

ELA REPORTER



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YOUR PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

PROPOSED REVISIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in English Language Arts (ELA) have been revised based on a formal review and evaluation process as directed by an Executive Order from the Governor. The review and evaluation process included several survey opportunities as well as legislative and Georgia State Board of Education listening sessions. Survey feedback was collected and analyzed by the University System of Georgia. The University System of Georgia provided survey results and recommendations for revisions to the standards to the State Board of Education on September 24, 2014. A Working Committee representing K-12 Georgia public school teachers, post-secondary staff, parents, and instructional leaders from across the state made revisions to the standards based on public feedback and recommendations from survey results for standards with less than 90% approval. ELA Advisory Committee then reviewed the recommended changes made by the Working Committees and provided additional suggestions for clarity and change based on feedback and survey recommendations. Business and Industry partners that include the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Georgia Public Broadcasting, and Georgia Power have been involved in the review and evaluation process. An Academic Review Committee consisting of representatives from the writing and advisory committees; the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement; and the Georgia Department of Education leadership staff reviewed and finalized the draft revised standards for presentation to the State Board of Education for permission to post for **60 days of public review and comment**.

Note: There were some recommendations made by survey respondents that committee members felt would be more appropriate for inclusion in the Teacher Guidance documents developed by the Georgia Department of Education for each grade/course and subject. Other recommendations to be emphasized in Guidance and Professional Learning include: **phonics instruction, cursive writing, literature and informational text, traditional computing methods, and the memorization of addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts.**

The draft of revised standards will be posted for 60 days of public review and comment from **November 12, 2014 through January 10, 2015.**

Gray highlighted standards denote one or more of the following:

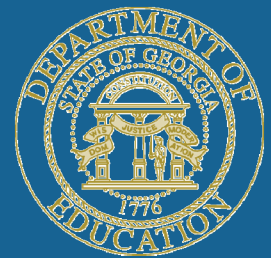
1. Standard as currently written received greater than or equal to 90% approval.
2. Standard as currently written was changed due to vertical alignment.
3. Standard as currently written was deleted to eliminate duplication.
4. Standard as currently written was reviewed and modifications were recommended for inclusion in Teacher Guidance documents.
5. Standard as currently written was reviewed and no change was recommended.

Drafts of Revised Standards Please click on the following links to access the draft of the revised standards: > [Revised English Language Arts Standards](#)

Surveys for Revised Standards After you have reviewed the draft revised standards, please click on the following links to access a short survey to provide your feedback about the revisions to the standards:

> <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/Proposed-English-Language-Arts-and-Mathematics-Standards-Kindergarten-through-High-School.aspx>

Georgia
Department
of Education



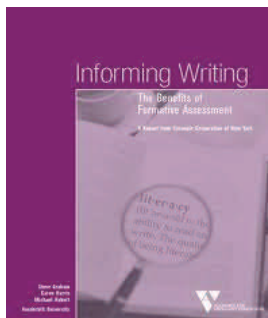
Dr. John D. Barge,
State School
Superintendent

*“Making Education Work
for All Georgians”*

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THE VALUE OF FORMATIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT



CLASSROOM-BASED WRITING ASSESSMENT

Informing Writing: The Benefits of Formative Assessment is the third report published by the Carnegie Corporation. Authors Steve Graham, Karen Harris, and Michael Hebert assert, “writing is not a generic skill but requires mastering the use of writing for multiple purposes.” In an effort to help teachers (and students) meet the requirements of the writing standards, we want to provide guidance for classroom instruction. According to authors Graham, Harris, and Hebert (2011), “...formative assessments allows teachers to gauge the effectiveness of instructional practices, modify instruction as needed, and provide students with feedback on writing strengths and areas in need for further development.”

The entire report provides evidence to answer two questions:

1. Does formative writing assessment enhance students’ writing?
2. How can teachers improve formative writing assessment in the classroom?

Not to overlook the research findings that examine the effectiveness of formative writing assessment (meta-analysis technique allows researchers to determine consistency and strength of the effects of an instructional practice), but the short answer to the first question is yes. Formative writing assessment does enhance students’ writing. However, the practical application of this report is where the focus of this article lies: How can teachers improve formative writing assessment in the classroom?

