

# English Language of Arts Glossary of Terms

Ohio Department of Education

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## Introduction

The purpose of the new English Language Arts Glossary of Terms is to provide definitions for terms that educators may find confusing (or for which they need a clear definition) while teaching Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts or reviewing related webpages. This glossary is not meant to be a comprehensive content-area list of literary terms or a list for students. Department staff selected some terms because we frequently received questions about these terms or related standards from the field. The advisory committee and working groups, who worked on the standards' revisions, suggested other terms be added to this glossary due to public comments from the first revision survey in the spring 2016.

## Adage

A saying that sets forth a general truth that has gained credibility through use over time (e.g., No risk, no gain.).

## Affix

A word part that is "fixed to" either the beginnings of words (prefixes) or the endings of words (suffixes); For example, the word disrespectful has two affixes, a prefix (dis-) and a suffix (-ful).

## Alignment

The degree of correspondence among or connection between parts, ideas, concepts, or constructs

The vertical alignment of the standards looks at the way each grade level standard builds on the previous one so that skills and knowledge follow a progression that increases in complexity to the anchor standard.

## Alliteration

The repetition of speech sounds in the beginning of nearby words (e.g., Peter Piper's pickled peppers).

## Allusion

A passing reference in a text to a literary or historical person, place, event, or other literary work; For example, in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Walton writes in his second letter to his sister, Margaret, "...but I shall kill no albatross, therefore do not be alarmed for my safety..." This is an allusion to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a prominent literary work, in which a sailor suffers great misfortune at sea, including the loss of his entire crew, after killing a highly regarded bird.

## Analogy

Relationships created between new and familiar words, concepts, and ideas

As a literary term, analogies can be various types of comparisons, such as metaphors or parables; however, analogies can also be stand-alone relationships like those you might see on the SAT.

Example - RED : COLOR :: ROSE : FLOWER

### **Analyze**

To break material down into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to the overall structure or purpose of the text(s)

### **Antonym**

A word having the opposite meaning of another word (e.g., cool : warm).

### **Argument**

A type of oral or written communication that develops or debates a topic in a logical or persuasive way

### **Assess**

To evaluate or measure the nature, ability, or quality of

### **Audience**

The intended target group of a message, such as adolescents for young adult literature

### **Author's purpose**

The motive or reason for which an author writes, as to entertain, inform, or persuade

### **Blend**

To combine the sounds represented by letters in order to pronounce a word or word part (e.g., snail)

### **Central idea**

See main idea

### **Character**

Persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work

### **Claim**

An arguable statement

### **Clarify**

To make the meaning more transparent and easy to understand

### **Clause**

A group of words containing both a subject and a predicate (e.g., when she went to the store, he sang)

### **Cloze/Close reading**

Cloze reading procedure involves removing words from a sentence or paragraph and having the student infer meaning from the context in order to supply the appropriate missing words to create meaningful text. At the lower grades, a list of missing words, in random order, is often provided for the student.

Close reading procedure requires that students gather information through a deep examination of the text and organize that information around pertinent ideas that help students create meaning or develop a strong factual base.

### **Compare**

To detect similarities or correspondences between two or more ideas, objects, concepts, and other elements from a text

### **Compose**

Arranging ideas and details in a clear and coherent way to create an effective message

### **Connotation**

What may be suggested by or associated with the meaning of a word (e.g., home may suggest warmth or family)

### **Context**

1. The parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specific word or passage, usually influencing the meaning or effect;
2. The social or cultural situation in which a spoken or written message occurs

### **Contrast**

Indicates differences

### **Counterclaim**

Arguable statements intended to dispute other claims

### **Decode**

To analyze (break down) spoken words or graphic symbols/units of a familiar language to discover their intended meaning

### **Delineate**

To describe or outline with precision

### **Demonstrate**

To make evident or prove

### **Denotation**

The general or literal meaning of a word (e.g., home is a place where a person lives)

## Describe

To convey the appearance, nature, and/or attributes of elements or ideas in literary or informational text using vivid language and textual evidence

## Dialogue

The verbal interaction between two or more characters in a dramatic or narrative work

## Diction

The stylistic choice and use of words and phrases in speech or writing

## Drama

A literary genre designed for performance in the theater in which actors take on the roles of characters, perform the indicated actions, and utter the written dialogue

## e.g.

*For example* or *such as*; used to give an example of the preceding word or words

## Edit

The correction of mechanical features of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, in order to prepare materials for publication or presentation

## Emergent reader texts

Texts consisting of images, images with a single word or phrase, and/or short sentences made up of learned sight words and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words; may also include rebuses (a picture that represents a word or word part) within the text to represent unfamiliar words.

## Evaluate

To make judgments about the value of ideas, purposes, or claims of a text based on criteria and standards

## Evidence

Facts, figures, details, quotations, or other sources of data and information that provide support for claims or an analysis of the text and that can be evaluated by others

## Exemplar

A product that serves as an excellent illustration of a point, principle, or model

## Explain

To make clear by describing in more detail or giving relevant facts or ideas

## Explicit

Directly stated

### **Fable**

A short narrative that contains a moral or principle of human behavior (e.g., Aesop's The Hare and the Tortoise - slow and steady wins the race)

### **Figurative language**

Words or expressions with meaning other than the literal interpretation

### **Figures of speech**

Spoken and written language that departs from literal meaning in both pattern and usage (e.g., personification, metaphor, hyperbole)

### **First person**

A narrator who is a participant in the story and uses the pronouns I and me

### **Flashback**

The technique of disrupting the order of events in a story by shifting to an earlier time in order to introduce information

### **Folktale**

A short narrative in prose of unknown authorship which has been a part of an oral tradition over generations (e.g., Johnny Appleseed)

### **Formal style**

A style of speaking and writing used to inform an audience in impersonal terms, marked by careful attention to organization of content and to grammatical structure and pronunciation.

### **Genre**

A type or class of literature (e.g., fiction, drama, poetry)

### **Grapheme**

A written representation of a phoneme (a sound); may be a single letter or group of letters

### **i.e.**

That is; used to state something more clearly

### **Idiom**

Phrases or expressions that have meanings different from the literal (e.g., The kids clean their rooms once in a blue moon.)

### **Implement**

To apply a procedure to an unfamiliar task; to put into practice

## Implicit

Intended or suggested rather than directly stated

## Inference

A conclusion logically drawn from presented information

## Informative/explanatory writing

Writing that represents knowledge originating from instruction, study, or research and that is meant to reveal or further clarify by describing in more detail

## Integrate

To identify elements and fit them into an existing structure

## Interpret

Understand and explain the meaning of

## Irony

Text or dialogue in which there is a root sense of hiding what is actually the case in order to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effect

- Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning the speaker implies differs sharply from what is directly said. For example, when someone says, "What a nice day!" if it is raining outside, this is verbal irony.
- Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or story in which the author and the audience or reader have information that is unknown to the characters or actors. For example, In Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, Snow White does not know the apple offered to her by the disguised evil queen is poisonous, but the audience or reader knows this.
- Situational irony is represented by a mismatch between expectation and reality. For example, you save money for months to buy your new video game console, and the day before you finally go to get it, your mother surprises you with the new game system as a gift.

## Key details

Points of information in a text that strongly support the meaning or tell the story

## Literal

Taking words in their usual or most basic sense without metaphor or allegory

## Learned spelling patterns

Groups of letters that can represent the same sound; For example, -er, -ir, and -ur can represent the same sound in her, sir, and fur.

## Main idea

The chief topic of a passage expressed or implied in a word or phrase

## Metaphor

A type of comparison in which a word or expression's literal usage and meaning is applied to a distinctly different thing (e.g., "All the world's a stage..." - Shakespeare)

## Meter

A unit of rhythm; the recurrence, in regular units, of a prominent feature in the sequence of speech sounds, usually in poetry

## Mood

The emotion(s) expressed by an author or artist in the rhetoric, structure, and/or perspective of his or her work

## Moral

A principle or value of human behavior

## Morphology

The study of the structure and construction of words including where the word originated (i.e., Greek, Latin), the inflection (the way a word is changed or altered in form to achieve a new meaning, such as adding -s or -ed to a verb to change tense), and compounding (two or more words connected to make a longer word, such as birdbath).

## Myth

A narrative of ancient origin that a particular cultural group believes to be a true explanation of why the world is as it is and that provides a rationale and rules for societal customs (e.g., The Adventures of Perseus)

## Narrative writing

A story involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do

## Narrator

The person in a fictional narrative who relates the account or story

## Nonliteral

See figurative language

## Nuance

A subtle difference in a shade of meaning, expression, or sound

## Onset

The initial phonological unit (letter or letters involved in the initial sound of the word) of any word (e.g., the c in cat)

### **Opinion**

A personal view, attitude, or appraisal

### **Parallel structure**

A form of language construction in which word forms, sentences, clauses, or paragraphs are constructed in the same way

### **Paraphrase**

To translate from the original text into one's own words

### **Personification**

When an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings (e.g., The sun smiled down on us.)

