

2006 Mississippi Language Arts Curriculum Framework - Revised



**Dr. Hank M. Bounds, State Superintendent of Education
Dr. Beth Sewell, Executive to the Superintendent
Dr. Kris Kaase, Associate State Superintendent of Academic Education
Robin Miles, Bureau Director, Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts**

**Mississippi Department of Education
P.O. Box 771, 359 North West Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
(601) 359-3778
www.mde.k12.ms.us**

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Director, Office of Human Resources
Mississippi Department of Education
359 North West Street
Suite 359
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
(601) 359-3511

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Patrick Gray
Cindy Hale
Julia Harrington
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Sharon Long
Rebecca McCaleb
Carolyn Miller
Alice Mitchell
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MISSION STATEMENT

The primary purpose of the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised* is to promote an understanding of the principles, concepts, and processes of the language arts curriculum in Mississippi. The content of the framework is centered on the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, research, and inquiry. In teaching each of these key areas of the language arts curriculum, teachers should work to ensure students are actively engaged in meaningful activities that emphasize the importance of language arts in daily life; enhance students' confidence in their ability to read, write, speak, listen, view, and conduct research; and help students learn to communicate and reason more effectively. The framework provides teachers with a guide to assist in instructing students with the essential language arts concepts students should learn as they pursue a career or continue their education.

PURPOSE

The *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised* is the basis for curriculum development for K-12 language arts teachers in Mississippi. The framework provides an outline of what students should know and be able to do through competencies and objectives (previously identified as benchmarks and benchmark items), as well as curriculum guides that include teaching strategies and student activities. The framework replaces the previous document, the *Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2006* that was implemented in 2006.

CYCLE

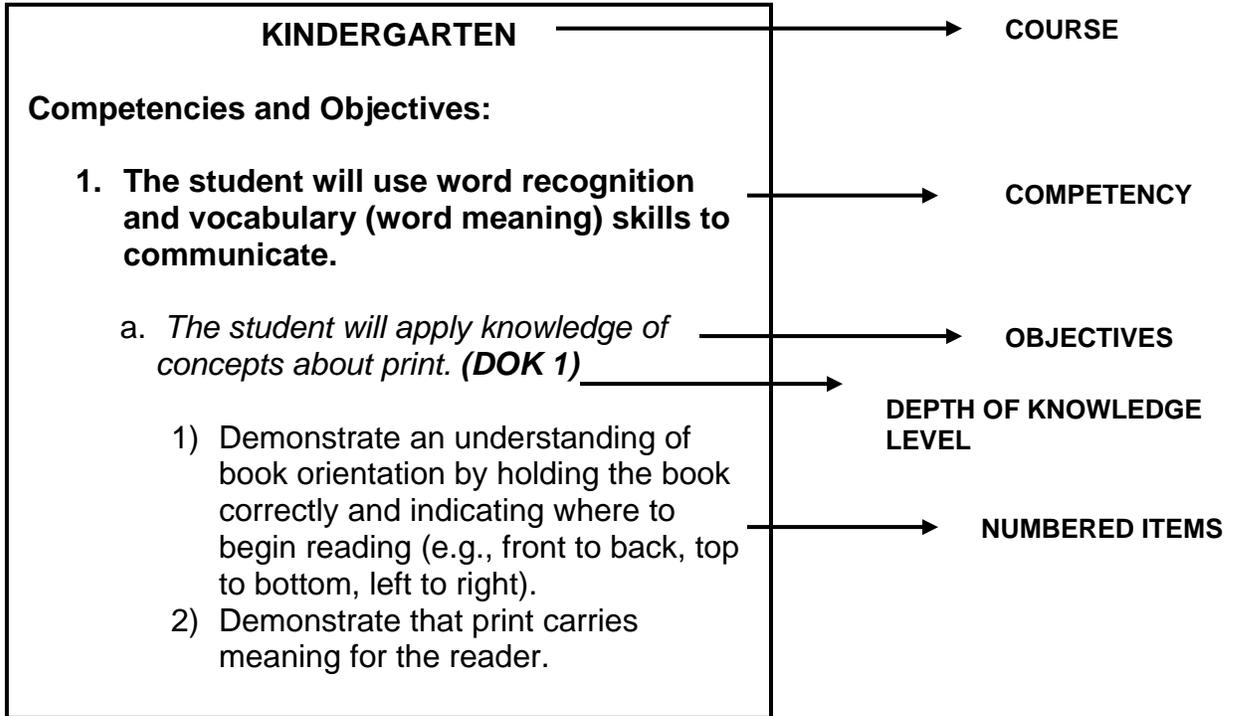
All Mississippi content area frameworks are reviewed on a six (6) year cycle. Approximately three years after a framework is implemented, a team is chosen to review the current framework and recommend changes and modifications based on research and best practices in the teaching of language arts as reflected in state and national trends.

