



# COURSE/CREDIT CONTENT EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The Michigan Department of Education has developed and the State Board of Education has approved *High School Content Expectations (HSCE)* that outline what students should know and be able to do in English language arts, mathematics and science. Content Expectations for social studies are currently in the development process. These expectations serve as the foundation for the development of more specific Course/Credit Content Expectations that outline what students should know and be able to do for each credit required in the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

The Michigan Merit Curriculum Course/Credit Content Expectations and Guidelines will assist school districts and teachers to align their current curriculum, guide what is taught and assessed to earn credit, and provide parents with a tool to gauge student progress. These expectations also will serve as the basis to develop various questions included in the Michigan Merit Exam.

In the future, the Michigan Department of Education will be developing a variety of companion documents to support the implementation of these credits.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

*Sec. 1278b(a) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed at least 4 credits in English language arts that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education before graduating from high school.*

*Sec. 1278b(5)(f) The English language arts credit requirements are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum.*

## Background Information

The English Language Arts High School Content Expectations (HSCE) are organized in four strands, 14 standards, and 91 expectations. The 91 expectations are recursive in that they are addressed repeatedly throughout units of instruction and in increasing complexity and sophistication over the four years of high school English language arts. The overarching goal for the HSCE is for students to exhibit the “habits of mind” or “dispositions” listed in the Successful Post-Secondary Engagement chart on page four of the HSCE document available on the Michigan Department of Education’s high school web site at [www.michigan.gov/highschool](http://www.michigan.gov/highschool). These dispositions are developed through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and expressing experiences encompassing a broad range of literary, nonfiction literary, and informational texts.

The Grade 9 through 12 English Language Arts Course/Credit Requirements define how credit will be assigned for the four English language arts credits required for graduation. The credit requirement documents for each grade provide a model unit framework and model units of instruction for meeting the 14 standards and 91 expectations while developing the disposition assigned to each grade level. The model units focus on specific aspects of the literary experience while building, refining, applying, and extending the knowledge, skills, and strategies students will need for success beyond high school.

## What Research Says

Research shows that in order for students to be successful in college and well-paying jobs, high school graduates need four years of English language arts in which all expectations are addressed across units of instruction in increasing levels of complexity and sophistication. In Michigan today, only 37% of high schools require students to take four years of continuous study in English language arts.

## Questions & Answers

1. **Q: If a district currently requires a class such as Speech or Technical Writing, rather than English 9, 10, 11, or 12, as one of its required English graduation requirements, would it be allowed as one of the four English language arts requirements, or would it have to be changed to more of a general English 9, 10, 11, or 12-type class?**

**A:** If the Speech or Technical Writing courses meet all 91 expectations and offer students the opportunity to build, refine, apply, and extend the knowledge, skills, and strategies included in the unit framework and incorporated in the model units of instruction for the grade level, and include opportunities for developing the dispositions, a district could assign credit for these courses.

2. **Q: Are the four dispositions in English Language Arts (ELA) suggested themes to meet the benchmarks or are they mandated? Do all four need to be addressed at each grade level?**

**A:** Since the dispositions represent an overarching goal of the ELA High School Content Expectations, they are required. The goal is that by the end of high school, students will exhibit the "habits of mind" exemplified in all four dispositions. The Course/Credit requirements for ELA 9, 10, 11, and 12 are designed to focus on and develop one disposition in each grade while offering opportunities for discussing questions that would lead to all four dispositions. The more often each disposition is discussed throughout the grades, the more likely the students will be comfortable discussing issues related to all four dispositions.