

# English Language Arts

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K-12



## Introduction

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The *Standards for English Language Arts K–12* are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of English language arts (ELA) standards. Its companion document, *Standards for Literacy in History and Science 6–12*, extends the same principle to communication skills in other content areas. The present work, led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA), builds on the foundation laid by states in their decades-long work on crafting high-quality education standards. The *Standards* also draw upon the most important international models as well as research and input from numerous sources, including scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, and educators from kindergarten through college. In their design and content, the *Standards* represent a synthesis of the best elements of standards-related work to date and an important advance over that previous work.

As specified by CCSSO and NGA, the *Standards* are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked. A particular standard was to be included in the document only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for students to be college and career ready in a twenty-first-century, globally competitive society. As new and better evidence emerges, the *Standards* will be revised accordingly.

The *Standards* are an extension of a prior initiative led by CCSSO and NGA to develop college and career readiness (CCR) standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening as well as in mathematics. The CCR Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Standards, released in draft form in September 2009, served as a touchstone for the present work. While the format, structure, content, and purpose of that earlier document differ in some ways from this document, the basic aims and concepts are clearly connected. The main difference is that while the earlier CCR document defined a goal toward which education efforts should aim—college and career readiness for all students—the current document describes the progressive development of skills and understandings across the grades necessary for all students to reach that goal. Just as feedback on the September 2009 CCR draft has greatly influenced the design and development of the K–12 standards, so too will the response to the K–12 standards help guide subsequent revisions to the CCR standards. In their final forms, both documents—CCR and K–12—will be tightly aligned and mutually supporting.

While the *Standards* treat college and career readiness for all students as the end point—an ambitious goal in its own right—many students will reach this point before the end of high school. For them, advanced work in literature, composition, language, history, science, and so on should be available. It is beyond the scope of the *Standards* to describe what such advanced work should consist of, but it needs to provide the next logical step up from the college and career readiness baseline established here.

As a natural outgrowth of meeting the charge to define college and career readiness, the *Standards* also lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understandings students must demonstrate have broad applicability outside of the classroom or workplace. The *Standards* insist upon the sort of close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and appreciating the aesthetics of literature. They require the sort of critical reading that is necessary to sift carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and online. They demand the sort of wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational text that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens world views. They mandate the sort of cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. In short, they promote the development of skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language.

## Key design considerations

### *A blend of cross-cutting and specific standards*

The Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening strands include two levels of standards. The cross-cutting Core Standards are the same across the two *Standards* documents, their commonality emphasizing the broad responsibility within the school for meeting the standards and also facilitating schoolwide professional development. Then there are specific Standards that are unique to a given content area, which respects the particular demands of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in ELA and in other disciplines.

### *A focus on results rather than means*

The *Standards* define what all students must learn, not everything that teachers are allowed to teach. By focusing on required achievements, the *Standards* leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed. The *Standards* require, for example, that all students be able to produce writing in a variety of situations, including those that allow time for revision. The *Standards* do not, however, specify a particular writing process that students must use (although certain elements common to process-writing approaches, particularly revision, are embedded in the requirements). Teachers are thus freed—and obligated—to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for those assignments that allow for multiple drafts. Similarly, the *Standards*, with their emphasis on observable outcomes, do not enumerate various metacognitive strategies that students may need to use to monitor and direct their thinking and learning.

### *Shared responsibility for literacy*

The *Standards for English Language Arts K–12* and the *Standards for Literacy in History and Science 6–12* together establish the requirement that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use be a shared responsibility. The *Standards* present reading instruction in K–5 as fully integrative, including a rich blend of narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. ELA-specific instruction in grades 6 and above includes fiction, poetry, and drama but also a particular form of informational text: literary exposition and argument (e.g., speeches, essays, and historical documents with significant cultural importance and literary merit). Teachers in other content areas must use their unique disciplinary expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use in their respective field. Progress toward college and career readiness and building a rich knowledge base require that at least half of the reading students do must focus on history, science and related disciplines. This distributed approach honors the unique place of English language arts instruction in literacy development while ensuring that students have communication skills tailored to the demands of other disciplines. It also reflects the reality that students must communicate effectively in a wide range of disciplines, not just ELA.

### *Grade bands to describe growth, grades to focus instruction*

Evidence consulted in creating the *Standards* suggests that beyond the earliest grades, major developments in students' literacy skills typically occur across spans of grades rather than within individual grades. This document stays true to that evidence by organizing standards after grade 3 into multiyear bands (grades 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR). At the same time, the work of educating students does proceed on a day-to-day, year-to-year basis. Any standards document must therefore provide guidance to educators on what each year's instruction and assessment should look like. To make the grade specific focuses for instruction clear, after the descriptions of the standards in each area of ELA, we provide a one page summary of the grade specific focuses for each grade from fourth grade onwards, including how the grade specific focus in each area relates to the grade band requirements. The Standards offer that focus through several grade-specific elements:

- Single-grade standards in many areas of kindergarten and grades 1, 2, and 3
- Text complexity expectations in Reading, beginning at grade 2
- Areas of focus in Writing, beginning at grade 4

- Areas of focus in the Conventions section of Language Development, beginning at grade 4

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### *Research and media skills integrated into the standards as a whole*

To be ready to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, students need a mix of the communication skills that have served literate people for millennia and new competencies necessary in an information- and media-saturated world. To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, report on, and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new. Just as the need to research and to consume and produce media are embedded into every element of today's curriculum, so too are the associated skills and understandings embedded throughout the *Standards* rather than treated separately. Web links to sample media texts are included selectively among the reading text exemplars in Appendix B to reinforce the point that print and online materials can be used together instructionally to enhance students' understanding.

### *An integrated model of English language arts*

Although the *Standards* divide the English language arts into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Development strands for conceptual purposes, the processes of communication are in theory and practice an undivided whole. As illustrated in the graphic that introduces each grade or grade band and as embodied in the content of the standards themselves, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language development are tightly interrelated and often reciprocal.

## Central features of the document

### *Reading and Literature: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension*

As students advance through the grades, they must be able to handle independently texts of steadily increasing complexity and be able to gain more from what they read. Beginning formally at grade 2, the *Standards* specify what proportion of texts students read should be within grade band and, at some grades, above grade band. (Additional material in Appendix A of the *Standards* defines and explains text complexity in more detail.) Whatever texts they are reading, students must also show a steadily increasing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text. This means, for example, finding and making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts; considering a wider range of textual evidence; and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts. The *Standards* place growing demands on students' comprehension at each higher grade or grade band to ensure that all students are college- and career-ready readers no later than the end of high school.

### *Writing and Research: Text types, grade-level focuses, and research*

While some writing skills, such as the ability to reflect audience, purpose, and task in what one writes, are important for many types of writing, others are more properly part of writing in specific text types: narrative, informative and explanatory text, and argument. Beginning at grade 4, the *Standards* specify the sorts of writing over extended and shorter timeframes that students in each grade must be able to produce in response to sources. Although conducting research calls upon reading, speaking, listening, and language skills, writing is typically central to analyzing information and presenting findings. The *Standards* pair writing and research to signal that close connection.

### *Speaking and Listening: Flexible communication*

Including but not limited to skills necessary for formal presentations, the Speaking and Listening strand requires students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills: listening attentively, participating productively, exchanging information, and speaking effectively. Students must learn to sift through and evaluate multiple points of view; listen thoughtfully in order to build on and constructively question the ideas of others while contributing their own ideas; and, where appropriate, reach agreement and common goals through teamwork.

### *Language Development: Conventions and vocabulary*

The Conventions standards in the Language Development strand include the essential “rules” of formal written and spoken English, but they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among alternatives. Thus, standards pertaining to grammar and usage, mechanics, and the fundamentals of language and writing are accompanied by standards on word choice and style. The Vocabulary standards focus both on understanding words and their nuances and on acquiring new words through conversation and reading and by being taught them directly. Rather than require that students use one particular skill or another to determine a word’s meaning, the Vocabulary standards insist only that students get the proper meaning, with the means (context, word analysis, and so on) to be chosen flexibly based on the situation.

### *Appendices*

The *Standards* include a range of supporting materials that help explain and enrich the main document:

- Appendix A contains a model of text complexity, including both qualitative and quantitative measures of how easy or hard a text is to read, as well as supplementary statements about instruction in writing, language conventions, and vocabulary
- Appendix B consists of text exemplars at all grades/bands to illustrate appropriate complexity and quality in the text types required by the Reading standards
- Appendix C consists of annotated writing samples to show how grade- or grade-band-appropriate writing embodies the relevant Writing standards

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## Student Practices in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language Use

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The following Student Practices in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use undergird and help unify the rest of the *Standards*. The Student Practices are not themselves standards: every idea introduced here is subsequently represented in one or more places within the larger document. They are, rather, the “premises”—broad statements about the nature of college and career readiness in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use—that underlie the individual standards and cut across the various sections of the document.

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As students progress toward being college and career ready, they exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity the following capacities in their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use:

### **1. They demonstrate independence as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and language users.**

Students can, without significant scaffolding or support, comprehend and evaluate complex text across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and clearly convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are independently able to discern a speaker’s key points as well as ask questions, build on others’ ideas, and articulate their own ideas. They apply language conventions without prompting. On their own, they determine the meaning of words in context and acquire and use new words.

### **2. They build strong content knowledge.**

Students build a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They demonstrate their ability to become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and the discipline-specific expertise needed to comprehend subject matter and solve problems in different fields. They refine their knowledge and share it through substantive writing and speaking.

### **3. They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.**

Students consider their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use in relation to the contextual factors of audience, task, purpose, and discipline. They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition and familiarity of the audience should affect tone and how the connotations of words affect meaning. They also know that different disciplines call for different types of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence in history, experimental evidence in the sciences).

### **4. They comprehend as well as critique.**

Students are engaged and open-minded—but skeptical—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author’s or speaker’s assumptions and assess the veracity of claims.

### **5. They privilege evidence.**

Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.



## **6. They care about precision.**

Students are mindful of the impact of specific words and details, and they consider what would be achieved by different choices. Students pay especially close attention when precision matters most, such as in the case of reviewing significant data, making important distinctions, or analyzing a key moment in the action of a play or novel.

## **7. They craft and look for structure.**

Students attend to structure when organizing their own writing and speaking as well as when seeking to understand the work of others. They understand and make use of the ways of presenting information typical of different disciplines. They observe, for example, how authors of literary works craft the structure to unfold events and depict the setting.

## **8. They use technology strategically and capably.**

Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.

## **9. They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.**

Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are diverse settings in which people from often widely divergent backgrounds must learn and work together. They actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening. They do not simply adopt other points of view as their own but rather evaluate them critically and constructively. Literature can play a special role in expanding students' horizons in this way: through reading great classic and contemporary works, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and experiences much different than their own.

## English Language Learners

The *Standards* articulate rigorous grade-level expectations in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing to prepare students to be college and career ready. English language learners (ELLs) must be held to the same high standards expected of students who are already proficient in English. However, because these students are acquiring English language proficiency and content area knowledge concurrently, some students will require additional time and all will require appropriate instructional support and aligned assessments.

ELLs are a heterogeneous group with differences in ethnic background, first language, socio-economic status, quality of prior schooling, and levels of English language proficiency. Effectively educating these students requires adjusting instruction and assessment in ways that consider these factors. For example ELLs who are literate in a first language that shares cognates with English can apply first-language vocabulary knowledge when reading in English; likewise ELLs with high levels of schooling can bring to bear conceptual knowledge developed in their first language when reading in a second language. On the other hand, ELLs with limited or interrupted schooling will need to acquire background knowledge prerequisite to educational tasks at hand. As they become acculturated to US schools, ELLs who are newcomers will need sufficiently scaffolded instruction and assessments to make sense of content delivered in a second language and display this content knowledge.

While some ELLs are economically and educationally advantaged, this is not the case for many of these students. Moreover, once in the U.S., the majority of ELLs attend high poverty schools with high percentages of other ELLs. These schools often lack the resources and capacity needed to help ELLs reach high academic standards. However, schools and districts can be assisted in providing a positive learning environment that capitalizes on the linguistic and cultural diversity of the student body.

To help ELLs meet high academic standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language use it is essential that ELLs have access to:

- The requisite coursework to prepare them for post-secondary education or the workplace;
- Coursework that is made comprehensible for students learning content in a second language, through specific pedagogical techniques and additional resources;
- Teachers, as well as school-level and district personnel, who are well prepared and qualified to support English-language learners;
- Well designed opportunities for classroom discourse and interaction to enable ELLs to develop communicative strengths in language arts
- Speakers of English who know the language well enough to provide the ELLs with models and support; and
- Ongoing assessment and feedback to guide learning.

It is also worth noting that instruction for these students is additionally guided by language proficiency standards that language arts teachers can use in conjunction with the English language arts standards to help ELLs become fully proficient and literate in English.

## Access for Students with Disabilities

The *Standards* articulate rigorous expectations in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use in order to prepare students to be college and career ready. These standards identify the knowledge and skills students must acquire in order to be successful. Research shows that students with disabilities are capable of high levels of learning and should not be limited by low expectations and watered down curriculum. The vast majority of this population of students, including students with intellectual impairments,<sup>1</sup> *can* achieve proficiency when they receive high-level instruction and accommodations. It is imperative that these highly capable students—regardless of their disability—are held to the same expectations articulated in the Core Standards as other students.

However, *how* these high standards are taught is of the utmost importance in reaching students with special needs. When acquiring the knowledge and skills represented in the Core Standards, students with disabilities may need accommodations<sup>2</sup> or—in exceptional cases—modified goals, incorporated in an individualized education program (IEP),<sup>3</sup> to help them access information or demonstrate their knowledge. In instances when a standard asks students to perform actions they are physically incapable of, students will need to be presented with alternative options to demonstrate similar knowledge and skills within the range of their abilities. Accommodations based on individual needs allow students of all disability levels to learn within the framework of the *Standards*.

### Meeting English Language Arts (ELA) Standards

Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use standards—given the nature of the standards themselves—often require accommodations for students with disabilities. For example, a standard that calls for “listening” should be interpreted to include reading sign language. “Speaking” should be read broadly to include “communication” or “self-expression.” “Reading” should allow for students’ use of Braille, screen reader technology, or other assistive devices to demonstrate comprehension skills. In a similar vein, “writing” should not preclude the use of a scribe, computer, or speech-to-text technology. With appropriate accommodations and support, students with all levels of disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum and achieve grade-level proficiency with regard to the ELA content and skills articulated in the *Standards*.

In short, while the *Standards* set and retain high expectations for all students, they may need to be translated and occasionally modified to apply appropriately to students with disabilities, including all levels of intellectual impairment. Promoting a culture of high expectations for all students is a fundamental goal of the *Standards*. Achieving this goal requires the inclusion of students with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Less than two percent of the population of all students and less than 20% of the population of students with disabilities.

<sup>2</sup> See the Council of Chief State School Officers, (2003). *Training District and State Personnel on Accommodations: A Study of State Practices, Challenges, and Resources* at <http://www.ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=221> for further explanation and evidence around accommodations.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), an IEP includes appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the individual achievement and functional performance of a child.

## How to Read This Document

The *Standards* are divided into an ELA-specific document (*Standards for English Language Arts K–12*) and a literacy document for history and science (*Standards for Literacy in History and Science 6–12*). The ELA document includes standards for and examples of history and science reading in K–5.

The ELA-specific document is organized by grade (kindergarten and grades 1, 2, and 3) and grade band (grades 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR). The *Standards for Literacy in History and Science* are organized by grade band (grades 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR). Each grade/band is divided into strands—Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Development.

While all strands contain standards statements, each strand also has its own specific features.

### Reading and Literature (ELA)/Reading (History/Science)

Kindergarten and grade 1 begin with the **mix of key text types (A)**, which identifies the genres and subgenres of reading material appropriate for each grade. This is followed by a list of **illustrative texts (B)** in the key text types. This list is suggestive of the sorts of texts appropriate for the grade in terms of complexity and quality; excerpts appear in Appendix B.

Grades 2, 3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR include this information immediately after a graphic specifying **required text complexity by grade (C)**—in brief, the proportion of texts within and above grade band that students must read each year. (For example, 70% of the texts that grade 3 students read should

Mix of Key Text Types for Grade 1			
<b>Narratives</b> <i>At this level, includes children's adventure stories, biographies, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.</i>	<b>Drama</b> <i>At this level, includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes.</i>	<b>Poetry</b> <i>At this level, includes nursery rhymes, and the subgenres of narrative poems, limericks, and free verse.</i>	<b>Illustrative Informational Text</b> <i>At this level, includes books about science, history, and the arts and other nonfiction materials.</i>
<b>Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry</b>			<b>Illustrative Informational Text</b>
<i>Green Eggs and Ham</i> by Dr. Seuss (1960) <i>Frog and Toad Together</i> by Arnold Lobel (1971) <i>Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures</i> by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Sue Stevenson (1987) "Halfway Down" by A. A. Milne (1924) "It Fell in the City" by Eve Merriam (1986) Read Alouds:			<i>A Tree Is a Plant</i> by Clyde Robert Bulla, illustrated by Stacy Schuett (text: 1960/illus: 2001) <i>What Do You Do With a Tail Like That?</i> by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page (2003) "Our Good Earth" in <i>National Geographic Young Explorers</i> , April 2009 (2009) Read Alouds: <i>Follow the Water from Brook to Ocean</i> by Arthur Daron

come from the grades 2–3 text complexity band, while the other 30% should come from the grades 4–5 band.) An overview of the method for **determining text complexity (D)** in the particular grade band follows. (A fuller treatment is provided in Appendix A.)

