

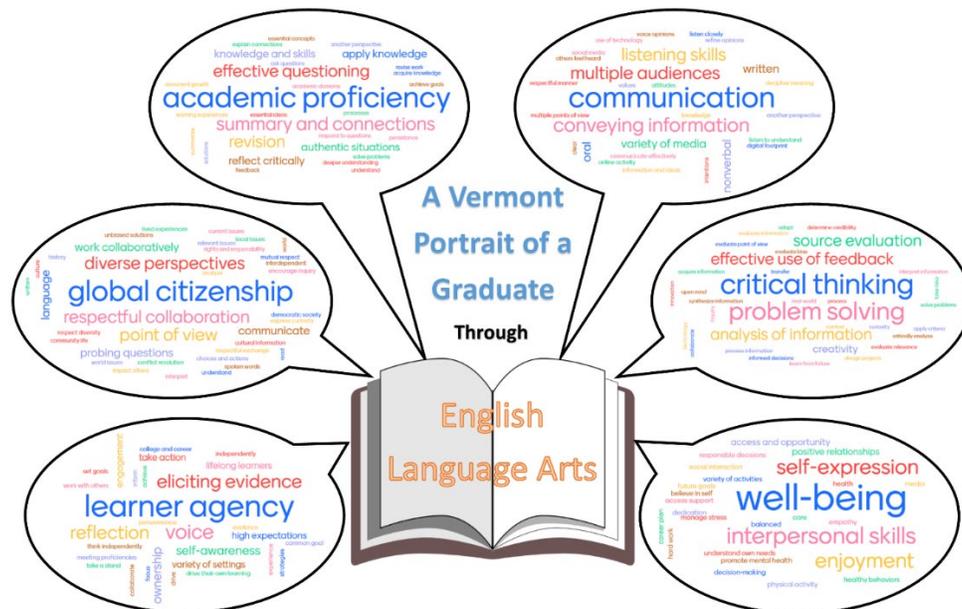
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A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate through English Language Arts

Introduction

The ability to engage in respectful discourse, to effectively express oneself while listening and responding to diverse perspectives, is an important skill for any global citizen. Literacy skills are also essential when thinking about lifelong learning. Students can gain experience toward proficiency in these aspects of a [Vermont Portrait of a Graduate](#) (PoG) and more through English Language Arts.

Collaboratively developed by Vermont educators, students, and community members, a Vermont Portrait of a Graduate clarifies expectations for College and Career Readiness as described in the Vermont [Education Quality Standards](#) (EQS). The PoG specifies the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal skills and abilities that students should be able to demonstrate upon graduation, serving as a tool for reviewing and refining local proficiency-based graduation requirements, as well as a guide for making instructional decisions. The PoG considers six attributes of a lifelong learner: learner agency, global citizenship, academic proficiency, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, and well-being. Each attribute includes key descriptors and performance indicators, many of which can be addressed through English Language Arts (ELA).



Learner Agency

Voice • Eliciting Evidence • Reflection

In the context of ELA, students take ownership of their learning by developing their own voice and expressing their opinions clearly and effectively. Through routine writing as well as exercises in speaking and listening, students learn to communicate in a way that reflects their authentic selves, their beliefs, and their opinions, all of which are informed by evidence as well as experience. As indicated in the [CCSS for Writing](#), students employ research skills in order to evaluate sources for credibility and bias while collecting evidence to support their opinions. Throughout this process, students engage in constant reflection as they learn more about themselves as lifelong learners and contributing members of society.

Global Citizenship

Respectful Collaboration • Point of View • Diverse Perspectives

Global citizenship centers around the ability to engage in respectful collaboration. In order to be able to collaborate respectfully, students need the ability to maintain and communicate their own point of view while also taking into consideration the diverse perspectives of others. The [CCSS for Speaking and Listening](#) highlight important skills for productive and respectful collaboration with diverse partners, including building on the ideas of others, expressing themselves clearly and persuasively, and evaluating another's point of view. In addition, the [CCSS for Reading](#) call for extensive reading of literature from diverse cultures and different time periods, helping students gain the cultural knowledge necessary to develop an appreciation for and understanding of the contributions of different groups of people.

Academic Proficiency

Summary and Connections • Effective Questioning • Revision

Comprehending and interpreting complex texts is essential to achieving academic proficiency in any content area; the [CCSS for Reading](#) address the skills needed for students to be successful in doing so. By honing their close reading skills, students gain the ability to identify key information and details and use these to summarize what they have read as well as heard. Since strong reading skills are transferable across academic disciplines, the ability to summarize and make connections within the ELA content area can be broadened to make multidisciplinary connections. Additionally, students learn effective questioning techniques in order to gain a deeper understanding of information and ideas. Finally, reflection and revision are key components of [the writing process](#), as students endeavor to produce their finest work.

Communication

Conveying Information • Multiple Audiences • Listening Skills

Communication skills are at the heart of ELA education. In order to communicate effectively, students need to learn how to convey information clearly to multiple audiences, adjusting their language as appropriate. The [CCSS for Writing](#) present different types and purposes for written communication, which include offering and supporting opinions, often to unfamiliar and varied audiences. Essential to clear communication is a command of the conventions of standard English, as outlined by the [CCSS for Language](#), which includes knowledge of the nuances of language as well as strategies for vocabulary acquisition and usage. In addition to conveying information clearly and in a respectful manner, students also must be able to receive it by employing effective listening skills, as described in the [CCSS for Speaking and Listening](#). These include taking into consideration multiple points of view and using what they learn in conversation to refine their own opinions.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Analysis of Information • Source Evaluation • Use of Feedback

Critical thinking in the context of ELA can take many forms. When unpacking a complex text, students must interpret, analyze, and synthesize information. Being able to evaluate information is also important; the [CCSS for Reading](#) require students be able to evaluate arguments set forth in texts as well as the evidence supporting them. At the same time, the [CCSS for Writing](#) include source evaluation as a critical step in the research process, as students determine the reliability and validity of various sources of information, as well as potential biases. Students of ELA also learn not to accept their first attempt as their final product and are encouraged to receive and respond to feedback with a [growth mindset](#).

Well-Being

Interpersonal Skills • Self-Expression • Enjoyment

The ability to form positive relationships with peers is an important part of a student's social well-being. Interpersonal skills are essential in ELA as well; in order to have effective discussions about literature, engage in writers' workshops with peers, or work collaboratively on projects, students need to have the skills to form these positive relationships. Additionally, students learn forms of [self-expression](#) in ELA, through [creative and reflective writing](#). In doing so, they can learn more about themselves as learners and as people in general. Reading and writing can also provide a source of pleasure and a means to de-stress, thus contributing to an overall sense of well-being.