

A Parent Guide to Understanding the State Graduation Requirements



Preparing Your High School Student for the Future

*“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the
past or present are certain to miss the future.”*

- John F. Kennedy





Welcome

As a parent, you know how important it is for all students to graduate high school with the knowledge, experiences, and skills to prepare them to enter college, technical training, or the workplace. The 2007 school year marks the beginning of an exciting new era in Michigan high school education. It is the year, all freshmen who entered 8th grade in 2006, will be required to complete the Michigan Merit high school graduation requirements.

As a result, the graduating class of 2011 will be prepared, through this innovative curriculum, for the 21st century global economy. Students will leave high school with the knowledge, experiences, and skills that will prepare them to enter college, technical training, or the workplace.

The Michigan Merit requires students to complete sixteen credits required for graduation. To accomplish this they must earn 4 credits of English and mathematics, 3 credits of science and social studies, along with 1 credit of physical education and health, 1 credit of visual, performing and applied arts, and have an online experience. (Two credits of world language will be required beginning with students who entered 3rd grade last year or the class of 2016). For the first time, all Michigan students will graduate with these state requirements, in addition to local district requirements – well prepared to move to the next phase of their lives.

High school requirements have changed in another important way. They are clearly stated so everyone knows exactly what students will be expected to learn. This helps teachers align their curriculum and instruction to ensure all students learn each subject. They also provide parents with an important tool to use with teachers to determine academic progress and explore ways to support learning at home.

Preparing students to take their place in the world is challenging. The knowledge and skills that are needed to enter college, technical or trade school, or directly enter the workplace today are different than those required 10 or 20 years ago. One thing is for certain, jobs that provide economic independence require fundamentally different skills, and the place to begin preparing students is in school by providing a solid foundation.

Inside this guide you will find the level of knowledge, experiences and skills required for your son or daughter to become economically independent, self-fulfilled, citizens of the 21st century.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically...Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.



21st

Century Skills

An old expression says that children need to learn the 3Rs: readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic. Today, however we must base our high schools on a brand new set of 3R's, identified by educational experts as the key ingredients of an effective education:

- **Rigor** – All students need the chance to succeed at challenging classes, such as algebra, writing, chemistry, world history and geography.
- **Relevance** – Courses and projects must spark student interest and relate clearly to their lives in today's rapidly changing world.
- **Relationships** – All students need adult mentors who know them, look out for them, and push them to achieve.

These new 3Rs are the building blocks for a redesigned system of high schools, one that will truly prepare graduates for college, work, and citizenship.

BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

www.gatesfoundation.org

Beyond traditional learning, today's economy demands students to be knowledgeable in what TIME magazine calls 21st century skills:

- **Knowing more about the world** – Today's students will become part of a global workforce and need to think of themselves as part of a larger world.
- **Thinking outside the box** – Jobs in the new economy – the ones that won't get outsourced or automated – put an enormous premium on creative and innovative skills.
- **Becoming smarter about new sources of information** – In an age of overflowing information and increasing mass media, kids need to rapidly process what's coming at them and distinguish between what is reliable and what isn't.
- **Developing good people skills** – EQ, or emotional intelligence, is as important as IQ for success in today's workplace.

To make the grade in the global economy, kids need to think their way through abstract problems, work in teams, distinguish good information from bad, or speak a language other than English.