### **Perspective**

A position from which something is considered or evaluated

### **Phoneme**

An individual sound unit of speech

### **Phrase**

A group of words not containing a subject and a predicate (e.g., running in the rain)

### **Plagiarism**

The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own

### **Plot**

The events and actions of a narrative work

### **Poetry**

Literature that can be in metrical form and that expresses an idea or concept often using figurative language; The three most common types are narrative, dramatic and lyric.

### **Point of view**

Chiefly in literary texts, the narrative point of view (as in first- or third-person narration)

### **Prefix**

An affix attached before a root word (e.g., disconnect)

### **Premise**

An assertion or proposition which forms the basis for a work or theory



### Primary sources

An original text used largely for informational purposes, as in research. (e.g., journals, photographs, research data)

### Prose

Written or spoken language that is not verse

### Proverb

A short, concise statement of widely accepted truth about everyday life (e.g., Actions speak louder than words.)

### Publish

To prepare written material for presentation to an audience

### Pun

A deliberate and humorous play on words that are the same or similar in sound but different in meaning (e.g., I'm glad I know sign language; it's pretty handy.)

### Purpose

The goal a reader or writer seeks to attain

### Revise

The part of writing and preparing written material concerned chiefly with reconsidering and reworking text relative to task, purpose, and audience

### Rhetoric

The effective use of language in prose, verse, or oration to communicate with, inform, or persuade an audience

### Rhyme

Repetition of the last stressed vowel and of all the speech sounds following that vowel

### Rhythm

A recognizable, varying pattern in the beat of the accents in a stream of speech sounds

### Rime

A vowel and any following consonants of a syllable (e.g., ook in book)

### Roots

The basic part of a word that carries the main component of meaning and that cannot be further broken down without loss of identity

### Rubric

An evaluation tool or guideline that outlines the criteria and indicators of success

### Satire

The use of ridicule or sarcasm, often in humorous or witty ways, to expose immorality or foolishness

### Scaffolding

The gradual withdrawal of adult support within the learning process in order to shift more and more responsibility for learning onto the student

### Scene

The subdivision of acts in a play in which there is no change of place or in the continuity of time

### Second person

A narrator who addresses a story to a someone he or she calls "you"

### Secondary sources

A text used largely for informational purposes that references, analyzes, interprets, or critiques one or more primary sources, as in research

### Segment

Separating the individual phonemes, or sounds, of a word into distinct units

### Seminal U.S. documents

Influential and important works in United States history (e.g., The Bill of Rights, The Emancipation Proclamation 1864)

### Sensory language

Use of details from the five senses to appeal to the reader

### Sequence of events

The structure of the action of a story in its chronological order

### Setting

The general place, historical time, and social circumstances in which action occurs in a story or play

### Soliloquy

The act of a character in a drama, alone on stage, uttering his thoughts aloud

### Simile

A comparison between two distinctly different things indicated by the word "like" or "as"(e.g., quiet as a mouse)

### Sonnet

A lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of 14 lines of iambic pentameter (i.e., ten syllables, five pairs of one stressed and one unstressed syllable)

### Stanza

A grouping of lines of verse in a poem often set off by a space in the printed text

### Suffix

An affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the grammatical function of the word (e.g., history - noun to historical - adjective)

### Summarize

Condensing a text to its general theme(s) and/or major points

### Suspense

A lack of certainty on the part of a concerned reader about what is going to happen to characters with whom the reader has established a bond

### Synonym

A word having a similar meaning (e.g., cold : chilly)

### Syntax

The study of the way sequences of words are ordered into phrases, clauses, and sentences

### Synthesize

A process of arranging and combining pieces, parts, and elements into a pattern or structure not clearly there before

### Text complexity

The inherent difficulty of reading and comprehending a text combined with consideration of reader and task variables (e.g., language clarity, sentence length, reader motivation)

### Text features

Print features, as well as graphic, informational, and organizational aids (e.g., bold print, italics, maps, charts, labels, headings)

### Theme

An abstract concept broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work

### Thesis statement

The basic argument advanced by a speaker or writer who then attempts to prove it throughout the remainder of the piece of writing

### Third person

A narrator who is outside the story proper and refers to all of the characters as he, she, or they

### Tone

The author's attitude reflected in the style of the written word

### Transitions

Words, phrases, or sentences that establish connections between ideas when writing or speaking (e.g., similarly, in addition, finally)

### Verse

Compositions written in meter