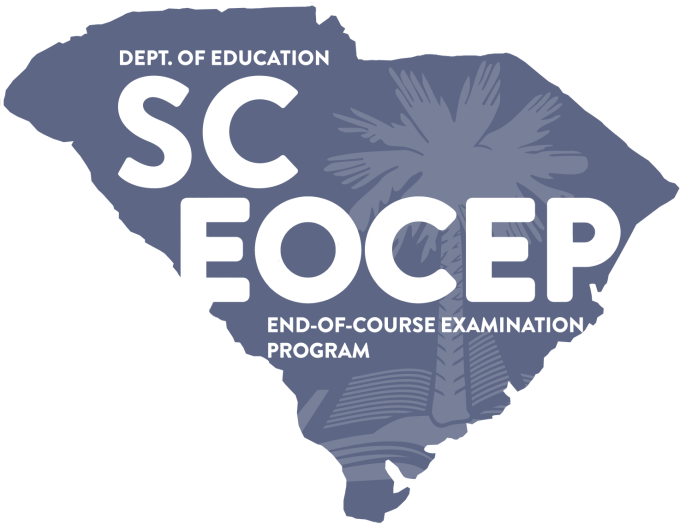
SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



2026 Data Review Report
Statewide Instructional Recommendations
English 2

Office of Assessment and Standards

October 2026

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Introduction to the Data Review Reports

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Assessment and Standards (OAS) extends our deepest gratitude to the hard-working teachers across our state. We are especially thankful for the educators who dedicate their time to participate in our annual assessment meetings. Your collaboration is what makes these reports possible.

What is the Data Review Committee?

As part of our Test Development Cycle every year, the SCDE gathers educators from across South Carolina for virtual Data Review Meetings. This group of dedicated educators forms our *Data Review Committee*, a specialized team tasked with examining state-level, item-by-item test data to better understand student ability and identify where students are struggling with specific standards.

From Numbers to Strategies

For this report, the Committee focused on the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) English 2 assessment, which measures the *2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards* (*2024 SC CCR ELA Standards*). While every standard on the EOCEP English 2 blueprint is assessed, this report selectively highlights key standards where statewide trends point to clear, actionable recommendations for the classroom.

The Committee looks closely at the *quantitative* data, how students across the entire state responded to test items. They use these numbers to produce a *qualitative* analysis. In other words, they look at the data to figure out *why* students are struggling, and then they offer actionable, instructional recommendations on how to improve student achievement on those topics.

A Redesigned Format

Based directly on feedback from teachers across the state, we have redesigned the Data Review Reports to be more useful for your daily practice. The reports are now organized by standards and indicators. Within each section, you will find:

- **Committee Observations:** What the data tells us about student understanding and misconceptions.
- **Historical Trends:** Years in which similar trends or observations were noted.
- **Instructional Recommendations:** Practical strategies to address learning gaps.

How to Use This Report

The goal of this report is to provide clear suggestions to improve instructional practice and inspire collaborative discussions at your school. Offered in a spirit of helpfulness and collaboration, these recommendations reflect broad, statewide trends. Because every classroom is unique, we recognize that certain identified gaps or suggestions may not align with every individual school or district.

Get Involved and Learn More

The OAS provides numerous resources for districts, schools, and teachers to help clarify the standards, understand how our assessments align with them, and make the most of test data.

Our **Assessment Quick Links for Teachers Page** includes the following resources for English 2 educators:

- Applications for Assessment Committees: Apply to Content Review Committees, Data Review Committees, and more.
- Test Blueprints: Broadly outline the test construct in terms of content and rigor.
- Assessment Specifications for Teachers: Guidance on how standards are assessed on the ECOEP (distinct from how a concept is taught).
- Data Review Reports: Access older reports from various content areas.
- Item Type Descriptions: Breakdown of the item formats students encounter on the EOCEP assessments.
- Sample Items: Grade- and content-aligned items demonstrating the EOCEP formats.
- Online Tools Training (OTT): Allows students to practice interacting with sample items in the official testing environment.
- Information on the Text-Dependent Writing (TDW): Scoring Guideline, Rubrics, and Sample responses.

Our **ELA Standards Page** includes:

- Standards: The *2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards*
- Instructional Resources: Support materials designed to help teachers instruct the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards*.
- Professional Learning Opportunities: District-level professional learning menus and recordings of past webinars.

Interested in Statewide Assessment Data?

State-level assessment data is published each year on our website. You can explore the 2026 EOCEP Test Scores directly through our online interactive tools or download full data files from the right side of the page.

Want to make an impact?

If you are interested in joining an annual assessment committee, we invite you to apply through our website!