Required Text Complexity by Grade	
Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grade	
Grades 4–5 Level Text	Grades 6–8 Level Text
4	100%
5	70%

With advancing through grades 4–5, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- In grade 4, students develop proficiency in reading texts in the grades 4–5 band.
- In grade 5, students further develop proficiency in reading texts in the grades 4–5 band (80 percent) and begin reading texts in the grades 6–8 band (20 percent).

**Determining Text Complexity for Grades 4–5**

Determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself (used by teachers) and about the reader (used by particular students). The qualitative dimensions of text (such as the amount of nonfiction complexity) rather than an oversimplification of text and quality (such as the amount of nonfiction complexity) are used to determine text complexity. A text is a grade band if it is a mixture of "text 4" or "text 5" or "text 6" or "text 7" or "text 8" or "text 9" or "text 10" or "text 11" or "text 12" or "text 13" or "text 14" or "text 15" or "text 16" or "text 17" or "text 18" or "text 19" or "text 20" or "text 21" or "text 22" or "text 23" or "text 24" or "text 25" or "text 26" or "text 27" or "text 28" or "text 29" or "text 30" or "text 31" or "text 32" or "text 33" or "text 34" or "text 35" or "text 36" or "text 37" or "text 38" or "text 39" or "text 40" or "text 41" or "text 42" or "text 43" or "text 44" or "text 45" or "text 46" or "text 47" or "text 48" or "text 49" or "text 50" or "text 51" or "text 52" or "text 53" or "text 54" or "text 55" or "text 56" or "text 57" or "text 58" or "text 59" or "text 60" or "text 61" or "text 62" or "text 63" or "text 64" or "text 65" or "text 66" or "text 67" or "text 68" or "text 69" or "text 70" or "text 71" or "text 72" or "text 73" or "text 74" or "text 75" or "text 76" or "text 77" or 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### Writing and Research

Cross-cutting **Core Standards (H)**, which are numbered and apply to many types of writing, are organized under a number of boxed subheadings (e.g., “Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task”). **Standards (I)** specific to writing in particular text types—narrative, informative and explanatory text, and argument—are lettered and follow in a separate section. In kindergarten through grade 5, writing arguments takes the form of opinion writing, hence the parenthetical notation next to “Arguments” in those grades/bands.

### Speaking and Listening

Cross-cutting **Core Standards**, which are numbered and apply to speaking and listening in many situations, are grouped with lettered **Standards**, which set requirements for speaking and listening in key communication (e.g., “Presentation of Ideas and Information”).

### Language Development

This strand is organized differently in the ELA and history/science documents. The ELA strand comprises two full sections: Conventions and Vocabulary. Each section includes numbered **Core Standards** organized under a number of boxed subheadings (e.g., “Mechanics”) and introduced by a brief summative paragraph and list of **key terms (J)** intended to be taught explicitly in grade-appropriate ways. ELA Vocabulary consists of three subsections—determining the meaning of words, understanding the nuances of words, and acquiring vocabulary—under each of which numbered Core Standards appear. Language Development in the history/science document consists of the summative paragraphs for Conventions and all of the Vocabulary section found in ELA except for nuances in word meaning.

**Writing and Research Standards**

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**Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task**

**Core Standards – Students can and do:**

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and arguments that demonstrate an awareness of audiences that are familiar and known to the student.

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**Conducting research**

**Core Standards – Students can and do:**

2. Perform short, focused research to build knowledge by exploring aspects of a single topic.
3. Gather information from multiple print and digital resources, including print and digital resources.
4. Determine the accuracy and relevance of the information gathered to answer specific questions.
5. Restate information from multiple print and digital sources in one’s own words, through summary or paraphrase.
6. Provide basic bibliographic information for print and digital sources.

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**Revising writing**

**Core Standards – Students can and do:**

7. With guidance and support from peers and adults, strengthen writing through revision, editing, or beginning again to maintain a clear focus throughout.

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**Using tools and technology**

**Core Standards – Students can and do:**

8. Use technology and other tools to produce, revise, and edit writing.

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**Developing proficiency in a range of writing**

9. Create a variety of extended and on demand writing products to demonstrate proficiency in a range of writing.<sup>11</sup>

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**Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):**

**Narratives**

- a. orient the reader through a clear introduction, introducing characters, setting, and location, or by backfilling information after events have been introduced into the storyline
- b. create an organization in which events are logically or causally sequenced
- c. in producing a story, include an initiating event, complicating action, a climax, and a resolution
- d. use a variety of text structures, and clauses to signal sequence
- e. use concrete and sensory details to develop narrative elements

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix D for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

**Language Development Standards**

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**Conventions**

In grades 4–5, students heighten their ability to situate and describe using language that is increasingly precise and vivid. They form and use verbs of various tenses to locate people, actions, and events in time, and they correctly use adjectives and adverbs to modify. Students begin to gain control of frequently confused words (e.g., *affect*, *effect*) and edit writing to remove language that is not idiomatic. Their mastery of capitalization is complete. They use punctuation to separate items in a set of items. They understand how to quote and use quotation marks. Their spelling is conventional. They use sentence structure for effect.

**J**

Key Terms: adjective; adverb; interjection; preposition; simple, progressive, and perfect tense

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**Conventions of language and writing**

**Core Standards – Students can and do:**

1. Maintain the focus of a paragraph on a topic through structural elements such as main ideas, supporting sentences, and transitions.

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**Grammar and usage**

**Core Standards – Students can and do:**

2. Form and use the simple (e.g., *I walked*, *I walk*, *I will walk*), progressive (e.g., *I was walking*, *I am walking*, *I will be walking*) and the perfect (e.g., *I had walked*, *I have walked*, *I will have walked*) verb tenses.

### Focus for Instruction

Beginning with grade 4, a page summarizing grade-level responsibility, including grade-specific areas of focus, is provided to help distinguish responsibilities within multiyear bands.

# English Language Arts

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## Kindergarten



### Mix of Key Text Types for Kindergarten

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<i>At this level, includes children’s adventure stories, biographies, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.</i>	<i>At this level, includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes.</i>	<i>At this level, includes nursery rhymes and the subgenres of narrative poems, limericks, and free verse.</i>	<i>At this level, includes books about science, history, and the arts and other nonfiction materials.</i>

#### Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>4</sup>

*Are You My Mother?* by P.D. Eastman (1960)

*Put Me in the Zoo* by Robert Lopshire (1960)

“Mix a Pancake” by Christina Rossetti (1986)

“Wouldn’t You?” by John Ciardi (1986)

#### Illustrative Informational Texts

*My Five Senses* by Alike (1962)

Read Alouds:

*Amazing Whales!* by Sarah L. Thomson (2005)

*The Year at Maple Hill Farm* by Alice and Martin Provensen (1978)

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Kindergarten-Grade 1 text complexity. This list includes read-alouds.

## Reading and Literature Standards<sup>5</sup>

### Grasping specific details and key ideas

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Retell key details and information drawn from the text.
2. Explain the subject of the text or the problem the characters face.
3. Answer questions about characters and events that take place in the text.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. retell the beginnings, middles, and endings of stories
- b. ask and answer questions about details of a text
- c. identify the problems that characters face in a story and the lessons learned
- d. identify the feelings of characters and the reasons for their actions
- e. differentiate between realistic and fantastical elements within a story

##### Informational Text

- a. restate key information (e.g., events, subject, ideas) from a text
- b. ask and answer questions about details of a text

## Reading Foundations

### Print Concepts

1. Students demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
  - a. identify basic features and conventions of books and other written texts (e.g., front cover, back cover, title, author)
  - b. understand that print is left to right, top to bottom, and page by page
  - c. understand that words are separated by spaces in print
  - d. recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet

### Linguistic Awareness

2. Students gain awareness of spoken words, syllables, and phonemes.
  - a. recognize, recite, and produce rhyming words
  - b. count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words
  - c. recognize, blend, and segment onset and rimes of spoken words [ /g/ - /oat/; /bl/ - /ock/ ]
  - d. count or place tokens for individual words in spoken phrases or simple sentences
  - e. orally blend and segment individual phonemes in simple, one-syllable words
  - f. demonstrate phonemic awareness by isolating and pronouncing the initial and final phonemes (sounds) in three-phoneme /CVC/ words without consonant blends (e.g., /road/, /save/, /ham/)
  - g. add or substitute individual phonemes in simple, one-syllable words to make new words (e.g., /at/ → /sat/ → /mat/ → /map/ )

<sup>5</sup> The expectation is that students can fulfill these standards with texts they read independently as well as texts that are read aloud to them.



## Observing craft and structure

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Identify the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in the text.
5. Identify important parts or sections of texts.
6. Compare and contrast characters or events from different stories.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. identify words and phrases that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses
- b. identify similarities in beginning and ending sounds of words in children’s poems and songs
- c. identify parts of a story and parts of a poem as well as sections of informational picture books and tell how they are different
- d. identify common characteristics of folktales and fairy tales, including their use of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition
- e. participate (e.g., react, speculate, read along, act out) when familiar texts are read aloud
- f. compare and contrast characters or events from different stories written by the same author or written about similar subjects

#### Informational Text

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- a. identify basic text features and what they mean, including titles and subtitles, table of contents, and chapters

## Reading Foundations, continued

### Phonics and Word Recognition

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3. Students know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
  - a. demonstrate basic knowledge of letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary or most frequent sound for each consonant
  - b. identify which letters represent the five major vowels and know the long and short sound of each
  - c. blend letter-sounds to decode short-vowel CVC words (e.g., *cat, mop, sun*)
  - d. read at least 25 very high frequency words by sight (e.g., *of, to, he, she, is, do, does*)

### Developing Fluency

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4. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
  - a. read rebus and preprimer texts with purpose and understanding
  - b. demonstrate increased accuracy and fluency on successive readings of a text

## Integrating information and evaluating evidence

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Use text illustrations to predict or confirm what the text is about.
8. Identify words in a text that link ideas and events together.
9. Identify who is telling a story or providing information in the text.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

---

- a. use pictures, illustrations, and context to make predictions about and confirm story content
- b. identify words in a story that link events together (e.g., *first/second, then, next, before/after, later, finally*)
- c. identify who is the speaker in a story or poem

#### Informational Text

---

- a. identify words that link ideas together (e.g., *also, in addition, for example, but*)
- b. identify the author and sources of information when provided by the text

## Developing habits for reading text

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

10. Begin to read independently and/or with a partner, sustaining effort necessary to build understanding.

## Writing and Research Standards

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## Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and opinions that communicate to a familiar, known audience.

## Conducting research

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Gather information from experiences or provided text sources.

## Revising writing

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. With specific guidance, add details to strengthen writing through revision.

## Using tools and technology

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Gain familiarity with technology and other tools to produce, revise, and edit writing.

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### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>6</sup>

#### Narratives

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- a. establish a situation in time and/or place
- b. recount several loosely linked actions in a short, familiar event, controlling for chronological order
- c. provide a reaction to what happened

#### Informative and Explanatory Texts

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- a. establish the topic in a title or first sentence
- b. supply facts and information relevant to the topic

#### Arguments (opinions)

---

- a. introduce the topic directly, or use the title of a book when writing about a text
- b. express preferences or opinions (e.g., *My favorite book is . . .*) relevant to the topic
- c. provide a reason for preference or opinion (e.g., *It reminded me of when I met my friend Carlos*)
- d. use linking words that express causality (e.g., *I like . . . because . . .*)

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## Speaking and Listening Standards

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### Listening closely and participating productively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Participate productively in group activities requiring speaking and listening.
2. Listen closely to and sustain attention on texts read aloud as well as other sources of information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by restating the information and answering pertinent questions.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Classroom discussions and participating productively

---

- a. initiate and participate in conversations with peers and adults through multiple exchanges, attending to the comments of others
- b. confirm understanding by restating information or answering questions about what has been discussed
- c. ask questions to get information, ask for help, or clarify something that is not understood
- d. follow norms for conversation, such as listening to others and taking turns to speak

### Exchanging information and speaking effectively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

3. Share experiences and ideas that demonstrate an awareness of their listeners.
4. Speak audibly and clearly.

**Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):**

Presentation of ideas and information

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- a. describe people, places, things, and events with relevant facts and examples
- b. recite or read aloud poems, rhymes, songs, and stories, speaking clearly at an understandable pace

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## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In kindergarten, students learn to form letters and words in print and to relate sounds (phonemes) to one or more letters. They understand the notion of a sentence, that a sentence performs one of a few basic functions (make a statement, ask a question, or issue a command), and that end punctuation can signal the sentence's function or intensity. With prompting and assistance, they form and expand basic sentences in order to express thoughts, beginning the sentence with a capital letter. Students have a sense of what a noun is, of what singular and plural nouns are, and of how plural nouns are often formed. They also know how to use the most frequently occurring prepositions.

Key Terms: exclamation point, capital/uppercase and lowercase letter, singular and plural noun, period, punctuation, question mark, sentence

#### Conventions of language and writing

**Core Standards — Students can and do:**

1. Print all upper- and lowercase letters.
2. Write a letter or letters for each consonant and short-vowel sound (phoneme).

#### Grammar and usage

**Core Standards — Students can and do:**

3. Produce and expand complete sentences in shared writing and language activities.
4. Use and understand question words (e.g., *what, where, when, who, which, how*).
5. Form regular plural nouns by adding /s/ or /es/ (e.g., *dog, dogs; wish, wishes; baby, babies*).
6. Demonstrate understanding of the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *to/from, in/out, on/off, for, of, by, with*).

#### Mechanics

**Core Standards — Students can and do:**

7. Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun *I*.
8. Identify end punctuation, including periods, question marks, and exclamation points.

9. Spell simple words phonetically using knowledge of sound-letter relationships.

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In kindergarten, students learn about words in terms of like versus unlike and “similar but not quite the same,” using objects and movements as aids. They learn to use descriptive language to distinguish one object from another and order and position words to describe sequences and spatial relationships. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, listening to and responding to texts read aloud as well as by being taught the words directly.

### Determining the meaning of words

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods).

### Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Act out the meaning of verbs describing the same general action (e.g., *walk, march, strut, prance*) to gain a sense of their different meanings.
3. Demonstrate understanding of common adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms).
4. Use common adjectives to distinguish objects (e.g., the *small blue* square, the *shy white* rabbit).

### Acquiring vocabulary

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

5. Demonstrate meaning of new vocabulary taught directly and gained through conversations and hearing texts read aloud.
6. Demonstrate understanding of words that express order and position (e.g., *first, middle, last; before, after; under, over*).

# English Language Arts

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## Grade 1



### Mix of Key Text Types for Grade 1

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<p><i>At this level, includes children’s adventure stories, biographies, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes staged dialogue and brief, familiar scenes.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes nursery rhymes and the subgenres of narrative poems, limericks, and free verse.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes books about science, history, and the arts and other nonfiction materials.</i></p>

#### Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>7</sup>

*Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss (1960)

*Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel (1971)

*Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Suçie Stevenson (1987)

“Halfway Down” by A. A. Milne (1924)

“It Fell in the City” by Eve Merriam (1986)

Read alouds:

*Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, illustrated by Garth Williams (1932)

*Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin* by Lloyd Moss, illustrated by Marjorie Priceman (1995)

#### Illustrative Informational Texts

*A Tree Is a Plant* by Clyde Robert Bulla, illustrated by Stacey Schuett (text: 1960/illus: 2001)

*What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page (2003)

“Our Good Earth” in *National Geographic Young Explorer*, April (2009)

Read alouds:

*Follow the Water from Brook to Ocean* by Arthur Dorros (1991)

*Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life* by Molly Bang & Penny Chisholm, illustrated by Molly Bang (2009)

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C for other texts illustrative of Kindergarten-Grade 1 text complexity. This list includes read-alouds.