The pilot year (optional) for the *Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2006* was school year 2005-2006. The implementation year for the framework was school year 2006-2007. The implementation year for the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework–Revised* is school year 2007-2008.

ORGANIZATION

The framework is organized by grade level (K-12) and by course at the secondary level. A general description that includes the purpose, overview, and suggested prerequisites is found preceding each Curriculum Outline for the grade level or course. To enhance the implementation of the framework, a Glossary and Appendix are included at the end of the framework. The

Curriculum Outline for the Mississippi Language Arts Framework is formatted as follows:



STRANDS

The *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised* is comprised of five strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Viewing. The five interrelated strands combine to provide continuity to the teaching of K-12 language arts. These strands overlap and should be integrated and embedded throughout teachers' daily lesson plans. This continuity provides the necessary foundation for successful completion of high school language arts requirements. The five strands help to assure that appropriate processes are used and important concepts are learned throughout each grade level and secondary course. Even though the process strands are not listed throughout the framework, these strands should be incorporated when presenting the content of the curriculum.

COMPETENCIES

The **competencies, printed in boldface type, are the required learning standards for all students. The Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition and English II Subject Area Tests are aligned to the competencies.** While competencies for grades K-12 are similar, and in some cases identical,

objectives require an extension of knowledge and broader, deeper application of skills. A critical component at each grade level is text complexity. Text complexity is indicated by such elements as sophistication of language, content, and syntax. As students move from kindergarten to grade twelve, texts should require a greater cognitive involvement by the student in order for the student to appreciate and comprehend the meaning and beauty inherent in language. Text composed by students should also reflect this increasing complexity.

Competencies are intentionally broad in order to allow school districts and teachers the flexibility to create a curriculum that meets the needs of their individual students. They may relate to one, many, or all of the language arts curriculum strands and may be combined and taught with other competencies throughout the school year. Competencies do not have to be taught in the order presented in the framework. The competencies are presented in outline form for consistency and for easy reference throughout the framework. Competencies may be taught throughout the year in any order and combined with other competencies. They are not ranked in order of importance. Competencies provide a general guideline of on-going instruction, not isolated units, activities, or skills. The competencies are not intended to be a list of content skills that are taught, assessed, and recorded as “mastered.”

OBJECTIVES

Objectives (previously identified as benchmarks and benchmark items), indicate skills that enable fulfillment of competencies, describe competencies in further detail, or show the progression of concepts throughout the grades. Objectives require an extension of knowledge and broader and deeper application of skills. A listing of numbered items further defines objectives. Many of the objectives are interrelated rather than sequential. Objectives are not intended to be taught in the specific order in which they are presented. Multiple objectives can and should be taught at the same time.

The Mississippi Curriculum Tests 2nd Edition (MCT2) will be developed based on the objectives found in the framework. At least fifty percent (50%) of the test items on the MCT2 must match the Depth of Knowledge level assigned to the objectives for each competency. The Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level is indicated at the end of each objective.

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE

Each objective for the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised* has been assigned a depth-of-knowledge (DOK) level based on the work of Norman L. Webb. DOK levels help administrators, teachers, and parents understand the objective in terms of the complexity of what students are expected to know and do. Standards (i.e., competencies and objectives) vary in terms of complexity. Some objectives expect

students to reproduce a fact or complete a sequence of steps, while others expect students to reason, extend their thinking, synthesize information from multiple sources, and produce significant work over time. Teachers must know what level of complexity is required by an objective in order to ensure that students have received prior instruction or have had an opportunity to learn content at the level students will be expected to demonstrate or perform. Assessment items must be created to ensure that what is elicited from students on the assessment is as demanding cognitively as what students are expected to know and do as stated in the objectives.