BUILDING A NEW STUDENT IN MICHIGAN

TIME MAGAZINE 2006



What you do in HIGH SCHOOL MATTERS

Grades Matter – Your high school grade point average is a great predictor of whether or not you will earn a college degree. Less than 14 percent of students with a C average or lower in high school earned a two-year or four-year college degree. Even if you don't go to college, your high school grade point average is still important because it predicts future income. High school grades do not predict income right after high school, but they do strongly predict long-term income. If you don't go to college, an increase of one letter grade (from C to B) in your high school grade point average typically increases income by 13 percent by age 28! So even if you don't go to college, improving your high school grades from Cs to Bs improves the chances that you will be able to support a family.¹

Homework Matters – Homework might seem like a waste of time, but it teaches you content, time-management, and discipline – all of which you'll need in college. ...Homework time strongly predicts college success: Over half the students who do more than 10 hours of homework a week will get a four-year college degree; only about 16 percent of those doing less than three hours of homework a week will earn a bachelor's degree.¹

Math Courses Matter - The further you go in math in high school, the better your chances of earning a college degree. Completing Algebra II (or a higher course) is a huge help in earning a college degree. And if you really want a bachelor's degree, you better go as high as you can in math while you're still in high school.¹

English Courses Matter - To be successful in college and well-paying jobs, high school graduates must have strong oral and written communication skills. In English, the vast majority of workers in good jobs had taken "four years of English that is at least at grade level."²

The future is coming at you fast. Are you ready for it?

Find out how the new Michigan graduation requirements will give you the learning foundation to earn an extra million over your lifetime plus enter college, career training and the workplace READY!

Career Goals Matter – If you want to accomplish your educational goals you must be motivated and have a good game plan. Develop a career plan — think of it as your education itinerary.

Start by deciding on your goal:

- **Explore** the jobs out there. Research the types of careers available to people with your interests and skills.
- **Ask** your high school counselor for information about careers.
- **Research** the education requirements for the field that interests you. If you need an advanced degree, will you have the money and patience to go the distance?

To a large extent, your career determines what your life is like. It determines the amount of money you make, the free time you have, the physical environment you work in.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the career you want pay a salary you can live with?
- Will it offer you opportunities to grow and move up in the world?
- Can you put up with sitting at a desk all day or traveling all the time?

Another thing you have to think about is the rapidly changing job market:

- Is the career you're considering likely to be around when you're ready for a job?
- How might it be different from the way it is today?³

To learn more about career planning visit the Career Portal listed above or the ACT Comprehensive Career Guidance website at <http://www.act.org/cps/>

A Parent Guide to Understanding the State Graduation Requirements



Preparing Your High School Student for the Future

“Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens.”

President William J. Clinton



Michigan Merit Curriculum

English Language Arts (ELA) Goal Statements

The goal for English Language Arts Grades 9-12 is to build a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and strategies that will be refined, applied, and extended as students engage in more complex ideas, texts, and tasks. The following summaries of the English Language Arts provide an overview of the knowledge and skills required to earn 4 credits of English. If you desire more detailed and specific information, the High School English Language Arts Content Expectations are available at www.michigan.gov/highschool.

English 9

- In English Language Arts Grade 9, students will be introduced to the various genre of classic and contemporary narrative and informational texts that will be read and analyzed throughout high school.
- Ninth graders will connect with and respond to texts by analyzing relationships within and across families, communities, societies, governments, and economies.
- Through the lens of Inter-Relationships and Self-Reliance, they will consider
 - how they build relationships,
 - how their relationships impact others, and
 - how they are responsible to society.

English 10

- In English Language Arts 10, students will add to the list of various genre of classic and contemporary narrative and informational texts that will be read and analyzed throughout high school with a special focus on American literature.
- Tenth graders will connect with and respond to texts through critical response and stance.
- They will learn to evaluate for validity and quality, to balance and expand their perspectives promoting empathy, social action and appropriate use of power.
- Through the lens of Critical Response and Stance, students assess and modify
 - their beliefs,
 - views of the world, and
 - the powers that impact them.

English 11

- In English Language Arts 11, students will add to the list of various genre of classic and contemporary narrative and informational texts that will be read and analyzed throughout high school with a special focus on British and World literature and ACT success.
- They will build a context for change in their lives and develop realistic plans for the future.
- Through Transformational Thinking, students will connect with and respond to texts and use forward thinking to
 - make better decisions,
 - generate new ideas for solving problems, and
 - find wisdom.

