

**College Readiness English Language Arts and Reading  
Vertical Team Phase 2  
GAP ANALYSIS**

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**Background/Process:**

Phase 2 of the College Readiness Program has been completed as directed by the Third Special Called Session of the 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature with House Bill 1, which is Section 28.008 of Texas Education Code: “Advancement of College Readiness in Curriculum.” A vertical team (VT) of ten members, six representing secondary public education and four representing higher education, was charged with evaluating the degree of alignment between the state’s College Readiness Standards (CRS, adopted January 24, 2008) and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts and Reading, Middle School (Sixth, Seventh, Eighth) and High School (I, II, III, IV) and to identify any gaps that may exist. This process is called “gap analysis,” and the two documents that the VT was charged with comparing are readily available on the Internet at: [www.thecb.state.tx.us/collegereadiness/TCRS.cfm](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/collegereadiness/TCRS.cfm) and [www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/index.html](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/index.html).

Pre-meeting homework was emailed to all team members on September 8, 2008, instructing members to review the CRS and TEKS and rate each of the CRS items as having strong, adequate, or weak alignment with the TEKS. A conference call was held on September 11, 2008, to further explain the homework assignment and provide an overview of the newly revised English Language Arts and Reading TEKS. The ranking system of “strong, adequate, weak” was referred to with the acronym “SAW.” In general, the SAW system was used to assess the qualitative degree of strength of the most direct connection between CRS and TEKS, rather than a quantitative count of how many connections of any strength were found. For cases of alignment that were difficult to identify, members were also asked to note if this was due to the nature of the CRS or to the nature of the TEKS.

On September 23-24, 2008, in Austin, Texas, the Phase 2 College Readiness English Language Arts Vertical Team met to discuss the gap analyses that team members had completed as individuals prior to this meeting. Joseph Kulhanek, TEA Director of the College Readiness Program, and Lynette Heckmann, Director of College Readiness Initiatives from the Higher Education Coordinating Board, guided the VT with their task of analyzing and aligning the CRS English Language Arts and Reading Key Contents, Organizing Components, and Performance Expectations with the TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading. An overview of Phase 1 was provided with ample time for additional questions from team members. Sarah Crippen, Director of Language Arts and Reading for the Texas Education Agency, provided an overview of the most recent English Language Arts and Reading TEKS adoption process and explained the legislative intent to incorporate the CRS into the TEKS. Ms. Crippen then introduced Kim Callison

who was on the Phase 1 Team which wrote the CRS. She offered clarification on the intent of the CRS to help the team make a more meaningful assessment of alignment between CRS and TEKS.

Ms. Crippen facilitated the collective VT discussion using the SAW scale and addressing the CRS standards individually and in order. The template was populated in the left-hand column with the CRS. The middle column was used to record the VT's SAW alignment rating and their comments. The right-hand column was used to record the specific parts of the TEKS the VT members found that align with the CRS. While some of this collective feedback was simply "voiced" and recorded by TEA staff, items for which there was no strong consensus yielded on-the-spot discussion to identify and resolve issues. The VT finished this task on the first day. On the second day, the VT reviewed the gap analysis and made minor changes based on further discussion. Comments by team members were recorded and noted on the gap analysis document.

On the second day, September 24, 2008, the VT collaboratively drafted the initial gap analysis report. The gap analysis was emailed to all VT members on September 9, 2008, for review and comment. All VT members had the opportunity to relay to the co-chairs any feedback or corrections via email. Taking into account the discussion and feedback from this stage, the co-chairs finalized the report and submitted it to the agency for posting on the web portal.

## **Findings and Contextual Comments for Gap Analysis Spreadsheet:**

The Phase 2 College Readiness English Language Arts and Reading vertical team members found that the College Readiness Standards in English Language Arts and Reading are well-aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. With minor exceptions, team members generally indicated strong alignment between the CRS and TEKS.

The following are the findings and comments for individual CRS Standards:

### **CRS I. Writing found to be aligned with English Language Arts and Reading TEKS**

- The CRS writing standard can be aligned with TEKS research standards, primarily because of CRS I.A.2.
- CRS I.A.4. The standard refers to revising but not to editing. Alignment was, therefore, limited to TEKS that explicitly mention revising.
- CRS I.A.5. The general phrase “standard English” assumes the more specific details in TEKS 17, 18, 19. “Voice” is taken to mean grammatical person, not speaker’s voice.

