

# Literacy Progressions

## Purpose of Literacy Progressions in Current Curriculum

The literacy progressions are a resource that teachers can use to support students in meeting the learning outcomes in the current provincial curriculum (programs of study). They are not intended to be an add-on or a separate program of studies. They should not be used to teach or to formally evaluate and report literacy separately from subject learning outcomes.

The progressions are a tool that can be used to support literacy development in meaningful ways as students engage with subject content. When literacy is explicit in each subject:

- a meaningful context is created where students learn and apply literacy skills; and
- students' ability to understand subject content is enhanced.

## Importance of Literacy

Strong literacy skills are essential in today's society. Alberta Education recognizes the importance of these skills in the *Ministerial Order on Student Learning*<sup>1</sup>, which states that all students "will employ literacy and numeracy to construct and communicate meaning."

## Definition of Literacy

Alberta Education defines literacy as follows.

**Literacy**

*Literacy is the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living.*

*Language is a socially and culturally constructed system of communication.*

<sup>1</sup>Ministerial Order on Student Learning: Goals and Standards Applicable to the Provision of Education in Alberta (#001/2013)

## Organization of the Progressions – Components, Elements, and Descriptors

Literacy progressions identify the aspects of literacy that apply across subjects in each division level. The progressions provide educators with a common reference for literacy and numeracy development within certain age ranges or divisions.

The following chart shows how the progressions are organized.

The progressions are organized by two **components**—Awareness, and Knowledge and Understanding.

### Component: LITERACY KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING (LKU)

#### Literacy Knowledge and Understanding Descriptors

The descriptors identify what students are typically able to demonstrate as their literacy knowledge and understanding increases. This is a cumulative process. It is expected that learning experiences, while developmentally appropriate, will become increasingly complex.

	Kindergarten (typically ages 4–5)	Division I (typically ages 6–8)	Division II (typically ages 9–11)	Division III (typically ages 12–14)	Division IV (typically ages 15–18+)
<b>LKU3</b> <b>Construct Meaning</b>  <i>Students use efficient and effective strategies to construct meaning.</i>	<b>Vocabulary</b> Children use familiar, high-frequency vocabulary and begin to acquire new vocabulary related to learning experiences (e.g. school-related words).	<b>Vocabulary</b> Students use an increasing amount of high-frequency vocabulary and acquire new vocabulary related to learning experiences (e.g. describe, compare, life-cycle, province).	<b>Vocabulary</b> Students acquire and use precise and descriptive vocabulary, general academic vocabulary (e.g., identification, definition), and subject/discipline-specific vocabulary (e.g., pulley, ecosystem) related to learning experiences.	<b>Vocabulary</b> Students acquire and use precise, effective, and descriptive vocabulary, general academic vocabulary (e.g., procedure, interpret) and subject/discipline specific vocabulary (e.g., nebulae, consumerism) related to learning experiences.	<b>Vocabulary</b> Students purposefully acquire, select, and expand their use of precise, effective and descriptive vocabulary, general academic vocabulary and subject/discipline specific vocabulary (e.g., nationalism, Lewis structure) related to learning experiences.

**Elements** assist in exploring the breadth and depth of each literacy or numeracy component.

The **descriptors** explain what students can typically demonstrate by the end of their particular age/division grouping.

## How can the literacy progressions be used by teachers?

Teachers can use the progressions in the following ways:

- as a reference tool, providing an overview of key aspects of literacy that apply across the subjects from Kindergarten to Grade 12;
  - when viewed horizontally, across an element, the descriptors provide an overview of how literacy is developed throughout a student's schooling.
  - when viewed vertically, within an age range or division, the descriptors in each element provide a profile of the literacy developed within the subjects throughout that age range or division.
- to plan effective learning experiences that foster the development of literacy;
  - consider what literacy skills will assist students in understanding the learning outcomes in the subject.
  - identify literacy components, elements, and descriptors that represent what the students will use and/or develop in this learning experience.
- as a reference point when gathering information about students' literacy strengths, needs, and growth; and
- to assist in determining when a student may require literacy support to facilitate understanding of subject content.

