



## **EOCEP English 2**

***2024 Test Data Review Report***

## Introduction

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Data Recognition Corporation and the South Carolina Department of Education Office of Assessment and Standards (OAS) convened a panel of content experts to review item data from the Spring 2024 administration of the End of Course Examination Program (EOCEP) for English 2. The panel of content experts analyzed operational and field test items, including information about how students performed on each item. Based on their analyses, the panel offered the instructional insights and strategies in this document to support student learning.

Operational items on the EOCEP for English 2 assessment were aligned to the *2015 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards*. To be most useful for teachers, instructional insights and strategies based on operational items have been organized to align with the *2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards*.

The OAS recognizes the hard work of the panel and South Carolina educators and offers these relevant and useful suggestions for improving instruction as an addendum to those from previous years.

## Theme

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The committee noted that English 2 students may struggle to understand theme (ELA.E2.AOR.2.1) Teachers should reinforce the idea that “theme” is a complex statement, not a single word. A theme is universal and can apply to multiple texts. If a theme can only apply to one specific text, it is not a theme. The committee recommends instructional strategies such as:

- Define theme and provide examples. The classroom discussion should include how the statement can apply to multiple works. Using a short video, ask students to track the different \*motifs. A motif is a recurring element used to reinforce a theme. Examples of motifs include greed, power, love, and revenge. Ask students to explain what they can learn about one motif as presented in the video. As a class, determine the theme. Then, ask students to explain how the creator of the video helped illustrate the theme. This can also be completed in small groups or individually.
- Pre-select a text for students to use. Then, pull motifs from the text. Each motif will serve as a station. Allow students to work in a station to determine a theme based on that motif. The theme should be written as a complete sentence. Allow each group of students to present their theme and explain how they determined it. Students should consider questions such as:
  - How do the characters help develop this theme?

- How does dialogue help develop this theme?
- Are there any symbols related to the theme? If so, how do the symbols help develop the theme?
- How does the author depict characters with the motif? For example, what happens to a character(s) associated with power if the motif is power? Do things end well for the character, or do they end badly? Why does the author choose to do this?
- Some students may need to start with simpler texts. Fables are an effective way to teach a theme: ask students to determine the theme of a fable and then write it in a complete sentence. Move on to more complex texts when students are ready.
- Provide a universal theme and ask students to find an example of it in a movie or story.
- Provide multiple potential themes for a text, and let students choose which of them apply and *why*.
  - A variation on this idea is to ask students to choose evidence from the passage to support each theme, and then rank the evidence to determine which theme is best supported and which themes don't apply.
- Ask students to generate a creative representation of a theme (a painting/drawing, a model, etc.).

*\*The term “motif” is not directly assessed on the EOCEP for English 2.*

## Analyzing Rhetoric

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The panel noted that students may have an incomplete understanding of rhetoric. In the 2015 ELA Standards, indicator RI.10.1 asks English 2 students to “determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.” In the 2024 ELA Standards, ELA.E2.AOR.4.1 asks students to “analyze an author’s perspective or purpose, and evaluate the effectiveness of the author’s rhetoric used to advance that perspective or purpose.” The main shifts from the 2015 indicator to the 2024 indicator are:

- The term “perspective” replaces “point of view”.
- Analysis replaces determine.
- Students are asked to evaluate if the rhetoric is effective in advancing the author’s perspective or purpose.

As a reminder to teachers, rhetoric does not enter the 2015 ELA standards until

English 1. In the 2024 ELA standards, rhetoric is introduced in ELA.6.AOR.5.3, “...the rhetorical appeal of ethos, pathos, or logos.” While students in English 2 will not be asked to define the terms ethos, pathos, and logos on the EOCEP for English 2, they may encounter the terms on the assessment. English 2 students will need to understand the terms and identify the use of these appeals. English 2 teachers are encouraged to review the AOR.5.3 and AOR.4.1 indicators from previous grade levels to fill in any instructional gaps that may occur because of the shift to the new standards.

- The [English 2 Assessment Specifications for Teachers](#) document outlines how rhetoric will be assessed on the EOCEP for English 2 assessment. Teachers are encouraged to read this document and watch the accompanying video.
- The committee encourages teachers to think beyond “logos, ethos, and pathos” and instead frame rhetoric as a way to think about an author’s choices. Students need to see examples of multiple techniques and choices that authors make, including similar techniques between texts or authors. Discussions of style and word choice should also be tied to rhetoric.
- A rhetoric [support document](#) is available on the SCDE website. This document is intended to help teachers better understand the concept of rhetoric in terms of grade-level expectations. Although much of this support document is targeted to expectations for preceding grade levels, the insights and examples are still relevant for teaching these concepts in English 2, especially for students who are struggling to understand rhetoric.

The panel also suggests some specific teaching strategies to help students better understand rhetoric:

- Read and listen to speeches. Have students think about how rhetoric is applied and how the audience might perceive the language differently when reading vs. listening.
- Make graphic organizers based on watching commercials. Ask students to look at the script, visuals, music, etc.
- Analyze fictional speeches (e.g., *Antigone*, *Animal Farm*) to discuss rhetorical techniques.

## Writing: Organization, Conventions, and Revision

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The committee noted that demonstrating a command of English grammar and conventions remains a difficult skill for students to master. As with last year, the committee recommends peer editing and one-on-one conferences to help students revise their writing. The committee recommends using mentor texts to encourage students to think about more complex sentences or complex punctuation. The panelists noted that students may avoid complexity for fear of making mistakes, but modeling effective use of complexity can help move students away from, for example, comma-

splice errors and move them toward a more nuanced incorporation of punctuation and sentence structure.

In addition to helping with mechanics, the panelists encourage teachers to use writing conferences to help students with organization. Ask students to think about why a paragraph is structured the way it is. “Sentence strips” are a good way for students to consider how a paragraph is structured. Introduce the concept first through mentor texts that show examples of writing with strong organization or structure. Ask students how a passage is organized, and give them suggestions (e.g., “Would changing this paragraph make the writing more effective? Why?”) Comparing and contrasting the use of headings can also help students think about organization more explicitly.

Ask students to consider how an audience will react to their writing. Start with examples: show them excessively wordy passages or excerpts that use inappropriately formal/informal language for the author’s intended purpose. The panel feels that students too often focus on grammatical correctness but neglect word choice, clarity, and precision. Teaching students to “hear” their writing can help them develop and demonstrate their voice.

Some panelists expressed concern that students are not being taught to use voice in their writing and that instruction may focus only on passive and active voice. Informative and argumentative writing all students the opportunity to express their real voice through writing. The reader should feel as though the writer is speaking directly to them. The committee recommends:

- Incorporate mentor texts with a strong voice, or even listen to podcasts to help introduce the idea of writing with voice. Students should understand that letting their personality show in their writing can often help their readers feel more connected to it.
- Students should understand that the topic impacts the tone of the writing. For example, if a student is writing about the impact of climate change on whales, a playful tone would be in opposition to the seriousness of the topic. Students should also understand that in addition to topic, audience, word choice, sentence structure, and style contribute to voice.
- Provide students with two versions of the same text. Each version should be written for a different audience. Ask students to examine each version and compare the tone, word choice, sentence structure, and style. How are they similar? How are they different? Why does the author choose certain words based on the audience? Why does the author use certain types of punctuation for one audience and not the other?
- Next, provide students with a topic and two different audiences. Ask the students to write a short informational or argumentative piece for each audience. Repeat the previously mentioned process with the students’ writing. Allow students to work in small groups and provide feedback to one another. The teacher may

also choose to conference with each student. Using the feedback, ask the students to re-write each piece. Repeat the process as needed.