

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 Web site. Please see:

ELA Toolkit: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elastandards/pubela.html>

Term	Definition
Appropriate group behaviors	Conduct that includes the student displaying speaking and listening skills. (Speaking includes communicating through vocalization, signing, or using communication aids such as voice synthesizers.) This conduct would include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. speaking in turn b. looking at people when speaking and listening, if possible c. using an appropriate volume and rate d. answering or asking questions that relate to the topic being discussed e. thinking before speaking f. attending/listening to others and reacting appropriately to them g. sitting or standing still, as much as is possible h. gesturing appropriately i. being courteous in general
Audience	The specified or clearly implied person(s) to whom the writer addresses his/her work or correspondence.
Author's message	The intent of the writer; what he/she is trying to say or what point the writer is trying to make; possibly related to the moral of the story, if it has one. The message is related to the author's purpose.
Author's purpose	Why the author wrote what he/she did; an author may have more than one purpose for writing a piece of literature, such as to entertain, instruct, persuade, or describe. .
Author's style	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.
Bias	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.
Collage	A grouping of words, pictures, symbols, etc., displayed without necessarily having a set pattern or organization.
Compare	To point out similarities.

Term	Definition
Compose	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), sign language (American Sign Language (ASL) or other gestural communication system), 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.
Communicate	Convey knowledge of or information about something. Communication is an expression of information that can be conveyed via a variety of modes of communication. Examples: eye gaze, point, sign, verbalize
Contrast	To indicate differences.
Create	See <i>Compose</i> .
Data	Information that is often numeric and usually used for analysis.
Descriptive text or Description related to Writing AGLIs	A text that lists the characteristics of something. The topic is usually about the attributes of a thing. Generally, third person pronoun forms are used, but if the text is a memoir or an autobiography, first person is used. Examples: requirements for employment, the appearance of a person, the details of a location
Explicit (Compare <i>Implicit</i>)	Fully and clearly expressed; leaving nothing implied; fully and clearly defined or formulated; readily observable. Text: Explicit text reveals the meaning by direct statements. For example, at the end of a fable, the moral is often stated.
Expository text or Exposition related to Writing AGLIs	One of the classifications of discourse whose function is to inform, to instruct, or to present ideas and general truths objectively. Exposition presents information, provides explanations and definitions, and compares and contrasts.
Facts	Information that can be verified as true.
Fact vs. opinion	Facts can be proven conclusively to be true or false. Opinions cannot be proven to be true or false.
Fallacies	Statements, arguments, or conclusions based on faulty reasoning.
Familiar text vs. unfamiliar text	Familiar text includes kinds of selections that are typical for the student and that he/she frequently reads or listens to; it is text that is commonly read or read aloud as part of the instructional program. Unfamiliar text includes kinds of text that the student would not be readily familiar with; it is text that would be new to a student when read or listened to.
Fiction	Texts that are not true stories but may have some basis in truth. Examples: historical fiction, a literary work whose content is produced by the imagination
Fluency	The ability to read connected text with appropriate speed, accuracy and expression. “Appropriate” is individualized to the reader’s needs. As a guide, the appropriate speed, accuracy, and expression allow a reader to gain meaning and build comprehension, understanding, and/or appreciation of text.

Term	Definition
Genre	A category used to classify literary works, usually by form, technique, or content. Examples: poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction
Graphic organizer/Semantic web	One example of a strategy to show the relationship of ideas or information to other ideas or information; a way to display information in an organized format. Examples: webs, maps, charts, Venn diagrams
Implicit (Compare <i>Explicit</i>)	Implied or understood, though not directly expressed. Text: Implicit text refers to text that must be interpreted; the meaning is “between the lines.”
Infer, make an inference	A deduction or conclusion made from facts that are suggested or implied (implicit) rather than overtly stated (explicit).
Informational text (Compare <i>Literary text</i>)	A text that is organized by topic and supporting details. Informational texts may have boldface headings, graphics, illustrations, and captions that signal importance in the text.
Justify	To show a good reason for a decision or conclusion by providing facts or data.
Literal questions	The answers are directly stated in the story and require no inference. The questions often address who, what, where, when, and why.
Literary devices	The techniques authors use to achieve a particular effect. Examples: symbolism, metaphor, simile, alliteration, personification, flashback, foreshadowing, exaggeration, analogy, irony.
Literary elements	Elements such as setting, plot, character, rhythm, rhyme, etc. For further information see <i>Story Elements</i> , <i>Rhythm</i> , and <i>Rhyme</i> .
Literary text (work) (Compare <i>Informational text</i>)	A text that tells a story to make a point, express a personal opinion, or provide an enjoyable experience. It includes a wide range of different texts. Literary text is organized by the structure of a story, poem, or drama.
Main idea vs. supporting detail/idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea: a generalization used to refer to the central idea of informational text as a whole or to pieces (such as a paragraph or section) of informational text. • Supporting details: statements about specific facts, ideas, or data that support main ideas.
Main idea vs. theme/message	The phrase “main idea” is used with informational text; the term “theme” or “message” is used with literary text.
Metaphor	A figure of speech that does not use the word “like” or “as” in which an implied comparison is made between two essentially unlike things that actually have something in common. Example: He is a lion in battle.
Narrative	A narrative is a story or account of events, experiences, etc., whether true or fictitious; can be used to refer to a book or other form of literary work containing such a story. See <i>Story</i> .
Nonfiction	Texts that are based on fact; literary works that are not fiction. Examples: informational text, content area text, practical “how-to” text, biography, autobiography.