## Reading and Literature Standards<sup>8</sup>

### Grasping specific details and key ideas

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Retell key details and information drawn from the text.
2. Explain the subject of the text or the problem the characters face.
3. Answer questions about characters and events that take place in the text.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. retell the beginnings, middles, and endings of stories
- b. ask and answer questions about details of a text
- c. identify the problems that characters face in a story and the lessons learned
- d. identify the feelings of characters and the reasons for their actions
- e. differentiate between realistic and fantastical elements within a story

##### Informational Text

- a. restate key information (e.g., events, subject, ideas) from a text
- b. ask and answer questions about details of a text

## Reading Foundations

### Linguistic Awareness

1. Students gain awareness of spoken words, syllables, and phonemes.
  - a. aurally distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words (e.g., /tap/ vs. /tape/; /sock/ vs. /soak/; /sit/ vs. /sight/)
  - b. produce single-syllable words by orally blending phonemes, including consonant blends (e.g., /cats/, /black/, /blast/)
  - c. isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final phonemes (sounds) in single-syllable words (e.g., *fast*, *fast*)
  - d. orally segment single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual phonemes

<sup>8</sup> The expectation is that students can fulfill these standards with texts they read independently as well as texts that are read aloud to them.



## Observing craft and structure

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Identify the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in the text.
5. Identify important parts or sections of texts.
6. Compare and contrast characters or events from different stories.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

---

- a. identify words and phrases that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses
- b. identify similarities in beginning and ending sounds of words in children’s poems and songs
- c. identify parts of a story and parts of a poem as well as sections of informational picture books and tell how they are different
- d. identify common characteristics of folktales and fairy tales, including their use of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition
- e. participate (e.g., react, speculate, read along, act out) when familiar texts are read aloud
- f. compare and contrast characters or events from different stories written by the same author or written about similar subjects

#### Informational Text

---

- a. identify basic text features and what they mean, including titles and subtitles, table of contents, and chapters

## Reading Foundations, continued

### Phonics and Word Recognition

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2. Students know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
  - a. know the common spelling-sound correspondences for consonants (e.g., *wr-*, *sh*, *-ck*, *-ll*)
  - b. know vowel digraph and final-*e* conventions for representing long vowels
  - c. know spelling-sound correspondences for diphthongs and other common vowel teams (e.g., *loud*, *cow*, *look*, *loop*, *boy*, *boil*)
  - d. use knowledge of phonics and spelling conventions to decode regularly spelled one-syllable words (e.g., *sick*, *march*, *sight*, *slice*, *bake*, *spring*)
  - e. understand that every syllable must have a vowel sound and use that knowledge to determine the number of syllables in a word
  - f. decode two-syllable words following basic patterns (e.g., *rabbit*, *magnet*, *napkin*, *pickle*, *butter*)
  - g. read words with inflectional endings (e.g., *-s*, *-es*, *ies*, *-ed*, *ied*, *-ing*, *-er*, *-est*)
  - h. use phonics to decode visually new words when reading
  - i. recognize grade-appropriate, irregularly spelled words by sight

## Integrating information and evaluating evidence

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Use text illustrations to predict or confirm what the text is about.
8. Identify words in a text that link ideas and events together.
9. Identify who is telling a story or providing information in the text.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

---

- a. use pictures, illustrations, and context to make predictions about and confirm story content
- b. identify words in a story that link events together (e.g., *first/second, then, next, before/after, later, finally*)
- c. identify who is the speaker in a story or poem

#### Informational Text

---

- a. identify words that link ideas together (e.g., *also, in addition, for example, but*)
- b. identify the author and sources of information when provided by the text

## Developing habits for reading text

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

10. Begin to read independently and/or with a partner, sustaining effort necessary to build understanding.

## Reading Foundations, continued

### Developing Fluency

3. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
  - a. demonstrate increased accuracy, fluency, and expression on successive readings of a text
  - b. use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary
  - c. read aloud, alone, or with a partner at least 15 minutes each day, in school or out

## Writing and Research Standards

### Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and opinions that communicate to a familiar, known audience.

### Conducting research

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Gather information from experiences or provided text sources.

### Revising writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. With specific guidance, add details to strengthen writing through revision.

### Using tools and technology

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Gain familiarity with technology and other tools to produce, revise, and edit writing.

---

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>9</sup>

#### Narratives

- a. establish a situation in time and/or place that is appropriate for the sequence of events to follow
- b. develop appropriately sequenced actions within one or more events using linking words, phrases, or clauses to signal chronological ordering
- c. provide a reaction to what happened
- d. include dialogue if appropriate, and some details
- e. provide a sense of closure and/or a reflective statement

#### Informative and Explanatory Texts

- a. include some sort of beginning to establish the topic (beyond using the title of the piece)
- b. supply facts and information relevant to the topic
- c. use simple additive linking words (e.g., *and*, *first*, *second*) to create connections between the facts
- d. provide examples relevant to the topic
- e. provide a sense of closure

#### Arguments (opinions)

- a. introduce the topic or book directly, or use the title of the book as an introduction
- b. state opinions (e.g., *My best friend is . . .*) relevant to the topic
- c. provide reasons for opinions and details to support them

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

- d. use linking words that express causality (e.g., *I like . . . because . . .*)
- e. refer to the content of the text when writing about literature

## Speaking and Listening Standards

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### Listening closely and participating productively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 1. Participate productively in group activities requiring speaking and listening.
- 2. Listen closely to and sustain attention on texts read aloud as well as other sources of information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by restating the information and answering pertinent questions.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Classroom discussions and participating productively

---

- a. initiate and participate in conversations with peers and adults through multiple exchanges, attending to the comments of others
- b. confirm understanding by restating information or answering questions about what has been discussed
- c. ask questions to get information, ask for help, or clarify something that is not understood
- d. follow norms for conversation, such as listening to others and taking turns to speak

### Exchanging information and speaking effectively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 3. Share experiences and ideas that demonstrate an awareness of their listeners.
- 4. Speak audibly and clearly.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Presentation of ideas and information

---

- a. describe people, places, things, and events with relevant facts and examples
- b. recite or read aloud poems, rhymes, songs, and stories, speaking clearly at an understandable pace

## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In grade 1, students gain increasing skill and independence in sentence formation and development. They have a sense of what a verb is and that its form changes to signal different time periods (past, present, and future). Their repertoire of prepositions continues to expand, and they use pronouns with regularity. Students capitalize names, places, and dates. They use end punctuation as well as commas in dates and in simple series of words. Their range of word-formation and spelling strategies grows.

Key Terms: comma, pronoun, verb

## Grammar and usage

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Produce and expand complete sentences in response to questions and prompts.
2. Use subject, object, and possessive pronouns (e.g., *I, me, my; they, them, their*).
3. Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future in writing and speaking (e.g., *Today I walk home; Yesterday I walked home; Tomorrow I will walk home*).
4. Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., *during, beyond, toward*).

## Mechanics

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

5. Capitalize names, places, and dates.
6. Use end punctuation for sentences, including periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
7. Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series.
8. Form new words through addition, deletion, and substitution of sound and letters (e.g., *an → man → mat → mast → must → rust → crust*).
9. Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and common irregular words.
10. Use phonetic spellings for untaught words, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In grade 1, students begin to sort words themselves into categories rather than the objects that they name. They are able to define familiar words (e.g., *duck*) in a two-step process of identifying a category (bird) to which it belongs and naming one or more attributes that distinguish this category member from others (able to swim). Students grasp that many words they know can mean different things depending on how the word is used, and they make distinctions between and among closely related verbs and adjectives in terms of manner and intensity. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, listening to and responding to texts read aloud as well as by being taught the words direct.

## Determining the meaning of words

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Sort words into categories (e.g., colors, clothing).
2. Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a *duck* is a bird that swims; a *tiger* is a large cat with stripes).
3. Demonstrate understanding of the concept of multiple-meaning words (e.g., *match, kind, play*) by identifying various meanings of some grade-appropriate examples of such words.

## Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Define, choose, or act out the meaning of closely related verbs that differ in manner (e.g., *look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl; speak, shout, mumble, whine, whimper, murmur*).
5. Distinguish among closely related adjectives that differ in intensity (e.g., *large, gigantic; hot, scalding; tasty, delicious; quiet, silent*).

## Acquiring vocabulary

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

6. Acquire and use new vocabulary taught directly and gained through conversations and hearing texts read aloud.



# English Language Arts

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## Grade 2





## Required Text Complexity by Grade

Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grade

Grades	2–3 Level Text	4–5 Level Text
2	100%	
3	70%	30%

While advancing through the grades, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- **In grade 2**, students focus on reading texts in the 2–3 grade band level with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.

### Determining Text Complexity for Grades 2–3

Text complexity is determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself refined by teachers' professional judgment about the match of particular texts to particular students. The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

Qualitative Measures of Texts <sup>10</sup>	Quantitative Measures of Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure</i>: Explicit, simple, conventional; simple graphic representations are supplementary to meaning; texts are relatively short</li> <li>• <i>Purpose</i>: Single; explicitly stated</li> <li>• <i>Style and Language</i>: Familiar, accessible, plain; few literary devices; mostly clear, everyday language; limited use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language</li> <li>• <i>Richness</i>: A few ideas/concepts; concrete; low information density</li> <li>• <i>Relationships</i>: A few connections; explicit</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge Demands</i>: Ability to handle simple themes and fantastical elements as well as draw upon common, everyday experiences; general background knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required; some everyday and general content knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>A study is underway with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity.</p>
<p>Professional Judgment that weighs students’ prior knowledge and life experiences as well as their interests, motivations, and maturity level.</p>	

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharples (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)

### Mix of Key Text Types for Grade 2

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<p><i>At this level, includes children’s adventure stories, biographies, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes staged dialogue, scenes, and brief, familiar scenes.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes nursery rhymes and the subgenres of narrative poems, limericks, and free verse.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes books about science, history, and the arts and other nonfiction materials.</i></p>

#### Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>11</sup>

- Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima (1955)
- The Stories Julian Tells* by Ann Cameron (1981)
- Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens (1995)
- “Grandpa’s Stories” by Langston Hughes (1958)
- “Weather” by Eve Merriam (1969)

**Read alouds:**

- The Cricket in Times Square* by George Selden, illustrated by Garth Williams (1960)
- “Fireflies” by Paul Fleischman, illustrated by Eric Beddows (1988)

#### Illustrative Informational Texts

- Maps & Globes* by Jack Knowlton, pictures by Harriet Barton (1985)
- Sunshine Makes the Seasons* by Franklyn M. Branley (1985)
- From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons (1991)
- Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs* by Kathleen V. Kudlinski, illustrated by S.D. Schindler (2005)

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Grades 2-3 text complexity.

## Reading and Literature Standards

### Grasping specific details and key ideas

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Retell what the text says explicitly and make inferences required to understand the text.
2. Identify the lessons or topics of the text and the key details that support them.
3. Describe in detail a specific character, event, or topic in the text.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. ask and answer clarifying questions (e.g., how, why, where, when, who, and what) concerning specific details in the text and refer explicitly to parts of a text to answer these questions
- b. identify or infer the moral or lesson in well-known stories, fables, folktales, or myths
- c. describe how major events in a story often lead from problem to solution
- d. examine a specific incident in a story, narrative, or drama in depth and establish when, where, and why it occurs
- e. describe characters based upon what they say and do

##### Informational Text

- a. accurately restate the key information provided by the text
- b. ask and answer clarifying questions (e.g., how, why, and what) concerning specific details in the text and refer explicitly to parts of a text to answer these questions
- c. identify the main idea and supporting details and facts in a text
- d. explain the topic of each paragraph in a multi-paragraph text
- e. identify specific events in historical or scientific texts and discuss what happened, as well as where, when, and why it happened, according to facts taken from the text

## Reading Foundations

### Phonics and Word Recognition

1. Students know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
  - a. know the common spelling-sound correspondences for consonants (e.g., *wr-*, *sh*, *-ck*, *-ll*)
  - b. know vowel digraph and final-*e* conventions for representing long vowels
  - c. know spelling-sound correspondences for diphthongs and other common vowel teams (e.g., *loud*, *cow*, *look*, *loop*, *boy*, *boil*)
  - d. use knowledge of phonics and spelling conventions to decode regularly spelled one-syllable words (e.g., *sick*, *march*, *sight*, *slice*, *bake*, *spring*)

## Observing craft and structure

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Explain the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in the text.
5. Gain familiarity with different ways of presenting stories and information in text.
6. Compare and contrast different versions of the same story or informational texts on the same subject.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. recognize sensory details and how they are used to describe events, feelings, and objects
- b. describe the different ways poets use rhyme, rhythm, and sensory images to convey a topic or message
- c. identify repetitions in phrases, refrains, or sounds in poems and songs
- d. describe story elements, including characters, setting, the problem, and how it is resolved
- e. discuss stories written by the same author about similar characters or compare different versions of similar well-known tales and myths from various cultures

#### Informational Text

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- a. locate key words, facts, or other details using features of texts (e.g., captions, headings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, and icons)
- b. distinguish between writing that is based on real events and writing that is based on fantasy or fictional events
- c. combine information from two different parts of a text and identify how they are related (e.g., chronology, causation)
- d. after reading two passages on the same subject, combine the information to more fully describe a topic

## Reading Foundations, continued

### Developing Fluency

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2. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
  - a. demonstrate increased accuracy, fluency, and expression on successive readings of a text
  - b. use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary
  - c. read alone or with a partner at least 20 minutes each day, in school or out

## Integrating information and evaluating evidence

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Locate and use information from graphs, illustrations, and electronic sources.
8. Identify and understand words and phrases that indicate logical relationships.
9. Identify who is telling the story or providing information at any given point in the text.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. efficiently navigate stories in print and electronic text and explain how images and illustrations connect to and clarify the content
- b. identify who is telling the story or who is speaking in a drama

#### Informational Text

- a. use information from visual elements of print and electronic texts (e.g., graphs, maps, charts, illustrations, photographs, diagrams) and explain how they help a reader understand the text
- b. identify words (e.g., *such as*, *because*, *therefore*, *in order to*, *since*) that logically connect ideas in sentences and paragraphs

## Developing habits for reading complex text

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

10. Develop the habit of reading independently and productively, sustaining concentration and stamina to read increasingly demanding text.

## Writing and Research Standards

### Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and opinions that communicate to a familiar, known audience.

### Conducting research

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Gather information from experiences or provided text sources.

### Revising writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. With specific guidance, strengthen writing through revision.

### Using tools and technology

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Gain familiarity with technology and other tools to produce, revise, and edit writing.

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#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>12</sup>

##### Narratives

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- establish a situation in time and/or place that is appropriate for the sequence of events to follow
- recount a single well-elaborated event or sequence of events, managing chronological sequence with temporal words, phrases, and clauses
- tell what the narrator thought or felt
- include dialogue if appropriate and specific details
- provide closure through reaction, commentary, or summation

##### Informative and Explanatory Texts

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- produce a brief introduction
- create an organizational structure that presents similar information together, frequently patterned after chapter book headings or picture books
- use adequate and specific facts and definitions to develop points
- use linking words, such as *also*, *another*, *and*, and *more*, to connect ideas within categories of information, and headers to signal groupings
- include a concluding sentence or section

##### Arguments (opinions)

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- introduce the topic or book(s) directly
- state opinion(s) relative to the topic
- provide reasons for opinions and details to support them
- create a list-like structure for organization
- use words to link and organize opinions and reason(s) (e.g., *because*, *another*, *and*, *also*)
- refer to the text(s) when writing about literature
- close with a concluding statement or recommendation

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## Speaking and Listening Standards

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### Listening closely and participating productively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Participate productively in small groups and as a class, engaging in a series of oral exchanges about texts and topics.

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

2. Sustain concentration on information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by paraphrasing the information.

### **Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):**

#### Classroom discussions and participating productively

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- a. engage in conversations on familiar topics
- b. paraphrase the key information or ideas of others presented orally or through other media
- c. inquire about oral or visual presentations to deepen understanding or clarify comprehension
- d. link additions to conversation to the previous remarks of others
- e. participate productively by listening politely to the ideas of others, taking turns speaking, and extending their ideas in light of discussions

#### Exchanging information and speaking effectively

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### **Core Standards — Students can and do:**

3. Share experiences and ideas, thinking about the needs of their listeners.
4. Speak audibly and clearly at an understandable pace.

### **Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):**

#### Presentation of ideas and information

---

- a. recount stories or experiences with descriptive details by answering who, what, where, when, how, and why questions about them
- b. report on a topic, including appropriate facts and details
- c. use appropriate tone to express ideas, feelings, and needs clearly
- d. recite or read aloud poems, rhymes, songs, and stories, speaking clearly at an understandable pace

## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In grade 2, students create sentences of expanding length and complexity, though their control over these sentences is likely to be imperfect. Their command of noun and verb formation extends to common irregular forms. Students capitalize correctly in most situations. Their use of punctuation has grown to include commas in greetings and closings of letters as well as apostrophes to form contractions and to signal possession. Their spelling is increasingly conventional, and they now consult references, such as beginning dictionaries, to aid them when needed.

Key Terms: apostrophe, contraction, regular and irregular nouns and verb, possessive

#### Grammar and usage

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### **Core Standards — Students can and do:**

1. Generate and expand sentences with embedded, dependent, or conjoined clauses (e.g., *After we came home from school, I fed the gerbil and my sister cleaned the cage.*).
2. Form common irregular plural nouns (e.g., *feet, children, teeth, mice, fish, women.*).