English 12

- Twelfth graders will synthesize information, ideas, and themes to understand the past, the present, and to think innovatively about the future.
- They will demonstrate their acquired knowledge and skills in a senior project.
- Through the lens of Leadership Qualities, they will identify and apply their own leadership skills and prepare for responsible action as American citizens in the context of a global world by
 - envisioning a new view of the world,
 - determining when to take risks, and
 - knowing when to stand up for what they believe to be right.

Michigan Merit Curriculum

Writing, Speaking, and Representing

The Writing Process (Standard 1.1)

Successful students understand and practice writing as an ongoing process. They plan using prewriting strategies; compose written pieces for different purposes; revise for language and meaning; edit for grammar usage and mechanics; and proofread for spelling, layout and fonts.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Write a persuasive essay arguing for the grade you feel you deserve. Support your argument using specific examples from your work; refer to the class writing rubric as evidence to support your argument.*
- 10th** *Keep a writing portfolio; reflect on two pieces of unit writing that represent best effort.*
- 11th** *Analyze text for topic development, organization, word choice, sentence structure, and conventions of usage and punctuation.*
- 12th** *Show evidence that the final product is a result of the writing process; document with artifacts including prewriting activities, drafts, revisions, edits, and final work.*

Personal Growth (Standard 1.2)

Successful students express themselves to understand and discover new ideas, and develop self awareness and insight. Through writing, speaking, and art they are able to share their experiences and perspectives. Students are able to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses after reviewing a collection of personal work.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Write a persuasive essay to persuade another person to stand up for what is right in a current social situation related to the themes in the novel.*
- 10th** *Write an essay answering the question: How can this historic book guide me in today's world?*
- 11th** *Reflect on the decision-making process you used in making an important decision in your life using a decision making model; include progress you've made; and identify next steps in the process.*
- 12th** *Evaluate your own strengths for leadership potential; create a chart that lists the leadership qualities you currently have, those you plan to develop, and your action plan.*

Audience and Purpose (Standard 1.3)

Successful students use writing conventions to compose a variety of written, spoken, and multimedia compositions for different purposes and audiences. The essays they write are clear, and ideas are organized logically. Written pieces have well-crafted sentences, appropriate language, engaging introductions, clear thesis or argument, well-constructed paragraphs, transition sentences, and powerful conclusions.

Successful students participate collaboratively and productively in groups to answer questions or solve problems. Students are skillful group members and use discussions to clarify their thinking by posing questions, contributing ideas, and being responsive to feedback. They evaluate their own and others' effectiveness in group discussions and formal presentations.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Use a class panel discussion to make a decision and identify alternate outcomes.*
- 10th** *Take a stand on a controversial issue; list arguments and counterarguments; debate both sides of the issues with peers.*
- 11th** *Interview a survivor using an interview model; work within groups to further define the elements of survival.*
- 12th** *Work in discussion groups to respond to the issues surrounding class mobility; evaluate the statement "The promise of America leaves no one out;" analyzing all sides of the issue, form a group consensus, and present to class.*

Inquiry and Research (Standard 1.4)

Successful students develop and use the tools and practices of research. Generating their own questions, students refine the topics and develop their own plan for organizing the information. Evaluating and verifying the information, students use it to support and develop their ideas. They share their findings and conclusions in a published written report using appropriate writing conventions. Citations of resources reflect a wide variety of print and electronic sources.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Research the skills needed for your preferred career pathway and present to peers.*
- 10th** *Research the author's high school and college experiences; discuss the author's determination to get a college degree and to become a writer; make connections with your own plans for further education.*
- 11th** *Trace, record, and present a research document of the background and history of a significant medical or technological advancement.*
- 12th** *Decide on one big idea, theme, topic, or issue on which to focus your research; use the guidelines in the Research and Inquiry Process Activity.*

Finished Products (Standard 1.5)

Successful students produce a variety of written, spoken, multigenre and multimedia works, making conscious choices about language, form, style, and/or visual representation for each work. They develop powerful, creative and critical messages that are crafted with format and tone to effectively address audiences. Technology tools are used to produce polished written and multimedia work using feedback to strengthen their written and multimedia presentations.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Write a feature article about an event in a novel that you are reading.*
- 10th** *Using a problem-solution format, write a proposal to establish a relationship between a company and your high school.*
- 11th** *Critique peers' digital storytelling or multimedia presentation using class-generated rubric.*
- 12th** *In a comparative essay, draw parallels between the social and political events in the text being studied and today's government; provide examples of current government policies.*

Reading, Listening, and Viewing

Strategy Development (Standard 2.1)

Successful students develop critical reading, listening, and viewing strategies to enhance understanding. They use their knowledge of how content is organized, featured, and presented in informational text to create personal meaning. Students demonstrate their understanding by restating, paraphrasing, summarizing, critiquing, and by developing a personal response. They use a variety of listening and viewing skills to identify the key ideas, significant details, logical organizations, fact and opinion and propaganda. They demonstrate appropriate behavior in group discussions and/or in work teams.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Create a guidebook on how to approach reading selections in textbooks, primary documents, and scientific articles.*
- 10th** *Identify the thesis and supporting ideas in the anchor text and connect to the linking text.*
- 11th** *Read the research report taking a critical stance; identify and summarize key issues and persuasive elements in preparation for a class debate.*
- 12th** *Critically examine the argumentation and conclusions of multiple informational texts regarding a social issue; write an argumentative essay agreeing with or rebutting the text analyzed, and state your own conclusions.*

Deeper Meaning (Standard 2.2)

Successful students use a variety of reading, listening, and viewing strategies to create personal meaning of complex text beyond surface meaning. They delve into the text looking for underlying messages. Students know that understanding is influenced by literary and persuasive strategies, prior knowledge, personal experience, and different critical perspectives.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Summarize the story from another character's perspective.*
- 10th** *Write a literary analysis identifying the themes and provide support from the text; apply themes to a real-world context.*
- 11th** *Read the three informational texts together to understand the conditions of an event; relate this phenomenon to real-world situations.*
- 12th** *Analyze how the author uses characters' actions and motives to impact the understanding of the message.*

Independent Reading (Standard 2.3)

Successful students develop as a reader, listener, and viewer for personal, social, and political purposes by self-selected reading and participating in book clubs or literature circles. Examples of texts read include instruction manuals, historical documents, newspapers, technical articles, and subject-specific books. Students read, listen to and view diverse and varied texts for a variety of tasks. They reflect on, self assess, and monitor their understanding using academic criteria. They set personal learning goals and take responsibility for personal growth.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Critique presentations of speakers using advanced organizer.*
- 10th** *Create a visual display of the voices of a literary era including titles, authors, photographs, and quotations from representative texts; present to peers.*
- 11th** *Engage in book clubs/literature circles choosing among five to six teacher-selected texts that support the unit focus.*
- 12th** *Explain how a given project has facilitated your development as a reader, listener, and viewer; evaluate project and learning using a rubric; write and share reflections on experience in peer debriefing.*

Literature and Culture

Close Literary Reading (Standard 3.1)

Successful students read with a purpose or objective and know to read a newspaper editorial, for instance, differently than a novel. They analyze characteristics of specific works and authors to identify basic beliefs and perspectives underlying an author's work. Students are able to discuss characterization, literary language, and the structural elements of both fictional and non-fiction works. Skilled readers understand the effects of author's style and how the author uses, for example, imagery, symbols, irony, or flash backs to influence the reader.

