

Reading Specialist Subject Matter Knowledge

Reading Specialist candidates must demonstrate the necessary depth and breadth of content knowledge needed to support all students in mastering grade level expectations as outlined in the [2017 Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Framework](#). In addition, Reading Specialists must know:

- a. Evidenced-based¹ concepts of language and literacy (*i.e.*, supported by evidence presented in peer-reviewed literature).
- b. Components of language: phonology, syntax, semantics, morphology, discourse, pragmatics.
- c. Components of reading: concepts of print, phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness), phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension.
- d. The reciprocal relationships among:
 - i. Phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, rapid automatic naming speed, decoding, word recognition, and spelling.
 - ii. Decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension.
 - iii. Background knowledge, vocabulary, decoding, and reading comprehension.
 - iv. Reading comprehension and writing/composition.
 - v. Listening comprehension and reading comprehension.
 - vi. Reading, writing, language, viewing, speaking, and listening in service of building knowledge.
- e. Brain science research, including how the brain learns to read and neurobiological impacts on reading development.
- f. Characteristics of diverse learner profiles, including the strengths and needs commonly demonstrated by multilingual students and students with reading disabilities including [dyslexia](#).
- g. Aspects of texts to consider when evaluating and selecting curriculum and print/digital texts, including: dimensions of [text complexity](#), alignment with grade-level topics; curriculum topics, diversity in literacy genres and forms; cultural relevance of text to students; the representation of diverse cultures and perspectives in texts.
- h. Aspects of learners to consider when evaluating and selecting curriculum and print/digital texts, including: text quality, a student's current literacy strengths and needs, background knowledge, interests, stamina and motivation, and reading difficulties and disabilities.
- i. Elements of composition, including:
 - i. Craft and structure of texts in various genres and forms.
 - ii. Composition process.
- j. Knowledge of evidence-based practices for explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction in the following topics, aligned to grade specific standards in the [2017](#)

¹ *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*. 29 Nov. 2016. www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceusesinvestment.pdf

Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Framework and the digital literacy standards of the 2016 Massachusetts Standards for Digital Literacy and Computer Science:

- i. Concepts of print, including the alphabetic principle.
- ii. Phonological and phonemic awareness, including the progression of phonological awareness skills and of phoneme skill development.
- iii. Phonics for word recognition and spelling, including the systematic, cumulative progression of phonics concepts, syllabication, and spelling rules/generalizations.
- iv. Oral reading fluency at the word, sentence, and passage levels, including reading sight words with automaticity
- v. Comprehension, including vocabulary, word knowledge, text structures, summarizing, monitoring for understanding, and integration of content presented in diverse formats.
- vi. Vocabulary, including approaches for selecting words to teach in-depth and word learning strategies such as the use of context and word parts (morphology).
- vii. English grammar and usage, and conventions of English.
- viii. Progressions of writing skills, including: letter formation, encoding/spelling, conventions, sentence structure, paragraph formation.
- ix. Writing, including idea development, the organization and purpose of arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives; using the writing process; and awareness of task, audience, and purpose.
- x. Handwriting and developmentally appropriate keyboarding.
- xi. Speaking and listening skills, including skills required for collaborative conversations and presentations.
- xii. Digital/media literacies, with particular emphasis on online research and the evaluation of online information for accuracy and bias.
- k. Evidence-based practices for literacy across content areas, including disciplinary literacy.
- l. Purposes, attributes, strengths/limitations and administration of various types of assessments including valid, reliable and scientifically-based screening and diagnostic assessments; curriculum-based measurements (CBM); and assessments used for formative, progress monitoring, and summative purposes.
- m. Approaches to using assessment data to identify students at risk for reading difficulties and to inform instruction.
- n. Structure and purpose of flexible multi-tiered systems that support academic and behavioral needs of all students in a school, including consideration of executive function, self-regulation, working memory, and metacognition.
- o. Collaborative leadership and adult learning theories and strategies related to:
 - i. Effective mentorship and coaching.
 - ii. Planning and leading professional development.
 - iii. Developing a school-based plan for literacy instruction and assessment that integrates evidence-based strategies.
 - iv. The evaluation and selection of core and intervention instructional materials for literacy.