

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 STANDARDS	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

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.

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 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>.

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 within their district.

Categories of assessments approved for Essential Skills graduation requirement

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

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

1st Category: Statewide Assessment

Assessment Option and Achievement Standards				
	Assessment	Reading	Writing	Math
Students enrolled in 11th grade during the 2013-2014 academic year	OAKS	236	40	236
Students enrolled in 11th grade during the 2014-2015 academic year and beyond	Smarter Balanced	To be determined, summer 2015. Oregon Department of Education will use multiple methods, including using Smarter Balanced field test results, to establish a Smarter Balanced scale score that represents an equivalent level of rigor to the current OAKS achievement standard. See <i>Smarter Balanced Transition: Methodology for Essential Skills</i> , at http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=2042 .		

2nd Category: Other Assessments

Assessment Options and Achievement Standards				
Assessment	Reading	Writing	Math	
ACT	18	19*	19	
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	460*	450	
PSAT	44	N/A	45	
AP/IB	Various	N/A	Various	
Accuplacer	86	N/A	N/A	

*Based on the composite score derived from both the selected response and direct-writing portions of the test. The SAT refers to this as the Writing section of the SAT. The ACT refers to this as the combined English/Writing test.

3rd Category: Work Samples

Assessment Options and Achievement Standards			
	Reading	Writing	Math
Number of Work Samples	2 Total: •One of which must be informational	2 Total: •One must be expository or persuasive •One in any of the approved modes (expository, persuasive, narrative)	2 Total: •One each for any two of the required content strands (algebra, geometry, or statistics)
Score Categories (from the Official State Scoring Guides)	Traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate General Understanding • Develop an Interpretation • Analyze Text 	Traits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas/ Content • Organization • Sentence Fluency • Conventions 	Process Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Sense of the Task • Representing and Solving the Task • Communicating Reasoning • Accuracy • Reflecting and Evaluating
Work Sample Score Requirement	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.

Where do I find additional information?

For general information, please visit the *Essential Skills Home* page: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=2042>.

For policy-related information, please visit the *Essential Skills District Policy Resources* page: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=3963>.

For information about specific Essential Skills, please visit the appropriate page:

- Reading: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2703>;
- Writing: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2704>; or
- Mathematics: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2707>.