

Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the *Comprehensive Curriculum*?

The purpose of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* is to align content, instruction, and assessment. Research has shown that when these are aligned, students' academic achievement increases. Additionally, the use of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* provides uniformity in content taught across the State in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

2. What does it mean to say that the *Comprehensive Curriculum* aligns content, instruction, and assessment?

The Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) identify the essential content for each grade, while the activities within the *Comprehensive Curriculum* indicate various instructional strategies based on best practices for teaching. The units in the curriculum have been arranged so that the content to be assessed will be taught before the iLEAP testing dates. Samples of performance-based classroom assessments are provided to assist teachers in determining if students are making progress towards mastery of the GLEs.

3. Who wrote the course documents in the *Comprehensive Curriculum*?

The course documents were written by Louisiana educators. The names of writers are listed in the Acknowledgements section of the Introduction for each content area. The one exception is that the Reading Essentials courses for grades PreK-4 were written by national Reading First consultants.

4. What are the State's policies concerning implementation of the *Comprehensive Curriculum*?

The State has indicated that all content of the curriculum must be taught and has provided guidelines to districts for using the curriculum. Local districts are responsible for implementation and monitoring of the *Comprehensive Curriculum*. Districts have been delegated the responsibility of deciding if units are to be taught in the order presented and whether substitutions of equivalent activities are to be allowed. Additionally, districts may determine if fewer activities than those presented may be used as long as each GLE is adequately addressed by the activities that are used. The district is responsible for determining if permitted changes are to be made at the district, school, or teacher level.

5. If a district wants to change the order of the units or the order of activities within a unit, how will this affect the alignment of the curriculum with the State assessments?

The order of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* units ensures that all the Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) to be tested are addressed prior to administration of the State iLEAP assessments. Districts may change the order of the units, but should do so cautiously to preserve the alignment of the GLEs with State assessments.

The order in which activities within a unit are taught is not as critical as the order of the units for a course; however, it is important to recognize that many of the activities which address the same GLEs are often purposely spread throughout a unit. This

allows students to revisit concepts and skills over an extended time period. Reordering of unit activities based on groupings of activities that address the same GLEs would defeat this “spiraling” approach.

6. What are equivalent activities?

Equivalent activities address the same Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs), require students to use the same skills and content knowledge, and are of the same rigor as the sample activities. Equivalent activities should be more rigorous than the sample activities for students performing at higher levels. The modes of delivery and materials used may be different. A guide for determining equivalent activities can be found under the *2008 Workshop Materials* link on <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/saa/1914.html>.

7. What are the procedures for using the activities in the *Comprehensive Curriculum* in the classroom?

The activities are not designed to be taught in isolation. *Incorporation of activities into lesson plans is critical to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Curriculum.*

Lesson plans should be designed to introduce students to one or more of the activities, provide background information and follow-up, and prepare students for success in mastering the Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) associated with the activities. Depending on the time needed for an activity, some lessons may incorporate more than one activity; other activities are longer and may be used in a lesson plan that spans several days.

Lesson plans should address individual needs of students and include processes for re-teaching of a concept or skill for students who need additional instruction. Appropriate accommodations must be made for students with disabilities.

8. Are the timeframes in the units exact?

The timeframes are the writers’ best estimates based on their experiences in the classroom and the number of activities in a unit. It was suggested to districts that a curriculum map be developed for each course. In a curriculum map, the timeframes are matched to the school year calendar and serve as a way for teachers to pace themselves as they teach the units. Timeframes may also need to be adjusted based on daily class configurations (e.g., block, number of class periods, length of a class period).

9. There was a revision of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* released in May 2008. Does this mean that there are new GLEs? If not, why was there a need to revise the curriculum?

No. The GLEs are the same as those published in 2004. When the 2005 version of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* was distributed, there was insufficient time for field testing and adjustments prior to the implementation of mandated NCLB testing. The Department gathered feedback from teachers and used a group of reviewers from outside the State in 2006 to determine where adjustments should be made to improve the documents. The 2008 version of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* is a result of input from these two groups and the writers.