Four levels of depth of knowledge are used in the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised*. The levels represent a hierarchy based on two main factors. (1) One factor is sophistication and complexity. Sophistication will depend on the abstractness of the activity, the degree to which simple knowledge and skills have to be recalled or drawn upon, the amount of cognitive processing required, the complexity of the content concepts used, the amount of content that has to be recalled or drawn upon, the lack of routine, and the need to extend knowledge meaningfully or produce novel findings. (2) The other factor is that students at the grade level tested have received prior instruction or have had an opportunity to learn the content. Objectives and assessment items that address complex knowledge can still have a low DOK level if the required knowledge is commonly known and students with normal instruction at a grade level should have had the opportunity to learn how to routinely (habitually) perform what is being asked. The four levels of depth of knowledge (DOK) are described below.

Level 1. Recall and Reproduction

Level 1 is the recall of information such as a fact, definition, term, or a simple procedure, as well as performing a **simple** process or procedure. Level 1 only requires students to demonstrate a rote response, use a well-known formula, follow a set procedure (like a recipe), or perform a clearly defined series of steps. A “simple” procedure is well-defined and typically involves only **one step**. Verbs such as “identify” work at the recall and reproduction level. Simple word problems that can be directly translated into and solved by a formula are considered Level 1. Verbs such as “describe” and “explain” could be classified at different DOK levels, depending on the complexity of what is to be described and explained. Items that require students to recognize or identify specific information contained in maps, charts, tables, graphs or drawings are generally Level 1.

A student answering a Level 1 item either knows the answer or does not: that is, the answer does not need to be “figured out” or “solved.” In other words, if the knowledge necessary to answer an item automatically provides the answer to the item, then the item is at Level 1. If the knowledge necessary to answer the item does not automatically provide the answer, the item is at least at Level 2. Some

examples that represent but do not constitute all of Level 1 performance are as follows:

- Recall or recognize a fact, term, concept, trend, generalization, theory, or property.
- Represent in words or diagrams a concept or relationship.
- Provide or recognize or identify a standard representation for simple phenomenon or specific information contained in graphics.
- Perform a routine procedure such as measuring length.

Level 2. Basic Reasoning, Using Skills and Concepts

Level 2 includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response. The content knowledge or process involved is **more complex** than in level 1. Items require students to make some decisions as to how to approach the question or problem. In science and mathematics, keywords that generally distinguish a Level 2 item include “classify,” “organize,” “estimate,” “make observations,” “collect and display data,” and “compare data.” These actions imply **more than one step**. For example, to compare data requires first identifying characteristics of the objects or phenomenon and grouping or ordering the objects. Level 2 activities include making observations and collecting data; classifying organizing, and comparing data; and organizing and displaying data in tables, graphs, and charts. In social studies, this level generally requires students to contrast or compare people, places, events and concepts; convert information from one form to another; give an example; classify or sort items into meaningful categories; describe, interpret or explain issues and problems, patterns, reasons, cause and effect, significance or impact, relationships, points of view or processes.

Some action verbs, such as “explain,” “describe,” or “interpret,” could be classified at different DOK levels, depending on the complexity of the action. For example, interpreting information from a simple graph, requiring reading information from the graph, is a Level 2. An item that requires interpretation from a complex graph, such as making decisions regarding features of the graph that need to be considered and how information from the graph can be aggregated, is at Level 3. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of Level 2 performance, are as follows:

- Specify and explain the relationship between facts, terms, properties, or variables
- Select a procedure according to specified criteria and perform it
- Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions
- Organize, represent and interpret data
- Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.
- Predict a logical outcome based on information in a reading selection.