Successful students read to discover and grasp differing points of view. When reading, students analyze and evaluate the portrayal of various groups, societies, and cultures. They examine and compare differing and diverse interpretations and why interpretations may vary not only from text to text, but from reader to reader. They are able to discuss the relationships between the text and its historical and contemporary contexts.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Describe how figurative language such as an analogy or simile can clarify the meaning of the text.*
- 10th** *Describe the meaning of the literature being studied, (novels, music lyrics, plays, essays), at the surface level and allegorical levels.*
- 11th** *Identify what strategies can be used to glean information about the purpose and conclusions of an article before actually reading through all the information presented; consider author's perspective, intended audience, and purpose.*
- 12th** *Read about the authors; identify basic beliefs, perspectives, and philosophical assumptions underlying the authors' works; explain why they choose to tell their characters' stories; and identify the bigger story each is telling.*

Reading and Response (Standard 3.2)

Successful students read and respond to a wide range of world literature representing many time periods, forms, subjects and authors. They are able to discuss with peers the differences between different types of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, and explain why an author may have chosen one form instead of another.

Sample Activities:

- 9th** *Select a topic and present it in two different genres.*
- 10th** *Read different pieces of literature from a given literary era noting characteristics of that era.*
- 11th** *Compare the elements of a science article to that of a news article.*
- 12th** *Analyze informational texts (essays, editorials, opinion articles); identify types of exposition within each text.*

Text Analysis (Standard 3.3)

Successful students are familiar with American, British, and world literature and authors. They are able to discuss with understanding how the time period and social and political movements that exist when the text is written can affect an author's work. They see how cultural and historical perspectives connect across time and are still relevant today. Students explore and analyze major works of literature looking for relationships and connections between them.

Within English 9-12* students will analyze, interpret, and critique various genre and time periods including:

- 9th** *Contemporary Literature, Poetry, Realistic Fiction, Epic Poetry, Shakespearean Tragedy*
- 10th** *American Literature, Drama, Contemporary Realistic Fiction, Social Protest, Harlem Renaissance Drama*
- 11th** *Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Literature, British Literature, Shakespearean Drama, World Literature*
- 12th** *Postcolonial World Literature, Poetry, Political Satire, Classic Greek Tragedy*

*Grade-level focus may vary by district.

Mass Media (Standard 3.4)

Successful students read and view mass media, film, series fiction, and other texts from popular culture thinking critically about the message. Students read and view media by asking questions, making notes, summarizing, and critiquing the text. They know that producers and publishers have their own economic, political, social, and aesthetic purposes. Students read newspapers and view films from different perspectives and with an awareness of possible bias and differing points of view.

Sample Activities:

- 9th Write a reflective essay explaining what the given topic means to the writer and why it might be important to you as the reader.*
- 10th View and read political allegories thinking critically about the message; apply the message to the historical event on which it is based.*
- 11th Listen to and view media clips and interviews; compare the time in which the author wrote the piece to the time of the interviews and media clips.*
- 12th Review a documentary from the unit that you found especially thought-provoking; use the guidelines for reviewing a documentary to identify how the creator incorporated the elements of a documentary.*

Language

Effective English Language Use (Standard 4.1)

Successful students understand and use the English language effectively in a variety of contexts and settings. They know how to use sentence structures, vocabulary, context, and linguistic applications to influence meaning. They demonstrate understanding of the conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Sample Activities:

- 9th Write a descriptive essay using identified characteristics, that include, strong visual images, practical and precise details, and word choice and sentence structure that supports the mood.*
- 10th Debate issues developing a position; use logical reasoning, organized ideas, and language clearly and effectively according to the rules of standard spoken American English.*
- 11th Write a news article using identified characteristics, such as, short separated, telegraphic sentences, quotations where appropriate, essential information and language appropriate to audience and subject.*
- 12th Respond to a social commentary by giving a persuasive speech, address those in the audience as though they are a group of community leaders; collect peer feedback using a class generated rubric.*

Language Variety (Standard 4.2)

Successful students understand and respect how languages and dialects can vary depending on the person or circumstance. They are able to discuss how the language they select has the potential to have a positive or negative effect on the audience.