3. Form the past tense of common irregular verbs (e.g., *sat*, *hid*, *told*).

## Mechanics

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Capitalize holidays, product names, geographic names, and important words in titles.
5. Use commas in greetings and closings of letters.
6. Use apostrophes to punctuate contractions and to form common possessives.
7. Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words.
8. Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words (e.g., *cage* → *badge*; *boy* → *boil*; *paper* → *copper*).
9. Use spelling rules for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., *sitting*, *smiled*, *cries*, *happiness*).
10. Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, to check and correct spellings.

## Vocabulary

In grade 2, students use a repertoire of strategies for dealing with unknown words. They can analyze the word itself, consider how it is used, consult reference materials, use the components of a compound word as clues to the word's meaning, or employ some combination of these strategies to determine or clarify word meanings. They figure out which meaning of a multiple-meaning word is most likely intended in a particular circumstance, and they differentiate among the connotations of related verbs and adjectives. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, reading and responding to text as well as by being taught the words directly.

## Determining the meaning of words

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Determine or clarify the meaning of an unknown word by using one or more of the following strategies:
  - identifying its base word when it has affixes (e.g., *happiness*, *finally*, *grimy*, *busily*)
  - determining how it is used in a sentence when reading, including whether it names or describes a thing or an action
  - consulting reference materials, including glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital
2. Determine the relevant meaning of multiple-meaning words by using context.
3. Explain the meaning of grade-appropriate compound words (e.g., *birdhouse*, *lighthouse*, *housefly*; *bookshelf*, *notebook*, *bookmark*).

## Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Distinguish among related verbs (e.g., *toss*, *throw*, *hurl*) to gain a sense of their shadings of meaning.
5. Distinguish among related adjectives (e.g., *thin*, *slender*, *skinny*, *scrawny*; *irritated*, *mad*, *angry*, *furious*) to gain a sense of their shadings of meaning.



## Acquiring vocabulary

### **Core Standards — Students can and do:**

6. Acquire and use new vocabulary taught directly and gained through reading and conversations.

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# English Language Arts

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## Grade 3



### Required Text Complexity by Grade

Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grade

Grades	2–3 Level Text	4–5 Level Text
2	100%	
3	70%	30%

While advancing through the grades, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- **In grade 3**, students focus on reading texts in the 2–3 grade band level text (70 percent) independently and are introduced to texts in the 4–5 grade band level as “stretch” texts (30 percent), which will likely require scaffolding.

### Determining Text Complexity for Grades 2–3

Text complexity is determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself refined by teachers’ professional judgment about the match of particular texts to particular students. The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

Qualitative Measures of Texts <sup>13</sup>	Quantitative Measures of Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure</i>: Explicit, simple, conventional; simple graphic representations are supplementary to meaning; texts are relatively short</li> <li>• <i>Purpose</i>: Single; explicitly stated</li> <li>• <i>Style and Language</i>: Familiar, accessible, plain; few literary devices; mostly clear, everyday language; limited use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language</li> <li>• <i>Richness</i>: A few ideas/concepts; concrete; low information density</li> <li>• <i>Relationships</i>: A few connections; explicit</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge Demands</i>: Ability to handle simple themes and fantastical elements as well as draw upon common, everyday experiences; general background knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required; some everyday and general content knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>A study is underway with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity.</p>
<p>Professional Judgment that weighs students’ prior knowledge and life experiences as well as their interests, motivations, and maturity level.</p>	

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharples (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)

### Mix of Key Text Types for Grade 3

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<i>At this level, includes children’s adventure stories, biographies, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.</i>	<i>At this level, includes staged dialogue, scenes, and brief familiar scenes.</i>	<i>At this level, includes nursery rhymes, and the subgenres of narrative poems, limericks, and free verse.</i>	<i>At this level, includes books about science, history, and the arts and other nonfiction materials.</i>

#### Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>14</sup>

*My Father’s Dragon* by Ruth Stiles Gannett, illustrated by Ruth Chrisman Gannett (1948)

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (1985)

*The One-Eyed Giant (Book One of Tales from the Odyssey)* by Mary Pope Osborne (2002)

“Knoxville, Tennessee” by Nikki Giovanni (1968)

“Eating While Reading” by Gary Soto (1995)

#### Read Alouds:

“How the Camel Got His Hump” in *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling (1902)

#### Illustrative Informational Text

*A Medieval Feast* by Alike (1983)

*So You Want to Be President?* by Judith St. George, illustrated by David Small (2000)

*Bat Loves the Night* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies (2008)

*Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11* by Brian Floca (2009)

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Grades 2-3 text complexity.

## Reading and Literature Standards

### Grasping specific details and key ideas

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Retell what the text says explicitly and make inferences required to understand the text.
2. Identify lessons or topics of the text and the key details that support them.
3. Describe in detail a specific character, event, or topic in the text.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. ask and answer clarifying questions (e.g., how, why, where, when, who, and what) concerning specific details in the text and refer explicitly to parts of a text to answer these questions
- b. identify or infer the moral or lesson in well-known stories, fables, folktales, or myths
- c. describe how major events in a story often lead from problem to solution
- d. examine a specific incident in a story, narrative, or drama in depth, and establish when, where, and why it occurs
- e. describe characters based upon what they say and do

##### Informational Text

- a. accurately restate key information provided by the text
- b. ask and answer clarifying questions (e.g., how, why, and what) concerning specific details in the text and refer explicitly to parts of a text to answer these questions
- c. identify the main idea and supporting details and facts in a text
- d. explain the topic of each paragraph in a multi-paragraph text
- e. identify specific events in historical or scientific texts and discuss what happened, as well as where, when, and why it happened, according to facts taken from the text

## Reading Foundations

### Phonics and Word Recognition

1. Students know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
  - a. identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes (e.g., *un-*, *re-*, *mis-*, *-ful*, *-tion*, *-able*)
  - b. decode regularly spelled single-syllable and multi-syllable words (e.g., *vocabulary*, *refrigerator*, *terrible*, *frightening*)
  - c. read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words by sight
  - d. use phonics and word analysis to identify visually new words when reading

## Observing craft and structure

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Explain the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in the text.
5. Gain familiarity with different ways of presenting stories and information in text.
6. Compare and contrast different versions of the same story or informational texts on the same subject.

### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. recognize sensory details and how they are used to describe events, feelings, and objects
- b. describe the different ways poets use rhyme, rhythm, and sensory images to convey a topic or message
- c. identify repetitions in phrases, refrains, or sounds in poems and songs
- d. describe story elements, including characters, setting, the problem, and how it is resolved
- e. discuss stories written by the same author about similar characters or compare different versions of similar well-known tales and myths from various cultures

#### Informational Text

---

- a. locate key words, facts, or other details using features of texts (e.g., captions, headings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, and icons)
- b. distinguish between writing that is based on real events and writing that is based on fantasy or fictional events
- c. combine information from two different parts of a text and identify how they are related (e.g., chronology, causation)
- d. after reading two passages on the same subject, combine the information to more fully describe a topic

## Integrating information and evaluating evidence

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Locate and use information from graphs, illustrations, and electronic sources.
8. Identify and understand words and phrases that indicate logical relationships.
9. Identify who is telling the story or providing information at any given point in the text.

## Reading Foundations, continued

### Developing Fluency

---

2. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
  - a. demonstrate increased accuracy, fluency, and expression on successive readings of a text
  - b. use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary
  - c. read at least 20 minutes each day, in school or out

## Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

---

- a. efficiently navigate stories in print and electronic text and explain how images and illustrations connect to and clarify the content
- b. identify who is telling the story or who is speaking in a drama

### Informational Text

---

- a. use information from visual elements of print and electronic texts (e.g., graphs, maps, charts, illustrations, photographs, diagrams) and explain how they help a reader understand the text
- b. identify words (e.g., *such as, because, therefore, in order to, since*) that logically connect ideas in sentences and paragraphs

### Developing habits for reading complex text

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

10. Develop the habit of reading independently and productively, sustaining concentration and stamina to read increasingly demanding text.

## Writing and Research Standards

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### Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and opinions that communicate to a familiar, known audience.

### Conducting research

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Gather information from experiences or provided text sources.

### Revising writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. With specific guidance, strengthen writing through revision.

### Using tools and technology

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Gain familiarity with technology and other tools to produce, revise, and edit writing.

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**Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>15</sup>****Narratives**

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- a. set the time, indicate a location, introduce characters, or enter immediately into the story line to engage the reader
- b. recount a single, well-elaborated event or a sequence of events that unfold naturally using temporal words, phrases, and clauses
- c. tell what the narrator thought or felt
- d. develop a focus, provide pacing, and include only relevant information
- e. develop a character through the description of external behavior
- f. provide descriptive details
- g. employ dialogue and other narrative strategies
- h. provide a satisfying conclusion that is reflective and/or that effectively ties up loose ends

**Informative and Explanatory Texts**

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- a. produce an introduction that names the topic and provides at least one general detail about it
- b. create an organizational structure that presents similar information together, frequently patterned after chapter book headings or picture books
- c. use adequate, relevant, and specific facts and definitions to develop points
- d. logically categorize details and facts drawn from personal experience and other sources
- e. use linking words, such as *also*, *another*, *and*, and *more*, to connect ideas within categories of information, and use headers to signal groupings
- f. include only appropriate information
- g. include a concluding sentence or section

**Arguments (opinions)**

---

- a. introduce the topic or book(s) directly, and attempt to capture the reader's interest
- b. state an opinion relative to the topic (e.g., *This is a good book* or *John is a good friend*)
- c. provide facts and details to support the opinion
- d. create a list-like organizing structure that provides reasons for the opinion
- e. use appropriate words to link and organize opinions and reason(s) (e.g., *because*, *another*, *and*, *also*)
- f. refer to the text(s) when writing about literature
- g. provide a concluding statement, reflection, and/or recommendation

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.



## Speaking and Listening Standards

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### Listening critically and participating productively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Participate productively in small groups and as a class, engaging in a series of oral exchanges about texts and topics.
2. Sustain concentration on information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by paraphrasing the information.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Classroom discussions and participating productively

---

- a. engage in conversations on familiar topics
- b. paraphrase the key information or ideas of others presented orally or through other media
- c. inquire about oral or visual presentations to deepen understanding or clarify comprehension
- d. link additions to conversation to the previous remarks of others
- e. participate productively by listening politely to the ideas of others, taking turns speaking, and extending their ideas in light of discussions

### Exchanging information and speaking effectively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. Share experiences and ideas, thinking about the needs of their listeners.
4. Speak audibly and clearly at an understandable pace.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Presentation of ideas and information

---

- a. recount stories or experiences with descriptive details by answering who, what, where, when, how, and why questions about them
- b. report on a topic, including appropriate facts and details
- c. use appropriate tone to express ideas, feelings, and needs clearly
- d. recite or read aloud poems, rhymes, songs, and stories, speaking clearly at an understandable pace

## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

By grade 3, students have learned the foundations of written and spoken language, including letter, word, and sentence formation and crucial forms of punctuation. They ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent in simple situations. Students use quotation marks to indicate dialogue. They know most of the conventions of spelling and consult references to look up words when they still have difficulty. They use precise everyday language to describe and begin to consider the effects of word choice in writing and speaking.

Key Terms: subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement, comma splice, fragment, run-on, quotation mark

#### Conventions of language and writing

##### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Group related ideas into a paragraph.

#### Grammar and usage

##### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Generate complete sentences, avoiding fragments, comma splices, and run-ons.\*
3. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.\*

#### Mechanics

##### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Use quotation marks in dialogue.
5. Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing regular words.
6. Consult reference materials, including dictionaries, to check and correct spellings.

#### Word choice and style

##### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Use precise everyday language.
8. Choose words for effect.\*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Conventions standards noted with an asterisk (\*) need to be revisited by students in subsequent grades. See Appendix A for a full listing.

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In grade 3, students use their repertoire of strategies to determine and clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. They know that words are sometimes used in nonliteral ways and can use that knowledge to help them understand common idioms. They learn and can paraphrase many common idioms and sayings. They recognize that words have nuances in meaning and rely on context and background knowledge to sort among related words that describe abstract concepts. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, reading and responding to text as well as by being taught the words directly.

### Determining the meaning of words

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Determine or clarify the meaning of an unknown word by using one or more of the following strategies:
  - using prefixes and suffixes when it is a multimorpheme word (e.g., *thoughtless*, *recycle*, *unforgettable*)
  - determining how it is used in a sentence when reading
  - consulting reference materials, including glossaries and dictionaries, both print and digital
2. Determine the meaning of multiple-meaning words by using context.
3. Distinguish between literal and nonliteral uses of language.
4. Paraphrase the meaning of common idioms and sayings.

### Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

5. Distinguish among related words that describe states of mind, degrees of certainty, or other abstract concepts (e.g., *knew*, *believed*, *suspected*, *heard*, *wondered*).

### Acquiring vocabulary

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

6. Acquire and use new vocabulary taught directly and gained through reading and conversations.

# English Language Arts

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Grades 4–5



## Required Text Complexity by Grade

Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grade

Grades	4–5 Level Text	6–8 Level Text
4	100%	
5	70%	30%

While advancing through grades 4–5, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- **In grade 4**, students focus on reading texts in the 4–5 grade band level with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.
- **In grade 5**, students focus on reading in the 4–5 grade band level (70 percent) independently and are introduced to texts in the 6–8 grade band level as “stretch” texts (30 percent), which will likely require scaffolding.

### Determining Text Complexity for Grades 4–5<sup>17</sup>

Text complexity is determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself refined by teachers’ professional judgment about the match of particular texts to particular students. The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

Qualitative Measures of Texts	Quantitative Measures of Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure</i>: Largely explicit and direct; graphic representations are supplementary to meaning; texts are of increasing length</li> <li>• <i>Purpose</i>: Single or twofold; clearly indicated</li> <li>• <i>Style and Language</i>: Moderately accessible; some literary devices; some everyday language; some use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 words and figurative language</li> <li>• <i>Richness</i>: Some ideas/concepts; mostly concrete; moderate information density</li> <li>• <i>Relationships</i>: Some connections; largely explicit</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge Demands</i>: Ability to handle fairly simple themes, consider a perspective somewhat different from one’s own, and understand unfamiliar experiences; general background knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required; some general and discipline-specific content knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>A study is underway with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity.</p>
<p>Professional Judgment that weighs students’ prior knowledge and life experiences as well as their interests, motivations, and maturity level.</p>	

<sup>17</sup> Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharples (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)

### Mix of Key Text Types for Grades 4–5

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<p><i>At this level, includes children’s adventure stories, biographies, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes nursery rhymes, and the subgenres of narrative poems, limericks, and free verse.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes books about science, history, and the arts and other nonfiction materials and digital media sources on a range of topics.</i></p>

<b>Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>18</sup></b>	<b>Illustrative Informational Texts</b>
<p><i>Alice in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll (1865)</p> <p><i>The Little Prince</i> by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1943)</p> <p><i>Bud, Not Buddy</i> by Christopher Paul Curtis (1999)</p> <p>“The Echoing Green” from <i>Songs of Innocence</i> by William Blake (1789)</p> <p>“Casey at the Bat” by Ernest Lawrence Thayer (1888)</p> <p>“Words Free As Confetti” by Pat Mora (1996)</p> <p><i>Where the Mountain Meets the Moon</i> by Grace Lin (2009)</p>	<p><i>Discovering Mars</i> by Melvin Berger (1992)</p> <p><i>Hurricanes: Earth’s Mightiest Storms</i> by Patricia Lauber (1996)</p> <p>“Ancient Mound Builders” by E. Barrie Kavash from <i>Cobblestone</i> (2003)</p> <p><i>Volcanoes</i> by Seymour Simon (2006)</p> <p>“Kenya’s Long Dry Season” by Nellie Gonzalez Cutler from <i>Time for Kids</i> (2009)</p> <p>“Seeing Eye to Eye” by Leslie Hall from <i>National Geographic Explorer</i> (2009)</p>

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Grades 4-5 text complexity.