### **CRS II. Reading found to be aligned with English Language Arts and Reading TEKS**

- CRS II.A.1. TEKS 12, “Media Literacy,” includes written texts since it refers to “skills to analyze how words . . . impact meaning.” Though CRS says “determine,” TEKS 10A, with its emphasis on analyzing and evaluating, is relevant since the tasks are so closely related.
- CRS II.A.3. While knowledge and skills statements for TEKS 2-10 include making inferences, the student expectations do not. The CRS standard refers to “explicit and implicit textual information,” but TEKS makes little mention of “explicit” information. “Implicit” cannot be assumed to include “explicit” because a student may understand a literary work’s larger, implied meaning without understanding the explicit meaning of each word.
- CRS II.A.4. This standard should be limited to non-fiction texts because of its emphasis on “facts,” “assertions,” and “opinions.”
- CRS II.A.6. Only TEKS that explicitly refer to “imagery” are included here since the CRS II.A.7 refers to the broader term “figurative language.”
- CRS II.A.8. The alignment is judged to be merely adequate because of uncertainty about the meaning of the term “generic” in the CRS. According to the CRS examples, “generic features” refers to form, genre, or persona, perhaps intending a distinction between informational and literary texts. Furthermore, while TEKS emphasizes study within various genres, there is little about study across genres.
- CRS II.A.9. Six members voted adequate, primarily because of limited mention of audience in TEKS. Furthermore, while evaluation is a higher-level skill that usually assumes analysis, alignment was limited to TEKS that explicitly say “analyze.”
- CRS II.C.3. The alignment was judged merely adequate because the CRS standard emphasizes reading literature in order to understand its historical period,

- rather than comparing or contrasting literature from different periods. Alignment is strong in middle school and in English IV, but weak in English I, II, and III.
- CRS II.C.4. Alignment is strong in middle school, adequate in English I and II, but weak in English III and IV.
  - CRS II.D.1. The alignment was judged merely adequate because “insights gained about oneself” is weak in TEKS (while the phrase “making connections,” found in several TEKS, could include personal insights, this meaning is not clear). Alignment is especially weak in middle school and in English I.
  - CRS II.D.2. The alignment is clear in English I, III, and IV, but it is not explicit at other levels. This is understandable since middle school is often teaching the earlier literature that will then become the basis for comparison to later literature in high school.

**CRS III. Speaking found to be aligned with English Language Arts and Reading TEKS**

- CRS III.A.2. The alignment was judged merely adequate because of insufficient evidence in TEKS to show that students are taught to adjust their presentations.
- CRS III.B.1. The alignment was judged weak because TEKS makes no mention of one-on-one communication.

**CRS IV. Listening found to be aligned with English Language Arts and Reading TEKS**

- CRS IV.B.2. The alignment was judged weak because TEKS makes no mention of one-on-one communication.

**CRS V. Research found to be aligned with English Language Arts and Reading TEKS**

- CRS V.A.3. While TEKS does not make explicit reference to devising a research timeline, this may be assumed to be part of developing a research plan.
- CRS V.B.4. While TEKS does not explicitly use the term “ethically,” high school TEKS use the term “accurately,” and middle school TEKS refer to differentiation between “paraphrasing and plagiarism.”
- CRS V.C.2. While TEKS does not explicitly use the term “ethically,” high school TEKS use the term “accurately,” and middle school TEKS refer to differentiation between “paraphrasing and plagiarism.”

**Phase 2 Vertical Team members**

Higher Education

- Arbolina Jennings, Texas Southern University, Houston
- Elizabeth Kessler, University of Houston, Houston
- Mark Noe, The University of Texas Pan American, Edinburg
- Pat Tyrer, West Texas A&M University, Canyon

Secondary Education:

- Cindy Davis, Winters High School, Winters
- Doloris (Lori) Brown, Winston Churchill High School, San Antonio

- Maria Ludivina Cortez, Nikki Rowe High School, McAllen
- Maggie Portillo, Lee High School, Midland
- Debbie King, Lee High School, Baytown
- Edwin Wood, Bowie High School, Arlington

**Texas Education Agency**

- Sarah Crippen, Director of English Language Arts and Reading
- Kerry Ballast, Assistant Director of English Language Arts and Reading
- Joseph Kulhanek, Director of the College Readiness Program

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

- Lynette Heckman, Director of College Readiness Initiatives
- Evelyn Hiatt, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of P16 Initiatives

# English Language Arts Gap Analysis

*Organizing Structure: The Texas College Readiness Standards Compared to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts*

