

Key Grade 12 Ontario English Curriculum Concepts—*Viewpoints* and *Reference Points*

The Grade 12 English University Preparation (**ENG4U**) course emphasizes a consolidation of literacy, critical thinking, and communications skills from the students' entire secondary school English program. With that fundamental principle in place, the selections, models, activities, and extensive instructional and assessment material in the *Viewpoints 12* and *Reference Points* texts have been chosen according to the Ontario curriculum and developed with the following key concepts in mind.

Curriculum Concept #1

Students will need to be able to use language in all its forms skilfully, confidently, and flexibly for personal and practical, professional, and business reasons.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* teach all aspects of purposeful communication through a wide and balanced range of stimulating materials and activities that encourage confident, precise use of language in all its forms, inspired and encouraged by traditional literary and informational texts and all major print and non-print media. Visuals and media study are integrated throughout the texts.

Curriculum Concept #2

Students need to recognize and appreciate the central importance of language and literature in learning and everyday life, preparing them for the literacy demands they will face as Canadians and as members of the global community.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* help students to recognize and appreciate the central importance of language and literature in their lives. Both texts provide students with a wide, balanced, and diverse range of relevant Canadian and international literature, from short stories and essays to poetry and drama, supported by a large selection of activities to articulate and refine their ideas. The literature, while structured by genre, may also be approached by theme, as suggested by the thematic listings.

Curriculum Concept #3

Students will need to develop a lifelong love of reading and writing to succeed in their constantly evolving academic and career path.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* provide highly enjoyable and stimulating selections

enhanced by creative activities that will help students grow as engaged and insightful readers and writers. Most importantly, serious in-depth analysis and interpretation are emphasized throughout.

Curriculum Concept #4

Whatever their post-secondary destination, all students need to be able to think critically and creatively and to express themselves clearly and persuasively, both orally and in writing.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* use hundreds of activities, key questions, checklists, and model responses to provide effective direction to students. These resources, along with introductory “context setters” and open-ended questions, trigger initial creative and critical responses, leading to such activities as the fully developed literary research paper, and to individual and group oral activities.

Curriculum Concept #5

Because literature is a fundamental element of identity and culture, students need to read and reflect on a rich variety of literature, informational texts, and media works to deepen their understanding of themselves and the world around them. To encompass both personal and societal concerns, their study of literary works should include accomplished writers from many genres, cultures, and historical periods.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* include powerful and provocative works by writers from different periods (e.g., Aristotle, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Bacon, Swift, Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Arnold, Moodie, Dickinson, Chekhov, Eliot, Joyce, Lawrence, Woolf, Auden, Orwell), from all regions of Canada (e.g., McLuhan, Leacock, Richler,

Munro, Laurence, Wong, Livesay, Ondaatje, Bowering, Brewster, Ng-Chan, MacLeod, Nowlan, Clarke, Blackduck, Atwood, Frye, Wallace, Findley, King, Highway, Morgan), and from around the world (e.g., Neruda, Kimenye, Postman, Kingsolver, Le Guin, de Maupassant, Desai, White, Walker, Hughes, Walcott, Heaney, Scliar, Szymborska). Every selection has a “context setter” that provides background information about the author and helps students to understand quickly the cultural and historical contexts of the piece.

Curriculum Concept #6

Students need to understand that facility in language will help them to learn in all subject areas. By using language for a broad range of purposes, students will increase their ability to communicate with precision, using many technical terms and types of specialized language for specific audiences and purposes.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* provide an extensive and comprehensive range of professional and student models and activities with clear directions and key checklists that encourage and demonstrate concretely to students how to use language effectively and precisely in a broad range of circumstances. These forms range from academic (research, essays, debates, oral presentations) and media applications (video production, advertising, news reports, Web pages, photographs) to practical business applications (e-mail, the Internet, graphs, resumés, job interviews, formal business reports, and presentations). Further support for these activities is provided in the appendices (which include a quick reference on grammar, usage, and mechanics), an extensive glossary, and 118 activity- and language-related blackline masters in the teacher resource. All of these materials will help to guide students in applying their writing and oral skills to various curriculum areas and workplace situations.

Curriculum Concept #7

In order to prepare themselves for university, senior students will need to develop independence, objective research skills, and evolving language skills in more challenging and complex ways.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* provide, after each selection or model, specific activities that encourage students to develop and demonstrate in detail—collaboratively and independently—their evolving research, critical, creative, and technological skills. The “Elements,” “Themes,” and “Additional Resources” features in the teacher resource can be used to encourage students to make connections among the works in the anthology and other related resources. Further, the four “In-Depth” sections in the anthology allow students to explore more deeply a particular playwright (Shakespeare), genre (media), or other areas of literary and curriculum interest, such as argumentation or universal themes and patterns. These additional and engaging “In-Depth” sections promote student reflection, larger perspectives for independent study, and summative evaluation. In addition, the “Wrap-Up” activities at the end of each genre unit are designed to help students to consolidate and assess their knowledge and skills.

Curriculum Concept #8

In order to understand their progress in English skills and knowledge, students, with the help of their teachers and achievement charts, will need to learn how to assess their own learning and to plan strategies for improvement. Assessment should be viewed as a positive learning opportunity for student and teacher alike.

Viewpoints 12 and *Reference Points* provide 63 generic and specific assessment rubrics and checklists in the teacher resource—all related to specific processes and products, covering all four strands, and linked to the four levels of the Ontario Achievement Chart. Along with the key questions and checklists embedded in the student texts, these assessment blackline masters will help students carry out independent self-assessment and then formulate methods for improving their work.