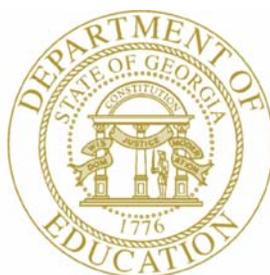# Content Descriptions

Based on the state-mandated content standards

American Literature and Composition

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

Introduction

The State Board of Education is required by Georgia law (A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000, O.C.G.A. §20-2-281) to adopt End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) designed to measure student achievement in core subjects in grades nine through twelve. With educator input and State Board of Education approval, eight content areas were designated in 2001 to be tested. The current state-mandated content standards in English language arts were adopted by the State Board of Education in July 2010, and the American Literature and Composition EOCT was developed based on these standards.

Program Purpose

The EOCT are designed to improve student achievement by assessing student performance on the standards specific to each course tested. Student performance on each test is provided to schools for diagnostic and remedial use. These results are used to help make instruction more effective and to ensure that all Georgia students have access to rigorous courses that meet high academic expectations. These results are also used for student accountability and to gauge the quality of education in the state. The EOCT are the final exams for the courses specified. For students enrolled in grade nine for the first time before July 1, 2011, the final grade for each course is calculated by weighing the course grade 85% and the EOCT score 15%. For students enrolled in grade nine for the first time on July 1, 2011, or after, the final grade for each course is calculated by weighing the course grade 80% and the EOCT score 20% (State Board Rule 160-4-2-.13). The student must have a final grade of at least 70 to pass the course and earn credit toward graduation.

EOCT Content Descriptions

The EOCT Content Descriptions are provided to acquaint Georgia educators with the content assessed by the EOCT. Only the knowledge, concepts, and skills addressed in the state-mandated content standards are assessed on the EOCT. It is important to note that some content standards are better suited for classroom or individual assessment rather than large-scale summative assessment. While those standards designed for classroom/individual assessment are not included in the Content Descriptions, the knowledge, concepts, and skills outlined are often required for the mastery of the standards that are assessed. Therefore, the EOCT Content Descriptions are in *no way* intended to substitute for the state-mandated content standards; they are provided to help educators better understand how the standards will be assessed. Further, the EOCT Content Descriptions *by no means* suggest *when* concepts and skills should be introduced in the instructional sequence; rather, they are intended only to communicate the concepts and skills that will be assessed on the EOCT, but in no particular order. Georgia law requires educators to teach the material set forth in the state-mandated content standards. The standards are located at www.georgiastandards.org.

American Literature and Composition Domains
In order to provide reliable measures of student achievement, as well as to give structure to the assessment program, the performance standards were grouped into content domains. In some cases, these domains include elements from more than one strand of the content standards. Four domains were identified for American Literature and Composition:

- **Reading (Literary and Informational)**
  Assessment in this domain focuses on reading for general understanding, recognizing and analyzing literary elements of texts, locating evidence that supports claims and inferences, evaluating author's purpose and point of view, analyzing the effect of word choice and figurative language, and acquiring and using new vocabulary. In addition to including a variety of literary and informational texts, assessment in this domain will include excerpts from, and references to, foundational American works of literary and historical importance.

- **Speaking and Listening**
  Assessment in this domain focuses on comprehension and presentation of information in a variety of media; evaluation of the credibility and accuracy of messages delivered in diverse formats; evaluation of a speaker's reasoning and use of evidence; and the ability to adapt or enhance a message for the appropriate audience, purpose, or task.

- **Writing**
  Assessment in this domain requires students to demonstrate understanding of coherence and focus in texts, including well-defined perspectives, tightly reasoned arguments, and audience awareness. The assessment addresses the stages of the writing process, the effective use of introductions, the use of supporting evidence, and the construction of a meaningful conclusion. Assessment in this domain also addresses strategies for developing and refining research subjects; using print and digital sources for research and distribution of writing; selecting, synthesizing, and evaluating the credibility of multiple sources; and following a standard format for citation.