The authors of this report point out that assessments can be administered in a variety of ways in the classroom:

Providing feedback: Writing improves when teachers assessing students’ writing, Peers assessing others’ writing

Teaching students to assess their own writing: Writing improves when students are taught to evaluate the effectiveness of their own writing.

Monitoring progress: Writing improves when teachers monitor students’ progress on an ongoing basis.

In the section on Best Practices, the authors provide evidence that demonstrates enhanced effects of including formative writing assessment as part of classroom instruction.

Time is always a precious commodity that teachers have very little of, so we have tried to narrow the focus of this report. The entire document is 69 pages (including appendixes); however, the actual “practical” part of the report is 33 pages. For practical purposes (instruction in the classroom), the strength of the report lies in the Best Practices section, pages 16–25 (10 pages).

While Graham, Harris, and Hebert do not offer these as the *only* strategies that will improve student writing, they do point out that this report “demonstrates that there are a variety of effective instructional methods teachers can apply to improve the writing and reading achievement of students in American schools.”

Graham, S., Harris, K., and Hebert, M.A. (2011). *Informing writing: The benefits of formative assessment. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act report.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Read further at <http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/InformingWriting.pdf>.



CARNEGIE CORPORATION

Carnegie Corporation was established by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 “to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding.” The foundation makes grants to promote international peace and to advance education and knowledge. For more information, visit www.carnegie.org.





The State of ELA in Georgia, by Carolyn Waters

The State of ELA in Georgia:

Your ELA/Literacy team at the DOE is keenly aware of the ‘critical needs’ of our English teachers. Clearly, our English teachers must shift into high gear and focus on writing, close reading of literary and informational texts, and citing text evidence as required by constructed and extended response questions that are expected on the new Georgia Milestones EOG and EOC assessments. This focus will impact the ability of our students to understand the demands of analysis and synthesis from multiple sources of information. Moreover, this focus will have a greater impact on the demand for rigor which will propel student engagement and achievement. We are interested in meeting the needs of our teachers in order to assist them in the preparation of all our students. As a result, we have embarked on a three-phase strategic design to prepare for **“Rigorous Academic Writing.”** **Phase I of the ELA Triathlon** includes instruction to promote and build sustainability for rigorous writing by using the process embedded in the DBQ/LBQ Project (Document Based Questions/ Literary Based Questions). This process empowers teachers to prepare students for rigorous academic writing. **Phase II** will include a deep understanding of “Learning Progressions” enabling teachers to more tightly align standards K-12 and invest students with the power to understand their own learning progression. **Phase III** includes a close examination of performance-based tasks for the purpose of giving students grade-level appropriate, scaffold opportunities to demonstrate their ability to analyze and synthesize information. The goal? *Rigorous Academic Writing* that evinces student learning and enhances student achievement.

We continue to partner with our RESA ELA Specialists and the ELA Advisory Committee to assess the needs of our teachers and to evaluate the resources we have in order to support new initiatives to improve instruction. Please urge your teachers to sign up for our *ListServ* (links on page 4) so that they can get copies of *The ELA Reporter* and other important links to instructional strategies, professional research, updates, videos, and other valuable information. We also want to encourage you and your teachers to keep your eye on the vision of “*Making Education Work for All Georgians.*”

Rigorous Academic Writing

Update on Phase I: (DBQ/LBQ Literacy Project) Writing Process

In the month of August, the ELA/Literacy team, in partnership with the RESA Districts, completed Day 1 Training at three sites: Dearing (CSRA), Cartersville (Bartow County College and Career Academy), and Lenox (Coastal Plains RESA). Teachers were introduced to a writing process that includes multiple texts that are thematically connected. Teachers learned how students must examine all the texts and go through a process that includes close reading for deep understanding, finding the salient theme, writing a thesis, identifying the evidence to support their theme, drawing inferences, and making coherent arguments in a written constructed response. **DOES THIS SOUND LIKE SKILLS THAT ARE NEEDED FOR ANSWERING THE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE QUESTIONS MAKING THEIR DEBUT ON THE NEW GEORGIA MILESTONES?**

