

# English Language Arts and Literature Curriculum

## English Language Arts and Literature Introduction

### What Is English Language Arts and Literature?

Language is a uniquely structured system that forms the basis for thinking, communicating, and learning. Influenced by numerous cultures and languages over many centuries, English has grown to become a prominent language for international communication. English language arts and literature involves learning about historical aspects and contemporary applications of the English language through the interrelated strands of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing. Engagement with a wide variety of texts offers students opportunities to expand their thinking beyond personal experiences, to think critically about ideas and information, and to explore creative expression. Focusing on developing the ability of students to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts, to inform, persuade, or entertain, English language arts and literature also aims to spark the imagination, inspire a love for learning, and develop appreciation for the rich diversity of human experiences shared through language, literature, and story. Experiences in English language arts and literature help students develop deep understandings of others and themselves, build and strengthen interpersonal relationships, and engage in responsible citizenship.

### Language, Literacy, and Literature

Oral language development is an active process that begins at birth and expands throughout a lifetime. Listening and speaking form the foundation for literacy development as students participate in oral language experiences and share in the oral traditions of their families and communities. These skills are further developed and applied in a variety of oral language experiences in English language arts and literature that include oral storytelling, discussions, drama, and presentations. Students learn to be active listeners, and they explore and purposefully select a variety of digital or non-digital forms and tools to enhance presentation delivery and capture the attention of an audience.

Literacy involves acquiring and applying the understanding and skills necessary to decode, evaluate, and logically communicate ideas and build meaning. Foundational literacy focuses on clear and developmentally appropriate learning in the areas of phonological awareness and phonics. Students in English language arts and literature develop the ability to identify and manipulate sounds in oral language and understand relationships between sounds and the letters that represent them. A focus on fluency fosters, within students, the ability to read a range of texts accurately, automatically, and with expression. Students apply strategies to comprehend increasingly complex messages and they expand their verbal and written vocabulary through the study of word meanings, origins, and structures.

Communicating well in a modern world involves understanding social practices, relationships, cultures, and information. Engaging with a variety of traditional, contemporary, and emerging texts enables students to see how text form and structure can influence the representation and interpretation of ideas and information. Analyzing media texts helps students understand how text creators seek to persuade and helps students become thoughtful consumers of media. In English language arts and literature, students differentiate between fact and opinion and discover the artistry of messages shared through poetry, image, and song. The study of quality literature empowers students to understand contextual nuances of time and place and gain insight into our inherited literary traditions. Local First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Francophone stories reflect the diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives of the founding peoples of Alberta. By exploring stories from both local and global communities in English language arts and literature, students build empathy, broaden perspectives, and expand worldviews.

As text creators, students explore ways to share their ideas, responding to texts they encounter and to the world around them. Throughout English language arts and literature, students apply writing processes and language conventions to organize ideas and communicate effectively in a variety of digital or non-digital contexts. They learn to form opinions based on quality research from multiple sources of information and to support their opinions with evidence and logical arguments. They develop ethical citizenship by learning about and following protocols for accessing information and citing sources. Students explore the English language to craft and shape ideas, instilling beauty or persuasion within compositions and presentations to reflect style and discover their own unique voice.

The English language arts and literature curriculum provides solid foundations in language, literacy, and literature that will support Alberta's students in achieving personal and academic goals. Students will engage in formal and informal exchanges, demonstrating respect, humility, and responsibility as they seek to understand and be understood. By thinking critically, managing information ethically, and sharing ideas effectively, students will be able to adapt to changing conditions, persevere through challenges, and find creative solutions. As confident and competent communicators, Alberta's students will be better prepared to achieve successful and fulfilling lives while making meaningful contributions to their communities and the world.