Level 3. Complex or Strategic Thinking

Level 3 requires reasoning, planning, using evidence, and a higher level of thinking than the previous two levels. Students would go beyond explaining or describing “how and why” to justifying the “how and why” through application and evidence. The cognitive demands at Level 3 are **complex and abstract**. The complexity does not result only from the fact that there could be multiple answers, a possibility for both Levels 1 and 2, but because the multi-step task requires **more demanding reasoning**. In most instances, requiring students to explain their thinking is at Level 3; requiring a very simple explanation or a word or two should be at Level 2. An activity that has more than one possible answer and requires students to justify the response they give would most likely be a Level 3. Experimental designs in Level 3 typically involve more than one dependent variable. Other Level 3 activities include drawing conclusions from observations; citing evidence and developing a logical argument for concepts; explaining phenomena in terms of concepts; and using concepts to solve non-routine problems. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of Level 3 performance, are as follows:

- Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem,
- Solve non-routine problems,
- Develop a model for a complex situation
- Form conclusions from experimental data,
- Determine the author’s purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection, and
- Analyze and describe the characteristics of various types of literature.

Level 4. Extended Thinking or Reasoning

Tasks at Level 4 have high cognitive demands and are very complex. Students are required to make several connections—relate ideas within the content area or among content areas—and have to select or devise one approach among many alternatives on how the situation can be solved. Many on-demand assessment instruments will not include any assessment activities that could be classified as Level 4. However, standards, goals, and objectives can be stated in such a way as to expect students to perform extended thinking. “Develop generalizations of the results obtained and the strategies used and apply them to new problem situations,” is an example of a Grade 8 objective that is a Level 4. Many, but not all, performance assessments and open-ended assessment activities requiring significant thought will be Level 4.

Level 4 requires complex reasoning, experimental design and planning, and probably will require an extended period of time either for the investigation required by an objective, for accessing and investigating multiple sources, or for

carrying out the multiple steps of an assessment item. However, the extended time period is not a distinguishing factor if the required work is only repetitive and does not require applying significant conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking. For example, if a student has to take the water temperature from a river each day for a month and then construct a graph, this would be classified as a Level 2 activity. However, if the student conducts a river study that requires taking into consideration a number of variables, this would be a Level 4. Some examples that represent but do not constitute all of a Level 4 performance are as follows:

- Based on provided data from a complex experiment that is novel to the student, deduct the fundamental relationship between several controlled variables,
- Conduct an investigation, from specifying a problem to designing and carrying out an experiment, to analyzing its data and forming conclusions,
- Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures, and
- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.

THE REVISION PROCESS FOR THE MLAF 2000

The Language Arts Curriculum Revision Team was selected in March 2004. The purpose of the team was to revise the existing language arts framework as a part of the ongoing curriculum review cycle. The team was charged with ensuring the revised framework reflects current scientifically-based reading research, reflects the mandates of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, addresses increased rigor through the use of Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge model, resembles the other content area frameworks in format, and is user friendly for teachers and administrators. The team met regularly from the spring of 2004 through the summer of 2005. Professional analysis of the competencies and objectives was conducted by Norman Webb and John Fortier. Revisions were made based upon the comments of this group. Additional help for the creation of teaching strategies was provided to the Revision Team by the Mississippi Writing Thinking Institute. The Language Arts Curriculum Revision Team extends sincere thanks to this organization for their valuable contributions to this document.

In revising the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework-Revised*, the teacher committees worked to accomplish two major goals. First, the framework was revised to ensure close alignment between competencies, objectives, and assessment items. Secondly, the framework was reorganized to make the document similar in design to other subject area frameworks. In order to accomplish these goals, competencies were condensed and reworded. All revised competencies are assessable as required by USDE Standards and Assessment Guidance, 2004. Benchmarks from the Reading and Writing Instructional Intervention Supplements are now represented as objectives. District personnel accustomed to using benchmarks in preparing for state level

assessments will now focus on objectives. The new format simplifies the curriculum so that only one framework document is needed for reference.

The Refinement Process for the Language Arts Framework

Through the process of developing performance level descriptors and test item specifications with teacher committees, areas in the framework needing additional clarity or specificity were identified. In addition, feedback was requested and received from over 400 practitioners through survey responses on the Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2006. These resources were used to refine the document. This revised edition provides more information for teachers, administrators, and parents regarding implementation of the new framework and should help teachers be better prepared for the implementation of the Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition (MCT2).