- **Language**
  Assessment in this domain focuses on demonstrating command of the correct conventions of Standard American English grammar and usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

American Literature and Composition
Domain: Reading (Literary and Informational)

Overview of the Domain
- Students recognize, comprehend, and summarize the important ideas and viewpoints in a written work.
- Students analyze various elements in American fiction, using evidence from a text as a basis for interpretation.
- Students analyze and apply knowledge of various forms of drama, poetry, and nonfiction.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of significant themes in American literary works and central ideas of informational works; students analyze how two or more themes or central ideas interact to make the text more complex.
- Students demonstrate knowledge of important works of American literature and analyze foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance.
- Students determine the author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly powerful or persuasive.
- Students analyze literary text in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated from what is really meant (e.g., sarcasm, irony, understatement, satire).
- Students determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; students analyze how word choice affects meaning and tone.
- Students acquire new vocabulary by using context; structural analysis of prefixes, suffixes, and root words; and resource materials.

Associated Standards

ELACC11-12RL1
ELACC11-12RL2
ELACC11-12RL3
ELACC11-12RL4
ELACC11-12RL5
ELACC11-12RL6
ELACC11-12RL9
ELACC11-12RI1
ELACC11-12RI2

ELACC11-12RI3
ELACC11-12RI5
ELACC11-12RI6
ELACC11-12RI7
ELACC11-12RI8
ELACC11-12RI9
ELACC11-12L4 (a–c)
ELACC11-12L5a

Associated Concepts and Skills
Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:
- analyzing literary and structural elements of fiction, using evidence from a text as a basis for interpretation, such as:
  o determining the plot or conflict of a fictional passage
  o recognizing patterns of imagery or symbolism and how these patterns can be used to enhance the meaning or theme of the passage

- o recognizing and analyzing literary elements in American fiction, such as style, point of view, irony, structure, and theme
  - o analyzing how characters are introduced and developed
  - o analyzing the impact of the author's choices regarding story elements such as setting, plot, characterization, and mood
  - o recognizing the mood or tone of a passage and analyzing how the author establishes it
- demonstrating knowledge of the elements of dramatic literature by:
  - o classifying various forms of dramatic literature (e.g., political drama, modern drama, theatre of the absurd)
  - o evaluating the effects of various dramatic conventions on a particular excerpt, including plot, setting, dialogue, and monologue
  - o analyzing the interactions between the characters of a drama
  - o determining the theme of a drama based on evidence in the text
- analyzing and responding to poetry from various periods of American literature:
  - o analyzing the effects of poetic elements using evidence from a poem; elements may include:
    - tone
    - mood
    - sound
      - – alliteration
      - – end rhyme
      - – slant rhyme
      - – internal rhyme
      - – consonance
      - – assonance
    - form
      - – fixed and free
      - – lyric
      - – ballad
      - – sonnet
      - – narrative poem
      - – blank verse
  - o determining the meaning of words as they are used in a poem, including figurative and connotative meanings
  - o relating the effects of diction and imagery (e.g., controlling images, figurative language, extended metaphor, understatement, hyperbole, irony, paradox, and tone) to the theme or underlying meaning of a poem
- analyzing and applying knowledge of nonfiction American literature by:
  - o determining the effects of language, style, syntax, and rhetorical strategies
  - o recognizing and analyzing the characteristics of nonfiction, including structure, purpose, use of evidence and support, and point of view
- recognizing and analyzing central ideas and themes, such as:
  - o determining the theme or themes of a literary text
  - o understanding the central idea(s) or argument(s) of an informational text
  - o analyzing the development of a theme or central idea over the course of a text

- o analyzing how multiple themes interact and build on one another to produce a complex account
  - o analyzing how the author's language and style influences the theme
- demonstrating knowledge of important works of American literature and analyzing foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance
- determining the author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly powerful or persuasive
- analyzing literary text in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated from what is really meant (e.g., sarcasm, irony, understatement, satire)
- determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings
  - o understanding and analyzing figurative language
  - o using knowledge of other literary works often alluded to in American literature to understand the meaning of new words
- analyzing how word choice affects meaning and tone
- defining unfamiliar words by using context, patterns of word changes, and resource materials:
  - o using context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase
  - o understanding the correct meaning of a given Latin or Greek word, root, or affix
  - o selecting the correct affix to shift a given word to new meaning
  - o determining how the affix in a given word affects its meaning
  - o inferring the meaning of a root word based on one or more words containing the same root
  - o using excerpts from dictionaries, thesauruses, or related references to understand vocabulary
  - o prefixes that may be tested include, but are not limited to, the following: *anti*, *bi*, *dis*, *mis*, *non*, *pre*, *re*, *semi*, *sub*, and *un*
  - o suffixes that may be tested include, but are not limited to, the following: *able*, *dom*, *en*, *ful*, *hood*, *ish*, *less*, *ly*, *ment*, *ness*, and *ous*
  - o roots that may be tested include, but are not limited to, the following: *biblio*, *logy*, *magni*, *micro*, *ped*, and *phon*

