

Virginia Department of Education Report

October 2009

The proposed revised English Standards of Learning were presented to the Virginia Board of Education for first review on October 22, 2009. The Board accepted the proposed revised English SOL. The Standards are posted for public comment. Please address any public comments to englishsol@doe.virginia.gov

A series of five public hearings will follow as outlined in Superintendent's Memo # 300-09 posted October 23, 2009, available at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_centers/administrators/superintendents_memos/2009/300-09.shtml

The proposed revised English Standards of Learning will be presented to the Virginia Board of Education on January 7, 2010. If accepted, the writing the Curriculum Framework will follow. Teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators will be solicited to assist in the writing process. Full implementation of the English Standards is expected by 2013.

Virginia received a Striving Readers” grant. Struggling readers in eight Virginia middle schools will receive supplemental instruction through an initiative funded by a multi-year Striving Readers grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The eight schools in three divisions were selected by the Virginia Department of Education to participate in the Virginia Striving Readers Intervention Initiative. The schools are as follows:

- Norfolk
 - Azalea Gardens Middle
 - Lake Taylor Middle
- Richmond
 - Thomas C. Boushall Middle
 - Lucille M. Brown Middle
- Roanoke
 - Addison Aerospace Magnet Middle
 - Breckinridge Middle
 - Stonewall Jackson Middle
 - Woodrow Wilson Middle

The participating schools selected Voyager Expanded Learning's "Passport Reading Journeys" intervention program for the supplemental instruction. Groups of seventh-grade and eighth-grade students in the eight schools will receive supplemental instruction during the school day, beginning in 2010-2011. Follow-up awards totaling \$1.4 million annually will support supplemental instruction for struggling readers in the eight schools through 2012-2013 and the impact of the tutoring on reading achievement will be independently evaluated. Virginia is one of eight states to share in \$6.6 million in first-year Striving Readers grants announced this fall. The program supports initiatives to raise literacy levels in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students while building a scientific research base for efforts to increase adolescent literacy.

Superintendent's Memo #295-09 , available at

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_centers/administrators/superintendents_memos/2009/295-09.shtml , announces the Virginia Online Reading Tutorial is now open for registration. The registration process this year is the same as last; teachers and administrators will register on the same spreadsheet. Once teachers receive their user name and password, they will create their own classes, uploading students into the secure database using the student's Student Test Identifier (STI). This year the training modules have been professionally done and replace any face-to-face training. All training videos and registration materials are now housed on the tutorial's new home page, available at: <http://www.vatutorials.com/> . We were lucky to be able to keep the tutorials in the recent budget cuts. I urge you to use this tool for your at-risk students.

**2009 – 2010
Standards of Learning Assessments
English: Writing Testing Schedule**

Administration	Grade	Testing Period	Answer Document Ship Date
Fall 2009 English: Writing Test Multiple Choice Short Paper	8 and End-of-Course	10/19/09 or 10/20/09 10/21/09	11/06/09
Spring 2010 English: Writing Test Multiple Choice Short Paper	5, 8, and End-of-Course	03/01/10 or 3/02/10 03/03/10	03/19/10
Summer 2010 English: Writing Test Multiple Choice Short Paper	End-of-Course	07/12/10 or 07/13/10 07/14/10	07/23/10

**Spring 2010
Standards of Learning Assessments
Non-Writing Tests for Grades 3 through 8**

Option	Testing Period	Answer Document Ship Date
1	04/12/10 – 05/07/10	05/07/10
2	05/03/10 – 05/28/10	05/28/10
3	05/17/10 – 06/11/10	06/11/10

Virginia Dominion Power has announced their annual Strong Men and Women Writing contest, which is open to all high school juniors and seniors. Students are invited to honor outstanding African Americans by writing a 400-word essay about one of the 223 individuals featured in the Strong Men and Women series. Each school may submit two entries. Student winners will receive a new laptop computer, and their schools will receive a \$1,000 cash award. Additional details and registration packets may be found at: <http://www.dom.com/>, keyword "strong." Applications are due November 9, 2009.

The Poetry Society of Virginia announces their annual student contest. See the brochure is attached.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a joint effort by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in partnership with Achieve, ACT and the College Board. Governors and state commissioners of education from across the country committed to joining a state-led process to develop a common core of state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. The first step of this initiative is developing college- and career-readiness standards followed by K-12 standards.

These standards will be research and evidence-based, internationally benchmarked, aligned with college and work expectations and include rigorous content and skills. The NGA Center and CCSSO are coordinating the process to develop these standards and have created an expert validation committee to provide an independent review of the common core state standards, as well as the grade-by-grade standards. Additional information is available at: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

English Language Arts Standards

Reading

1. Determine both what the text says explicitly and what can be inferred logically from the text.
2. Support or challenge assertions about the text by citing evidence in the text explicitly and accurately.
3. Discern the most important ideas, events, or information, and summarize them accurately and concisely.
4. Delineate the main ideas or themes in the text and the details that elaborate and support them.
5. Determine when, where, and why events unfold in the text, and explain how they relate to one another.
6. Analyze the traits, motivations, and thoughts of individuals in fiction and nonfiction based on how they are described, what they say and do, and how they interact.
7. Determine what is meant by words and phrases in context, including connotative meanings and figurative language.
8. Analyze how specific word choices shape the meaning and tone of the text.
9. Analyze how the text's organizational structure presents the argument, explanation, or narrative.
10. Analyze how specific details and larger portions of the text contribute to the meaning of the text.
11. Synthesize data, diagrams, maps, and other visual elements with words in the text to further comprehension.
12. Extract key information efficiently in print and online using text features and search techniques.
13. Ascertain the origin, credibility, and accuracy of print and online sources.
14. Evaluate the reasoning and rhetoric that support an argument or explanation, including assessing whether the evidence provided is relevant and sufficient.
15. Analyze how two or more texts with different styles, points of view, or arguments address similar topics or themes.
16. Draw upon relevant prior knowledge to enhance comprehension, and note when the text expands on or challenges that knowledge.

17. Apply knowledge and concepts gained through reading to build a more coherent understanding of a subject, inform reading of additional texts, and to solve problems.
18. Demonstrate facility with the specific reading demands of texts drawn from different disciplines, including history, literature, science, and mathematics.

Writing

1. Establish and refine a topic or thesis that addresses the specific task and audience.
2. Gather the information needed to build an argument, provide an explanation, or address a research question.
3. Sustain focus on a specific topic or argument.
4. Support and illustrate arguments and explanations with relevant details, examples, and evidence.
5. Create a logical progression of ideas or events, and convey the relationships among them.
6. Choose words and phrases to express ideas precisely and concisely.
7. Use varied sentence structures to engage the reader and achieve cohesion between sentences.
8. Develop and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
9. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard written English, including grammar, usage, and mechanics.
10. Represent and cite accurately the data, conclusions, and opinions of others, effectively incorporating them into one's own work while avoiding plagiarism.
11. Assess the quality of one's own writing, and, when necessary, strengthen it through revision.
12. Use technology as a tool to produce, edit, and distribute writing.

When **writing to inform or explain**, students must also do the following:

13. Synthesize information from multiple relevant sources, including graphics and quantitative information when appropriate, to provide an accurate picture of that information.
14. Convey complex information clearly and coherently to the audience through purposeful selection and organization of content.
15. Demonstrate understanding of content by reporting facts accurately and anticipating reader misconceptions.

When **writing arguments**, students must also do the following:

16. Establish a substantive claim, distinguishing it from alternate or opposing claims.
17. Link claims and evidence with clear reasons, and ensure that the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
18. Acknowledge competing arguments or information, defending or qualifying the initial claim as appropriate.

Speaking & Listening

1. Select and use a format, organization, and style appropriate to the topic, purpose, and audience.
2. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly and concisely.
3. Make strategic use of multimedia elements and visual displays of data to gain audience attention and enhance understanding.
4. Demonstrate command of formal Standard English when appropriate to task and audience.
5. Listen to complex information, and discern the main ideas, the significant details, and the relationships among them.
6. Follow the progression of the speaker's message, and evaluate the speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
7. Ask relevant questions to clarify points and challenge ideas.
8. Respond constructively to advance a discussion and build on the input of others.

Superintendent's Memo # 289-09 posted Friday, October 16 available at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_centers/administrators/superintendents_memos/2009/289-09.shtml

CHAPTER 474

An Act to require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to distribute a teacher's manual on Holocaust education.

[H 2409]

Approved March 27, 2009

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall select and distribute to all local school divisions a teacher's manual, with instructions for its use in the classroom, that emphasizes the causes and ramifications of the Holocaust and genocide. Each local school division shall provide grade-appropriate portions of the manual to history and literature teachers of these classes.*

Accordingly, the Virginia Department of Education suggests that school divisions provide grade-appropriate portions of teachers' manuals found at the following sites:

Virginia Holocaust Museum

<http://www.va-holocaust.com/learn/default.asp?id=60>;

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/>;

<http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/>; and

Yad Vashem

<http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/index.asp>.

I encourage all educators to assume the responsibility for ensuring that Virginia's young people recognize the importance of the related Standards of Learning in English and History and the Social Sciences.

For more information, please contact Dr. Beverly Thurston, coordinator, history, social sciences and international education, Office of Middle and High School Instruction, by e-mail at Beverly.Thurston@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2893.