

# English Language Arts (ELA) Glossary

A Toolkit, including curriculum guidance materials and resources applicable to use in grades prekindergarten to grade 12, is located on the Department's website. Please see:

ELA Toolkit: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/3-8/ELAToolkit.html>

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Appropriate group behaviors</b>	These would include speaking and listening skills. Speaking includes communicating through such means as vocalization, signing, or using communication aids, such as voice synthesizers. These behaviors would include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaking in turn</li> <li>looking at the people when speaking and listening, if possible</li> <li>using an appropriate volume and rate</li> <li>answering or asking questions that relate to the topic being discussed</li> <li>thinking before speaking</li> <li>attending/listening to others and reacting appropriately to them</li> <li>sitting or standing still, as much as is possible</li> <li>gesturing appropriately</li> <li>being courteous in general</li> </ol>
<b>Audience</b>	The specified or clearly implied person(s) to whom writers address his/her correspondence
<b>Author's message</b>	This refers to the intent; what he/she is trying to say, what is the point; possibly related to the moral of the story, if it has one; message is related to author's purpose.
<b>Author's purpose</b>	An author may have more than one purpose for writing a piece of literature, such as to entertain, to instruct, persuade, or describe. It refers to why he/she says what he/she says.
<b>Author's style</b>	This refers to the general characteristics of a work that distinguish it from another author's work; often includes the author's use of language and how the use of the language affects the author's intent.
<b>Bias</b>	An inclination of temperament or outlook; a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment; prejudice-an instance of such prejudice; deviation of the expected value of a statistical estimate from the quantity it estimates; systematic error introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others.
<b>Collage</b>	Grouping of words, pictures, symbols, etc. displayed without necessarily having a set pattern or organization to follow
<b>Compare</b>	To actively point out similarities.
<b>Compose</b>	All words that can refer to the act of writing and include the creation of original material, possibly by voice; by organizing or shaping information or ideas; and/or by using objects, visual language (selecting pictures, symbols, etc. to convey information), signing, stamping, and any communication aids such as a voice synthesizer or speech generating device that has audible speech output, from single switch through computer based options to communicate ideas, choices or information.
<b>Communicate</b>	Convey knowledge of or information about something. Communication is an expression of information via a variety of modes of communication (e.g., eye gaze, point, sign, verbalize, etc.).
<b>Contrast</b>	Refers to indicating differences.
<b>Create</b>	See <i>compose</i> .

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<b>Data</b>	Information that is often numeric and usually used for analysis.
<b>Descriptive text</b>	A descriptive text is a text which lists the characteristics of something. The topic is usually about the attributes of a thing. Third person pronoun forms are used. (e.g., requirements for employment, the appearance of a person, the details of a location, etc.)
<b>Explicit text</b>	Explicit text reveals the meaning by direct statements. For example, at the end of a fable, the moral is often stated.
<b>Exposition</b>	One of the classifications of discourse whose function is to inform or to instruct or to present ideas and general truths objectively. Exposition presents information, provides explanations and definitions, and compares and contrasts.
<b>Facts</b>	Information that can be verified as true.
<b>Fact vs. opinion</b>	Statements of fact can be proven conclusively to be true or false. Statements of opinion cannot be proven to be true or false.
<b>Fallacies</b>	Statements, arguments, or conclusions based on faulty reasoning.
<b>Familiar text vs. unfamiliar text</b>	Familiar text is something that is typical for the student and frequently reads or listens to it; it is text that is commonly read or read aloud as part of the instructional program. Unfamiliar text is not something that the student would be readily familiar with; it is text that would be new to a student when read or listened to.
<b>Fiction</b>	Texts that are not true stories, but may have some basis in truth. For example, historical fiction, literary work whose content is produced by the imagination, etc.
<b>Fluency</b>	The ability to read connected text with appropriate speed, accuracy and expression.
<b>Genre</b>	A category used to classify literary works, usually by form, technique, or content. Examples of genres: poems, plays, fiction, nonfiction, etc.
<b>Graphic organizer</b>	One example of a strategy to show the relationship of ideas or information to other ideas or information: webs, maps, charts, Venn diagrams, etc.; displays information in an organized format
<b>Implicit text</b>	Implicit text refers to text that must be interpreted; the meaning is “between the lines.”
<b>Infer, make an inference</b>	A deduction or conclusion made from facts that are suggested or implied (implicit) rather than overtly stated (explicit).
<b>Informational text</b>	Informational text is organized by topic and supporting details, whereas literary text is organized by the structure of a story, poem, or drama. Informational texts may have boldface headings, graphics, illustrations, and captions that signal importance in the text.
<b>Justify</b>	To show good reason for a decision or conclusion by providing facts or data.
<b>Literal questions</b>	The answers are directly stated in the story and require no inference. These questions often address who, what, where, when, and why.
<b>Literary devices</b>	The techniques authors use to achieve a particular effect; For example, symbolism, metaphor, simile, alliteration, personification, flashback, foreshadowing, exaggeration, analogy, irony, etc.
<b>Literary elements</b>	Literary elements include: setting, plot, character, rhythm, and rhyme.
<b>Literary text</b>	A wide range of texts that tell a story to make a point, express a personal opinion, or provide an enjoyable experience.
<b>Main idea vs. supporting detail</b>	Main idea is a generalization that can be used to refer to the central idea of informational text, sometimes to pieces (paragraph or section) of informational text. Details refer to statements about specific facts, ideas, or data that support main ideas.
<b>Main idea vs. theme</b>	The term “main idea” refers to informational text whereas the terms “theme” or “message” refer to literary text.
<b>Nonfiction</b>	Texts that are based on fact, include informational text, content area text, practical “how-to” text, biography, autobiography, etc.; literary works that are not fiction.
<b>Note taking</b>	The act of composing text that is a condensed or informal record or a brief comment or explanation based on read or listened to information.