American Literature and Composition
Domain: Speaking and Listening

Overview of the Domain
- Students read and view texts in a variety of media and formats, including but not limited to essays, speeches, book reviews, television and radio transcripts, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, Web pages, charts, graphs, illustrations, and technical documents.
- Students integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- Students evaluate a speaker's point of view; reasoning; and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone.
- Students demonstrate ability to convey a clear and distinct perspective by using a logical line of reasoning; addressing opposing perspectives; and using appropriate organization, substance, and style.
- Students make strategic use of digital media to enhance presentations.
- Students determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text, including figurative language and connotative meaning.
- Students analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- Students acquire and use general academic and subject-specific words and phrases.

Associated Standards
ELACC11-12RI4
ELACC11-12SL2
ELACC11-12SL3
ELACC11-12SL4
ELACC11-12SL5
ELACC11-12L6

Associated Concepts and Skills
Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:
- evaluating the messages and effects of a variety of media and formats, including but not limited to essays, speeches, editorials, book reviews, television and radio transcripts, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, Web pages, charts, graphs, illustrations, and technical documents
- evaluating an argument presented by a speaker or writer by:
  - determining a speaker's point of view
  - evaluating the speaker's or writer's rhetoric; analyzing word choice, points of emphasis, and tone
  - determining and evaluating the reasoning and evidence used to support an argument
  - determining assumptions made by the author when elaborating an argument
- integrating multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media by:
  - evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source
  - noting discrepancies in information among sources

- o evaluating print and electronic sources of information, understanding which types of texts and websites are likely to contain inaccuracies, agendas, and bias
  - o using information to make informed decisions and solve problems
- presenting information and findings using supporting evidence by:
  - o conveying a clear and distinct perspective by using a logical line of reasoning and appropriate development
  - o addressing opposing perspectives
  - o using organization, substance, and style that are appropriate for the subject, purpose, audience, and formality of the task
- making strategic use of digital media to enhance presentations
- determining the meaning of new vocabulary words by using context, such as:
  - o understanding the correct meaning of a given word or phrase
  - o determining the implied comparison in a metaphor
  - o distinguishing the meaning of the metaphor in the context of the passage
  - o determining the correct definition of a multi-meaning word, based on context
  - o selecting and/or using strategies for finding the meaning of unfamiliar words or concepts
- evaluating an argument presented by a speaker or writer
  - o determining a speaker's or writer's stance or point of view
  - o determining and analyzing the premise(s) of a speaker's or writer's argument
  - o determining and evaluating the evidence used in support of an argument or stance
  - o assessing the links among ideas
  - o analyzing the impact of word choice on tone and meaning
  - o assessing the major points of emphasis

American Literature and Composition
Domain: Writing

Overview of the Domain

- Students use the writing process to develop argumentative and explanatory texts.
- Students develop a claim or topic by using relevant evidence, examples, quotations, and explanations.
- Students use appropriate transitions—words, phrases, and clauses—to link major sections of the text and clarify relationships among ideas.
- Students use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary appropriate to the audience and its knowledge of the topic.
- Students establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Students provide a concluding statement or section that supports the information or explanation presented.
- Students participate in the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- Students use knowledge of research techniques to support writing.
- Students follow appropriate conventions for citation to avoid plagiarism, following the guidelines of an appropriate style manual.