## Reading and Literature Standards

### Grasping specific details and key ideas

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Determine what the text says explicitly and make inferences required for understanding; explain how those inferences stem from the text.
2. Articulate the main ideas and themes of the text and provide a summary that captures the key supporting details.
3. Describe in detail two or more characters, events, or topics in the text and explain how they are related to one another.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. determine the theme of a story or drama, basing the understanding of theme on how characters adapt or change in response to the challenges posed in the plot
- b. summarize accurately the significant events of a play or narrative in chronological order, describing where, when, why, and how specific actions take place
- c. describe characters based on evidence from their thoughts, words, deeds, and interactions with others
- d. describe the setting in detail, drawing on evidence of the time, place, and other cues
- e. determine the theme of a poem, basing the understanding of theme on the key observations, images, or statements in a poem

##### Informational Text

- a. outline the main and supporting ideas in the text and provide an accurate summary
- b. identify the topic sentence and gist of each paragraph in a multi-paragraph text
- c. describe related events in a history text or related topics in a science text and explain the relationships between the events or topics

### Observing craft and structure

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Explain the meanings of words and phrases in the text, distinguishing literal and figurative uses.
5. Comprehend literature and information presented in a range of structures.
6. Compare and contrast texts written on the same topic or theme and explain how they are different and similar.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. describe the sensory details in texts and distinguish the use of literal versus figurative language
- b. observe and explain how words with similar meanings can have different connotations
- c. identify the meaning of figurative phrases and culturally significant characters found in mythology that are integral to understanding other works of literature and texts (e.g., *Herculean*, *Pandora's box*)
- d. identify how narratives and plays are structured to describe the progress of characters through a series of events and challenges

- e. identify rhymes and other repetitions of sounds that supply rhythm and pattern in poems and narrative prose
- f. compare a narrative or a play with a presentation in another format, such as film, stage, or interactive text, and note what is surprising or different about the alternative version
- g. compare works of literature on the same topic or with a similar theme

#### Informational Text

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- a. explain the meaning of key words and terms as they are used in the text
- b. understand information drawn from a variety of texts with different structures, such as chronological, compare-and-contrast, or as a chain of causes and effects
- c. identify and use text features (e.g., bold print, key words, topic sentences, hyperlinks, electronic menus, and icons) to locate information quickly and aid in comprehension
- d. compare and contrast related accounts on the same or similar topics by different authors, by analyzing their content and perspectives

### Integrating information and evaluating evidence

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 7. Explain and use information presented graphically or visually in print, videos, or electronic texts.
- 8. Outline the information or evidence used to support an explanation or argument, determining which points support which key statements.
- 9. Determine the point of view or purpose that guides how events or ideas are described.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. identify the narrator of a story and explain how different stories are narrated from different perspectives
- b. compare accounts of historical events and figures or natural phenomena with their depiction in a fictional work

##### Informational Text

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- a. explain how factual information presented graphically or visually (e.g., maps, charts, diagrams, timelines, animations, and other interactive visual elements) aids in the comprehension of print and electronic texts
- b. explain how authors support their specific claims with evidence, including which evidence supports which claims
- c. determine the author's purpose and how that is reflected in the description of the events and ideas

### Developing habits for reading complex text

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 10. Develop the habit of reading independently and productively, sustaining concentration and stamina to read increasingly demanding texts.



## Writing and Research Standards

### Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and arguments that demonstrate an awareness of audiences that are familiar and known to the student.

### Conducting research

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Perform short, focused research tasks that build knowledge by exploring aspects of a single topic.
3. Gather information from experience, as well as print and digital resources.
4. Determine the accuracy and relevance of the information gathered to answer specific questions.
5. Restate information from source materials in one's own words, through summary or paraphrase.
6. Provide basic bibliographic information for print and digital sources.

### Revising writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. With guidance and support from peers and adults, strengthen writing through revision, editing, or beginning again to maintain a clear focus throughout.

### Using tools and technology

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

8. Use technology and other tools to produce, revise, and edit writing.

### Developing proficiency in a range of writing

9. Create writing over extended timeframes (time for reflection and revision) and shorter timeframes (a single sitting or a day or two), responding to specific sources.

Focus by grade level:

Grade 4: Describing the content of literary or informational sources at the 4-5 grade band level of text complexity and content

Grade 5: Comparing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 4-5 grade band level of complexity and content

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## Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>19</sup>

### Narratives

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- a. orient the reader by establishing a situation, introducing characters, setting, and location, or by backfilling information after entering immediately into the storyline
- b. create an organizing structure in which events are logically or causally sequenced
- c. in producing a story, create a plot with an initiating event, complicating action, a climax, and a resolution
- d. use a variety of temporal words, phrases, and clauses to signal sequence
- e. use concrete and sensory details to develop narrative elements
- f. develop the narrative using techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and reporting the narrator’s thoughts
- g. show both external behaviors and the internal responses of characters to events
- h. provide closure and a realistic outcome of the narrative’s events

### Informative and Explanatory Texts

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- a. state the topic clearly and provide a general observation and focus
- b. develop the subject using relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
- c. group related information logically in basic structures (paragraphs, sections) and provide headings or illustrations when useful
- d. employ specialized vocabulary and a formal, objective style when appropriate
- e. use appropriate links to join ideas
- f. include only relevant appropriate information to demonstrate focus
- g. provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation offered

### Arguments (opinions)

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- a. introduce an opinion about a concrete issue or topic
- b. support opinions with relevant reasons
- c. support reasons with specific details
- d. link the reasons together using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *because*, *since*)
- e. adopt a relatively formal style for sharing and defending an opinion when appropriate to the discipline or context
- f. provide a concluding statement or section that offers reflections, restatement, or recommendations consistent with the opinion presented

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## Speaking and Listening Standards

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### Listening closely and participating productively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Participate productively one on one, in small groups, and as a whole class, joining in discussions and making relevant points about what they have read, heard, or written.
2. Sustain concentration on information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by summarizing the main ideas and supporting details.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

### Classroom discussions and collaboration

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- a. come to discussions having read required material and, in conversation, build upon background knowledge from that material and other information known about the topic
- b. demonstrate understanding of the content and ideas presented or discussed by distilling them into an accurate summary
- c. ask questions to clarify or follow up on ideas or information presented orally or through other media
- d. respond to questions and make comments that contribute to the topic and ideas of previous speakers
- e. explain information presented graphically or visually in conjunction with other information presented orally
- f. engage productively and respectfully with others during discussions, including listening actively, gaining the floor respectfully, and qualifying or justifying what they think after listening to others' questions or accounts

### Exchanging information and speaking effectively

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. Share experiences, opinions or other information, choosing material that is relevant to the topic and to the listeners.
4. Speak audibly and clearly at an appropriate and understandable pace, using formal English when indicated or appropriate (e.g., presenting ideas versus class discussion).

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Presentation of ideas and information

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- a. speak coherently about events, topics, or texts that focus and organize ideas in a logical sequence and include facts, details, or other information that support the main ideas
- b. use appropriate volume, phrasing, and pace for clarity
- c. read aloud prose and poetry, with appropriate emotion and fidelity to the text

## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In grades 4–5, students heighten their ability to situate and describe using language that is increasingly precise and vivid. They form and use verbs of various tenses to locate people, actions, and events in time, and they correctly use adjectives and adverbs to modify. Students begin to gain control of frequently confused words (e.g., *effect*, *affect*) and edit writing to remove language that is not idiomatic. Their mastery of capitalization is complete. They use punctuation to separate items in a series and a comma to distinguish an introductory element from the main part of the sentence. Students mark titles in conventional ways. They understand how to quote and use quotation marks. Their spelling is conventional. Their language is increasingly topic specific, precise, and varied, and they manipulate sentence structure for effect.

Key Terms: adjective; adverb; interjection; preposition; simple, progressive, and perfect tense

### Conventions of language and writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Maintain the focus of a paragraph on a topic through structural elements such as main ideas, supporting sentences, and transitions.

## Grammar and usage

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Form and use the simple (e.g., *I walked, I walk, I will walk*), progressive (e.g., *I was walking, I am walking, I will be walking*) and the perfect (e.g., *I had walked, I have walked, I will have walked*) verb tenses.
3. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.\*
4. Form and choose between adjectives and adverbs (including comparative and superlative forms), placing them appropriately within the sentence.\*
5. Correctly use frequently confused words.\*
6. Use idiomatic language.\*

## Mechanics

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Capitalize the first word in quotations as appropriate and other important words, such as section headers.
8. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.\*
9. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence.
10. Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works.
11. Use quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.
12. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.\*

## Word choice and style

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

13. Use specialized, topic-specific language to convey ideas precisely.\*
14. Use figurative language to create images or make comparisons and connections between people, objects, or ideas.\*
15. Use punctuation for effect.\*
16. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.\*<sup>20</sup>

### Focus by Grade-Level

Grade 4: Distinguish one idea or thing from another (Conventions Standards #'s 1-3, #8, #9, #11)

Grade 5: Word choice (Conventions Standards #'s 4-6, #13, #14)

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<sup>20</sup> Conventions standards noted with an asterisk (\*) need to be revisited by students in subsequent grades. See Appendix A for a complete listing.

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In grades 4–5, students are capable of selecting among a wide range of strategies—analyzing the word itself, using localized context clues (particularly at the sentence level), and consulting reference materials—to determine and clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. They develop the habit of verifying their inferences of word meanings. They are able to interpret simple figurative language found in what they read. They learn and can paraphrase many common idioms, proverbs, and adages. They make distinctions among words based on connotation. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, reading and responding to text as well as by being taught the words directly. This includes a focus on “Tier 2” words and phrases (those that commonly appear in writing but not in spoken language), “Tier 3” words and phrases (those that are specific and important to particular disciplines).<sup>21</sup>

### Determining the meaning of words

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Determine or clarify the meaning of an unknown word by using one or more of the following strategies:
  - analyzing the word's sounds, spelling, and meaningful word parts
  - using semantic clues in sentences, such as definitions, examples, or restatements included within the text
  - using syntactic clues, such as using its position within the sentence as a guide to whether it represents a thing or an action
  - consulting reference materials, including glossaries, dictionaries, and thesauruses, both print and digital
2. Determine the relevant meaning of multiple-meaning words by using context.
3. Verify the preliminary determination of a word's meaning (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or by looking up the word in a dictionary).
4. Interpret figurative language, including simple similes and metaphors.
5. Paraphrase the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

### Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

6. Distinguish a word from other words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

### Acquiring vocabulary

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

7. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 2<sup>22</sup> words taught directly and gained through reading.
8. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 3 words taught directly and gained through reading.
9. Know and use words and phrases that signal contrast, addition, or other logical relationships (e.g., *however*, *although*, *nevertheless*, *similarly*, *moreover*, *in addition*).

<sup>21</sup> Beck I. L., McKeown, M.G. & Kucan, L. (2002). *Brining Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*, New York; Guilford Press

## Grade 4 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 4, students apply the reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read text at the 4-5 grade band level independently, with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 100% text at the 4-5 grade band level

100%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 4, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by describing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 4-5 grade band level of complexity and content

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 4, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentation of ideas and information

### Language Development

*In grade 4, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.*

- Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Distinguish one idea or thing from another:
  - Maintain the focus of a paragraph on a topic ... (Conventions Standard #1)
  - Form and use the simple, progressive and perfect verb tenses ... (Conventions Standard #2)
  - Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense. (Conventions Standard #3)
  - Use punctuation to separate items in a series ... (Conventions Standard #8)
  - Use a comma to separate an introductory element ... (Conventions Standard #9)
  - Use quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations ... (Conventions Standard #11)

## Grade 5 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 5, students apply the reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read text at the 4-5 grade band level independently and are introduced to 6-8 grade band “stretch” texts, which will likely require scaffolding.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 70% text at the 4-5 grade band level, 30% text at the 6-8 grade band level

70%

30%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 5, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by comparing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 4-5 grade band level of complexity and content.

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 5, students apply the speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening Standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentation of ideas and information.

### Language Development

*In grade 5, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions,*

- Vocabulary standards applied to both reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Word choice
  - Form and choose between adjectives and adverbs. (Conventions Standard #4)
  - Correctly use frequently confused words. (Conventions Standard #5)
  - Use idiomatic language. (Conventions Standard #6)
  - Use specialized, topic specific language to convey ideas precisely. (Conventions Standard #13)
  - Use figurative language to create images ... (Conventions Standard #14)

# English Language Arts

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Grades 6–8





## Required Text Complexity by Grade

Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grade

Grades	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–10
6	100%	
7	90%	10%
8	70%	30%

While advancing through grades 6–8, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- **In grade 6**, students focus on reading texts in the 6–8 grade band level with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.
- **In grade 7**, students focus on reading texts in the 6–8 grade band level (90 percent) independently and are introduced to texts in the 9–10 grade band level as “stretch” texts (10 percent), which will likely require scaffolding.
- **In grade 8**, students focus on reading texts in the 6–8 grade band level (70 percent) independently as well as sustained practice with texts in the 9–10 grade band level as “stretch” texts (30 percent), which will likely require scaffolding.

### Determining Text Complexity for Grades 6–8<sup>23</sup>

Text complexity is determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself refined by teachers’ professional judgment about the match of particular texts to particular students. The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

Qualitative Measures of Texts	Quantitative Measures of Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure</i>: Largely implicit and subtle; graphic representations are essential to meaning; texts are of increasing length</li> <li>• <i>Purpose</i>: Single or multiple; subtly stated</li> <li>• <i>Style and Language</i>: Moderately demanding; several literary devices; consistent use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language</li> <li>• <i>Richness</i>: Several ideas/concepts; mostly abstract; moderate information density</li> <li>• <i>Relationships</i>: Several connections; largely implicit</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge Demands</i>: Ability to handle fairly challenging themes, consider multiple perspectives, and understand unfamiliar experiences; cultural and historical knowledge useful for understanding characters, settings, and allusions; some discipline-specific content knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>A study is underway with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity.</p>
<p><b>Professional Judgment</b> that weighs students’ prior knowledge and life experiences as well as their interests, motivations, and maturity level.</p>	

<sup>23</sup> Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharples (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)

### Mix of Key Text Types for Grades 6–8

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<p><i>At this level, includes the subgenres of adventure stories, biographies, memoirs, historical fiction, mysteries, folktales, legends, fables, tall tales, myths, fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, and graphic novels.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes one-act and multi-act plays both as text and film.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse, odes, ballads, and epics.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes such subgenres as exposition and argument in the form of essays, opinion pieces, speeches, opinion pieces as well as other documents and digital media sources on a range of topics.</i></p>

Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry <sup>24</sup>	Illustrative Informational Texts
<p><i>Little Women</i> by Louisa May Alcott (1869)</p> <p><i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> by Mark Twain (1876)</p> <p><i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> by Madeline L’Engle (1962)</p> <p><i>The Dark Is Rising</i> by Susan Cooper (1973)</p> <p><i>Black Ships before Troy: The Story of the Iliad</i> by Rosemary Sutcliff (1993)</p> <p><i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> by William Shakespeare (1596)</p> <p>“Oh Captain, My Captain” by Walt Whitman (1865)</p> <p>“Stopping by a Wood on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost (1923)</p> <p>“I, Too” by Langston Hughes (1925)</p>	<p><i>Preamble and First Amendment to the United States Constitution</i> by United States (1787, 1791) **</p> <p><i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave</i> by Frederick Douglass (1845)</p> <p>“Gettysburg Address”** by Abraham Lincoln (1863)</p> <p>“Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” by Winston Churchill (1940)</p> <p><i>Travels with Charley: In Search of America</i> by John Steinbeck (1962)</p> <p><i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> by Maya Angelou (1969)</p>

**\*\*Seminal historical texts that all students are expected to read**

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Grades 6-8 text complexity.

# Reading and Literature Standards

## Grasping specific details and key ideas

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Read the text closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite text evidence to support understanding in discussion and in writing.
2. Articulate the text's main ideas and themes and provide a summary that captures the key supporting details, without taking a position or expressing an opinion.
3. Explain in detail how events, ideas, and characters unfold in the text and interact with one another.

### Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. infer themes when they are not explicitly stated and provide evidence on which those inferences are based
- b. analyze the development of the narrative, describing how particular incidents advance or foreshadow the plot
- c. recognize how the setting unfolds over the course of the text and describe its significance to the work
- d. build on an author's explicit descriptions and other evidence to draw reasonable conclusions about characters and how they interact, change, and influence the central events
- e. describe how a play unfolds and how particular lines of dialogue propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision
- f. analyze how patterns of imagery in a poem contribute to its overall theme or meaning

#### Informational Text

- a. summarize a text without expressing a personal opinion by drawing on the author's specific description of events or information
- b. determine how key ideas or concepts build on one another to reveal an overarching theme or idea

## Observing craft and structure

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

4. Interpret the meanings of words and phrases, including connotative and figurative meanings, and explain how specific word choices shape the meaning of the text.
5. Explain the text's structure, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions build on each other and contribute to the whole of the text.
6. Compare and contrast how two or more texts written on similar topics or themes differ in their focus and key details.

### Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. analyze how the author's choice of specific words or details contributes to the understanding of events and characters or to the tone of a narrative
- b. trace the specific comparisons made by similes, metaphors, and analogies and explain how they contribute to the meaning of the text
- c. compare similar ideas and themes as well as character types in myths, folktales, and legends from different cultures

- d. analyze the impact of line breaks and stanzas on the meaning of a poem and acts, scenes, and stage directions on the meaning of a drama
- e. compare the events, characters, ideas, and themes in texts written by the same author or on similar topics or themes

#### Informational Text

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- a. interpret the connotative meaning of closely related words and phrases as they are used in the text (e.g., *angry* versus *irate*)
- b. describe how an author organizes the explanation or argument, as well as the ways in which the text’s structure, language, and examples support its purpose
- c. examine the structure of a Web site or other electronic text and describe how it organizes information and links to additional sources

### Integrating information and evaluating evidence

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 7. Interpret information presented graphically or visually in print, videos, or electronic texts and explain how this information clarifies and contributes to the text.
- 8. Analyze the structure and content of an argument, including its main claims or conclusions, supporting premises, and evidence.
- 9. Determine the point of view or purpose represented in the text, assessing how it shapes the content.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. compare the points of view from which different novels and poems are told, as well as the viewpoints of different characters in a drama
- b. compare the fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character to historical sources from the period to determine which historical details have been emphasized, deleted, or changed in the fictional portrayal

##### Informational Text

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- a. interpret factual and quantitative data presented in diverse formats (including maps, charts, and diagrams as well as electronic media) and explain how this information clarifies or contributes to the text
- b. distinguish between fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment presented in essays, speeches, and critiques
- c. evaluate the strength of an argument’s premises and specific claims as well as the degree to which each is supported by evidence
- d. compare and contrast the viewpoints and use of evidence of two different authors writing about the same topic

### Developing habits for reading complex text

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

10. Develop the habit of reading independently and productively, sustaining concentration and stamina to read increasingly demanding texts.

## Writing and Research Standards

### Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and arguments that match purpose to task and address familiar as well as somewhat distant audiences (e.g., mayor, readers of school or neighborhood newspaper).

### Conducting research

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Perform short, focused research projects that demonstrate understanding of the material under investigation and generate additional related questions for research.
3. Gather information independently using a variety of relevant print and digital resources.
4. Assess the credibility, reliability, consistency, and accuracy of the information and sources gathered.
5. Represent and cite accurately the data, conclusions, and opinions of others, quoting and paraphrasing them into one's own work while avoiding plagiarism.
6. Provide full bibliographic information for print and digital sources in a standard format and document quotations, paraphrases, and other information.

### Revising writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, strengthen writing through revising, editing, or beginning again to ensure logical organization, precision of word choice, and coherence.

### Using tools and technology

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

8. Use technology and other tools to produce, revise, and distribute writing, as well as interact online with others about writing, including responding to and providing feedback

### Developing proficiency in a range of writing

9. Create writing over extended timeframes (time for reflection and revision) and shorter timeframes (a single sitting or a day or two), responding to specific sources.

Focus by grade level:

- Grade 6: Conveying the main ideas and key details of literary or informational sources at the 6-8 grade band level of text complexity and content
- Grade 7: Analyzing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 6-8 grade band level of complexity and content
- Grade 8: Comparing or evaluating the contents of literary or informational sources at the 6-8 grade band level of complexity and content

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## Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>25</sup>

### Narratives

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- a. orient the reader by establishing a situation, introducing characters, setting, and location, or by backfilling information after entering immediately into the storyline
- b. create an organizing structure in which events are logically or causally sequenced
- c. in producing a story, create a plot with well-structured episodes (e.g., initiating event, complicating action, resolution)
- d. use a variety of temporal words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, to shift from one time frame to another, and to show the relationships among events
- e. use relevant, specific details and literary devices, such as imagery and metaphor, purposefully to develop setting, plot, and character
- f. use techniques such as pacing, dialogue, or foreshadowing to highlight the significance of events or create particular effects (e.g., tension or suspense)
- g. show internal mental processes to develop complex characters and convey their needs, motives, and emotional responses
- h. provide an engaging conclusion, such as a surprise ending, a reflection, or a conclusion that returns to the beginning

### Informative and Explanatory Texts

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- a. establish the topic in an introduction that provides a sense of what's to follow
- b. develop the subject through relevant and specific facts, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
- c. organize specific information under broader concepts or categories and provide headings, figures, tables, or diagrams when useful
- d. use factual, precise language and maintain a formal, objective style when appropriate
- e. use strategies appropriate to informational and explanatory texts such as defining, classifying, comparing/contrasting, and cause/effect
- f. use appropriate links to join ideas and create cohesion
- g. provide only accurate and relevant information
- h. provide a conclusion that follows logically from the information or explanation presented

### Arguments

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- a. introduce a claim about a topic or concept
- b. support claims with logical reasons
- c. support reasons with detailed and relevant evidence

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

- d. signal the relationship between reasons, or between reasons and evidence, using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *another reason, such as, therefore, in addition*)
- e. sustain an objective style and tone appropriate for making a case when appropriate to the discipline or context
- f. include only relevant information and evidence in support of claims
- g. provide a concluding statement or section that offers reflections, a restatement, or recommendations that follow from the argument

## Speaking and Listening Standards

### Listening closely and participating productively

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Participate productively one on one, in small groups, and as a whole class, joining in discussions and remaining flexible and adaptable as participants.
2. Sustain concentration on information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by drawing well-supported inferences about the purpose and meaning of the information.

#### Standards – Students can and do (by key communication type):

##### Classroom discussions and collaboration

- a. come to discussions having completed reading or other preparation in advance and draw on that material explicitly in discussions
- b. determine a speaker’s attitude or point of view toward a topic presented orally or through other media
- c. ask questions to check understanding to clarify the main ideas and the supporting evidence of material presented orally or through other media
- d. advance a discussion by answering questions precisely and sharing specific factual knowledge and observations supported by credible evidence
- e. interpret information presented in visual and digital formats and explain how this data clarifies and contributes to a discussion or information presented orally
- f. support productive teamwork by setting clear goals and deadlines, monitoring progress and participation of each team member, and taking different views into account and modifying own views when indicated in light of what others say

### Exchanging information and speaking effectively

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

3. Share experiences, opinions, and other information, gaining and maintaining the interest and response of listeners.
4. Use appropriate tone and phrasing for emphasis, demonstrating a growing command of formal English when indicated or appropriate (e.g., presenting ideas versus class discussion).

#### Standards – Students can and do (by key communication type):

### Presentation of ideas and information

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- a. organize and present information about situations, topics, or texts that emphasize salient points and clarify and support claims and findings with pertinent and specific descriptions, facts, and examples in ways that are accessible and verifiable to listeners
- b. use gesture, tone, phrasing, and pace for emphasis
- c. incorporate visual displays and electronic media when helpful and in a manner that strengthens the presentation
- d. perform dramatic readings of various prose and poetry speaking with clarity, fidelity, and responsiveness to the text, noting changes in the situation, mood, or tone of text

## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In grades 6–8, students develop a firm command of sentence structure. They are able to form sentences of varying structures, place phrases and clauses properly within a sentence, and use a variety of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions to express relationships between sentence parts. Students have also mastered pronoun use, ensuring proper case, number, and person and avoiding vagueness. They understand and use verb voice and mood, and identify and correct inappropriate shifts in pronouns and verbs. Students set off nonrestrictive or parenthetical elements from the rest of the sentence with proper punctuation and use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence. They vary sentence patterns for effect and edit writing for redundancy and wordiness.

Key Terms: conjunction; dash; nonrestrictive/parenthetical element; indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood; parentheses; phrase and clause; pronoun case, number, and person; simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence; active and passive voice

### Grammar and usage

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Form compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.
2. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers.\*
3. Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
4. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.\*
5. Recognize and correct vague pronouns with unclear or ambiguous antecedents.\*
6. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
7. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
8. Avoid inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.\*

### Mechanics

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

9. Use punctuation to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements with commas, parentheses, or dashes.\*
10. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.



## Word choice and style

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

11. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive moods to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
12. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.\*
13. Choose words and phrases to express ideas precisely and concisely, avoiding wordiness and redundancy.\*<sup>26</sup>

### Grade-Level Focus

#### Focus by Grade-Level

Grade 6: Pronouns (Conventions Standards #s 3-5)

Grade 7: Sentence structure (Conventions Standards #1, #2, #12)

Grade 8: Verb voice and mood (Conventions Standards #s 6-8, #11)

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In grades 6–8, students continue to make use of a range of strategies to determine and clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. This repertoire now includes considering the word's use in a broader context that includes the content of the paragraph in which the word appears and the overarching structure of the text. They habitually verify their inferences of word meanings. They interpret a variety of figurative language found in what they read. They make distinctions among words based on connotation. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, reading and responding to text as well as by being taught the words directly. This includes a continuing focus on “Tier 2” words and phrases (those that commonly appear in writing but not in spoken language), “Tier 3” words and phrases (those that are specific and important to particular disciplines).

## Determining the meaning of words

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Determine or clarify the meaning of an unknown word by using one or more of the following strategies:
  - using knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes
  - using semantic clues, such as sentence and paragraph context as well as the organizational structure of the text (e.g., cause and effect, comparison and contrast)
  - using syntactic clues, such as using its position within the sentence as a guide to whether it is a subject, verb, or object
  - consulting reference materials, including glossaries, dictionaries, and thesauruses, both print and digital
2. Determine the relevant meaning of multiple-meaning words by using context.
3. Verify the preliminary determination of a word's meaning (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or by looking up the word in a dictionary).
4. Interpret figurative language, including metaphors, similes, and idioms.

<sup>26</sup> Conventions standards noted with an asterisk (\*) need to be revisited by students in subsequent grades. See Appendix A for a complete listing.

## Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

5. Distinguish a word from other words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

## Acquiring vocabulary

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

6. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 2 words taught directly and gained through reading.
7. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 3 words taught directly and gained through reading.

## Grade 6 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 6, students apply the reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read text at the 6-8 grade band level independently, with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 100% text at the 6-8 grade band level

100%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 6, students apply the writing standards to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter time frames, responding to specific sources by conveying the main ideas and key details of literary or informational sources at the 6-8 grade band level of complexity and content.

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 6, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening Standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.

### Language Development

*In grade 6, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions*

- Vocabulary standards applied to both reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Pronouns
  - Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case... (Conventions Standard #3)
  - Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts... (Conventions Standard #4)
  - Recognize and correct vague pronouns... (Conventions Standard #5)

## Grade 7 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 7, students apply the reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read text at the 6-8 grade band level independently and are introduced to 9-10 grade band level “stretch” texts, which will likely require scaffolding.*

- Reading Standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 90% at the 6-8 grade band level, 10% at the 9-10 grade band level

90%

10%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 7, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by analyzing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band level of complexity and content.

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 7, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.

### Language Development

*In grade 7, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.*

- Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Sentence structure
  - Form compound, complex... (Conventions Standard #1)
  - Place phrases and clauses... (Conventions Standard #2)
  - Vary sentence patterns... (Conventions Standard #12)

## Grade 8 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 8, students apply the reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on reading text at the 6-8 grade band level independently as well as on sustained practice with 9-10 grade band level “stretch” texts, which may require scaffolding.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 70% at the 6-8 grade band level, 30% at the 9-10 grade band level

70%

30%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 8, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by analyzing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band level of complexity and content.

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 8, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.

### Language Development

*In grade 8, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.*

- Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Verb voice and mood
  - Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice (Conventions Standard #6)
  - Form and use verbs in the indicative... (Conventions Standard #7)
  - Avoid inappropriate shifts... (Conventions Standard #8)
  - Use verbs in the ...voice ...mood... (Conventions standard #11)

# English Language Arts

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## Grades 9–10



## Required Text Complexity by Grade

Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grade

Grades	9–10 Level Text	11–CCR Level Text	Beyond CCR
9	100%		
10	70%	30%	
11		100%	
12		70%	30%

While advancing through grades 9–10, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- **In grade 9**, students focus on reading texts in the 9–10 grade band level with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.
- **In grade 10**, students focus on reading texts in the 9–10 grade band level (70 percent) independently and are introduced to texts in the 11–CCR grade band level as “stretch” texts (30 percent), which will likely require scaffolding.

### Determining Text Complexity for Grades 9–10<sup>27</sup>

Text complexity is determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself refined by teachers’ professional judgment about the match of particular texts to particular students. The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

Qualitative Measures of Texts	Quantitative Measures of Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure</i>: Implicit, subtle; graphic representations are essential to meaning; texts of increasing length</li> <li>• <i>Purpose</i>: Multiple; often implicit</li> <li>• <i>Style and Language</i>: Demanding; many literary devices; extensive use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language</li> <li>• <i>Richness</i>: Several ideas/concepts; abstract</li> <li>• <i>Relationships</i>: Several connections; implicit</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge Demands</i>: Ability to handle challenging themes, consider multiple perspectives, and understand experiences distinctly different from one’s own; cultural and historical knowledge useful for understanding characters, settings, and allusions; extensive discipline-specific content knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>A study is underway with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity.</p>
<p>Professional Judgment that weighs students’ prior knowledge and life experiences as well as their interests, motivations, and maturity level.</p>	

<sup>27</sup> Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharple (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)

### Mix of Key Text Types for 9–10

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<i>At this level, includes the subgenres of adventure stories, biographies, memoirs, historical fiction, mysteries, science fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels.</i>	<i>At this level, includes one-act and multi-act plays both in written form and on film.</i>	<i>At this level, includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse, odes, ballads, and epics.</i>	<i>At this level, Includes such subgenres as exposition and argument in the form of essays, speeches, opinion pieces as well as other documents and digital media sources on a range of topics.</i>

#### Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>28</sup>

*The Odyssey* by Homer (8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) translated by Robert Fagles

*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (1939)

*The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara (1975)

*In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez (1994)

*The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams (1944)

“Song” by John Donne (1635)

“The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe (1845)

“Loveliest of Trees” by A.E. Houseman (1896)

“I Am Offering This Poem to You” by Jimmy Santiago Baca (1977)

#### Illustrative Informational Texts

“Second Inaugural Address” by Abraham Lincoln (1865)\*\*

“State of the Union Address” by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1941)

“Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience” by Margaret Chase Smith (1950)

“Address at the March on Washington” by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963)\*\*

“A Quilt of a Country” by Anna Quindlen (2001)

**\*\*Seminal historical texts that all students are expected to read**

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Grades 9–10 text complexity.



## Reading and Literature Standards

### Grasping specific details and key ideas

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Read the text closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite text evidence to support analyses in discussion and in writing.
2. Articulate the theses and themes and summarize how they develop over the course of the text and how they are expressed by the key details.
3. Analyze in detail how complex and multifaceted events, ideas, and characters unfold and interact over the course of the text.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. draw on specific details to describe how the events, characters, or setting develops over the course of the drama, narrative poem, or story
- b. summarize the development of a theme and describe how that theme resonates throughout the text
- c. weave together the details of texts to form a comprehensive understanding of its characters, including their overlapping or competing motivations
- d. describe how the accumulation of specific phrases and images within poems contributes to a theme as a whole

##### Informational Text

- a. demonstrate a command of the precise details of the exposition or argument, drawing on specific points to support an understanding of a part or the text as a whole
- b. analyze the development of theses or explanations in texts and summarize succinctly the key relationships among ideas and supporting details

### Observing craft and structure

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

4. Interpret the meanings of words and phrases, including connotative and figurative meanings, and explain how specific word choices shape the meaning and tone of the text.
5. Analyze the structure of complex text and its parts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions build on each other and contribute to the whole of the text.
6. Compare and contrast the content and style of two or more texts written on similar topics or themes.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

- a. analyze how the precise choice of words and phrases creates vivid images and sets the tone, mood, and theme of the text; compare the impact of words selected by the author to similar words with different connotations

- b. explain how authors manipulate time (e.g., flashbacks, foreshadowing, pacing) to create suspense, mystery, or humor
- c. evaluate how playwrights use soliloquies to portray the internal thinking and feeling of characters
- d. compare and contrast similarities and differences in styles and forms of poems on a similar theme or topic

#### Informational Text

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- a. analyze how the author uses specific words and metaphors to establish tone or to make illuminating comparisons in an argument, explanation, or description
- b. explain how the author structures information or an argument to emphasize key points and advance a point of view
- c. analyze how different authors organize and categorize similar information and describe the impact of those different approaches

### Integrating information and evaluating evidence

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 7. Synthesize information presented graphically or visually in print, videos, or electronic texts with the information provided by the text.
- 8. Follow and evaluate the logic and reasoning of the text, including assessing whether the evidence provided is sufficient to support the claims.
- 9. Analyze the point of view or purpose represented in the text, assessing how it shapes the content, style, and tone.

#### Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):

##### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. explain how a story unfolds when it is told by alternating or multiple narrators with different points of view
- b. analyze literature in terms of its connection to related historical and cultural events and contexts

##### Informational Text

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- a. interpret complex, multifaceted, quantitative, or technical information presented in maps, charts, illustrations, graphs, and time lines
- b. provide an account of an author's precise claims, including how specific assertions are defined and distinguished from opposing statements
- c. analyze the explicit and implicit premises of an argument and determine if the conclusions reached are logically justified by the evidence presented in the text
- d. compare how different authors construct and develop different points of views or perspectives on similar events or issues by assessing their assumptions, evidence, and reasoning

### Developing habits for reading complex text

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

- 10. Develop the habit of reading independently and productively, sustaining concentration and stamina to read increasingly demanding texts.

