubric.

Corequisite standards. **Fourth-Grade Writing Strategies-**

- 1: Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view.
- 2: Create multiple-paragraph compositions.
- 3: Use traditional structures for conveying information.

Instructional Objectives

Decisions must be made about three critical design features in the deletion objective:

1. What sequence of instruction will allow students to revise? For example, when in the sequence will students identify information that is missing in the composition?
2. What amount of information should students revise?
3. What strategy will students use to rewrite or edit text on the basis of the revision phase?

Textual Unit Size and Sequence

The sequence of writing models is critical. Allow students first to learn the strategies for revising and then to apply those strategies to their own writing. Initial text models should control the difficulty of the task by beginning with focused revising tasks. Later texts should progress to increasingly complex compositions. Each phase of revising requires multiple models. A possible design sequence for adding follows.

Adding Information to a Text

The first models should contain obvious places for addition to and expansion of the text, including statements that require supporting details and development. Adding information may range from providing a specific illustration to support a claim or adding a word or a short phrase to clarify a concept.

Example:

Josh's dog Rex was overweight and lazy. He weighed too much and sat around all day. He didn't get much exercise. He only got excited when it was time to eat. Josh was at school during the day. Dinner was Rex's favorite time. Dinner was the time he liked the best. At dinner time Rex moved quickly, jumping and hopping and dashing and running around until Josh put the food in his dish. Josh did his homework in the evening.

Providing Strategies for Students

This strategy involves reading the model with the students while adding information to the text. The teacher reads the text first. Subsequent readings are done by student volunteers. Then the teacher provides the students with questioning strategies aimed at identifying segments of the text that need development, addition, and expansion. After the students have had enough experience with the text to make appropriate comments, the teacher asks the students to identify the first segment of the text that requires additional information (supporting details).

Example: The writer's topic sentence or claim is the following:

"Josh's dog was overweight and lazy." The teacher asks, "How can we provide the reader with proof that Josh's dog was overweight and lazy?" Students add appropriate details that develop the writer's claim. The teacher records the students' suggestions for additions. They should include appropriate words, phrases, and supporting details.

When the first paragraph is complete, the teacher asks the students to identify the next idea that requires additional information. The teacher asks, "Does Josh ever get excited? If so, how can the writer prove it?" The teacher records appropriate additions to this section of the text. Then the teacher says, "We have two pictures of Rex. What proof do we have that he is overweight and lazy?" The students identify the supporting details. "What proof do we have that he is sometimes active and excited?" The students identify the supporting details, and the teacher records the additions. The teacher asks, "On the basis of the information that we have gathered, what can we conclude about Josh's dog, Rex?" The teacher records the conclusion.

Deletion (Extending the Lesson)

Once the students have identified the areas that require additions and have composed and placed the additions, they eliminate information no longer germane to the text. The teacher asks the students, "What information remains in this story that does not fit with the writer's topic?"

The students are then asked to:

1. Eliminate complete sentences or phrases that do not tell more about the topic.
2. Delete individual words that do not tell more about the topic.
3. Rewrite sentences by combining sentences or sentence parts that tell the same thing about the topic and deleting unnecessary words.
4. Proceed from paragraph to paragraph.
5. Edit the revised text to ensure that the written-language conventions (e.g., grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling) are correct.

The teacher records the deletions.

Internalizing and Applying Writing Strategies

The teacher asks the students to rewrite the completed composition. When the rewriting is complete, the teacher asks the students to identify the strategies used to revise the original model.

They should include the following:

- Identifying topic sentences
- Providing additional information for each topic identified
- Drafting an appropriate conclusion
- Deleting information not pertinent to the topic

Next Steps

The teacher types up the strategies identified by the students, and the students keep the list of strategies in a writing folder. The strategies should also be posted in the classroom in poster form. Students should have multiple opportunities for teacher-directed revision. Progress should proceed from explicit teacher-directed instruction to guided practice to independent practice. When students can edit models provided by the teacher, they are ready to practice revising their own work by systematically applying the strategies for revision to their own prose. They are asked to:

1. Identify topic sentences that need further development.
2. Add clearer words, phrases, and supporting details.
3. Create appropriate paragraphs determined by the topics identified for addition.
4. Delete information that does not fit the composition, using steps for deletion.
5. Edit while using appropriate language conventions.
6. Define revising and tell why it is important to know when to add and delete information in a text.
7. Establish rules for adding and deleting.
8. Present the steps in adding and deleting information to revise text effectively.
9. Model multiple paragraphs containing information that needs to be revised. The text should include vocabulary familiar to the students, and the information to be revised should represent various parts of speech.
10. Encourage students to think out loud as they read the paragraph and (a) locate the sentences that need expansion; (b) locate the sentences or phrases that do not tell more about the topic; and (c) use the proofreader's deletion mark to eliminate segments that need to be deleted.
11. Repeat the lesson, using appropriate materials.
12. Begin the editing phase once revising and rewriting are complete. Students should edit text to ensure that the written language conventions are correct.
13. Do not underestimate the amount of time and practice needed to develop proficiency in revising and editing.