Associated Standards

ELACC11-12W1 (a–e)
ELACC11-12W2 (a–f)
ELACC11-12W5
ELACC11-12W7
ELACC11-12W8
ELACC11-12L3a

Associated Concepts and Skills

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:

- writing **arguments** to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
  - introducing precise claim(s); distinguishing the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims; and creating an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence
  - developing claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns
  - using words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text; create cohesion; and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims

- o establishing and maintaining a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing
- distinguishing slang or colloquial language as inappropriate for formal writing
  - o providing a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented
- writing **informative/explanatory** texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content
  - o introducing a topic; organizing complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; including formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension
    - determining the proper structure to use for conveying information, including chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question
    - determining the best topic sentence in a paragraph
    - recognizing extraneous or off-topic sentences
  - o developing the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts; extended definitions; concrete details; quotations; or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic
    - distinguishing the best supporting sentences, facts, examples, or descriptions to use in a paragraph
    - determining possible difficulties experienced by the audience in understanding information in a technical document
    - demonstrating knowledge of style conventions used in specific types of technical documents, such as resumes, memorandums, letters, e-mails, and user manuals
  - o using appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts
    - recognizing the best transitions to use between given sentences of a paragraph
  - o using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic
    - using the most precise language, action verbs, sensory details, and appropriate modifiers in relation to the purpose, audience, and structural formats of a passage
  - o establishing and maintaining a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing
  - o providing a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic)
- developing and strengthening writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience
  - o revising writing to improve the logic and coherence, sharpen the precision of word choice, and achieve the desired tone and formality in relation to the intended audience
  - o determining the best revision of a phrase or sentence in a given sentence or short passage for clarity of expression (e.g., awkwardly worded sentences, misplaced modifiers, lack of parallel structure), *not for revisions addressing the conventions of*

standard written English, which are covered in the Language domain
- o choosing an appropriate introductory sentence that engages the interest of the reader
- o choosing the best sentence to effectively conclude a passage
- o using appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style necessary for an intended audience
- o determining that a given stimulus material does not require revision
- applying research techniques to answer a question or solve a problem
  - o selecting or generating research questions that are appropriate for a particular scope or task
  - o narrowing or broadening a topic when appropriate
  - o using advanced searches effectively
  - o gathering relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources
  - o assessing the usefulness of sources in answering a research question
  - o determining the best supporting evidence or information from a secondary source to develop the main idea of a text
  - o integrating information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas
  - o demonstrating the proper way to integrate quotations and citations from secondary sources into a text while maintaining the focus and flow of ideas
- demonstrating knowledge of when citation is needed to avoid plagiarism
- demonstrating a knowledge of conventions and style guidelines used in documenting information from secondary sources
  - o determining the proper guidelines for documentation when compiling bibliographies and works-cited lists, according to a guide such as to the *Modern Language Associate Handbook* (MLA); the *Chicago Manual of Style*; the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA); and Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*
  - o selecting the correct way to list items in a citation (e.g., authors' last names listed first, authors arranged in alphabetical order, titles of magazine articles placed within quotation marks, titles of books in italics or underlined)

American Literature and Composition
Domain: Language

Overview of the Domain
- Students demonstrate command of the correct conventions of Standard American English grammar and usage.
- Students demonstrate command of Standard American English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Associated Standards
ELACC11-12L1
ELACC11-12L2

Associated Concepts and Skills
Assessment of this domain will focus on the following grammar and usage conventions that appear in **grades 1 through 10** of the "Language Progressive Skills" chart on page 56 of the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts*:
- ensuring subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement
- recognizing and correcting inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person
- recognizing and correcting vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents)
- recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons
- correctly using frequently confused words (e.g., *accept/except; there/their*)
- recognizing and correcting inappropriate shifts in verb tense
- recognizing and correcting inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood
- placing phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers
- using parallel structure
- using phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following grammar and usage convention that appears in the **11-12 grade band of standard L1**:
- resolving issues of complex or contested usage by consulting references as needed

Assessment of this domain will focus on the capitalization, punctuation, and spelling conventions that appear in **grades 1 through 10 of standard L2**. In addition, assessment of this domain will focus on the following punctuation convention that appears in the **11-12 grade band of standard L2**:
- observing hyphenation conventions