## Writing and Research Standards

### Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Write informative and explanatory texts and arguments that match purpose to task and address familiar as well as more distant, unknown and general audiences (e.g., peers, elected officials and policy makers, community members).

### Conducting research

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

2. Demonstrate proficiency at performing short, focused research projects as well as more sustained inquiries that demonstrate an increasing command of the subject under investigation.
3. Assemble evidence independently from authoritative and credible print and digital sources.
4. Assess the credibility, reliability, consistency, and accuracy of the information and sources gathered and determine the strengths and limitations of each source and avoiding over-reliance on any one source.
5. Represent and cite accurately the data, conclusions, and opinions of others, effectively incorporating them into one's own work while avoiding plagiarism.
6. Cite print or electronic sources correctly and document quotations, paraphrases, graphics, and other information using a standard format.

### Revising writing

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Strengthen writing through revision, editing, or beginning again to ensure to ensure logical organization, precision of word choice, and coherence.

### Using tools and technology

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

8. Use technology and other tools to produce, revise, and distribute writing, as well as to interact online with others about writing, including responding to and providing feedback.

### Developing proficiency in a range of writing

9. Create writing over extended timeframes (time for reflection and revision) and shorter timeframes (a single sitting or a day or two), responding to specific sources.

Focus by grade level:

Grade 9: Analyzing the content of literary or informational sources at the 9-10 grade band level of text complexity and content

Grade 10: Comparing or evaluating the contents of literary or informational sources at the 9-10 grade band level of complexity and content

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## Standards — Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>29</sup>

### Narratives

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By high school, students are most often using narrative writing as a technique embedded within other genres. They use narrative writing to inform and persuade. They may, for example, provide a brief anecdote to support a point made in an argument or a scenario to illustrate an explanation. In such cases, narrative writing is a technique rather than a form in itself.

### Informative and Explanatory Texts

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- a. provide a clear and coherent introduction that establishes the subject and conveys a knowledgeable stance
- b. develop a complex subject through relevant and specific facts, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
- c. organize complex information into categories that make clear distinctions and provide headings, figures, tables, and diagrams when useful
- d. employ discipline-specific and technical vocabulary and maintain a formal, objective style
- e. adapt strategies to present information and explanations (e.g., if/then, extended definitions, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect) and employ them to manage the complexity of a topic
- f. link ideas with transitions and by varying sentence structures to express relationships between ideas and create cohesion
- g. emphasize the most significant information and confirm the accuracy of key points
- h. provide a conclusion that articulates the implications and significance of the information or explanation

### Arguments

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- a. establish a substantive claim and distinguish it from alternate or opposing claims
- b. support claims with logical reasons
- c. provide relevant and sufficient evidence from credible sources in support of the reasons
- d. explain how the evidence links to the claim
- e. develop the argument in part based on knowledge of the audience (e.g., building bridges by opening with areas of agreement)
- f. convey relationships between reasons, as well as between reasons and evidence, and signal alternative claims using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *on the other hand*, *however*, *but*, *nevertheless*, *because*, *therefore*, *in addition*).
- g. maintain a formal style when appropriate to the discipline or context
- h. enhance the reliability of the argument by employing strategies such as paraphrasing or quoting explicitly from a credible, authoritative source
- i. provide a concluding statement or section that enhances the argument, using strategies such as articulating the implications, summing up the key factors, or weighing the evidence to support the claim

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## Speaking and Listening Standards

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### Listening closely and participating productively

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#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Participate productively in a range of structured interactions—both interpersonally and in groups—exchanging information constructively and with confidence.

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.

2. Sustain concentration on complex information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by summarizing, analyzing, and elaborating on key ideas.

**Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):**

Classroom discussions and collaboration

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- a. come to discussions having researched, studied, and taken notes on topics or issues under study and draw upon that preparation in discussions
- b. determine the key ideas as well as the tone and mood of communications presented orally or through other media
- c. ask questions to test the evidence that supports a speaker’s claims and conclusions presented orally or through other media
- d. build on essential information from others’ input and respond constructively by making cogent and verifiable comments that aid in the furthering and deepening of discussions
- e. integrate multiple streams of data presented through a variety of multi-modal media into a cohesive, meaningful understanding of the information
- f. support productive teamwork by identifying the comments and claims made on all sides of an issue; evaluating the degree to which each claim is supported by evidence; sifting, summarizing, and putting to use the most important ideas developed by the group; and determining what additional information, research, and tasks are required in order to move the group towards its goals

Exchanging information and speaking effectively

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**Core Standards — Students can and do:**

3. Present information and points of view, structuring and organizing comments to support their purposes and guide the listener.
4. Vary intonation and phrasing for emphasis and effect, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate (e.g., presenting ideas versus class discussion).

**Standards — Students can and do (by key communication type):**

Presentation of ideas and information

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- a. organize and present complex information about situations, topics, or texts so that listeners can follow the line of thought by grouping related ideas, using transitional markers, and clarifying one’s claims with evidence that is verifiable and accessible
- b. align verbal (tone, phrasing, pacing) and nonverbal strategies (gestures and facial expressions) for emphasis and effect
- c. make strategic use of multimedia elements and visual displays of data to enhance understanding
- d. perform dramatic readings of various prose and poetry, speaking with clarity, fidelity, and responsiveness to the text, reflecting on syntax and diction for cues regarding emphasis and rhythm

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## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In high school, students gain a broad range of sophisticated language skills to enhance meaning, achieve stylistic effect, and create subtle links between and among ideas. They maintain parallel structure. They acquire a more conceptual understanding of usage and the limits of “rules.” They use a full range of punctuation, including ellipses, semicolons,

colons, and hyphens, and have a fuller understanding of how to employ commas and dashes. They make use of a wide range of phrases and clauses for effect. They maintain a consistent style and tone, using a style manual appropriate to the discipline in which they are working to help conventionalize their writing.

Key Terms: colon, ellipses, hyphen, semicolon, parallel structure, verbal

## Grammar and usage

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Use parallel structure in writing.
2. Consult references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*) as needed to resolve particular usage issues, particularly when the usage is contested.

## Mechanics

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

3. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore a light[,] blue suit*).
4. Use a comma, ellipses, or dash to indicate a pause or break.
5. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
6. Use a colon to introduce a list or a quotation.
7. Observe the conventions concerning using hyphens to join words.

## Word choice and style

### Core Standards — Students can and do:

8. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to add variety and interest to writing.
9. Maintain consistency in style and tone.
10. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual.

### Focus by Grade-Level

Grade 9: Style (Conventions Standards #9, #10)

Grade 10: Advanced punctuation use (Conventions Standards #s 3-7)

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In high school, students continue to make use of a range of strategies to determine and clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. This repertoire now includes considering multiple levels of context (sentence, paragraph, and text levels) and the word's history. They habitually verify their inferences of word meanings. They interpret a wide range of figurative language found in what they read and consider its contribution to the text. Possessing a highly developed sense of the shadings among words with similar denotations,

they evaluate an author’s or speaker’s choice of words as well as alternatives to the words chosen. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, reading and responding to text as well as by being taught the words directly. This includes a continuing focus on “Tier 2” words and phrases (those that commonly appear in writing but not in spoken language), “Tier 3” words and phrases (those that are specific and important to particular disciplines).

### Determining the meaning of words

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

1. Determine or clarify the meaning of an unknown word by using one or more of the following strategies:
  - using knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes
  - using context, including syntactic and semantic clues, at the sentence, paragraph, and text levels
  - consulting reference materials, including general and specialized dictionaries and thesauruses, both print and digital
2. Determine the relevant meaning of multiple-meaning words by using context.
3. Verify the preliminary determination of a word’s meaning (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or by looking up the word in a dictionary).
4. Interpret figurative language and analyze its role within the text.

### Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

5. Assess and explain the merits of the choice of one word over another in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
6. Gain a clearer sense of a word’s meaning and use by comparing it to other words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

### Acquiring vocabulary

#### Core Standards — Students can and do:

7. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 2 words taught directly and gained through reading.
8. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 3 words taught directly and gained through reading.

## Grade 9 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

Reading and Literature	
<p><i>In grade 9, students apply the core reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read 9-10 grade band text independently, with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading standards applied to different text types</li><li>• Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text</li><li>• <b>Text Complexity focus:</b> 100% 9-10 Band Text</li></ul>	100%
Writing and Research	
<p><i>In grade 9, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument</li><li>• Research, including short focused research tasks</li><li>• <b>Grade-specific focus: Grade-specific focus:</b> Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by analyzing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade band level of complexity and content.</li></ul>	
Speaking and Listening	
<p><i>In grade 9, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.</li></ul>	
Language Development	
<p><i>In grade 9, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening</li><li>• <b>Grade-specific conventions focus: Style</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain consistency ... (Conventions Standard #9)</li><li>• (Style manual)... (Conventions Standard #10)</li></ul></li></ul>	



## Grade 10 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 10, students apply the core reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read 9-10 grade band text independently as well as on sustained practice with 11-CCR band “stretch” texts, which will likely require scaffolding.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 70% 9-10 Band Text; 30% 11-CCR text

70%

30%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 10, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by analyzing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade band level of complexity and content.

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 10, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.

### Language Development

*In grade 10, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.*

- Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Advanced Punctuation Use
  - Coordinate adjectives ... (Conventions Standard #3)
  - Comma/dash/ellipsis... (Conventions Standard #4)
  - Semicolon ... (Conventions Standard #5)
  - Colon ... (Conventions Standard #6)
  - Hyphen ... (Conventions Standard #7)

# English Language Arts

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Grades 11–CCR



## Required Text Complexity by Grade

Proportion of Texts Within and Above Grade Band to be Read in Each Grad

Grades	9–10 Level Text	11–CCR Level Text	Beyond CCR
9	100%		
10	70%	30%	
11		100%	
12		70%	30%

While advancing through grades 11-12, students must engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity.

- **In grade 11**, students focus on reading texts in the 11-CCR grade band level with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.
- **In grade 12**, students focus on reading texts in the 11-CCR grade band level (70 percent) independently and are introduced to texts in the “Beyond CCR” grade band level as “stretch” texts (30 percent), which will likely require scaffolding.

### Determining Text Complexity for Grades 11–CCR<sup>30</sup>

Text complexity is determined by a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures of the text itself refined by teachers’ professional judgment about the match of particular texts to particular students. The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

Qualitative Measures of Texts	Quantitative Measures of Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure</i>: Implicit, complex, unconventional; sophisticated graphic representations are essential to meaning; texts are sufficiently long to address complex subjects</li> <li>• <i>Purpose</i>: Multiple; often implicit and may be hidden or obscure</li> <li>• <i>Style and Language</i>: Unfamiliar, demanding, complex; many literary devices; extensive use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language; language may be intentionally or unintentionally ambiguous</li> <li>• <i>Richness</i>: Many ideas/concepts; highly abstract; high information density</li> <li>• <i>Relationships</i>: Many implicit, complex, interwoven connections</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge Demands</i>: Ability to handle one or more complex themes, consider multiple and unusual perspectives, and understand experiences distinctly different from one’s own; cultural and historical knowledge useful for understanding characters, settings, and allusions; extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>A study is underway with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity.</p>
<p><b>Professional Judgment</b> that weighs students’ prior knowledge and life experiences, students’ interests, motivations, and maturity level.</p>	

<sup>30</sup> Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharples (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)

### Mix of Key Text Types for 11–CCR

Narratives	Drama	Poetry	Informational Text
<p><i>At this level, includes the subgenres of adventure stories, biographies, memoirs, historical fiction, mysteries, science fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes one-act and multi-act plays both in written form and on film.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse, odes, ballads, and epics.</i></p>	<p><i>At this level, Includes such subgenres as exposition and argument in the form of essays, speeches, opinion pieces as well as other documents and digital media sources on a range of topics.</i></p>

#### Illustrative Texts for Narratives, Drama, and Poetry<sup>31</sup>

- Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813)
- Black Boy* by Richard Wright (1945)
- Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (1937)
- The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (1970)
- The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003)
- The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (1895)
- Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (1949)
- “Ode on a Grecian Urn” by John Keats (1820)
- “Because I Could Not Stop for Death” by Emily Dickinson (1890)

#### Illustrative Informational Texts

- The Declaration of Independence* by Thomas Jefferson (1776)\*\*
- The Crisis* by Thomas Paine (1776)
- Walden* by Henry David Thoreau (1854)
- “Politics and the English Language” by George Orwell (1946)
- “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King (1963)\*\*
- “Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan (1990)

**\*\*Seminal historical texts that all students are expected to read**

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix B for other texts illustrative of Grades 11–CCR text complexity.

# Reading and Literature Standards

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## Grasping specific details and key ideas

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### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Read the text closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite text evidence to defend and challenge analyses in discussion and in writing.
2. Articulate the text's theses and themes and provide a summary that clarifies the relationships among ideas and the connections between key details.
3. Analyze in detail how complex and multifaceted events, ideas, and characters unfold and influence one another over the course of the text.

### Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):

#### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. analyze where the author chooses to focus and which details the author chooses to emphasize
- b. analyze how multiple themes and ideas in the text interact and build on one another
- c. evaluate the extent to which setting shapes the course of events and sets the mood
- d. trace the origins and evolution of the traits, motivations, and relationships among characters and how they interact to influence the plot and its resolution
- e. describe how the poet develops a central image, preoccupation, or idea through the accumulation of specific phrases and images

#### Informational Text

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- a. demonstrate an understanding of the precise elements of an author's explanation or argument, including the distinctions the author makes between different ideas or information
- b. scrutinize the details within specific portions of texts and connect the insights gained to develop an understanding of the text as a whole
- c. analyze how the text captures the interaction between complex ideas or multifaceted events

## Observing craft and structure

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### Core Standards – Students can and do:

4. Interpret the meanings of words and phrases, including connotative and figurative meanings, and analyze how word choices have a significant effect on the meaning and tone of the text.
5. Analyze the ways the author chooses to structure the text, including how to present complex ideas and events and where to begin and end.
6. Compare and contrast the choices different authors make in treating similar topics or themes, including content, style, and tone.

## Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):

### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. analyze how the author’s use of language impacts the text, including the degree of formality of the diction and how it is evocative of a particular setting (e.g., a courtroom, a rural town)
- b. evaluate how authors create meaningful ambiguity and multiple layers of meaning in poetry, drama, and other narratives
- c. analyze how an author choice of where to begin a story, poem, or drama impacts the overall plot structure
- d. contrast alternative treatments of the same dramatic work in different stage productions and evaluate how the directors’ different interpretations relate to evidence within the script
- e. analyze how the author draws upon and transforms fictional or historical source material (e.g., how Shakespeare draws on Plutarch or a story in Ovid)

### Informational Text

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- a. describe how the choice of a particular word, phrase, or series of words can impact significantly the meaning of a document (e.g., contract, court opinion, essay)
- b. evaluate how the author’s choice of structure contributes to the effectiveness of the exposition or argument
- c. compare and contrast presentations of the same topic in different media and describe the differences in focus, organization, and links to other sources

## Integrating information and evaluating evidence

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

7. Synthesize information presented graphically or visually in print, videos, or electronic texts and, when appropriate, note discrepancies of fact or interpretation (e.g., data in a table inconsistent with the author’s analysis).
8. Rigorously evaluate the logic and reasoning of the text, including assessing whether the evidence provided is relevant and sufficient.
9. Analyze how the point of view or purpose develops in the text and explain how it is revealed in the key details.

## Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):

### Narratives, Drama, and Poetry

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- a. compare points of view from which different stories are told and trace how they shift within a story and influence characterization and plot
- b. explain how dramatic irony created by the differences between what the audience or reader knows and what the characters know in a drama or narrative fiction creates suspense, anxiety, or humor

### Informational Text

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- a. synthesize ideas and data presented graphically and determine their purpose and relationship to the rest of the text (print or digital), noting any inconsistencies or discrepancies between the two
- b. evaluate the reasoning and rhetoric that support an argument or explanation, including assessing the sufficiency and relevance of the evidence as well as identifying any unsubstantiated statements or fallacious reasoning
- c. analyze documents of historical and literary significance for their premises, perspectives, and logical structure

## Developing habits for reading complex text

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

10. Develop the habit of reading independently and productively, sustaining concentration and stamina to read increasingly demanding texts.

## Writing and Research Standards

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## Writing to reflect audience, purpose, and task

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Write informative and explanatory texts and arguments that match purpose to task and are tailored to audiences with specific requirements (e.g., admissions officer, human resources officer, skeptical audience).

## Conducting research

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

2. Demonstrate proficiency at performing short, focused research projects as well as more sustained inquiries that synthesize multiple authoritative sources on a subject.
3. Analyze evidence independently gathered from multiple authoritative and credible print and digital sources.
4. Assess the credibility, reliability, consistency, and accuracy of the information and sources gathered and determine their usefulness and relevance for the specific audience, purpose, and task.
5. Represent and cite accurately the data, conclusions, and opinions of others, effectively incorporating them into one's own work while avoiding plagiarism.
6. Cite print or electronic sources correctly and document quotations, paraphrases, graphics, and other information using a standard format.