Texas College Readiness English Language Arts Standards	Alignment Rating with Comment	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts
<p>The English language arts (ELA) College Readiness Standards (CRS) are designed to help students understand the specific content knowledge and academic skills necessary for college readiness. The CRS are broad in nature, equipping students for general education college ELA courses, but are not intended to encompass all skills necessary for students entering majors that require specific ELA knowledge.</p>	<p><b>SAW System:</b>  <b>S=Strong Alignment</b>  <b>A=Adequate Alignment</b>  <b>W=Weak Alignment</b>  <b>For example:</b>  <b>S9, W1=Nine vertical team members found strong alignment and one found weak alignment</b></p>	<p>As stipulated in the Texas Education Code, school districts are required to provide instruction in essential knowledge and skills at the appropriate grade levels. <b>The English language arts TEKS listed within this column apply to the essential knowledge for middle and high school students.</b></p>
<p><b>I. Writing</b></p>		
<p><b>A. Compose a variety of texts that demonstrate clear focus, the logical development of ideas in well-organized paragraphs, and the use of appropriate language that advances the author's purpose.</b></p>		
<p>1. Determine effective approaches, forms, and rhetorical techniques that demonstrate understanding of the writer's purpose and audience.</p>	S10	13a(h), 14ab(m), 15a(h), 16abd(h)
<p>2. Generate ideas and gather information relevant to the topic and purpose, keeping careful records of outside sources.</p>	S10	13a(h), 14ab(m), 20a(h), 21b(h), 23c(m), 23d(6,8)
<p>3. Evaluate relevance, quality, sufficiency, and depth of preliminary ideas and information, organize material generated, and formulate thesis.</p>	S10	13ab(h), 14ac(m), 15a(h), 16c(11,12), 16d(9,10), 21a(h), 22b(h), 23a(h), 24ab(m)

Texas College Readiness English Language Arts Standards	Alignment Rating with Comment	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts
4. Recognize the importance of revision as the key to effective writing. Each draft should refine key ideas and organize them more logically and fluidly, use language more precisely and effectively, and draw the reader to the author's purpose.	S10	13ce(h), 14ce(m), 22ac(h)
5. Edit writing for proper voice, tense, and syntax, assuring that it conforms to standard English, when appropriate.	S10	13d(h), 14d(m), 17(h), 18(h), 19abc(m), 19(h), 20(m), 21(m)
<b>II. Reading</b>		
<b>A. Locate explicit textual information and draw complex inferences, analyze, and evaluate the information within and across texts of varying lengths.</b>		
1. Use effective reading strategies to determine a written work's purpose and intended audience.	S10	8(h), 9(m), 10a(h), 11a(6), 12cd(9,10,12)
2. Use text features and graphics to form an overview of informational texts and to determine where to locate information.	S10	11b(h), 12b(m,h), 13a(6)
3. Identify explicit and implicit textual information including main ideas and author's purpose.	S10	8(h), 9(m), 9a(h), 13a(7)
4. Draw and support complex inferences from text to summarize, draw conclusions, and distinguish facts from simple assertions and opinions.	S10	8(h), 9ac(h), 10abc(m), 10ab(12), rcd(m), rcab(h)
5. Analyze the presentation of information and the strength and quality of evidence used by the author, and judge the coherence and logic of the presentation and the credibility of an argument.	S10	9ad(9,10), 10ab(h), 11ab(m), 12abc(h)
6. Analyze imagery in literary texts.	S10	3(9), 4(6), 7(6), 7(12), 8(m), rca(h)c(m)
7. Evaluate the use of both literal and figurative language to inform and shape the perceptions of readers.	S10	2c(9,10), 3(9,12), 4(6), 5a(11), 6(8,10), 8(m), rc(m)b

Texas College Readiness English Language Arts Standards	Alignment Rating with Comment	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts
8. Compare and analyze how generic features are used across texts.	S4, A6. "Generic features" undefined in CRS; TEKS emphasizes genre within rather than across texts.	2b(h), 3b(m)
9. Identify and analyze the audience, purpose, and message of an informational or persuasive text.	S4, A6. Minimal mention to audience in TEKS.	8(h), 9(6,7,8,10), 10a(6,7,8,9,10,12), 11a(8)
10. Identify and analyze how an author's use of language appeals to the senses, creates imagery, and suggests mood.	S10	3(9), 6(10,12), 7(11,12), 8(m,11), rca(h)
11. Identify, analyze, and evaluate similarities and differences in how multiple texts present information, argue a position, or relate a theme.	S10	2a(10,12)b(12), 3c(6), 9b(12)d(h), 10b(9,11)d(m), 11a(7,8), rcf(m)
<b>B. Understand new vocabulary and concepts and use them accurately in reading, speaking, and writing.</b>		
1. Identify new words and concepts acquired through study of their relationships to other words and concepts.	S10	1abc(h)d(9,10,11), 2bcd(m)
2. Apply knowledge of roots and affixes to infer the meanings of new words.	S10	1a(h), 2a(m), 2d(8)
3. Use reference guides to confirm the meanings of new words or concepts.	S10	1e(h), 2e(m)
<b>C. Describe, analyze, and evaluate information within and across literary and other texts from a variety of cultures and historical periods.</b>		
1. Read a wide variety of texts from American, European, and world literatures.	S10	2b(h), 3(11,12), 3bc(6), 3ab(8), 4(11,12), 5d(h)
2. Analyze themes, structures, and elements of myths, traditional narratives, and classical and contemporary literature.	S10	2b(9,11,12), 3b(m), 3ac(7,8), 5abc(12), 6a(6,8)
3. Analyze works of literature for what they suggest about the historical period and cultural contexts in which they were written.	S3, A7. Alignment is strong in middle school and in English IV, but weak in English I, II, and III. (Standard not mentioned in TEKS at these levels.)	2c(12), 3c(m)