Assessment

1. *Entry-Level Assessment for Instructional Planning.* Conduct an entry-level assessment of the students' overall proficiency on the standard. *Revise and edit selected drafts to improve coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, rearranging text, and correcting.* On the basis of that assessment, identify the dimensions of revision and editing that need to be taught and the level of instruction necessary. Use the entry-level assessment as your guide for instructional planning. With the assessment you can identify students who are proficient in revising and editing and those who need systematic instruction.
2. *Monitoring Student Progress Toward the Instructional Objective*
 - a. The assessment phase is designed to determine students' progress and mastery of skills that have been taught as well as the retention of those skills. The assessment measures progress toward components (i.e., specific objectives) of the standard rather than the entire standard.
 - b. A series of tasks should be constructed to assess students' mastery in revising at several levels (paragraph, multiple paragraph, self-composition). Assessment tasks should parallel the objectives and requirements of instruction. The sequence of tasks should progress toward the goal of the instructional unit, beginning with simpler units and requirements and progressing to more complex applications. These measures are administered on the completion of a particular unit of instruction. For example, the paragraph assessment should be made on the completion of revising and editing at the paragraph level.
 - c. On completion of instruction *in revising through adding or deleting*, a measure is administered to assess progress toward the objective. The integration of addition and deletion is assessed on completion of the specific instruction unit.
 - d. This assessment sequence continues through the remaining components of instruction necessary to achieve the standard.
3. *Post-test Assessment Toward the Standard.* On completion of all instructional units, assess student performance according to the procedures used to assess entry-level performance. Give students a multiple-paragraph composition to revise and edit. You may also want to have students write their compositions on a standard topic to assess their ability to revise and edit their own writing. During the year systematically assess the students' retention of editing and revising skills and proficiency in meeting other writing standards.

Meeting Students' Diverse Needs

1. *Students with Reading Difficulties or Disabilities*
 - a. Passages should be appropriate to the instructional reading levels of students. If not, students may work with peers or an aide for assistance with word recognition. In addition, teachers may need to use supplementary examples from the instructional resources designed for universal access. The examples control more carefully the amount and type of information to be added or deleted. At first, exercises might focus only on missing or redundant information; later, more subtle forms would be introduced, such as colorless descriptions or irrelevant information.
 - b. Expository text may be used that provides information related to grade-level content standards in the other disciplines (history–social science, science, and mathematics).
2. *Students Who Are Advanced Learners.* Use the entry-level assessment to determine whether students are proficient according to the standard or need instruction. If found proficient in the grade-level assessment, consider assessing performance according to the parallel standards for successively higher grades until the appropriate instructional level is determined. Instruction at that level should be provided to ensure that students are challenged. The students' rates of learning should be subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that they are

progressing at rates commensurate with their abilities. If students are not proficient according to the standard, the teacher may wish to:

- a. Adjust the pace of instruction because the students may not require the same number of examples or amount of practice as their peers do.
- b. Introduce more than one revising or editing dimension at a time.
- c. Use supplementary examples from the instructional materials designed for universal access that increase the complexity of the passages students edit for independent work.

3. *Students Who Are English Learners*

- a. English learners can learn to add and delete text well without developing knowledge of the rhetorical devices that enable them to write cohesive, coherent text. To help English learners achieve, provide them with specific, explicit instruction concerning transition phrases (e.g., *first, second, third, next, in conclusion*) and pronoun reference (e.g., *he, she, it, they*). Cohesive devices (such as transition phrases and pronouns), which are often used differently in the students' first languages, are useful in establishing cohesive, coherent texts.
- b. English learners benefit greatly from sentence-combining exercises. They need extensive guidance and practice in using such grammatical structures as relative clauses (e.g., I like the man *who lives on the corner*); conditional statements (e.g., *If I were you, I would not do that*); and subordinate clauses (e.g., She received good grades *because she worked hard*).
- c. Because English learners are still developing proficiency in English, care should be taken in organizing peer revision and peer editing. Individual students should receive feedback from the teacher on their writing and any grammatical or other errors they have made. Errors in grammar or other mistakes common to many students in the class should be the subject of additional classroom instruction and practice.
- d. Consider using expository text that provides information related to grade-level content standards in the other disciplines (history–social science, science, and mathematics).

Instructional materials should carefully sequence the introduction of the dimensions of revising and editing. Focus first on the number of objectives introduced, then on the number and range of examples.

Are the examples adequate? Or will you need to invest time creating your own examples? Are assessment passages and examples included? Assessment tasks should be available for each phase of assessment: entry-level assessment for instructional planning, monitoring of progress toward the instructional objective, and post-test assessment toward the standard.