10. What are the new features of the documents of the 2008 revision of the *Comprehensive Curriculum*?

New features in all documents include content area literacy strategies integrated in approximately one-third of the activities, blackline masters, focus GLEs (identification of the GLE(s) emphasized in an activity), and a materials list for each activity. The Prekindergarten curriculum is now a single document that integrates the GLEs for the four core content areas. Additionally, there is a link in each unit to the [Access Guide for the Comprehensive Curriculum](#), an online database of suggested strategies, accommodations, assistive technology, and assessments that may provide greater access to the curriculum activities.

11. Nothing happens when the hyperlinks are clicked in the curriculum documents. What needs to be done to get the links to work?

The curriculum documents were created in *Word*[®]. To activate the link on a PC, the user must hold down the CTRL key while clicking the left mouse button at the same time.

12. How can major changes (reordering of units, addition or deletion of units, GLEs for each unit) made in the 2008 revision be determined?

The Department has provided two documents for each course to assist users in determining major changes. One is *GLEs by Unit* and the other is a *Major Changes Form*. These documents for a course can be found in the appropriate course folder posted at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/saa/2108.html>.

13. Where can the blackline masters referenced in a course activity document be found?

The blackline masters (BLMs) are provided in a separate document for each course. The BLM document for a course is posted in the same course folder as the activity document at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/saa/2108.html>.

14. Is there a way to tell if a blackline master (BLM) has been provided for an activity?

Yes. If a blackline master is available for use with an activity, the materials list will provide the name of the blackline master followed by BLM. For example, if a materials list shows Management Skills BLM and Venn Diagram BLM, then there are two blackline masters for the activity. To find the blackline masters, read the headers in the blackline master document. The header on each blackline master will indicate the Unit number, Activity number, and the title of the blackline master.

15. Where can more information about the 18 content area literacy strategies used in the activities be found?

Content area literacy strategy names are italicized each time they are referenced. A link ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) is provided after the first occurrence of a literacy strategy name in an activity. This link opens a document containing detailed descriptions and examples of the literacy strategies. The document can be accessed directly at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11056.doc>.

16. With 18 content area literacy strategies being used in most courses, can we decide to focus on just a few for the first year?

The activities that have literacy strategies embedded in them indicate how to use a strategy as part of the information that teachers present to students. Focusing on

specific strategies may cause teachers to skip activities that have strategies not identified as a focus and could result in instruction that does not address all GLEs. With the understanding that the first use of a strategy may not be perfect and that teachers will become more proficient with additional use, the Department recommends using all the strategies rather than just a few.

17. Some GLE numbers are underlined in the list of GLEs provided for an activity. What does the underlining indicate?

The underlining indicates a Focus GLE, a GLE which the activity stresses or targets. Other GLEs listed for the activity are also addressed, but aren't emphasized as much as a Focus GLE. The Prekindergarten and Reading Essentials course documents do not use Focus GLEs.

18. If a GLE is identified as a Focus GLE, does it mean that the GLE is more important in terms of the state assessment?

No. The *Teachers Guide to Statewide Assessment* for each assessment provides information relative to the tested GLEs.

19. Can a district follow the sequence of its basal reading program rather than following the sequence of the units in the Reading and Language Arts Essentials document?

For each of the Grades K-4, there are two ELA documents: Reading and Language Arts Essentials and English Language Arts. The Reading and Language Arts Essentials (Reading Essentials) are designed to cover the Five Essential Components of Reading both in terms of content and pedagogy (explicit instruction). While some GLEs may overlap in the two documents, it is necessary to use both documents to address all ELA GLEs for a given grade. Neither of the individual documents alone addresses all ELA GLEs for a given grade.

