

A statewide Planning Committee representing 70% of ELs in the state met in 2015-16 to develop ESL Model Curriculum Units (MCUs). The ESL MCUs take a functional approach to language teaching and are organized around WIDA's [Key Uses of Academic Language](#) and the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#).

ESL units are focused on systematic, explicit, and sustained language development within the context of key academic practices and standards. Each ESL MCU connects to key linguistic demands from an existing content area MCU (ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science), but the primary purpose of these ESL units is that of focused and dedicated language study. They encourage a contingent pedagogy, and the simultaneous development of language, analytical practices, and concepts embedded in academic standards. Below is a sneak peak of one of our units in action:

Summary of first released unit, [ESL: Access to Clean Water](#):

- ★ ELP 1-2
- ★ Grade band: 6-8
- ★ Content Connection: Language of Social Studies

The purpose of this unit is to help ELs develop the language necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies. They will also learn language that will be used recurrently in and across various academic and social contexts. The unit focuses on systematic, explicit, and sustained English language development in the context of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. It is not to be confused with a sheltered social studies unit. "ESL: Access to Clean Water" is intended to be taught by an ESL teacher, and collaboration with the content teacher is essential. Please be mindful that, in addition to this dedicated, language-focused time, the student must also have access to all core academic content.

The language development in this unit centers on two of the [Key Uses of Academic Language](#) as connected to the following *key academic practices*:

GOAL 1. **EXPLAIN** causes and effects to create evidence-based claims.
GOAL 2. **DISCUSS** by stating opinions/claims about a substantive topic.

These unit-level *Focus Language Goals* were created through an analysis of the driving language demands embedded in "[Model United Nations: Access to Clean Water](#)," a grade 7 social studies Model Curriculum Unit.

In "ESL: Access to Clean Water," students get contextualized, extended practice in the word/phrase, sentence, and discourse dimensions. They will be able to use their learned language to take a position, state an opinion/claim, and offer evidence via explanation of cause and effect. While learning about the real, complex issues of clean water access, students will create public service announcements (PSAs) to educate and encourage others to take action. (This announcement will be shared with the school audience on World Water Day, March 22.) The embedded, authentic learning experiences help students develop effective communication with peers and adults about social and academic topics. By the end of the unit, through a social justice lens, students are equipped with the language to serve as advocates for clean water access around the world.

👉 [WATCH A FEW MINUTES OF A LESSON HERE](#)

For more information on the design process for the ESL MCUs, please see the [Next Generation ESL Project: Curriculum Resource Guide](#).

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