Sample Activities:

- 9th Identify different language patterns, regional and period dialect, and the use of language to understand the language of a region or historical time period.*
- 10th Participate in whole group, small group, and peer discussions following established discussion norms and protocols.*
- 11th Analyze the use of language when communication begins to break down and tensions escalate.*
- 12th In a reflective essay, provide evidence that the variety of language you have chosen for your final product reflects and shapes the intended experience and audience.*



Glossary

Argumentative Essay - An essay that uses logic and reason to show that one idea is more legitimate than another idea. It attempts to convince a reader to adopt a certain point of view or take a particular action. The argument must always use sound reasoning and solid evidence by stating facts, giving logical reasons, using examples, and quoting experts.

Comparative Essay - An essay that discusses in depth, the similarities and differences between two or more things, such as people, concepts, places, or abstract ideas. The essay is evaluated on the quality and depth of the comparison.

Descriptive Essay - An essay that describes an object, process, place, event or something abstract, such as ideas or feelings by answering the question, "What is it like?" It draws on the five senses using strong visual images, and practical and precise details.

Digital Story – A short video project that brings together story, multimedia, and digital technology.

Expository Essay - An informational essay that presents a subject or topic completely and fairly, using accurate detailed information; its purpose is to inform, explain, describe, or define.

Memoir - An autobiographical account that focuses on a single memorable moment or event that has particular significance to the writer.

Multi-genre Report - A personal, creative collection of different types of writing (genre) about a topic. Unlike a traditional, research-based paper, the multi-genre report requires that students select the best choice of literature to present their information. Students may select to write a poem, create a feature news article, design a brochure or include an audio tape of a speech addressing the research topic.

Multimedia Presentation - A presentation that uses technology, including pictures, diagrams, photographs, to communicate the student's message. Presentations are evaluated on visual quality as well as content.

Persuasive Essay - An essay in which the writer attempts to convince the reader to adopt a certain point of view or to take a particular action on a controversial issue. The writer may tap into basic human needs and values by making opinion statements of fact, value, or policy. Editorials and news articles are also forms of persuasive essays.

Research Report – A formal presentation of information discovered through an investigation of a topic, problem, or issue. The investigation is focused on answering a research question. Information is collected and evaluated by the student using a variety of resources.

Reflective Essay - An essay in which the writer responds to a significant event or idea to gain insight into his/her life and the lives of other. Letters, journals, speeches, poems, or formal or personal essays can all be reflective.

Find Information on the Web

Michigan.gov/highschool

www.michigan.gov/hsce

Michigan.gov/oeaa (MME/ACT Information)

www.michigan.gov/oeaa

ACT Report "On Course for Success"

http://act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/success_report.pdf

ACT Report "Reading Between The Lines"

http://act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/reading_report.pdf

ACT College Readiness Standards

www.act.org/standard

The ACT Writing Test

www.act.org/aap/writing

Understanding University Success

<http://s4s.org/cepr.uus.php>

Resources from High Schools That Work

www.sreb.org

Resources from the College Board (Standards for College Success)

www.collegeboard.com/about/association/academic/academic.html

Contact Information

Office of School Improvement, Interim Director: Betty Underwood

underwoodb@michigan.gov

Office of School Improvement, Supervisor: Deborah Clemmons

clemmonsd@michigan.gov

Content Expectations: Susan Codere Kelly

coderes@michigan.gov

ELA HS Content Expectations: Dr. Elaine Weber

eweber@misd.net

English Language Arts Consultant: Lynnette VanDyke

vandykel@michigan.gov

Mathematics Consultant: Ruth Anne Hodges

hodgesr3@michigan.gov

Science Consultant: Kevin Richard

richardk1@michigan.gov

Social Studies Consultant: Karen R. Todorov

todorok@michigan.gov