

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERATURE OVERVIEW

## What Is English Language Arts and Literature?

English language arts and literature is a subject that provides students with language and literacy skills required for success in the twenty-first century. From Kindergarten to Grade 6, students gain foundational knowledge and build on their language skills and experiences through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing. These strands of learning are closely interrelated and complementary; literacy skills in each of these strands reinforce and strengthen skills in the others. Through practice and experience, students understand how language is used in a variety of formal and informal contexts. Studying English language arts and literature involves reading, appreciating, and becoming familiar with influential writers whose works illustrate the essence of the human condition. Through the study of great texts, English language arts and literature lays the groundwork for critical thinking as well as personal expression.

## Why Is English Language Arts and Literature Important?

English language arts and literature is essential to foundational literacy and communication skills for lifelong learning. Being a literate, effective communicator is necessary for skillful public speaking and career readiness. Similarly, engaging in respectful and inclusive dialogue and considering varied viewpoints can enhance new ways of thinking. Students learn the difference between fact and opinion and support their opinions with evidence, demonstrating reasoning skills while considering multiple sources of information. By acquiring and applying a rich vocabulary, students, throughout Kindergarten to Grade 6, become flexible and precise communicators. They develop reading comprehension skills, which supports managing information, interpreting ideas, and researching varied topics—all crucial skills for learning and studying in the secondary grades, at the post-secondary level, and in the world of work.

Students read great texts from many traditions that have shaped our society and understand that multiple perspectives can be explored through these historical, traditional, classical, cultural, and contemporary texts. Students come to realize that the definition of “text” is quite broad, that a text refers to any object or experience with which readers, writers, listeners, speakers, viewers, and representers engage to make sense of their world. Texts are more than oral, print, visual, digital, and multimedia resources. They also encompass cultural artifacts, encounters with the land, and everyday communications.

Through exposure to and exploration of enduring art, writing, and texts across different time periods and places, students recognize truth, beauty, and goodness. Students develop various techniques for adding elements of beauty and persuasion to their composition of texts, keeping their audiences in mind. They also learn to write with clarity and confidence and use appropriate grammar and spelling in various genres for a variety of audiences. Students integrate their understandings of language and literature to think for themselves, to make connections, to solve problems, and to find creative solutions, all while collaborating and building positive relationships. As well-versed, literate learners with a comprehensive skill set, students are able to face challenges, demonstrate character and resiliency, and adapt to changing conditions.