Statewide Trends

After reviewing operational and field test items from the Spring 2026 administration of EOCEP for English 2, the committee identified five strengths and six areas for growth in student performance statewide.

Strengths

1. Students were consistently able to identify details that supported development of the central idea over the course of a text (AOR.2.2).
2. Students were consistently able to analyze how an author creates effects such as humor and suspense within literary texts (AOR.3.1).
3. Students were consistently able to analyze an author's choice to structure a literary text to create tension (AOR.5.1).
4. Students were consistently able to analyze word relationships and nuances in word meanings within literary and informational texts specifically related to the function of figures of speech (hyperbole) (AOR.8.1a), nuances in word meanings with similar denotations (AOR.8.1b), and the impact of word choices on meaning and tone (AOR.8.1c).
5. Students were consistently able to improve writing by considering feedback from adults and peers and revising to enhance clarity appropriate to audience, purpose, and task (C.5.).

The committee noted that while students performed well in the aforementioned areas, it is critical that teachers continue to teach the concepts and skills in the indicators listed above to their intended depth and rigor. The committee emphasized that rigorous, indicator-aligned instruction must continue to maintain these academic gains.

Areas for Growth

1. Students need support with analyzing how multiple perspectives add to and deepen meaning within and across texts (AOR.1.1).
2. Students need support with analyzing the development of universal themes across literary texts (AOR.2.1).
3. Students need support with analyzing an author's perspective or purpose, and evaluating the effectiveness of the author's rhetoric used to advance that perspective or purpose (AOR.4.1).
4. Students need support with analyzing the impact of multiple text structures in an informational text (AOR.5.2).
5. Students need support determining the meaning of unknown phrases in context (AOR.7.1a).
6. Students need support with demonstrating command of the standard English grammar and conventions, specifically punctuation (C.4.1b) and shifts in verb tense (C.4.1d).

These areas of growth were identified as instructional needs for students in English 2. The observations and instructional recommendations included in this report are targeted at supporting these needs.

Committee Observations and Recommendations

The following section is a collection of the committee's observations and instructional recommendations aimed at addressing the top six areas of growth as noted on page 3 of this report. It is not a comprehensive list of every observation and instructional recommendation made by the committee. As such, it remains of the utmost importance that teachers continue to teach the concepts and skills in all grade-level indicators to their intended depth and rigor. For additional instructional recommendations refer to the 2025 Test Data Review Report. Where appropriate, connections to the concepts and skills in related indicators have been noted.

General Observations and Recommendations

General Observation #1: Students need routine and repeated exposure to rigorous content to reflect the assessment expectations of the SCDE. The texts selected for instruction should represent the array of text types that students will be exposed to on the EOCEP, which include poetry, historical documents, literary and informational texts, and dramas.

- Students need continued exposure to the different text structures as these structures contribute to an author's purpose for creating an informational text.
    - Examples include chronological, compare-and-contrast, sequence, cause/effect, problem and solution, and description.

General Observation #2: Ensure that students have been introduced to close reading skills and comprehension tracking strategies such as graphic organizers and annotation models when reading literary and informational texts.

General Observation #3: Ensure that instruction reflects the intent of the indicators and aligns with the assessment specifications. This includes the language used to introduce, explain, and assess the indicators at the class (quizzes, tests, etc.) and school levels (benchmarks, common formative assessments, etc.).

- Explicitly use the academic language of the state standards to promote success for all students. The language of the indicators serves as a foundation for both instruction and assessment. Regularly incorporating this language into classroom discussions, tasks, and learning experiences helps students develop the vocabulary and conceptual understanding necessary for success on assessment items aligned to those indicators.
    - Routine and repeated exposure to the language of the indicators in daily instruction makes the language of the assessment more familiar to students when they are assessed at the end of the year.

General Observation #4: Design instruction to build on students' prior knowledge, learning experiences, and previous instruction to deepen comprehension and make meaning of the text throughout the instructional process.

- Students need to know how to combine their own experiences with what is presented in a text to support inferential thinking. The requirement for students to make inferences is an Overarching Expectation (OE) beginning at the kindergarten level. Students are expected to refine the skill of making inferences to draw conclusions as the rigor and text complexity increases between kindergarten and grade 12.

General Observation #5: Writing exercises should be a routine part of daily instruction. Writings could come in the form of, but not limited to:

- quick writes
- exit tickets
- journals

Reading Literary Texts

AOR.1.1

Observation: Students need intentional instruction on how to distinguish a character's perspective from the point of view, and how multiple perspectives deepen the meaning or enhance the style of a text.

Historical Trends: Not present.

Instructional Recommendations:

- Explicitly teach the difference between perspective (worldview of a character based on experiences, background, and beliefs) and point of view (narrator's vantage point from which the story is told).
    - Help students understand that perspective is based on how the narrator and/or character(s) perceive what is taking place with the story; and affects the feelings about people, places, or events and how the narrator or character(s) reacts.
- Ensure that students are tracking the experiences and interactions of characters in stories to identify shifts in perspective.
    - Having multiple perspectives does not lead to unreliable narrators because perspectives provide the reader with a look into how characters in a story encounter life.
- Use common texts to help develop and strengthen the skills related to how perspective impacts meaning.
    - Committee members suggest using fairy tales, fables, and classic short stories for children as the guide to rewrite these texts from the perspective of another character to determine how this shift impacts the overall meaning intended by the author.
        - Rewriting well-known literary texts must involve the students including the alternate character's thoughts, feelings, and understandings based on the descriptions and information from the original story to demonstrate the impact that perspective has on a text, its characters, and overall meaning.
- Plan instructional opportunities where students examine a political cartoon or other stimuli (poem, abstract art creation, etc.) and create an original story. Perspective as a concept can be developed through small activities that require students to produce individual samples using a common source of inspiration.

AOR.2.1

Observation: Theme development involves all elements of a literary text working together to create a universal message that relates to more than one text.

Historical Trends: Previously mentioned in the 2025 Test Data Review Report.

Instructional Recommendations:

- The theme of a literary text must be taught as a statement and not a single word.
    - Committee members suggest starting with using one word descriptors for a theme to have students find evidence to support this message from the author.
        - As the text is uncovered and students have identified the "one-word" theme, teachers should encourage students to deepen their understanding by creating full sentences that articulate what the theme illustrates. This strategy would work to enable all students to be successful with theme development and identification.
- Students must know that the theme of a text is a universal message that can be applied to multiple texts. The message/theme is uncovered through the actions, words, and other literary elements present in each text.
    - The main idea of text is not the same as the theme. The main idea of is specific to one text and does not always convey a universal lesson for readers to learn.
- Students need a clear understanding that theme identification requires inferential skills. The author intends for students to make the connections between the text and their experiences to accurately identify the theme of a text.
    - Instruction must focus on the implicit messages and signals readers encounter throughout a text. Teachers mentioned that asking the students, "What did the author intend for readers to learn?" provides a strong foundation for theme development and identification. Students can be instructed to examine:
        - What are the actions of the characters?
        - What causes these actions to shift?
        - What tone/words are presented by the author?
        - How does the action of the plot influence the characters and what they learn by the end of the story?

AOR.7.1a

Observation: A common area of student difficulty is the comprehension and analysis of poetry that uses archaic or antiquated language. Limited familiarity with outdated vocabulary and expressions often affects students' ability to determine meaning and engage in deeper textual analysis. As a result, students may need targeted vocabulary instruction and scaffolded reading strategies to help them access the text and interpret the poet's message effectively.

Historical Trends: Not present.

Instructional Recommendations:

- Ask students to rewrite each line of a poem in contemporary language to help them make sense of complex or archaic wording.
    - This recommendation does not require students to translate the language word for word, but to illustrate the intended idea presented in the poem itself in the students' language. Students can deepen their understanding of the text and more effectively analyze the poet's ideas, purpose, and craft by putting the poem into their own words.
    - Scaffolded strategies such as paraphrasing, annotation, close reading, and vocabulary investigations support deeper understanding of both the language and the poet's intended meaning.
- Students need specific vocabulary instruction related to context clues, affixes, etymology, and meaning.
    - Teaching students to break apart words encourages independent word-solving rather than relying solely on definitions.
    - Model how to approach difficult words to help students internalize effective comprehension strategies.
    - Help students look for context clues within a specific sentence, phrase, and across a particular paragraph to uncover the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Reading Informational Texts

AOR.4.1

Observation: Students need consistent instruction on the uses of rhetoric by authors to present a specific perspective on a topic/subject. Rhetorical appeals must focus on how they are used in application within and across an informational text.

Historical Trends: Not present.

Instructional Recommendations:

- After reviewing the text and/or image (political cartoon), have students identify the bias and perspective of the author using annotations and evidentiary findings that support the identification throughout the text.
  - Pre-select texts and images that provide a clear perspective on a topic presented by an author.
  - Encourage students to use their skills to identify the claim made by an author/artist, and their ability to justify their findings with evidence from the text/image.
- Students create rhetorical posters where they explain the "why" behind the usage of rhetorical appeals.
  - Students learn how to develop techniques and strategies related to rhetoric that allow students to identify an author's usage in an informational text.
  - Students need instruction that requires the application of rhetoric (rhetorical appeals and rhetorical devices), which goes beyond the identification level.
- Along with pre-selected texts and images, provide opportunities for students to develop and defend either an affirmative or negative claim. Students should cite relevant evidence from the texts and images to justify their position.
  - Students can be divided into specific groups where they are given an author's perspective and asked to support their conclusions with textual evidence.