In October, Day 2 Trainings were conducted at the same three strategic sites across Georgia in order to examine essays that were written by students after the teachers took the process from Day 1 training back to their classrooms. Tools of assessment (formative as well as summative) were examined in order to help teachers understand the power of collecting and examining the data to determine what adjustments are needed to differentiate and scaffold instruction for students who struggle as well as excel. **DOES THIS SOUND LIKE SKILLS THAT ARE NEEDED FOR MEETING THE TKES EVALUATION MAKING A DEBUT IN GEORGIA?**

The State of ELA in Georgia (continued)

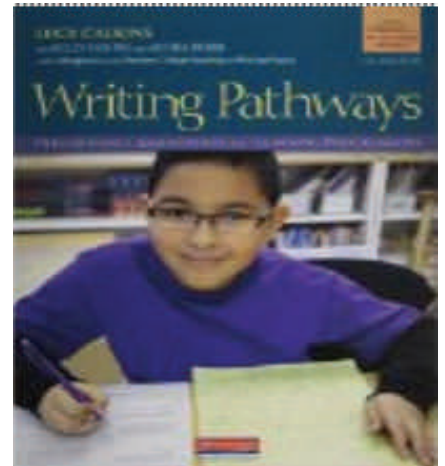


Our next steps include the creation of Professional Learning Communities of the trained teachers in this Rigorous Academic Writing Cadre and asking them to share their work with peers by opening up “**Lab Classrooms**” where teachers and administrators can observe this process. We are working toward the goal of being able to video classrooms where this kind of instruction is taking root. Our objective is to grow PLCs for Rigorous Academic Writing all over the state. To find out more about the DBQ/LBQ Literacy Project, you can access their site at the following link: <http://www.dbqproject.com/>.

DOES THIS SOUND LIKE THE KIND OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEACHERS PREFER—LEARNING FROM PEER TEACHERS?

Update on Phase II: Learning Progressions

Once more the DOE ELA/Literacy team and RESA ELA Specialists are partnering to begin planning the creation of Learning Progressions for Writing (a critical need) across Georgia. We have provided each RESA with a brand new publication from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project called *Writing Pathways*. Our next quarterly meeting will include a book study followed by a carefully orchestrated plan to train Georgia teachers. Depending on budget concerns, our hope is to bring Home Grown Institutes to Georgia teachers next summer.



DOES THIS SOUND LIKE A WAY TO EMPOWER OUR TEACHERS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN OWNING THEIR OWN LEARNING PROGRESSION TOWARD ACADEMIC GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT?

Some of you may have heard Mary Ehrenworth, a colleague of Lucy Calkins at Teachers College, at the Fall GACIS Conference; if so, this study will provide our teachers with the kind of inspired professional development that is vital to Georgia’s success! To find out more about the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, you may wish to explore their website: <http://readingandwritingproject.org/about>

Phase III: UBD Performance-Based Writing Tasks using grade-level, appropriate multiple texts to write a synthesis essays for grades 4-12. **UNDER CONSTRUCTION**



INSPIRE LEARNING! STAY POSITIVE!





Young Georgia Author's Writing Competition 2014-2015

ABOUT THE YOUNG GEORGIA AUTHORS WRITING COMPETITION

The purpose of the Young Georgia Authors (YGA) writing competition is to encourage students to develop enthusiasm for and expertise in their writing, to provide a context to celebrate their writing successes, and to recognize student achievement in arts and academics.

This prestigious competition has been engaging Georgia students for more than two decades and is open to any student currently enrolled in Georgia public schools, grades K-12. The competition is co-sponsored by the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) and the Georgia Council of Teachers of English (GCTE).

