

LEGISLATIVE LESSON PLAN
Addressing Reading, Writing, Health, and Social Studies TEKS,
as well as ELPS and CCRS

This lesson is intended to take **three 45-minute lesson blocks**. However, for teachers with less time, consider skipping the ENGAGE AND DISCOVER section and simply use the Questions and Answers to the THINK-INK/PAIR-SHARE activity as the guiding questions for a whole class discussion, being sure to incorporate key vocabulary and capture key points from class discussion on an anchor chart for reference throughout the BILL WRITING activity. With this modification, this lesson can be completed in 2-45 minute lessons. (Discussion and Bill Writing in block 1 and Debate in block 2)

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Goal

Students will experience the legislative process by learning to write bills, argue for and against bills, and vote on bills that will prevent drug and alcohol use and abuse.

Overview

In this Legislative Lesson Plan, students will learn the various ways drug and alcohol use/abuse can be prevented using the legislative process. They will learn how laws are made, write a new drug or alcohol prevention bill, and practice debating the bill before a legislature made up of their peers. Students will take on the role of legislators from either the House of Representatives or the Senate in order to draft a bill and vote on it. *Before beginning this lesson, be sure to complete the prerequisite lesson, Healthy Choices Lesson Plan.*

Teachers will use pages 3-8 to walk students through the three main parts of this lesson: “How Texas Laws Are Made”, “Writing a Bill”, and “Debating and Voting on Bills. “Differentiation and Accommodations” are on page 7.

Students will need copies of the following:

- Page 6: THINK-INK/PAIR-SHARE Worksheet
- Page 9-10: How Texas Laws Are Made
- Pages 11-12: How to Write a Bill
- Pages 13-15: Example Bills 1, 2, and 3
- Page 16: Drug and Alcohol Prevention Bill Worksheet

PART 1: Engage and Discover | Learning How Texas Laws Are Made

Use the following process to introduce Texas lawmaking and the guiding questions as formative assessment of students' understanding through the use of text evidence.

- 1) Remind students of activity from the *Healthy Choices* lesson when they responded to a story or stimulus to write about and discuss their current knowledge and thoughts around drug use.
- 2) Tell students that today they will learn how to pass laws that can impact positive change in the way the public views drugs and alcohol, how they are marketed, who can get access to them, and how people should be punished for breaking any existing laws.
- 3) Teacher reads "How Texas Laws Are Made" aloud (pages 10-11) as students highlight information that they find interesting, confusing, have questions about, or even things they already know about and would like to share more information on.
- 4) Have students write the things they talked about, called "Observances", on a piece of chart paper to create an "anchor chart" for all to see and discuss. There is an example of an anchor chart on page 18.
- 5) Ask students to do a "second-draft" reading of pages 10 and 11 independently to find text evidence to answer the questions they had from the discussion, and to answer each question in the "What I think" column" of the "THINK-INK/PAIR-SHARE" worksheet found on page 6. Tell students to also use the anchor chart to write down any additional questions that arise.
- 6) Have students get into pairs and then listen closely to their partner as they take turns explaining what they found for each question. They should record their partner's findings in the "What my partner thinks" column. They will then decide what to share with the class and should record that in their "What we will share" column.
- 7) Encourage class discussion of all findings and check to see if questions on the "Observances" anchor chart have now been answered, and if clarification of ideas has been confirmed.
- 8) Review the vocabulary below with students to help answer questions throughout the discussion.

VOCABULARY

The following terms should be taught and discussed to ensure students understand these concepts as discussion occurs in description above. Academic language should be added to all anchor charts:

Session - the length of time the legislature meets to address state business and pass laws.
The Texas legislature is usually in session for 140 days.

Senate - an assembly of citizens which make up the upper house of the legislature.
One of the two governing bodies of the legislature is the Senate. The other body is the House of Representatives.

Adjourn - to end a meeting temporarily with the intention of continuing at a later time.
The legislature has adjourned the meetings until after the MLK Jr. holiday.

Majority - the group who has most (over half) of the votes on any particular issue.

The bill regarding bus safety laws is expected to have the majority of votes and pass into law.

Yield - to give up one's opposing opinion to another member's position on a topic.

Senator Watson yielded the floor to Senator Davis and sat down so that she could speak.

Term - a period of time something can last to which limits have been set.

Texas Senators serve 4-year terms, and then their seat is open for election of a replacement.

Concerning - relating to or regarding a certain matter.

A bill concerning city curfews was voted upon this afternoon in the House of Representatives.

Legislator - what all members of the Legislature are called; a person who makes laws.

The legislator decided how he would vote on the bill after much consideration.

Bill - a draft of a statute, or idea for a law, which has yet been voted on and passed into law.

A bill about smoking in public places was put before the legislature to consider voting into law.

Veto - to reject a bill passed by the legislature.

The Governor vetoed a bill passed by the legislature and therefore it will not be passed into law.

Proposed - to offer or suggest for consideration.

The Representative proposed a new idea for a law and presented it to the Legislature.

Composition - the combined parts of a whole.

The composition of the Legislature is the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Relevant - having importance or appropriateness to the topic being discussed.

The opposing views about the bill under consideration were relevant and therefore considered.

Answers to THINK-INK/PAIR-SHARE worksheet:

1. What are the two bodies of government that make the laws in Texas?

Answer: Texas House of Representatives and Texas Senate.

2. What is a bill?

Answer: A proposed law.

3. What is a committee and what is its function?

Answer: A selected group of Representatives from the House and Senators from the Senate who review bills.

4. Why must all committee actions be held in public?

Answer: To give people/citizens a chance to voice their opinion about the proposed bill.

5. After officers of the House AND Senate approve the bill, where does the bill go?

Answer: It is sent to the governor.

6. How many days does the governor have to review and sign or “veto” the bill?

Answer: 10 days

7. What is a veto?

Answer: A rejection or disapproval of a bill by the governor.

8. What changes would you make to this process? Why?

9. What questions do you still have?

See “Useful Websites” on pages 8-9 for helpful websites for kids on the law-making process.

Think-Ink/Pair-Share How Texas Laws Are Made

Question	What I thought	What my partner thought	What we will share with the class
What are the two bodies of government that make the laws in Texas?			
What is a bill?			
What is a committee and what is its function?			
Why must all committee actions be held in public?			
After officers of the House AND Senate approve the bill, where does the bill go?			
How many days does the governor have to review and sign or "veto" the bill?			
What is a veto?			
What changes would you make to this process? Why?			
What questions do you still have?			

PART 2: Writing A Bill

Give students copies of pages 12-13, “How to Write a Bill,” and the example bills on pages 14-16. These will guide them in writing their bill. They can use the “Drug and Alcohol Prevention Bill Worksheet” on page 17 as a template.

Help students draw on what they learned in the *Healthy Choices* lesson to develop ideas for their drug or alcohol prevention bill. The bill should address one main question: *How will we stop students from trying or using drugs and alcohol?*

Teacher should model how to complete “Drug and Alcohol Prevention Bill Worksheet” on a document camera or overhead projector as students contribute content using example bills to guide them. Then teacher should spend some time brainstorming with students about reasons why someone might oppose this bill and list responses on an anchor chart (money, family values, concerns of alcohol and drug companies, etc.) At this point, students should be ready for independent practice in groups.

- 1) Break students into groups of 3-4.
- 2) Each group will brainstorm their greatest concern and primary solution for stopping students from using drugs and/or alcohol.
- 3) Each group will turn the concern and solution into a bill and place it in the correct format using the “Drug and Alcohol Prevention Bill Worksheet” (page 17).

PART 3: Debating and Voting on Bills

After the bills are drafted, an instructor will act as Chief Clerk and facilitate the reading of the bills. The Chief Clerk will ask two students (senators or representatives) to speak in favor of the bill and two other students (senators or representatives) to speak against it, using the anchor chart created earlier as necessary to remind students of valid reasons to oppose. The Chief Clerk will then take an up-down-hands vote of those for/against and record the final vote.

Please note, there are several specific rules a legislator must follow when speaking for or against a bill. A legislator must rise and be recognized by the Chief Clerk before addressing members. After being recognized by the Chief Clerk, the legislator:

- Remains standing at his or her desk or comes to the front of the room.
- Speaks on relevant topics to the issue or bill at hand.
- May yield the floor to another member for questions.

PART 4: Differentiation and Accommodations

- 1) Advanced students—Consider having a student or pair of students serve as the Chief Clerk from PART 3. In which case, the students that serve as the Chief Clerk should have a list of these rules as they hear the speakers and re-direct them when they fail to follow the rules exactly.
 - 1) Remains standing at his or her desk or comes to the front of the room.

- 2) Speaks on relevant topics to the issue or bill at hand.
 - 3) May yield the floor to another member for questions.
- 2) ELL students—Modeling the completion of a sample bill will support ELL’s in this task. Additionally, vocabulary should be specifically taught using visuals and placed on an anchor chart for easy reference throughout the lesson or unit. Additionally, the THINK-INK/PAIR-SHARE activity and the partner conversations and collaboration provide low-risk opportunities for ELL students to read, write, speak, and listen. Each part of the activity should be supported with sentence stems and anchor charts, as necessary.

Useful Websites

The Partnership for a Drug-Free Texas / Capitol Red Ribbon Rally

<http://www.drugfreetexas.org/>

<http://www.drugfreetexas.org/red-ribbon/>

Texas Education Agency / TEKS

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>

Texas Senate Kids

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/kids/>

Kids’ House - Texas House of Representatives

<http://www.kids.house.state.tx.us/>

How a Bill Becomes a Law

http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/gtli/legproc/process_bill.html.

If you have questions or comments, please email us at info@drugfreetexas.org.

HOW TEXAS LAWS ARE MADE

The two government bodies that make laws in Texas are the House of Representatives and the State Senate. Together, these make up the Legislature.

COMPOSITION OF LEGISLATURE

The members of the House are called representatives. In Texas, there are 150 state representatives. Each representative is elected for a two-year term. The leader of the House (elected by other members of the House) is called the Speaker of the House. Joe Straus is the current Speaker of the House.

The members of the Senate are called senators. In Texas, there are 31 state senators. Each senator is elected for a four-year term. The Lieutenant Governor (elected by Texas voters) is the leader of the Senate and is called the President of the Senate. David Dewhurst is the current Lieutenant Governor.

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

During the “session,” the Legislators (representatives and senators) meet in large rooms called chambers. A session, also known as a “term,” refers to the 140 days that the Legislature meets. The Texas Legislature meets every other year.

A bill is a proposed law. After a legislative session begins, representatives and senators, also known as legislators, have 60 days to write and introduce their bills. When writing their bills, the legislators must follow the rules of the Texas Constitution, which is the law that determines the powers of government and protects the rights of Texas citizens.

Once the bill is written, it is given to the Chief Clerk to file.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The bill is then introduced, either by a representative in the House or by a senator in the Senate.

After the bill is introduced, it must go to a special committee for review. Committees are selected groups of representatives in the House and senators in the Senate who review bills. There are 30 House committees and 10 Senate committees. All committee actions or hearings must be open to the public. That way it gives the people, or citizens, a chance to voice their opinions about a proposed bill.

Before submitting a bill to their fellow representatives or senators for a vote, committee members can make changes or additions to the bill. These are called amendments. Committees can also substitute a new bill for the original one.

After the committee has reviewed the bill and a majority have voted in favor, it is given to the Chief Clerk, who makes copies of it for the members of the House or Senate.

VOTING ON BILLS

The bill may then be scheduled for “floor action” where votes are taken.

After both chambers agree to pass the bill, it is “enrolled,” or prepared for presentation to the governor.

After the presiding officers of the House and the Senate sign the bill, it is sent to the Governor. Rick Perry is the current Governor of Texas.

ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR AND PASSING/REJECTION OF A BILL

After receiving the bill, the Governor has 10 days to review it and then sign it or “veto” it. A veto is the rejection, or disapproval, of a bill.

If the Governor doesn’t sign or veto the bill within 10 days, the bill automatically becomes the law.

If the Governor vetoes the bill, the legislature can “override” the veto. To override a veto, or reject the Governor’s veto, there must be a two-thirds majority vote in each chamber.

HOW TO WRITE A BILL

CHOOSING AN ISSUE

Write your bill about a drug, alcohol, and/or tobacco issue that is important to you. Below are some sample issues, but please be creative with your own ideas too! Don't forget to consider possible opposing points of view to what you will write. Possible topics include:

- Improving drug or alcohol prevention programs during school or after school.
- Preventing the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by youth.
- Making it harder for alcohol or tobacco companies to advertise their products to youth.
- Prohibiting the sale of electronic cigarettes (E-cigarettes) to anyone under 21 years of age.
- Requiring drug testing for youth, with mandatory counseling for those who test positive.

WRITING A BILL

A complete bill consists of four parts:

- 1) Title section
- 2) Bill description
- 3) Description of why this bill is needed
- 4) Description of the consequences to not approving the bill

Title: The title for the bill will take up three lines and should be centered at the top of the page. The first line should always state, "A BILL TO BE TITLED." The second line should be the name of your bill, also all in capital letters. On the third line, write a brief statement on what your bill is about, always starting with, "An act concerning...".

Here's an example of a complete title section from a previous bill:

A BILL TO BE TITLED
DRUG EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS
An act concerning the education of minors in the school setting

Bill description: The next section describes the law you are trying to change or add to through this bill. It should be formatted as seen below.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

Brief description of the current law you'd like to change or create.

XX law is to be amended as follows: Description of the law you are changing and how it needs to be changed. Or provide a description of the new law you would like to create.

Why the bill is needed: After the bill description, write a short paragraph where you describe why legislation is needed—use facts to back up your statements.

Consequences to not passing the bill: Finally, write another short paragraph describing what the consequences are if this bill isn't passed. Be sure to learn about possible reasons why others may oppose your bill, as this will help you debate later on.

Keep your entire bill to no more than one page.

Remember, this exercise is a mock legislation exercise. The writing of a legislative bill is for educational purposes only and will not actively change any state laws.

EXAMPLE BILL 1

Submitted by Gilbert Elementary in Dallas, Texas

A BILL TO BE TITLED

DRUG EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

An act concerning the education of minors in the school setting

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

The current education law is amended to read as follows:

Each teacher shall be required to teach students on the dangers of drug use.

The lessons shall be required in 2nd grade and continue to 8th grade. The lessons shall be taught twice a week for 30 minutes.

Why Legislation is needed:

Because kids often use drugs because they don't know the consequences and dangers of drug use. Adults and teenagers take advantage of kids by offering or selling them drugs. Seventy percent of people in prison today are there because their crimes were drug related. If the crimes weren't directly related, they were indirectly related; for example, people were stealing to get money to buy more drugs.

Consequences if not passed:

We will have more people going to prison for drugs. It will also cost us more in taxes to keep them in prison, and also lead to more drug-related deaths and crimes. It also costs the insurance companies more money when their employees have to go to rehab. The school dropout rate will also go up. We believe that prevention is a cheaper and healthier choice.

EXAMPLE BILL 2

Submitted by John R. Good Elementary in Austin, TX

**A BILL TO BE TITLED
PREVENTION OF CHILDREN FROM WANTING TO USE ILLEGAL DRUGS**

An act concerning the welfare of minors

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF TEXAS:

The Health and Safety Code **is amended to read as follows:**

Add (d), The commission shall provide parent education about the consequences of using illegal drugs, the supervision of children specifically to avoid exposing children to illegal drugs, and designing a safety plan for the family in the event of illegal drug exposure.

Why legislation is needed:

In spite of the laws on record written to deter youth from the desire to use illegal drugs, drug abuse among minors is on the rise. Parents are the primary caregivers of children and need education about their role as parents in providing supervision and guidance to the children in their care.

Consequences if not passed:

If this bill is not passed, youth will continue to see the adults who supervise them in the home using illegal drugs. Youth will continue to be adversely influenced to abuse drugs by watching their parents and/or other supervising adults continue to abuse drugs. Illness and accidents due to drug abuse will continue. Money will be wasted. Lives will continue to be ruined by drug abuse.

EXAMPLE BILL 3

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED PREVENTION OF UNDER AGE TOBACCO USE

An act concerning the transfer of tobacco to minors

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF TEXAS:

The Penal Code concerning Smoking Tobacco, **is amended to read as follows:**

Add (g), A person may not transfer, upon purchase, any nicotine or nicotine delivery device (including e-cigarettes and all tobacco products) to children under the age of 18.

Why legislation is needed:

Statistics indicate that adolescents who use tobacco progress to other drugs. A survey conducted by Monitoring the Future found 8th graders who smoked at all were three times more likely to try illicit drugs than nonsmokers. Nicotine found in tobacco products like cigarettes, dip, snuff, cigars, cigarillos and e-cigarettes is also highly addictive—especially to a young person’s brain—as it is still developing.

Aggressive efforts to prevent underage use of tobacco and nicotine are essential to the prevention of illicit drug use. In addition, e-cigarettes can addict people to nicotine, and thus encourage traditional cigarette smoking as well. Also, people may switch from traditional cigarettes to e-cigarettes instead of quitting altogether because they mistakenly think they are safe. E-cigarettes are not FDA approved or regulated, and contain harmful chemicals and nicotine.

Consequences if not passed:

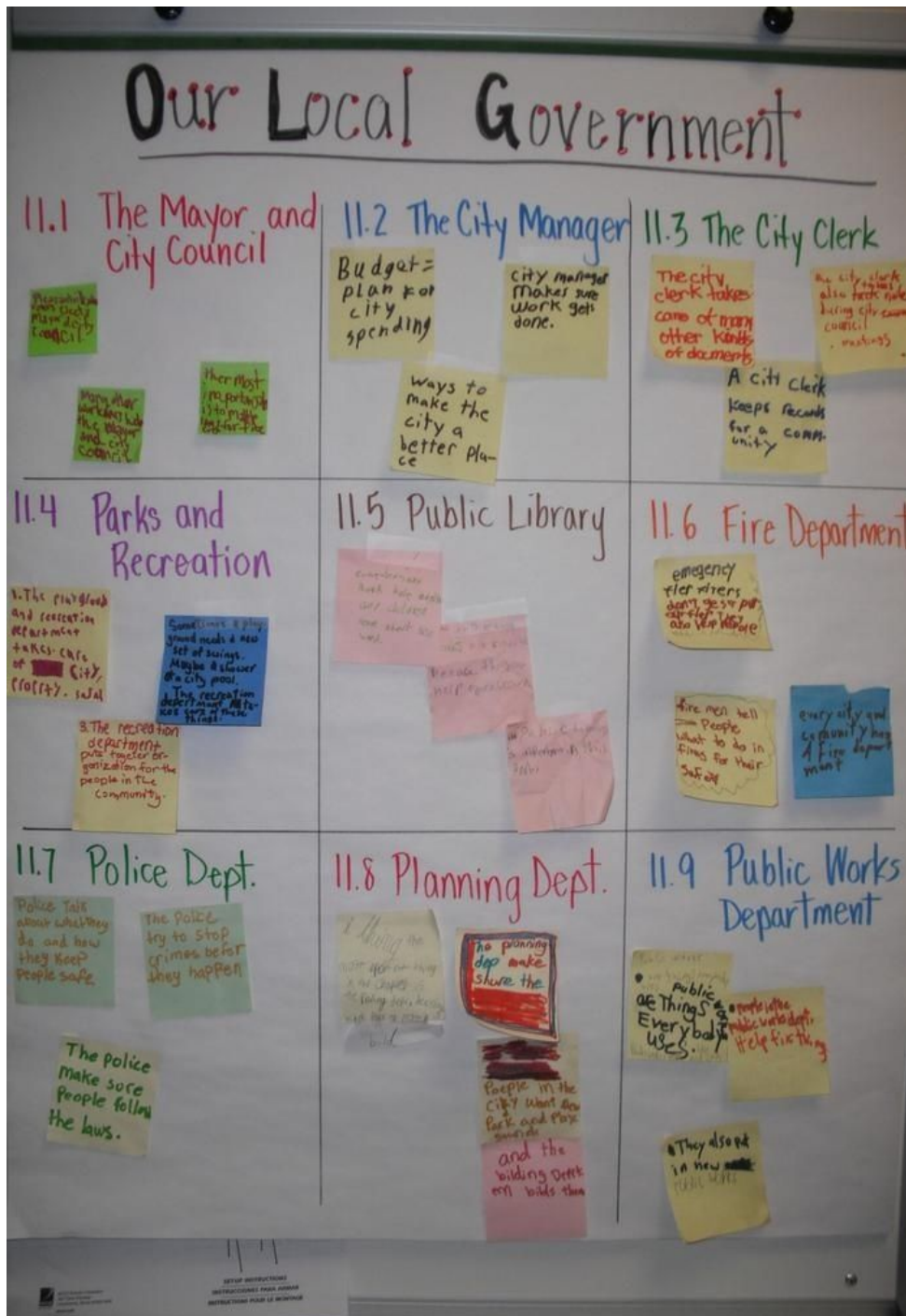
If this bill is not passed, children less than 18 years of age will continue to receive cigarettes and other tobacco/nicotine products from other adults and enhance their chances of using illicit drugs.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION BILL WORKSHEET

Directions	Text of Bill
Title:	A BILL TO BE ENTITLED _____
Subtitle:	An act concerning _____
Bill Description:	
	BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS: _____
Brief description of the current law you'd like to change or add to	
Description of the bill you are creating...	XX law ... is to be amended as follows:
After the bill description, write a short (unnumbered) paragraph where you describe why legislation is needed—use facts to back up your statements.	Why the bill is needed:
Finally, write another short paragraph describing what the consequences are if this bill isn't passed. Be sure to learn about possible reasons why others may oppose your bill, as this will help you debate later on.	Consequences to not passing the bill:

EXAMPLE ANCHOR CHART

An anchor chart is created **with** the kids while learning new information and is then left up throughout a learning unit, possibly with students adding to the chart (as seen below with sticky notes) as a visual reference for their continued work with the tasks and concepts. Clearly, this one is not specific to the lesson in this unit, but it can serve as a reference for teachers.



ACADEMIC STANDARDS MET FOR TEKS, ELPS, AND CCRS

TEKS STANDARDS

Reading

- 5.11(A-E) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Expository Text. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding
- 5.13 (A) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Procedural Texts. Students understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents

Writing

- 5.18 Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts. Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes
- 5.19 Writing/Persuasive Texts. Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write persuasive essays for appropriate audiences that establish a position and include sound reasoning, detailed and relevant evidence, and consideration of alternatives.

Social Studies

- 5.18 Citizenship. The student understands the importance of individual participation in the democratic process at the local, state, and national levels.

Health

- 5.5 (A-I) Health behaviors. The student comprehends behaviors that reduce health risks throughout the life span.
- 5.6 Influencing factors. The student understands how relationships influence individual and family health including the skills necessary for building and maintaining relationships

ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standards)

Learning Strategies

- §74.4.c.1. (E) internalize new basic and academic language by using and reusing it in meaningful ways in speaking and writing activities that build concept and language attainment;

Listening

- §74.4.c.2. (C) learn new language structures, expressions, and basic and academic vocabulary heard during classroom instruction and interactions;
- §74.4.c.2. (G) understand the general meaning, main points, and important details of spoken language ranging from situations in which topics, language, and contexts are familiar to unfamiliar;
- §74.4.c.2 (I) demonstrate listening comprehension of increasingly complex spoken English by following directions, retelling or summarizing spoken messages, responding to questions and requests, collaborating with peers, and taking notes commensurate with content and grade-level needs.

Speaking

- §74.4.c.3(E) share information in cooperative learning interactions;

§74.4.c.3 (G) express opinions, ideas, and feelings ranging from communicating single words and short phrases to participating in extended discussions on a variety of social and grade-appropriate academic topics;

Reading

§74.4.c.4(F) use visual and contextual support and support from peers and teachers to read grade-appropriate content area text, enhance and confirm understanding, and develop vocabulary, grasp of language structures, and background knowledge needed to comprehend increasingly challenging language;

§74.4.c.4 (G) demonstrate comprehension of increasingly complex English by participating in shared reading, retelling or summarizing material, responding to questions, and taking notes commensurate with content area and grade level needs;

Writing

§74.4.c.5 (F) write using a variety of grade-appropriate sentence lengths, patterns, and connecting words to combine phrases, clauses, and sentences in increasingly accurate ways as more English is acquired;

§74.4.c.5 (G) narrate, describe, and explain with increasing specificity and detail to fulfill content area writing needs as more English is acquired.

CCRS (College and Career Readiness Standards)

I . Writing

A. Compose a variety of texts that demonstrate clear focus, the logical development of ideas in well-organized paragraphs, and the use of appropriate language that advances the author’s purpose.

1. Determine effective approaches, forms, and rhetorical techniques that demonstrate understanding of the writer’s purpose and audience.

II . Reading

A. Locate explicit textual information, draw complex inferences, and analyze and evaluate the information within and across texts of varying lengths.

1. Use effective reading strategies to determine a written work’s purpose and intended audience.
9. Identify and analyze the audience, purpose, and message of an informational or persuasive text.

B. Understand new vocabulary and concepts and use them accurately in reading, speaking, and writing.

1. Identify new words and concepts acquired through study of their relationships to other words and concepts.

III . Speaking

A. Understand the elements of communication both in informal group discussions and formal presentations (e.g., accuracy, relevance, rhetorical features, organization of information).

1. Understand how style and content of spoken language varies in different contexts and influences the listener’s understanding.
2. Adjust presentation (delivery, vocabulary, length) to particular audiences and purposes.

B. Develop effective speaking styles for both group and one-on-one situations.

1. Participate actively and effectively in one-on-one oral communication situations.
2. Participate actively and effectively in group discussions.
3. Plan and deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct perspectives and demonstrate solid reasoning.

IV . Listening

- A. Apply listening skills as an individual and as a member of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).
 1. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a public presentation.
 2. Interpret a speaker's message; identify the position taken and the evidence in support of that position.