## Do teachers assess the literacy progressions?

Literacy development can be observed within the context of learning experiences across the subjects. Teachers are not required to formally evaluate and report on the progressions separately from learning outcomes.

The literacy progressions are not intended to be a formal diagnostic tool. They may be used by educators to inform the selection of assessment strategies, activities, and tools that are appropriate for their students.

## Purpose of Literacy Progressions in Future Curriculum

In future provincial curriculum

- the progressions will provide curriculum developers with a consistent reference tool that describes literacy milestones;
- the connections between learning outcomes and relevant literacy progressions that are developed and applied in a given subject will be shown; and
- the progressions will be identified by Alberta Education to indicate the literacy that students will use, develop and enhance through the learning outcomes, and for ease of use by teachers.

## Literacy Progressions

Literacy is the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language\* to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living.

\*Language is a socially and culturally constructed system of communication.

Component: LITERACY AWARENESS (LA)						
Literacy Awareness Descriptors						
The descriptors identify what students are typically able to demonstrate as their literacy awareness increases. This is a cumulative process. It is expected that learning experiences, while developmentally appropriate, will become increasingly complex.						
Element	Division	Kindergarten (typically ages 4–5)	Division I (typically ages 6–8)	Division II (typically ages 9–11)	Division III (typically ages 12–14)	Division IV (typically ages 15–18+)
<b>LA1</b> <b>IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY</b>  <i>Students recognize that literacy provides enjoyment and enables them to make sense of and participate in the world around them.</i>	<b>Purpose</b> Children recognize that language is all around them and provides enjoyment.	<b>Purpose</b> Students recognize that literacy is used for many purposes in their everyday lives and provides enjoyment.	<b>Purpose</b> Students recognize how literacy enhances learning opportunities and provides enjoyment.	<b>Purpose</b> Students recognize how literacy helps them to achieve personal and community goals, make informed decisions and provides enjoyment.	<b>Purpose</b> Students recognize how literacy is essential to achieving current and future goals and provides enjoyment.	
	<b>Participation</b> Children participate in guided activities that model how being literate enables them to participate in local and global communities.	<b>Participation</b> With guidance, students recognize how being literate enables them to participate in local and global communities.	<b>Participation</b> Students recognize how being literate enables them to participate in local and global communities.	<b>Participation</b> Students recognize and describe how being literate enables them to participate in local and global communities.	<b>Participation</b> Students recognize, describe and analyze how being literate enables them to participate in local and global communities.	
<b>LA2</b> <b>LEARNER AWARENESS</b>  <i>Students identify what they know, are able to do and need to learn when engaging in tasks that involve literacy.</i> *Regulate refers to students managing their own learning (e.g., goal setting, monitoring progress throughout a task, self-evaluation). Personal initiative, perseverance and adaptation are characteristics of a self-regulated learner. (Zimmerman, 2002).	<b>Personal Insight</b> Children participate in guided activities that model how to think about their literacy strengths and how they can regulate* their learning.	<b>Personal Insight</b> With guidance, students identify their literacy strengths and how they can regulate* their learning.	<b>Personal Insight</b> Students identify and describe their literacy strengths and challenges. With some guidance, they regulate* their learning.	<b>Personal Insight</b> Students identify, describe and reflect on their literacy strengths and challenges. They appropriately regulate* their learning.	<b>Personal Insight</b> Students identify, describe, reflect on and analyze their literacy strengths and challenges. They purposefully regulate* their learning.	

		<b>Literacy Awareness Descriptors</b>				
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<b>LA3 TASK AWARENESS</b>  <i>Students are aware of the literacy demands within a task.</i>		<b>Task Analysis</b> Children participate in guided activities that model how to identify the literacy skills needed to complete a task.	<b>Task Analysis</b> Students identify the literacy skills needed to complete a task.	<b>Task Analysis</b> Students analyze a task and identify the literacy skills needed to complete it.	<b>Task Analysis</b> Students analyze a task and identify the literacy skills that may be needed and/or adapted to complete it.	<b>Task Analysis</b> Students analyze a complex task and identify the literacy skills that could be transferred from different contexts to complete it.

<b>Component: LITERACY KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING (LKU)</b>						
		<b>Literacy Knowledge and Understanding Descriptors</b>				
		The descriptors identify what students are typically able to demonstrate as their literacy knowledge and understanding increases. This is a cumulative process. It is expected that learning experiences, while developmentally appropriate, will become increasingly complex.				
Element	Division	Kindergarten (typically ages 4–5)	Division I (typically ages 6–8)	Division II (typically ages 9–11)	Division III (typically ages 12–14)	Division IV (typically ages 15–18+)
<b>LKU1 RULES OF LANGUAGE</b>  <i>Students use rules of language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning.</i>  *Blending is the merging of two words (e.g., brunch, smog, mockumentary). **Novel creations are recently-coined words, terms and expressions (e.g., bling, gadget, googol, meme). ***Text(s) refers to anything that provides readers, writers, listeners, speakers, viewers and thinkers with the potential to create meaning through language (Neilsen, 1998) and is not limited to conventional/traditional print.		<b>Word Formation</b> Children know the relationship between letters and sounds.	<b>Word Formation</b> Students know how letter sounds and letter patterns form words (e.g., common affixes, basic compound words).	<b>Word Formation</b> Students know how parts of words can be used to form new words (e.g., compound words, basic Greek and Latin roots and affixes).	<b>Word Formation</b> Students expand and apply their knowledge of the formation of words to create and comprehend meaning (e.g., complex compound words, acronyms, Greek and Latin roots and affixes).	<b>Word Formation</b> Students expand and apply their knowledge of the formation of increasingly complex words to create and comprehend meaning (e.g., blending*, novel creations**, Greek and Latin roots and affixes).
		<b>Conventions</b> Children understand that oral language has a grammatical structure.	<b>Conventions</b> Students begin to understand and use conventions of language (grammatical structure, punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to comprehend and communicate texts***.	<b>Conventions</b> Students understand and use conventions of language (grammatical structure, punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to comprehend and communicate oral, print, or digital texts***.	<b>Conventions</b> Students understand and consistently use conventions of language (grammatical structure, punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to comprehend and communicate varied oral, print or digital texts***.	<b>Conventions</b> Students refine their understanding and use of conventions of language (grammatical structure, punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to enhance and create desired effects in all forms of oral, print or digital texts***.

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<b>LKU2</b> <b>ACQUIRE INFORMATION</b>  <i>Students use efficient and effective strategies to acquire, evaluate and ethically use information.</i>  *Source(s) may include traditional print, digital, videos, oral stories, experts, elders, primary and secondary accounts.	<b>Develop Questions</b>	Children share personal questions or a purpose to collectively explore topics and search for information.	<b>Develop Questions</b>	Through guided activities, students determine a purpose and develop questions to explore topics and search for useful sources of information.	<b>Develop Questions</b>	Students determine a purpose for their information search and develop questions to focus their search and select appropriate sources.	<b>Develop Questions</b>	Students determine a purpose for their information search and develop or refine questions to select the most useful and relevant sources.	<b>Develop Questions</b>	Students determine a purpose for their information search and develop, monitor and adjust questions to select the most useful and relevant sources.
	<b>Access</b>	Children recognize that information comes from more than one source.*	<b>Access</b>	Students gather information from a limited number of sources* to respond to a problem, question or topic.	<b>Access</b>	Students select, sort and analyze information from a variety of sources* to respond to a problem, question or topic. With guidance, students identify areas or gaps to determine further information needs.	<b>Access</b>	Students select, sort, analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources* to respond to a problem, question or topic. Students identify areas or gaps to determine further information needs and identify alternative sources.	<b>Access</b>	Students select, sort, analyze and synthesize information from a broad range of sources*, including primary and secondary sources, to respond to a problem, question or topic. Students monitor and adjust their search to determine further information needs and identify additional relevant sources.
	<b>Evaluate</b>	Through guided activities, children evaluate information by identifying what is real and imaginary, and by asking and answering questions.	<b>Evaluate</b>	With guidance, students evaluate information by identifying fact and fiction, determining relevant and irrelevant information, and considering the intent of the message.	<b>Evaluate</b>	Students evaluate information from several sources by identifying fact and fiction, determining relevant and irrelevant information and considering the intent of the message or the point of view.	<b>Evaluate</b>	Students evaluate information by classifying and comparing information, and by considering context, points of view and perspectives to determine its validity and authenticity.	<b>Evaluate</b>	Students evaluate the strengths and limitations of selected information by identifying misconceptions, perspectives, points of view and biases to determine its reliability, validity and authenticity.
	<b>Ethical Use</b>	Through guided activities, children recognize that authors and illustrators, including themselves, are creators of oral, print and digital texts.	<b>Ethical Use</b>	Students recognize that all oral, print and digital texts are owned by their creators.	<b>Ethical Use</b>	Students respect and acknowledge the ownership of oral, print and digital texts.	<b>Ethical Use</b>	Students respect and acknowledge the ownership of oral, print and digital texts, and cite sources when using copyrighted and/or public domain material.	<b>Ethical Use</b>	Students respect copyright and intellectual property rights by accurately citing and recording oral, print and digital references.

		<b>Literacy Knowledge and Understanding Descriptors</b>								
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<b>LKU3 CONSTRUCT MEANING</b>  <i>Students use efficient and effective strategies to construct meaning.</i>  <b>Comprehension Strategies*</b> include predicting, making connections, determining importance, questioning, visualizing, inferring, summarizing and synthesizing (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).	<b>Background Knowledge</b>	Children share personal experiences and, with guidance, connect them to relevant ideas or topics.	<b>Background Knowledge</b>	Students make connections to their background knowledge to support understanding of a new idea or topic.	<b>Background Knowledge</b>	Students make connections to background knowledge and, with guidance, identify gaps to explore new information.	<b>Background Knowledge</b>	Students reflect on and compare their background knowledge to confirm or readjust their understanding of a concept or topic.	<b>Background Knowledge</b>	Students reflect on and compare their background knowledge to develop deeper and/or broader understanding of a concept or topic.
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	Children use familiar, high-frequency vocabulary and begin to acquire new vocabulary related to learning experiences (e.g., school-related words).	<b>Vocabulary</b>	Students use an increasing amount of high-frequency vocabulary and acquire new vocabulary related to learning experiences (e.g., describe, compare, life cycle, province).	<b>Vocabulary</b>	Students acquire and use precise and descriptive vocabulary, general academic vocabulary (e.g., identification, definition) and subject/discipline-specific vocabulary (e.g., pulley, ecosystem) related to learning experiences.	<b>Vocabulary</b>	Students acquire and use precise, effective and descriptive vocabulary, general academic vocabulary (e.g., procedure, interpret) and subject/discipline-specific vocabulary (e.g., nebulae, consumerism) related to learning experiences.	<b>Vocabulary</b>	Students purposefully acquire, select and expand their use of precise, effective and descriptive vocabulary, general academic vocabulary and subject/discipline specific vocabulary (e.g., nationalism, Lewis structure) related to learning experiences.
	<b>Text Organization</b>	Children begin to recognize that authors organize texts in different ways.	<b>Text Organization</b>	Students know that texts are organized in different ways based on their purpose.	<b>Text Organization</b>	Students know that conventional and digital texts are organized in different ways (e.g., purpose, audience, delivery mode) and begin to use this knowledge to support comprehension.	<b>Text Organization</b>	Students use their knowledge of the distinctive ways conventional and digital texts are organized (e.g., purpose, audience, delivery mode) to increase comprehension.	<b>Text Organization</b>	Students apply and extend their knowledge of the distinctive ways conventional and digital texts are organized (e.g., purpose, audience, delivery mode) to enhance comprehension.
	<b>Comprehension Strategies*</b>	Children participate in guided activities that model the use of strategies when viewing, listening to and interacting with texts.	<b>Comprehension Strategies*</b>	Students develop and use strategies when viewing, listening to and interacting with texts.	<b>Comprehension Strategies*</b>	Students select, refine and apply strategies when viewing, listening to and interacting with subject/discipline area texts.	<b>Comprehension Strategies*</b>	Students purposefully select and apply strategies when viewing, listening to and interacting with subject/discipline area texts.	<b>Comprehension Strategies*</b>	Students strategically apply multiple strategies when viewing, listening to and interacting with subject/discipline area texts.

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<b>LKU4 COMMUNICATE MEANING</b>  <i>Students communicate to convey concepts, ideas and understandings.</i>  <i>*Mode</i> is a way or manner in which communication occurs, is experienced or is expressed (e.g., verbal/aural, written, non-verbal, visual, technological, multimodal).  <i>**Media</i> is the specific <i>tool</i> used to deliver information for a purpose. It is the vehicle for dissemination of information (e.g., conversation, speech, report, newsletter, digital presentation, website, blog, and movie).		<b>Clarity</b> Children explore various ways to present and share ideas and information.	<b>Clarity</b> Students present ideas or information in a logical and clear manner, with some details.	<b>Clarity</b> Students present ideas or information in a logical and clear manner and begin to use effects to enhance communication (e.g., tone, figurative language, bolding, accurate and descriptive vocabulary).	<b>Clarity</b> Students present ideas coherently and integrate effects, as needed, to enhance communication (e.g., tone, figurative language, bolding, accurate and descriptive vocabulary).	<b>Clarity</b> Students present ideas coherently by refining and integrating specific effects, as needed, to enhance communication (e.g., tone, figurative language, bolding, accurate and descriptive vocabulary).
		<b>Audience</b> With guidance, children adjust oral language to interact appropriately with peers and adults.	<b>Audience</b> Students adjust oral and written language, as appropriate, when communicating with peers and adults (e.g., to respect social/cultural practices, formal and informal situations).	<b>Audience</b> Students adjust oral and written language, tone and formality, as appropriate, when communicating with peers and adults (e.g., to respect social/cultural practices, formal and informal situations).	<b>Audience</b> Students adjust oral and written language, tone and formality, as appropriate, when communicating with a variety of audiences (e.g., to respect social/cultural practices, formal and informal situations).	<b>Audience</b> Students review and adjust communication, as necessary, to ensure alignment with the audience, message and purpose.
		<b>Purpose</b> Children express meaning in various ways.	<b>Purpose</b> Students organize texts for different purposes (e.g., to inform, persuade or entertain).	<b>Purpose</b> Students organize texts according to their purpose or intent.	<b>Purpose</b> Students organize texts in distinctive ways, according to their purpose or intent.	<b>Purpose</b> Students organize texts to be the most effective and/or creative for their purpose or intent.
		<b>Modes* and Media**</b> Children explore a variety of modes and media.	<b>Modes* and Media**</b> Students explore how diverse modes and media represent and communicate ideas and experiences. They choose modes and media to share.	<b>Modes* and Media**</b> Students identify how the different qualities of diverse modes and media represent and communicate ideas, experiences, understandings and concepts. They use diverse modes and media to share and present.	<b>Modes* and Media**</b> Students understand and use diverse modes and media to effectively represent and communicate experiences, understandings and concepts.	<b>Modes* and Media**</b> Students select and use the most appropriate modes and media to effectively represent and communicate experiences, understandings and concepts.
			<b>Media Influence</b> Students explore how media can evoke emotions.	<b>Media Influence</b> Students recognize how media can be used to evoke emotions.	<b>Media Influence</b> Students describe how media can be used to shape opinions and evoke emotions.	<b>Media Influence</b> Students analyze and explain the ways media can be used to shape opinions and evoke emotions.