



Introduction

SLAR Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

The SLAR TEKS Introduction is identically worded across grade levels, with a few exceptions. These exceptions are marked with numbered footnotes in the text on the next pages. We use the kindergarten Introduction as the basis for our example.

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part II

Chapter 128. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Spanish Language Arts and Reading as a Second Language

§128.10.¹ Implementation of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Spanish Language Arts and Reading, Elementary,² Beginning with School Year 2009-2010.

(a) The provisions of §§128.11-128.16³ of this subchapter shall be implemented by school districts beginning with the 2009-2010 school year and at that time shall supersede §§128.2-128.7⁴ of this subchapter.

(b) Students must develop the ability to comprehend and process material from a wide range of texts. Student expectations for Reading/Comprehension Skills as provided in this subsection are described for the appropriate grade level.

Figure: 19 TAC §128.10(b)⁵

Source: The provisions of this §128.10⁶ adopted to be effective September 4, 2008, 33 TexReg 7162.⁷

1 The statute number differs by grade range (§128.17 for Middle School).

2 Substitute “Middle School” for the sixth-grade Introduction.

3 The statute-number range differs by grade range (§§128.11–128.16 for Elementary, §128.18 for Middle School).

4 The statute-number range differs by grade range (§§128.2–128.7 for Elementary, §128.22 for Middle School).

5 The statute number differs by grade range (§128.17(b) for Middle School).

6 The statute number differs by grade range (§128.17 for Middle School).

7 For sixth grade, this section reads “...November 26, 2008, 33 TexReg 9465.”

§128.11.⁸ Spanish Language Arts and Reading, Kindergarten,⁹ Beginning with School Year 2009-2010.

(a) Introduction.

(1) The Spanish Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) reflect language arts standards that are authentic to the Spanish language and Spanish literacy, not mere translations from English. The Spanish Language Arts and Reading TEKS are organized into the following strands: Reading, where students read and understand a wide variety of literary and informational texts; Writing, where students compose a variety of written texts with a clear controlling idea, coherent organization, and sufficient detail; Research, where students are expected to know how to locate a range of relevant sources and evaluate, synthesize, and present ideas and information; Listening and Speaking, where students listen and respond to the ideas of others while contributing their own ideas in conversations and in groups; and Oral and Written Conventions, where students learn how to use the oral and written conventions of the Spanish language in speaking and writing. The Reading strand is structured to reflect major topic areas of the National Reading Panel Report as well as other current and relevant research on Spanish literacy development.¹⁰ In Kindergarten,¹¹ students engage in activities that build on their natural curiosity and prior knowledge to develop their reading, writing, and oral language skills.¹² Students should be read to on a daily basis.¹³

8 The statute number differs by grade level:

K	1	2	3	4	5	6
§128.11	§128.12	§128.13	§128.14	§128.15	§128.16	§128.18

9 Substitute the appropriate grade level.

10 For grades 3–6, this sentence reads: “The standards are cumulative--students will continue to address earlier standards as needed while they attend to standards for their grade.”

11 Substitute the appropriate grade level.

12 For grades 1–6, this section reads: “...students will engage in activities that build on their prior knowledge and skills in order to strengthen their reading, writing, and oral language skills.”

13 For grades 1–6, this sentence reads: “Students should read, write, and be read to on a daily basis.”

-
- (2) Research consistently shows that literacy development in the student’s native language facilitates learning in English (Collier & Thomas, 1997; Cummins, 2001). Students can develop cognition, learn, and achieve best when they can understand the language of instruction (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2003). Students who have strong literacy skills in their primary language can be expected to transfer those skills to English and *progress rapidly* in learning in English. Although English and Spanish look very similar on the surface (i.e., similar alphabets; directionality; cognates) the conventions of each language presuppose the reading process in that language. Consequently, systematic instruction in the appropriate sequence of skills is critical. For this reason, the Spanish Language Arts and Reading TEKS reflect language arts standards that are authentic to the Spanish language and not mere translations from English.
- (A) Spanish, as opposed to English, has a closer letter-sound relationship and clearly defined syllable boundaries. The syllable in Spanish is a more critical unit of phonological awareness than in English because of the consistent phoneme-grapheme correspondence. Syllables are important units for Spanish because of their strong effect in visual word recognition (Carreiras et al., 1993) and their major role in predicting Spanish reading success. In addition, Spanish presents a much higher level of orthographic transparency than English and does not rely on sight words for decoding. This orthographic transparency accelerates the decoding process, and the focus quickly moves to fluency and comprehension. Spanish uses frequency words that are identified by the rate of occurrence in grade appropriate text and used to build on fluency and comprehension. However, in English, “sight” words are used because of words that are not decodable such as “are” or “one.” In Spanish, decoding issues are not as prevalent as issues of comprehension. These specific features of the Spanish language will influence reading methodology and development.
- (B) Spanish instruction maximizes access to English content. Students with strong literacy skills in Spanish phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension can be expected to transfer those skills to English. The “transfer” of knowledge and skills from one language to another refers to the metalinguistic and metacognitive processes and awareness that students gain in developing literacy in two languages. Current research on bilingual instruction (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesse et al., 2006) shows how students use native literacy knowledge when learning to read and write in another language.
- (C) The effective transfer of skills transpires as students develop their metalinguistic skills and as they engage in a contrastive analysis of the Spanish and English languages (Cummins, 2007). Transfer matters occur within fundamentals of language that are common to Spanish and English; within fundamentals that are similar, but not exact in both languages; and in fundamentals specific to each language and not applicable to the other language. The strength of learning through formal instruction in Spanish determines the extent of transfer in English (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2000; Slavin & Calderon, 2001; Garcia, 2001). In other words, for transfer to occur, comprehension of the “rules” and the realization of their applicability to the new language specific tasks are necessary.
-

-
- (D) The concept of transfer necessitates the use of some of both languages¹⁴ in which both (Spanish and English) *co-exist with flexibility*. As a result of working within two language systems, students’ metalinguistic and metacognitive skills are enhanced when they learn about the similarities and differences between languages. This is *reliant* on the type of bilingual program model being used (See Texas Education Code, §29.066).
- (3) To meet Public Education Goal 1 of the Texas Education Code, §4.002, which states, “The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the reading and writing of the English language,” students will accomplish the essential knowledge, skills, and student expectations at Kindergarten¹⁵ as described in subsection (b) of this section.
- (4) To meet Texas Education Code, §28.002(h), which states, “... each school district shall foster the continuation of the tradition of teaching United States and Texas history and the free enterprise system in regular subject matter and in reading courses and in the adoption of textbooks,” students will be provided oral and written narratives as well as other informational texts that can help them to become thoughtful, active citizens who appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation.

14 In grades 5–6, this phrase reads: “... necessitates the use of both languages...”

15 Substitute the appropriate grade level.