WHAT TO WRITE

Unlike many writing competitions, the YGA does not provide a prompt to which students must respond or provide any other boundaries to their genre choice or creativity beyond a five-page maximum length limit (if typed, Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced). Entries may include:

- ◆ *Short Stories*
- ◆ *Poetry*
- ◆ *Essays/Literary Criticism/Analysis*
- ◆ *Journalism,*
- ◆ *Academic/Research Reports*
- ◆ *Personal Narratives*
- ◆ *Any Other Original Student Writing .*



HOW TO ENTER

Writings can only be entered in to the state-level competition by first winning a system level competition. The DOE and the GCTE will only accept submissions sent by a system level administrator. School systems may submit ONE winning entry per grade level (K-12). Entries must be provided to us on flat, ordinary paper. No bound copies, booklets, etc., will be judged. Please keep a copy of your submission for your records as the DOE and GCTE will not keep or return originals after the competition. The competition will not accept individual entries from students, parents, teachers, or other agencies. Good luck and happy writing!

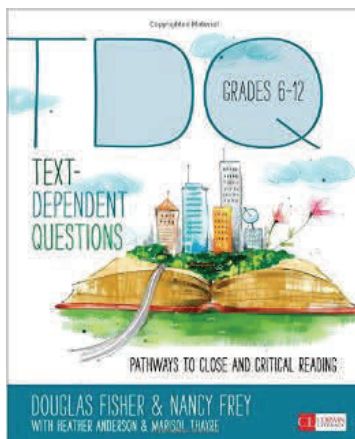
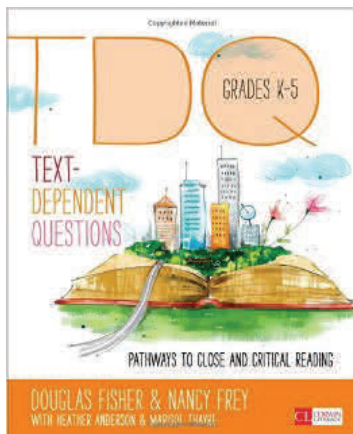
Official deadline to enter is **May 17, 2015**. For more information about entry guidelines for the Young Georgia Author's Competition, click on the following link: <http://gcte.net/> or contact Kathleen McKenzie at Kathleen_mckenzie@gwinnett.k12.ga.us.



*“Don't tell me the moon is shining;
show me the glint of light on broken
glass.”*

— Anton Chekhov

Resources We Recommend



Fisher & Frey's answer to close and critical reading

The genius of TDQ is the way Fisher and Frey break down the process into four cognitive pathways that help teachers "organize the journey through a text" and frame an extended discussion around it. Step by step, this approach ensures that in every close reading lesson, students are guided to consider explicit and implied meanings, and deeply analyze and appreciate various aspects of a text, especially those that may be challenging or confusing.

Here's how the four inter-related processes play out, with every why and every how answered:

What does the text say? (general understandings and key details)

How does the text work? (vocabulary, structure, and author's craft)

What does the text mean? (logical inferences and intertextual connections)

What does the text inspire you to do? (write, investigate, present, debate)

Longtime collaborators and recipients of numerous teaching and leadership awards, DOUGLAS FISHER and NANCY FREY are Professors of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University as well as teacher leaders at Health Sciences High & Middle College.

Book description and additional information can be found at <http://www.corwin.com/books/Book241984>.



Join Our ListServ and Check out our Wikis

One of the best ways to stay connected for information specific to your grade band is through our listserv (email list).

No username or password required

- ELA K-5 Join-ela-k-5@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- ELA 6-8 Join-ela-6-8@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- ELA 9-12 Join-ela-9-12@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- ELA District Support Join-ela-districtsupport@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- ELA Administrators Join-ela-admin@list.doe.k12.ga.us

Wikis:

- High School Wiki: <http://elaccqps9-12.wikispaces.com/>
- Middle Wiki: <http://georgiaelaccqps6-8.wikispaces.com/>
- Elementary Wiki: <http://georgiaelaccqpsk-5.wikispaces.com/>

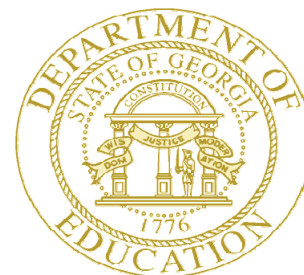


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GeorgiaStandards.Org ELA Page:
[https://www.georgiastandards.org/
Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx](https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx)