

# Essential Skills

## What are they?

The Essential Skills are cross-disciplinary skills necessary for success in college and career. Essential Skills are a part of the Oregon Diploma and articulate the skills that all students should have at the end of high school; the skills that students are building through their school experiences starting in kindergarten. The Essential skills are embedded in the content standards and skill sets that guide Oregon education.

- (1) **Read** and comprehend a variety of text
- (2) **Write** clearly and accurately
- (3) **Apply mathematics** in a variety of settings
- (4) **Listen** actively and **speak** clearly and coherently
- (5) **Think critically** and **analytically**
- (6) Use **technology** to learn, live, and work
- (7) Demonstrate **civic** and **community engagement**
- (8) Demonstrate **global literacy**
- (9) Demonstrate **personal management** and **teamwork skills**

Essential Skills are not another set of content standards.

The table below illustrates the difference

CONTENT STADARDS	ESSENTIAL SKILLS
Guides curriculum development	Describes outcomes of educational experiences
Describes what students should learn each year	Describes what students should be able to do by the time they graduate

## What is required for graduation?

For students first enrolled in Grade 9 in 2010-2011 or later, three of the Essential Skills are graduation requirements:

- (1) **Read** and comprehend a variety of text
- (2) **Write** clearly and accurately
- (3) **Apply mathematics** in a variety of settings

## How do students meet the graduation requirements?

Students prove that they have mastered these Essential Skills by earning at or above a cut score on an assessment from one of the approved categories their district.

### Categories of assessments approved for Essential Skills graduation requirement

- 1st Category: **Statewide Assessment**
- 2nd Category: **Other Assessments**
- 3rd Category: **Work Samples**

The 1<sup>st</sup> category, statewide assessment (OAKS), is the assessment approved for federal accountability purposes.

#### 1ST CATEGORY: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

Assessment Option and Achievement Standards				
Academic Year	Assessment	Reading	Writing	Math
2013-2014	OAKS	236	40	236
2014-beyond	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced field test results will be used to establish a Smarter Balanced that represents an equivalent level of rigor to the current OAKS achievement standard.		

#### 2ND CATEGORY: OTHER ASSESSMENTS

Assessment Options and Achievement Standards			
Assessment	Reading	Writing	Math
ACT or Plan	18	N/A	19
WorkKeys	5	N/A	5
Compass	81	N/A	66 (Int Alg)
Asset	42	N/A	41 (Int Alg)
SAT	440	N/A	450
PSAT	44	N/A	45
AP/IB	Various	N/A	Various
SAT Writing	N/A	460	N/A
Accuplacer	86	N/A	N/A

### 3RD CATEGORY: WORK SAMPLES

Assessment Options and Achievement Standards			
	Reading	Writing	Math
<b>Number of Work Samples</b>	<b>2 Total:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of which must be informational</li> </ul>	<b>2 Total:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One must be expository or persuasive</li> <li>• One in any of the approved modes (expository, persuasive, narrative)</li> </ul>	<b>2 Total:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One each for any two of the required content strands (algebra, geometry, or statistics)</li> </ul>
<b>Score Categories</b>	<b>Traits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate General Understanding</li> <li>• Develop an Interpretation</li> <li>• Analyze Text</li> </ul>	<b>Traits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas/ Content</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Sentence Fluency</li> <li>• Conventions</li> </ul>	<b>Process Dimensions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making Sense of the Task</li> <li>• Representing and Solving the Task</li> <li>• Communicating Reasoning</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Reflecting and Evaluating</li> </ul>
<b>Work Sample Score Requirement</b>	Minimum score of 12, with no Trait lower than 3.	Minimum score of 4 in all Traits.	Minimum score of 4 in all Process Dimensions.

#### Work Samples Guidelines

- All work samples must be scored with the official scoring guides.
- Work samples must meet the level of rigor required on the OAKS assessment.
- Work samples provide an optional means to demonstrate proficiency not an easier means.

### How were the Essential Skills developed?

The Essential Skills Task Force – comprised of educators from K-12, community college, higher education, students, and business/community representatives – worked together in 2007 to develop the Essential Skills policy. In 2008 the Essential Skills were available for

public review and input was collected through online surveys as well focus groups. The Task Force incorporated the feedback and Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) for the Essential Skills were adopted by the Board on June 19, 2008.

## **How is Essential Skills data collected?**

As students fulfill their Essential Skills graduation requirements, districts record information about the assessment, including which assessment category was used, whether the assessment was locally or externally scored, and the date that the student completed the assessment. This information is submitted to Oregon Department of Education through Essential Skill Codes in the Cumulative ADM collection. For additional information, visit the district page to view the Cumulative ADM manual, <https://district.ode.state.or.us/apps/info/DataClctnDetail.aspx?id=246>.