



# Escambia County Public Schools Elementary ELA Updates

Need ELA help? Complete this form <https://bit.ly/ELAAssist>

November  
2024-25

## ELA Team

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## Important Dates

Literacy Rep.  
Meetings  
In person at Spencer  
Bibbs Room 147

January 13  
February 10

**Spelling Bee**  
Jan. 16 at 6 p.m.

**Celebrate Literacy  
Week** Jan 27-31

ELA Canvas Hub

<https://escambia.instructure.com/enroll/4PLH4D>

**Escambia Literacy  
Association Survey  
Please!**

<https://bit.ly/3ZoYw4Z>

# Write Now



To earn a level 3 or 4 in Development on the FAST Writing Rubric students must appropriately cite evidence from multiple sources.

1) Make source citation a regular part of instruction by having students justify their responses orally and in writing using these stems:

According to (title of text), it says. . .

According to the text, “. . .”

The author of (title of the text) says,  
(Title of the text) suggests that

According to \_\_\_(the author), “. . . .”

In source 1 it states that, “. . .”

2) Teach academic words for “says”

agrees that

suggests

indicates

implies

demonstrates

3) Teach students to elaborate on their evidence by paraphrasing what the evidence says or providing examples to explain the evidence.

In other words

This means that

For example

This is important because

This explains

## Celebrate Literacy Week 2025

January 27-31

**Building Literacy  
Constructing the Foundation  
for Success!**



## P.D. Opportunities

### Need Reading Endorsement?

Need 40 hrs for recertification?

Go to the [Reading Endorsement Page](#)  
for information.

## Sandy Sansing Spelling Bee

January 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.  
at Washington High School

Online school [registration forms](#) must be completed and submitted by December 13, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.



AMIRA

### Snap and Read

Listen to student recordings and be sure the student is doing the reading. If students use Snap and Read to read the text, the data will not reflect real student ability. Students will also be assigned longer stories. Sit with students and listen to recordings together, so they know you are monitoring.

### Screen Time

Amira is intended to be a tool that gives immediate feedback to students as they build fluency. It isn't meant to replace time with the teacher.

### Minutes

Celebrate stories read—not minutes on the computer. 5 or 6 stories per week is the goal—which will be about 30 minutes per week. If students are reading above grade level passages, they may read fewer passages.

### Motivation

Encourage students with badges, certificates, and goal tracking. Don't use Amira practice passages for a grade.

# Pieces of the Puzzle



**Assessments have different purposes.** We use screening instruments to determine who needs intervention. We use formative assessment to check for understanding and adjust instruction. Progress monitoring assessments are used to track if an intervention is working.

The ELA module assessments are intended to measure student application of the Florida standards that have been taught during the module. Because ELA benchmarks are meant to be stacked, once they have been explicitly taught, students will see those item types over and over again, but with different texts.

**So why do some students struggle?** Students may not read fluently, or they may not have a lot of background knowledge and this might affect reading comprehension. The primary task of the module assessments in grades 2-5, however, is application of vocabulary strategies, summarization, comparative reading, and analysis of author's craft. This may be why students do better on the selection quizzes and other reading tests. Those assessments are testing some knowledge, but not testing literary analysis.

In Passage 1, which sentence supports the central idea that inventions can come from mistakes?

- Ⓐ "The night was freezing cold." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ "It looked like a big, fruity icicle on a stick." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ "Frank made new flavors." (paragraph 5)
- Ⓓ "Today you can buy Popsicles on one stick or on two." (paragraph 6)

## Solving the Puzzle

**We want to be sure students can comprehend.** Hugh Catts, Professor of Communication Science and Disorders and dyslexia researcher, suggests that we can't teach reading comprehension.\* Instead, we can set up the conditions for students to develop the ability.

- Teach students to accurately and fluently read words.
- Teach Tier 2 Vocabulary in context.
- Use texts with a rich content base—science, social studies, the arts— to build background knowledge.
- Use some strategies with rich text (summarize sections, generate questions), but not in isolation like you see in some workbooks.
- Ask students to cognitively engage while they read. Teach them how to use those strategies with the text as a tool for making meaning.

**Explicitly teach students the benchmarks.**

English Language Arts is a discipline. Teach students how

to think like a writer, a debater, a newscaster, or an English professor. The benchmarks outline the concepts we should apply.

**Release responsibility now!** Read-alouds have their place, but if students don't have enough practice reading and engaging cognitively with a text independently, they won't be as successful on module assessments or on the FAST. At this point in the year, able readers should be reading the text. We should give them a purpose for reading and set expectations. We should scaffold and differentiate as we need to, but the students should be reading independently.

**Go deeper with fewer texts.** It is better to spend more time with one rich text (or sections of it) than to rush through two of them. (It is okay, with careful planning, to skip module texts.) We can use *Notice and Note* and the close read sticky notes and encourage students to annotate while they read. It is good to backwards plan by looking at the module assessment. If we use the language of the benchmarks and ask students to justify their responses as they discuss, we can ensure students have plenty of practice applying tested benchmarks before the assessment.

**Those who are doing the talking are doing the learning.** We should provide students opportunities to discuss the text with each other. We can do turn and talks, use accountable talk stems, or Kagan strategies.

**Build knowledge.** Following Dr. Catts's recommendation and guidance in the BEST standards document: "Reading comprehension depends more on relevant background knowledge than on mastery of reading strategies." (p. 8), we should have students read multiple texts on the same topic or theme and discuss the relationship of ideas across these texts. It is more beneficial to have students dive deeper with a section of the whole group text during small group, than to pull an unrelated passage to reteach a benchmark. If students need a less challenging text, we should try to find one on the same topic. This will help build content vocabulary. We need up to 20 meaningful exposures to a word to learn it!

**Write in response to reading.** Writing makes thinking visible. Students should write in response to reading every day. This helps them clarify their thinking and it holds them accountable. The habit of thinking about reading will eventually transfer to assessment.

\*Reading Comprehension: Product or Process?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lqMcp71-M>