Term	Definition
Note taking	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.
Opinion	Judgment or belief not founded on certainty or proof; the prevailing or popular feeling or view (public opinion); an evaluation, impression, or estimation of the value or worth of a person or thing.
Outline	<p>A type of graphic scheme of the organization of a paper or a hierarchical way to display related items of text to graphically depict their relationships. It indicates the main arguments for the 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 the writer consider the most effective way to say what the writer wants to say.</p> <p>Many writers use outlines to help them think through the various stages of the writing process. Outlines are often used by students for research papers. Outlines provide a summary showing the logical flow of a paper. They are useful because they help the writer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. organize his/her thoughts before getting bogged down in word choice and sentence structure; 2. show which ideas need illustration or elaboration; and 3. choose an organizational technique for the writing, whether it be logical, chronological, or categorical in nature.
Paragraph	One or more sentences that develop a complete thought. A caption can be considered a paragraph.
Personification	A figure of speech in which inanimate objects or abstractions are endowed with human qualities or are represented as possessing human form.
Perspective: literary, political, personal, and evaluative criteria	A point of view or way of judging a piece of literature; a literary perspective might analyze a piece of literature based on its literary merits; a political perspective might analyze the same piece of literature 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.
Persuasion	The act, process, or instance of persuading (to move by argument, entreaty, or expostulation to a belief, position, or course of action).
Persuasive text or persuasion related to Writing AGLIs	A communicative purpose in which a writer attempts to convince an audience of one's point of view or to move the audience to action.
Poetry	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 may also be made to achieve meter, rhyme, natural cadences, and metaphors.
Predict (make a prediction)	A declaration or indication in advance of an occurrence, especially to foretell on the basis of observation, details from a story, personal experience, or scientific reason.
Prose	A literary medium distinguished from poetry, especially by its greater irregularity, variety of rhythm, and lack of metrical structure, and its closer correspondence to the patterns of everyday spoken or written language.

Term	Definition
Relevant vs. irrelevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant: related to a topic in some way that makes a difference to the purpose that is being presented. • Irrelevant: not related to a topic in some way that makes a difference to the purpose that is being presented.
Rhyme	<p>The repetition of sounds in two or more words or phrases that appear close to each other in a poem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>End rhyme</i> occurs at the end of lines. • A <i>rhyme scheme</i> is the pattern of end rhymes. • An <i>internal rhyme</i> occurs within a line. • <i>Slant rhyme</i> is an approximate rhyme.
Rhythm	<p>The regular recurrence and speed of sound and stresses in a poem or work of prose.</p>
Simile	<p>A figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are compared, often in a phrase introduced by the word “like” or “as.”</p>
Story	<p>An account of incidents or events; a narrative, either true or fictitious, that can be in prose or verse and is designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the listener or reader; a tale. A story can be a variety of lengths depending on the instructional needs of the student. It can be told through writing, pictures, symbols, etc., or through a combination of forms.</p>
Story elements	<p>Basic story elements include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. plot – the sequence of events or actions in a novel, play, short story, or narrative poem b. character – a person or sometimes an animal that takes part in the plot c. setting – time and place in which a short story, novel, or narrative poem take place d. theme – the central meaning of a literary work 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
Summarize	<p>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.</p>
Texts (written phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, symbols, illustrations; can be digitally available)	<p>Generally, the words of something that are written or printed; here words can be conveyed through pictures, symbols, signing, etc., or through a combination of forms.</p> <p>The definition of texts from the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) publication is “printed communication in their varied forms; oral communications, including conversations, speeches, etc., and visual communications such as film, video, and computer displays.”</p>
Text features	<p>Elements such as boldface print, italics, font type and size, underscoring, layout, color, headings, illustrations, graphs, charts.</p>

Term	Definition
Tone	The writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience conveyed through the author’s choice of words and detail. Examples: serious, humorous, sarcastic, objective
Types of reading (e.g., choral, popcorn, round-robin, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choral reading: people reading in unison. • Popcorn reading or round-robin reading: people taking turns reading by a random selection (for example, tossing a soft object to the person to designate the next reader).
Validity	An argument with a basis that can be supported by reason.
Verse	A writing/composition (written, printed, or orally composed) arranged with a metrical pattern (measured, cadence, etc.) or pattern of rhythm, typically having a rhyme; a group of lines that form a unit in a poem or song; a stanza.
Visual imagery	An image an author creates through figures of speech (e.g., metaphor, hyperbole) to help a reader understand an abstract idea (e.g., beauty)
Visual language	Elements including print, symbols (for example, PEC or Boardmaker symbols), photos, pictures, objects, etc., that communicate or represent information. Additional examples of visual language include maps, diagrams, models, and graphs Visual language may be used singularly (such as only symbols) or in combination (such as objects and print).
Voice	The distinctive style or manner of expression of an author or of a character.
Write	See <i>Compose</i> .
Writing process	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. prewriting – to formulate and organize ideas in preparation for writing b. drafting – to draw the preliminary sketch, version, plan, or initial composition of the final product c. revising – to review in order to correct or improve d. editing – to make revisions to the draft version of the final product

Resources:

- NAEP Reading for 2009 and Writing for 2011 Framework (prepublication editions, 2007) available at <http://www.nagb.org/publications/frameworks.htm>
- *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://www.thefreedictionary.com/>:
 - The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright ©2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company
 - *Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged* © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>
- <http://dictionary.reference.com/>
 - Random House Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2011.
- <http://www.maine.gov/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.