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<b>Outline</b>	<p>Many writers use an outline to help them think through the various stages of the writing process. An outline is a type of graphic scheme of the organization of your paper. It indicates the main arguments for your thesis as well as the subtopics under each main point. Outlines range from an informal use of indenting and graphics (such as —, *, +) to a formal use of Roman numerals and letters. Regardless of the degree of formality, the function of an outline is to help you consider the most effective way to say what you want to say. Another way to think of it is an outline is a hierarchical way to display related items of text to graphically depict their relationships. They are often used by students for research papers. Outlines provide a summary showing the logical flow of a paper. They are useful because they:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. help the writer organize their thoughts before getting bogged down in word choice and sentence structure;</li> <li>2. show which ideas need illustration or elaboration; and</li> <li>3. help the writer decide on an organizational technique for the report, whether it be logical, chronological, or categorical in nature.</li> </ol>
<b>Paragraph</b>	One or more sentences to develop a complete thought. A caption can be considered a paragraph.
<b>Perspective: literary, political, personal, and evaluative criteria</b>	A point of view or way of judging a piece of literature; a literary perspective might look at a piece of literature and analyze it based on its literary merits; a political perspective might look at the same piece of literature and analyze it, based on the political climate in which it was written or the political standpoint of the author; a personal perspective would present a reader's view based on personal criteria. Personal criteria are the basis for an evaluation.
<b>Persuade</b>	A communicative purpose in which a writer attempts to convince an audience of one's point of view or to move them to action.
<b>Poetry</b>	Writing designed to convey a vivid and imaginative sense of experience, especially by the use of condensed language chosen for its sound and suggestive power as well as for its meaning. Language choices are also made to achieve meter, rhyme, natural cadences, and metaphors.
<b>Predict</b>	A declaration or indication in advance of it occurring, especially to foretell on the basis of observation, experience, or scientific reason.
<b>Prose</b>	A literary medium distinguished from poetry, especially by its greater irregularity and variety of rhythm and its closer correspondence to the patterns of everyday speech.
<b>Relevant vs. irrelevant</b>	Relevant is related to a topic in some way which makes a difference to the purpose that is being presented. Irrelevant is not related to a topic in some way which makes a difference to the purpose that is being presented.
<b>Rhyme</b>	The repetition of sounds in two or more words or phrases, which appear close to each other in a poem. <i>End rhyme</i> occurs at the end of lines. An <i>internal rhyme</i> occurs within a line. <i>Slant rhyme</i> is approximate rhyme. A <i>rhyme scheme</i> is the pattern of end rhymes.
<b>Rhythm</b>	The regular recurrence and speed of sound and stresses in a poem or work of prose.
<b>Story elements</b>	<p>Basic story elements include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. plot – the sequence of events or actions in a novel, play, short story, or narrative poem</li> <li>b. character – a person or sometimes animal that takes part in the plot</li> <li>c. setting – time and place in which a short story, novel, or narrative poem take place</li> <li>d. theme – the central meaning of a literary work</li> <li>e. point of view – the perspective or vantage point from which a literary work is told, or the way in which an author reveals characters, actions, and ideas</li> </ol>

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<b>Summarize</b>	An approach to thinking and writing that expresses the main points of one or several resources, including readings, research findings, events, the writer’s own ideas, etc.
<b>Texts (written phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, symbols, illustrations; can be digitally available)</b>	Generally, the words of something that are written or printed; here words can be conveyed in pictures, symbols, signing, etc.  The definition of texts from the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) publication: “printed communication in their varied forms; oral communications, including conversations, speeches, etc. and visual communications such as film, video, and computer displays”.
<b>Text features</b>	Text features include: boldface print, italics, font type and size, underscoring, layout, color, headings, illustrations, graphs, charts, etc.
<b>Tone</b>	The writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience conveyed through the author’s choice of words and detail. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, objective, etc.
<b>Types of reading (e.g., choral, popcorn, round-robin, etc.)</b>	Choral reading is people reading in unison; popcorn reading or round-robin reading is people taking turns reading by a random selection (For example, tossing a soft object to the person sitting next to you to designate the next reader, etc.)
<b>Validity</b>	An argument is valid if its basis can be supported by reason.
<b>Visual language</b>	Visual language includes: print, symbols, photos, pictures, objects, etc. in place of words or text.
<b>Voice</b>	The distinctive style or manner of expression of an author or of a character.
<b>Write</b>	See <i>compose</i> .
<b>Writing Process</b>	A series of overlapping and recursive processes (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing) a writer often moves among when developing a piece of writing. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. prewriting – the formulation and organization of ideas preparatory to writing</li> <li>b. drafting – to draw the preliminary sketch, version, plan, or initial composition of the final product</li> <li>c. revising – to review in order to correct or improve</li> <li>d. editing – to make revisions to the draft version of the final product</li> </ol>

Resources:

- NAEP Reading for 2009 and Writing for 2011 Framework (pre-publication editions, 2007) available at <http://www.nagb.org/frameworks/fw.html>
- *Standards for the English Language Arts Book*, created by NCTE and IRA, published by NCTE
- *Webster’s II New Collegiate Dictionary* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001)
- <http://mainegov-images.informe.org/education/lres/pei/glossary032008.pdf>
- School Improvement Maryland available at <http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/reading/glossary.shtml>
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/outlines.shtml>

Disclaimer: The New York State Education Department does not recommend specific texts or publishers. Other resources may be visited for definitions.