If a district wants to follow the sequence of a recently adopted basal reader in grades K-4 rather than following the sequence of the Reading Essentials, it should correlate the basal reader and accompanying ancillary materials to the content outlined in the Reading Essentials document. The list of recently adopted reading textbooks (<http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11660.xls>) identifies weaknesses of individual reading materials based on criteria from the Consumer's Guide or the Florida Reading Research Center. The basal reading materials must be supplemented to address both the identified weaknesses and any gaps found during the correlation process.

Once a district has supplemented the basal reading materials as described above, the sequence of the basal reading materials may be followed and used in combination with the English Language Arts Comprehensive Curriculum document to address all the GLEs. If activities in the ELA Comprehensive Curriculum document are the same as those in the reading basal materials, they need not be repeated.

20. Can districts continue to use supplemental and intervention programs, such as Project Read or Language?

Supplemental or intervention programs such as Project Read may be used to supplement the Reading program after all other reading time requirements are met or

to provide intervention during additional time. They cannot be used in lieu of a comprehensive reading program based on scientific research.

21. The English language arts courses at the middle school level are written as single courses. We teach one course of English and another of Reading. Can we divide the activities in ELA and assign them to each course?

It is the Department's position that Reading in the middle school grades should be integrated with the other components of the ELA curriculum rather than having separate classes for English and Reading. Additional activities were added to the middle school ELA courses in the 2008 revision of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* to assist districts in providing instruction that would meet the minimal time requirements noted in *Bulletin 741*.

22. Must all teachers be teaching the same lesson on the same day in a given course or grade?

The State does not advocate the use of a day-by-day pacing guide. We have indicated that districts should map the curriculum to their school calendars for the purpose of informing teachers of *approximately* where they should be at a given time of the year. This mapping may require adjustment as the year progresses with the understanding that all the content for a particular course must be taught prior to the end of the school year. It seems reasonable to expect that teachers should be teaching the same units within a given time period. Some classes may be ahead and others might be slightly behind the established timeframe for a given unit. We have indicated to districts that they should investigate reasons for situations in which a teacher gets far behind the suggested timeline and provide ideas for improvement.

23. The units and activities of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* don't match the chapters and lessons of my textbook. Can I just follow my textbook and use the *Comprehensive Curriculum* activities that fit?

Strictly following the textbook would be contradictory to the intended use of the curriculum. Textbooks are designed for varied audiences in different states and often contain much more material than can be taught in a single year. The *Comprehensive Curriculum* and GLEs, respectively, should determine the order and the content to be taught. The textbook is to be used as a resource of information in the same way that other supplemental resources might be used. For example, the textbook may provide background information, definitions, introductory information, and practice exercises which can be used with an activity in designing a lesson plan. There may be textbook activities that meet the guidelines for equivalent activities (see FAQ #6).

24. Are there any materials that can be used to assist teachers in understanding how to use their textbooks with activities from the curriculum?

Department staff developed a guide for using textbooks and other resources in coordination with activities from the curriculum. Also developed is a short guide that can be used to determine if two activities are equivalent. These guides are available at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/saa/1914.html> via the *2008 Workshop Materials* link.

25. When will the *Access Guide for the Comprehensive Curriculum* be available?

The *Access Guide* will be piloted during the 2008-2009 school year in Grades 4 and 8, with other grades to be added over time. For additional information, contact Kristina.Braud@la.gov.

26. How are students with disabilities supposed to progress through the *Comprehensive Curriculum*?

Students with disabilities must receive instruction on the Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) for the grade in which they are enrolled. State assessment items are derived from the Standards, Benchmarks and GLEs, and students must have the opportunity to learn the content. Of course, if a student needs remediation or the re-teaching of requisite skills as part of the student's IEP, then this instruction should occur. The *Access Guide to the Comprehensive Curriculum* will provide ideas for providing appropriate access to the curriculum for students with disabilities.