Texas College Readiness English Language Arts Standards	Alignment Rating with Comment	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts
4. Analyze and compare the use of language in literary works from a variety of world cultures.	S6, A4. Alignment is strong in middle school, adequate in English I and II, but weak in English III and IV. (Standard not mentioned in TEKS at these levels.)	2c(9,10), 3abc(m)
<b>D. Explain how literary and other texts evoke personal experience and reveal character in particular historical circumstances.</b>		
1. Describe insights gained about oneself, others, or the world from reading specific texts.	S2, A8. We found more connections to insights about the world but not as many connections to oneself in TEKS. There is no specific language in middle school through 9th grade that reflects this particular standard in TEKS.	2a(11), 2c(12), 5b(10,12), rcac(m), rca(h)
2. Analyze the influence of myths, folktales, fables, and classical literature from a variety of world cultures on later literature and film.	S10. The alignment is clear in English I, III, and IV, but is not explicit in TEKS at other levels. This is understandable since middle school is doing the preparatory work.	2b(9,11,12)
<b>III. Speaking</b>		
<b>A. Understand the elements of communication both in informal group discussions and formal presentations (e.g., accuracy, relevance, rhetorical features, and organization of information).</b>		
1. Understand how style and content of spoken language varies in different contexts and influences the listener's understanding.	S10	25(h)
2. Adjust presentation (delivery, vocabulary, length) to particular audiences and purposes.	S1, A9. TEKS do not show enough evidence that students are being taught to adjust their presentations.	25(9,12), 27(m)
<b>B. Develop effective speaking styles for both group and one-on-one situations.</b>		

Texas College Readiness English Language Arts Standards	Alignment Rating with Comment	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts
1. Participate actively and effectively in one-on-one oral communication situations.	W10. No one-on-one in TEKS.	None
2. Participate actively and effectively in group discussions.	S10	26(h), 28(m)
3. Plan and deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct perspectives and demonstrate solid reasoning.	S10	25(h), 27(m)
<b>IV. Listening</b>		
<b>A. Apply listening skills as an individual and as a member of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).</b>		
1. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a public presentation.	S10	24b(11,12), 24c(9,10), 26a(m)
2. Interpret a speaker's message; identify the position taken and the evidence in support of that position.	S10	24a(h), 26a(m)
3. Use a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focus attention on message, monitor message for clarity and understanding, provide verbal and nonverbal feedback, note cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point is about to be made, select and organize key information).	S10	26ac(m), 26(11,12)
<b>B. Listen effectively in informal and formal situations.</b>		
1. Listen critically and respond appropriately to presentations.	S10	24a(h), 26a(m)
2. Listen actively and effectively in one-on-one communication situations.	W10. No one-on-one in TEKS.	None

Texas College Readiness English Language Arts Standards	Alignment Rating with Comment	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts
3. Listen actively and effectively in group discussions.	S10	26(h), 28(m)
<b>V. Research</b>		
<b>A. Formulate topic and questions.</b>		
1. Formulate research questions.	S10	20a(h), 20b(9), 22a(m)
2. Explore a research topic.	S10	20b(h), 21a(9,11), 22a(m)
3. Refine research topic and devise a timeline for completing work.	S10	20b(h), 22a(h)b(m)
<b>B. Select information from a variety of sources.</b>		
1. Gather relevant sources.	S10	21a(h), 23a(m)
2. Evaluate the validity and reliability of sources.	S10	21a(11,12), 22b(11,12), 24b(m)
3. Synthesize and organize information effectively.	S10	21b(h), 22b(h), 24ab(m)
4. Use source material ethically.	S10	21c(h), 23d(11,12)e(6,9,10)d(7,8)
<b>C. Produce and design a document.</b>		
1. Design and present an effective product.	S10	23abcde(h), 25abcd(m)
2. Use source material ethically.	S10	21c(h), 23d(7,8,11,12)e(6,9,10)