AOR.5.2

Observation: Students need continued instruction on the use of multiple text structures and text structures, and the impact these have on an informational text.

Historical Trends: Previously mentioned in the 2025 Test Data Review Report.

Instructional Recommendations:

- Begin instruction on text structures and text features at the base level of term identification to draw on their previous years of instruction. Consider terms such as:
    - Text structure
        - cause and effect
        - compare and contrast
        - chronological
        - description/List
        - problem and solution
        - sequence
    - Text Features
        - title
        - headings
        - subheadings
        - caption
        - illustration
- Model thinking aloud. Pair with a gradual release approach to support the success of all students as they know how text structures shape an author's purpose and intended meaning.
    - Consistently focus instruction on the ability to find claims, evidence, and reasons (CER) for an author's inclusion of text features and purpose for a specific structure.
        - Students could use sticky notes to explain the purpose behind an author's intentionality to use a specific structure in an informational text.
    - Incorporate a variety of strategies to help meet the needs of all students. Strategies include but are not limited to:
        - Small-group instruction identifying strong versus weak evidence.
        - Provide students with text structures and use evidence to support the identification of the structure.
        - Post short paragraphs around the room and have students identify the structure used.
            - Advance learning expectations by asking students to explain the impact that the structure has on the purpose of the paragraphs.
            - Include more text features gradually for students.
                - Use text from science and social studies textbooks to provide cross-curricular skill development.

Writing

C.4.1d

Observation: Students have difficulties with identifying and revising grammar and mechanics errors. Students need daily recursive writing practice that develops their ability to identify errors in their own writing, as well as writing from other sources.

Historical Trends: Previously mentioned in the 2025 Test Data Review Report.

Instructional Recommendations:

- Incorporate writing into the daily instructional design.
    - creative quick writes
    - bell ringers
    - exit tickets
    - short answer responses to be read aloud (redact student names)
        - Present authentic submissions for editing that are based on the ability levels of students, making the learning more relevant and accessible for all students.
- Use real world examples of writing that students encounter regularly to refine proofreading and revision skills.
    - school newsletter
    - local newspaper articles
    - internet-based texts
- Plan for writing workshops to support the writing development of all students.
    - one-on-one conferences
    - peer-editing workshops
    - writing cycles
        - Step-by-step writing development for struggling students, multilingual learners, and students with learning limitations.

General Writing Recommendations

Observation: The committee noted that students continue to struggle with demonstrating command of English grammar, usage, and conventions. Improving writing achievement requires consistent opportunities for students to analyze quality writing, practice skills in authentic contexts, receive feedback, and revise. Effective writing instruction should focus on helping students understand that strong writing develops through a process rather than through a single draft.

Historical Trends: Previously mentioned in the 2025 Test Data Review Report.

Instructional Recommendations:

- Students need to see strong writing before they can consistently produce it.
- Conduct brief "noticing" activities where students identify patterns in an author's writing.

- Think aloud while analyzing mentor texts:
    - Why did the author choose this sentence structure?
    - What effect does this punctuation create?
    - How does the sentence contribute to tone or meaning?
- Support the writing development of struggling writers and multilingual learners.
    - Provide sentence frames that model complex structures.
    - Use color-coding to identify:
        - subjects
        - verbs
        - independent clauses
        - dependent clauses
    - Allow students to imitate mentor sentences before creating their own.
    - Create anchor charts with examples of sentence patterns.
- Routinely monitor the ongoing writing process for students.
    - Track students' use of complex sentences over time.
    - Collect writing samples every few weeks.
    - Maintain simple checklists for:
        - sentence variety
        - punctuation accuracy
        - use of transitions
    - Compare first and final drafts to document growth.
- Writing conferences provide opportunities for individualized feedback that can move students from surface-level revisions to meaningful improvements. Conferences help students understand that revision involves improving ideas, organization, clarity, and style, not simply correcting errors.
    - Schedule short conferences throughout the writing process.
    - Focus each conference on one or two targeted skills.
    - Use conferences to guide students toward independent problem-solving.
    - Provide opportunities for students to explain their thinking as writers.
        - Sample Conference Questions
            - What is the purpose of this paragraph?
            - How does this evidence support your claim?
            - Which sentence are you most proud of?
            - Where do you think readers may become confused?
            - How could this section be more organized?

Strong writing instruction is built on modeling, practice, feedback, revision, and reflection. Students need frequent opportunities to study mentor texts, experiment with complex language, receive targeted feedback, analyze audience and purpose, and apply grammar skills within authentic writing tasks.