27. What about students who function several grade levels below grade placement?

It is critical that instructional activities remain aligned to the Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) for the grade in which the child is enrolled, with the expectation that the child learn grade-level material. This means that during instruction, the intent of the GLE remains intact, the content instruction is on the GLE, the materials are adapted for instruction on grade level, and the expectation remains that the child will learn. During instruction, the teacher may at times reduce the complexity level of the GLE as prerequisite or foundational skills are being taught. At all times, the intent of the Grade-Level Expectations remains intact and the use of the same materials or an adapted version of the materials, and appropriate assistive technology are used to gain access. An example of an accommodation may be providing the same information on a lower reading level or utilizing assistive technology such as providing the text/lesson on tape. For additional information on addressing GLEs with students with disabilities, contact Kristina.Braud@la.gov.

28. Is a district exempt from using the *Comprehensive Curriculum* in gifted and honors classes?

All students should be encouraged to work to their potential. Teachers may teach more than the content of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* when their students are capable of doing more. However, students are required to take on-level tests, so it is important to make sure the GLEs for that grade and content area take first priority.

Gifted: Generally, gifted students take courses designed for higher grades. Therefore, the teacher must document that the student has mastery of the GLEs for the grade in which the student is enrolled and supplement the course being taken so that students have the opportunity to master all GLEs prior to the end of the year.

Honors: Teachers of honors courses should add content to the "regular" *Comprehensive Curriculum* course to make it more rigorous or to allow for a more in-depth study of some of the course content (e.g., Algebra I Honors should use the *Comprehensive Curriculum* Algebra I course as the basis since this is content that all students completing an Algebra I course must master, but the teacher may add other units or activities to make the course more rigorous).

29. The units in Kindergarten curricula are not time bound. How does this affect the implementation of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* for these grades?

The time frames for Kindergarten units in the *Comprehensive Curriculum* for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies are based on recommendations from teachers who reviewed the course document as one part of the *Comprehensive Curriculum* development process. The intent is to allow districts flexibility in implementing the activities at these grades to meet the developmental needs of students. Teachers indicate that Kindergarten students need to revisit concepts a minimum of three times before they can internalize them. Thus, there is a need to use most of the activities multiple times.

Districts may choose to implement short time-bound units to introduce specific content and then revisit activities throughout the year to reinforce concepts/skills. Another alternative is to use the activities as parts of thematic or contextual situations as they occur in the classroom throughout the course. As with all other courses in other grades, all the activities (or equivalents) should be used to ensure that students have the opportunity to master the GLEs. The district is responsible for determining how the activities will be implemented and who may substitute equivalent activities. Information on use of the Reading Essentials course in Kindergarten is provided in the questions pertaining to Reading.

30. How should we use the Science and Social Studies curricula in grades 1, 2, and 3? We teach these as an integrated Social Sciences class. Do we have to teach these courses every day?

Science and Social Studies courses for grades 1, 2, and 3 in the *Comprehensive Curriculum* were developed with the understanding that they would be taught every other day for approximately 45 minutes. Those districts using the integrated Social Sciences format on a daily basis will want to determine how to use the two courses within the format established by the school ensuring that all the content is covered.

31. Is there a way to propose changes or alternatives to activities to the State?

At the present time, we do not have a specific process to evaluate changes or alternatives to activities in the current version of the curriculum.

32. I have found an error in one of the activities. How can I report this?

Send an email to Carolyn.Sessions@la.gov noting the content area, grade/course, unit, activity number, and information about the error. Corrected files and the list of corrections are posted on the Department's website at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/saa/2108.html>. Click on the word "HERE" which is printed in red text in the second paragraph.

33. When I open some of the math documents, there are errors with the math symbols. Sometimes spaces are printed instead of the symbols or some symbols don't print correctly. How do I correct this?

Most of the math symbols were made with *Math Type*[®] software. Specific fonts must be installed on your computer in order for the symbols to be read. You should use the *pdf* format of a document if you just want to print the document. If you need to copy and paste from the Word document, install the fonts on *each* computer on which the document is to be used. This can be done by downloading the *Math Type*[®] for Windows Font from <http://www.dessci.com/en/dl/fonts/default.asp>.