

# Essential Skills

## Definitions and Graduation Requirements

Essential Skill Definitions and Timeline	Requirement for students first enrolled in Grade 9 in:
<p><b>1. Read and comprehend a variety of text*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to read and understand text.*</li> <li>• Summarize and critically analyze key points of text,* events, issues, phenomena or problems, distinguishing factual from non-factual and literal from inferential elements.</li> <li>• Interpret significant ideas and themes, including those conveyed through figurative language and use of symbols.</li> <li>• Follow instructions from informational or technical text* to perform a task, answer questions, and solve problems.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Text includes but is not limited to all forms of written material, communications, media, and other representations in words, numbers, and graphics and visual displays using traditional and technological formats</i></p>	<p>2008-2009 and beyond</p>
<p><b>2. Write clearly and accurately</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts in a variety of formats and media, using appropriate technology.</li> <li>• Develop organized, well-reasoned, supported, and focused communications.</li> <li>• Write to explain, summarize, inform, and persuade, including business, professional, technical, and personal communications.</li> <li>• Use appropriate conventions to write clearly and coherently, including correct use of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, sentence construction, and formatting.</li> </ul>	<p>2009-2010 and beyond</p>
<p><b>3. Apply mathematics in a variety of settings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret a situation and apply workable mathematical concepts and strategies, using appropriate technologies where applicable.</li> <li>• Produce evidence, such as graphs, data, or mathematical models, to obtain and verify a solution.</li> <li>• Communicate and defend the verified process and solution, using pictures, symbols, models, narrative or other methods.</li> </ul>	<p>2010-2011 and beyond</p>

Essential Skill Definitions and Timeline	Requirement for students first enrolled in Grade 9 in:
<p><b>4. Listen actively and speak clearly and coherently</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen actively to understand verbal and non-verbal communication.</li> <li>• Give and follow spoken instructions to perform a task, ask and answer questions, and solve problems.</li> <li>• Present or discuss ideas clearly, effectively, and coherently, using both verbal and nonverbal techniques.</li> <li>• Use language appropriate to particular audiences and contexts.</li> </ul>	<p>Student cohorts beyond 2013-2014 may also be accountable for the additional Essential Skills.</p>
<p><b>5. Think critically and analytically</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and explain the key elements of a complex event, text*, issue, problem or phenomenon.</li> <li>• Develop a method to explore the relationships between the key elements of a complex event, text*, issue, problem or phenomenon.</li> <li>• Gather, question and evaluate the quality of information from multiple primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>• Propose defensible conclusions that address multiple and diverse perspectives.</li> <li>• Evaluate the strength of conclusions, differentiating reasoning based on facts from reasoning based on opinions.</li> </ul>	<p>Additional Essential Skills graduation requirements must be approved by the State Board of Education by March 1st of the students' 8th grade year.</p>
<p><b>6. Use technology to learn, live, and work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use creativity and innovation to generate ideas, products, or processes using current technology.</li> <li>• Use technology to participate in a broader community through networking, collaboration and learning.</li> <li>• Recognize and practice legal and responsible behavior in the use and access of information and technology.</li> <li>• Use technology as a tool to access, research, manage, integrate, and communicate ideas and information.</li> </ul>	<p>Student cohorts beyond 2013-2014 may also be accountable for the additional Essential Skills.</p>
<p><b>7. Demonstrate civic and community engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply knowledge of local, state, and U.S. history and government to explain current social and political issues.</li> <li>• Perform the civic and community responsibilities essential to living in a representative democracy.</li> </ul>	

Essential Skill Definitions and Timeline		Requirement for students first enrolled in Grade 9 in:	
<b>8. Demonstrate global literacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultural, linguistic, and artistic expressions.</li> <li>• Apply a global perspective to analyze contemporary and historical issues.</li> </ul>		Additional Essential Skills graduation requirements must be approved by the State Board of Education by March 1st of the students' 8th grade year.	
<b>9. Demonstrate personal management and teamwork skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate cooperatively and productively in work teams to identify and solve problems.</li> <li>• Display initiative and demonstrate respect for other team members to complete tasks.</li> <li>• Plan, organize, and complete assigned tasks accurately and on time.</li> <li>• Exhibit work ethic and performance, including the ability to be responsible and dependable.</li> </ul>			
Graduation Requirements by Cohort			
Students first enrolled in Grade 9 in	1. Read and comprehend a variety of text	2. Write clearly and accurately	3. Apply mathematics in a variety of settings
2008-2009	Required		
2009-2010	Required	Required	
2010-2011 and beyond	Required	Required	Required