## Revising writing

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

7. Strengthen writing through revision, editing, or beginning again to ensure to ensure logical organization, precision of word choice, and coherence.

## Using tools and technology

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

8. Demonstrate command of technology and other tools to produce, revise, and distribute writing, as well as to interact online with others about writing, including responding to and providing feedback.

## Developing proficiency in a range of writing

9. Create writing over extended timeframes (time for reflection and revision) and shorter timeframes (a single sitting or a day or two), responding to specific sources.

Focus by grade level:

Grade 11: Analyzing the content of literary or informational sources at the 11-CCR grade band level of text complexity and content

Grade 12: Synthesizing or evaluating the contents of literary or informational sources at the 11-CCR grade band level of complexity and content

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## Standards – Students can and do (by key text type):<sup>32</sup>

### Narratives

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By high school, students are most often using narrative writing as a technique embedded within other genres. They use narrative writing to inform and persuade. They may, for example, provide a brief anecdote to support a point made in an argument or a scenario to illustrate an explanation. In such cases, narrative writing is a technique rather than a form in itself.

### Informative and Explanatory Texts

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- a. provide a clear and coherent introduction that establishes the subject and conveys a knowledgeable stance
- b. develop complex subjects through judicious use of relevant and specific facts, details, quotations, examples, or other information
- c. organize and present information so that each new piece of information builds upon what precedes it to create a unified whole
- d. demonstrate command of discipline-specific and technical vocabulary when appropriate and adjust style as appropriate to the situation
- e. demonstrate control of a range of strategies to present complex information or explanations and employ them effectively to manage the complexity of the topic and accomplish the writer's purpose
- f. link ideas with transitions and by varying sentence structures to express the precise relationships among ideas and create cohesion
- g. provide a conclusion that articulates the implications and significance of the information or explanation

### Arguments

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- a. establish the importance of the issue, make a substantive claim, and distinguish it from alternate or opposing claims
- b. support claims with logical reasons
- c. provide relevant, sufficient, and convincing evidence from credible sources in support of the reasons
- d. make logical connections between the evidence and the claim
- e. develop the argument in part based on an awareness of the audience's values, knowledge of the issue, and possible biases
- f. convey relationships between reasons, as well as between reasons and evidence, and signal alternative claims using words, phrases and clauses (e.g., *on the other hand*, *however*, *but*, *nevertheless*, *because*, *therefore*, *in addition*)
- g. maintain a formal style when appropriate to the discipline or context
- h. enhance the credibility of the argument by demonstrating control of strategies, including paraphrasing or quoting from authoritative sources and citing logical consequences
- i. provide a concluding statement or section that enhances the argument, using strategies such as articulating the implications, summing up the key factors, or weighing the evidence to support the claim

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<sup>32</sup> See Appendix C for samples of student writing that illustrate through annotations the level of quality required to meet the writing standards.



# Speaking and Listening Standards

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## Listening closely and participating productively

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Participate productively in a range of structured interactions—both interpersonally and in groups—exchanging information constructively and with confidence, adapting to different levels of formality.
2. Sustain concentration on complex information presented orally, visually, or multi-modally and confirm understanding by challenging or defending key ideas and supporting evidence.

### Standards – Students can and do (by key communication type):

#### Classroom discussions and collaboration

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- a. come to discussions having formulated considered judgments on the topics or issues under study and draw upon that preparation in discussions
- b. evaluate the content and rhetoric of a speaker, noting when evidence is exaggerated or distorted
- c. ask questions that probe the reasoning and evidence that support the claims and conclusions made orally or through other media, including offering counter examples or other points of view
- d. propel conversations forward by providing essential information and sharing findings that clarify, accommodate, or challenge ideas
- e. synthesize information presented visually or digitally with other information presented orally, noting the effect on meaning of any discrepancies between the two presentations
- f. assist in the formulation and productive functioning of both formal and informal self-directed work groups by identifying and assigning tasks and maintaining conversational norms as well as evaluating the progress of the team towards its goals

## Exchanging information and speaking effectively

### Core Standards – Students can and do:

3. Present information clearly and persuasively to others, selecting the most appropriate way to structure comments for clarity and effect.
4. Adapt delivery, tone, and mood for emphasis and effect, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate (e.g., presenting ideas versus class discussion).

### Standards – Students can and do (by key communication type):

#### Presentation of ideas and information

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- a. organize and present complex information about topics, situations, or texts, providing reliable and credible evidence from authoritative sources in support of findings and claims such that the line of reasoning is clear and alternative perspectives are addressed
- b. shape delivery and message to the occasion and the audience's values, knowledge of the issue, and possible biases
- c. engage an audience and improve comprehension through visual aids in presentations, including multimedia platforms

- d. portray and explain various ways to perform dramatic readings of various prose and poetry, citing text evidence for the alternative readings

## Language Development Standards

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### Conventions

In high school, students gain a broad range of sophisticated language skills to enhance meaning, achieve stylistic effect, and create subtle links between and among ideas. They maintain parallel structure. They acquire a more conceptual understanding of usage and the limits of “rules.” They use a full range of punctuation, including ellipses, semicolons, colons, and hyphens, and have a fuller understanding of how to employ commas and dashes. They make use of a wide range of phrases and clauses for effect. They maintain a consistent style and tone, using a style manual appropriate to the discipline in which they are working to help conventionalize their writing.

Key Terms: colon, ellipses, hyphen, semicolon, parallel structure, verbal

#### Grammar and usage

##### Core Standards – Students can and do:

11. Use parallel structure in writing.
12. Consult references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage*) as needed to resolve particular usage issues, particularly when the usage is contested.

#### Mechanics

##### Core Standards – Students can and do:

13. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore a light[,] blue suit*).
14. Use a comma, ellipses, or dash to indicate a pause or break.
15. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
16. Use a colon to introduce a list or a quotation.
17. Observe the conventions concerning using hyphens to join words.

#### Word choice and style

##### Core Standards – Students can and do:

18. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to add variety and interest to writing.
19. Maintain consistency in style and tone.
20. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual.

##### Focus by Grade-Level

Grade 11: Parallel structure and phrasing (Conventions Standards #1, #8)

Grade 12: Usage (Conventions Standard #2)

## Vocabulary

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge marked by multiple connections that link a word to similar words and to contexts and experiences that are related to that word—as compared to simply a definition. In high school, students continue to make use of a range of strategies to determine and clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. This repertoire now includes considering multiple levels of context (sentence, paragraph, and text levels) and the word's history. They habitually verify their inferences of word meanings. They interpret a wide range of figurative language found in what they read and consider its contribution to the text. Possessing a highly developed sense of the shadings among words with similar denotations, they evaluate an author's or speaker's choice of words as well as alternatives to the words chosen. They acquire new words through interactive language use, including informal talk, discussion, reading and responding to text as well as by being taught the words directly. This includes a continuing focus on “Tier 2” words and phrases (those that commonly appear in writing but not in spoken language), “Tier 3” words and phrases (those that are specific and important to particular disciplines).

### Determining the meaning of words

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

1. Determine or clarify the meaning of an unknown word by using one or more of the following strategies:
  - using knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes
  - using context, including syntactic and semantic clues, at the sentence, paragraph, and text levels
  - consulting reference materials, including general and specialized dictionaries and thesauruses, both print and digital
  - using the word's history (etymology)
2. Determine the relevant meaning of multiple-meaning words by using context.
3. Verify the preliminary determination of a word's meaning (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or by looking up the word in a dictionary).
4. Interpret figurative language and analyze its role within the text.

### Understanding the nuances of words (denotations and connotations)

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

7. Assess and explain the merits of the choice of one word over another in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
8. Gain a clearer sense of a word's meaning and use by comparing it to other words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

### Acquiring vocabulary

#### Core Standards – Students can and do:

7. Acquire and use an extensive vocabulary of Tier 2 words taught directly and gained through reading.
8. Acquire and use a grade-appropriate vocabulary of Tier 3 words taught directly and gained through reading.

## Grade 11 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

### Reading and Literature

*In grade 11, students apply the core reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read 11-CCR grade band text independently, with scaffolding likely required for texts at the high end of the range.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 100% 11-CCR Band Text

100%

### Writing and Research

*In grade 11, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter timeframes, responding to specific sources by analyzing the contents of literary or informational sources at the 11-CCR grade band level of complexity and content.

### Speaking and Listening

*In grade 11, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.

### Language Development

*In grade 11, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.*

- Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Parallel Structure and Phrasing
  - Use parallel structure in writing ... (Conventions Standard #1)
  - Use various types of phrases... (Conventions Standard #8)

# Grade 12 English Language Arts: Focus for Instruction

## Reading and Literature

*In grade 12, students apply the core reading standards to the following types of text: narratives, drama, poetry, and informational text. Students focus on learning to read 11-CCR grade band text independently as well as on sustained practice with Beyond CCR band “stretch” texts, which will likely require scaffolding.*

- Reading standards applied to different text types
- Mix of text types: Narratives, Drama, Poetry, Informational Text
- **Text Complexity focus:** 70% 11-CCR Band Text; 30% Beyond CCR text

70%

30%

## Writing and Research

*In grade 12, students apply the standards in writing to the following types of text: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Argument. Students perform research, including short focused research tasks. They also write over various time frames in response to specific sources.*

- Writing standards applied to different text types: Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, Argument
- Research, including short focused research tasks
- **Grade-specific focus:** Students create writing over extended and shorter time frames, responding to specific sources by synthesizing or evaluating the contents of literary or informational sources of 11-CCR grade band level complexity and content.

## Speaking and Listening

*In grade 12, students apply the core speaking and listening standards in different contexts.*

- Speaking and listening standards applied in different contexts: classroom discussion and collaboration as well as in presentations of ideas and information.

## Language Development

*In grade 12, students apply the language development standards by applying the core vocabulary standards to determine word meaning, understand word nuances, and acquire vocabulary and to produce writing and speaking that observes appropriate conventions.*

- Vocabulary standards applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- **Grade-specific conventions focus:** Usage
  - Consult references ... (Conventions Standard #2)



## APPENDIX A

# Text Complexity Next Steps

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A key requirement of the Core Standards in Reading is that all students engage with texts of steadily increasing complexity as they advance through school. The Core Standards' model of *text complexity*—in the simplest terms, how easy or difficult a text is to read—blends qualitative and quantitative measures of inherent text difficulty with educators' knowledge of their students. All three elements should be considered together when evaluating a text's appropriateness for particular students.

*Qualitative dimensions* are aspects of text best measured by readers applying trained judgment to the evaluation task. These dimensions include the text's structure, format, and length; its purpose; its style and language; the quality, nature, and density of its ideas, concepts, and information; relationships among ideas, information, and characters in it; and the knowledge and experience demands it places upon readers.

*Quantitative dimensions* include not only those aspects of text traditionally measured by readability formulas—word length and sentence length—but also computer-assessable aspects of text cohesion. These include referential cohesion (the degree to which a text refers back to previous points) and word frequency.

The qualitative and quantitative measures of a text are balanced in the model by educators' *professional judgment* of the appropriateness of the text for particular students given their background knowledge, interests, and motivation. Harder texts may be appropriate for highly knowledgeable or motivated students, and easier texts may be suitable as a means for building struggling readers' skills up to required levels.

While the tools included in this draft and the forthcoming ones described below represent an important advance over those previously available, no measure or set of measures is perfectly accurate. The mandate is that the body of works that students study in a given year represent an appropriate level of complexity as defined by these standards.

### Current and next steps

A qualitative rubric, derived from prior studies and refined through feedback from trained teacher-raters, is included in this draft to define some ways in which text complexity should increase as students move through the grades. The rubric can be used (in conjunction with forthcoming quantitative measures) to place individual texts into grade bands by complexity. The qualitative dimensions are best understood, however, as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of "best fit," or determining which grade band's set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

The Core Standards work team is presently conducting a study with Coh-Metrix, a nonprofit research organization, to identify roughly five to seven computer-measurable dimensions of text cohesion. These dimensions, paired with a Lexile score, will yield a robust quantitative assessment of text complexity that, along with both the qualitative dimensions and professional judgment, will round out the Core Standards model of complexity. Graphically, these three elements will appear together in a "label" defining complexity for a given text.

Following the completion of that study in early 2010, the work team will oversee the development of a Web site designed to make the text complexity tools more user-friendly and broadly available. The site will contain a database of complexity information for a range of widely used texts, including links to texts and test passages of similar complexity. Educators will be able to input additional texts for evaluation and comment on the suitability of particular texts for particular groups of students. The overarching goal is to make text complexity a vital and easy-to-incorporate element of reading instruction.

## Text Complexity Qualitative Scheme

Dimension of Text		Grade Span				
		2–3	4–5	6–8	9–10	11–12
Structure		Explicit, simple, conventional; simple graphic representations are supplementary to meaning; texts are relatively short	Largely explicit and direct; graphic representations are supplementary to meaning; texts are of increasing length	Largely implicit and subtle; graphic representations are essential to meaning; texts are of increasing length	Implicit, subtle; graphic representations are essential to meaning; texts are of increasing length	Implicit, complex, unconventional; sophisticated graphic representations are essential to meaning; texts are sufficiently long to address complex subjects
Purpose		Single; explicitly stated	Single or twofold; clearly indicated	Single or multiple; subtly stated	Multiple; often implicit	Multiple; often implicit and may be hidden or obscure
Style and Language	Style	Familiar, accessible, plain; few literary devices	Moderately accessible; some literary devices	Moderately demanding; several literary devices	Demanding; many literary devices	Unfamiliar, demanding, complex; many literary devices
	Language	Mostly clear, everyday language; limited use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language	Some everyday language; some use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language	Consistent use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language	Extensive use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language	Extensive use of Tier 2 and 3 words and figurative language; language may be intentionally or unintentionally ambiguous
Richness		A few ideas/concepts; concrete; low information density	Some ideas/concepts; mostly concrete; moderate information density	Several ideas/concepts; mostly abstract; moderate information density	Several ideas/concepts; abstract; high information density	Many ideas/concepts; highly abstract; high information density
Relationships		A few connections; explicit; simple	Some connections; largely explicit	Several connections; largely implicit	Several connections; implicit	Many connections; implicit; complex and interwoven
Knowledge Demands	Life experiences (literary texts)	Ability to handle simple themes and fantastical elements as well as draw upon common, everyday experiences	Ability to handle fairly simple themes, consider a perspective somewhat different from one's own, and understand unfamiliar experiences	Ability to handle fairly challenging themes, consider multiple perspectives, and understand unfamiliar experiences	Ability to handle challenging themes, consider multiple perspectives, and understand experiences distinctly different from one's own	Ability to handle one or more complex themes, consider multiple and unusual perspectives, and understand experiences distinctly different from one's own
	Cultural/literary knowledge (chiefly literary texts)	General background knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required		Cultural and historical knowledge useful for understanding characters, settings, and allusions		
	Content/discipline knowledge (chiefly informational texts)	Some everyday and general content knowledge	Some general and discipline-specific content knowledge	Some discipline-specific content knowledge	Extensive discipline-specific content knowledge	Extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge

Adapted from ACT, Inc., (2005); Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010); Chall, Bissex, Conrad, & Harris-Sharples (1996); and Hess and Biggam (2004)



The qualitative dimensions of text complexity are best understood as continua of increasing complexity rather than as representing discrete and easily defined stages. Most authentic texts will exhibit some but not all of the traits linked to a particular grade band; qualitatively assigning a text to a grade band is therefore a matter of “best fit,” or determining which grade band’s set of descriptors most accurately describes the text.

### Structure

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- Explicit, simple, conventional → Implicit, complex, unconventional
- Simple graphic representations → Sophisticated graphic representations
- Graphic representations supplementary to meaning → Graphic representations essential to meaning
- Relatively short texts → Texts sufficiently long to address complex subjects

### Purpose

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- Single purpose → Multiple purposes
- Explicitly stated → Often implicit and may be hidden or obscure

### Style

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- Familiar, accessible, plain → Unfamiliar, demanding, complex
- Few literary devices → Many literary devices

### Language

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- Mostly everyday language → Extensive use of Tier 2 and 3 words
- Limited use of figurative language → Extensive use of figurative language
- Clear language → Potentially ambiguous language

### Richness

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- A few ideas/concepts → Many ideas/concepts
- Concrete ideas/concepts → Abstract ideas/concepts
- Low information density → High information density

### Relationships

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- A few connections → Many connections
- Explicit connections → Implicit connections
- Simple connections → Complex, interwoven connections

### Knowledge Demands: Life Experiences

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- Simple themes → Complex themes
- Single theme → Multiple themes
- Common, everyday experiences and fantastical elements → Experiences distinctly different from one’s own
- Single perspective like one’s own → Multiple and unusual perspectives

### Knowledge Demands: Cultural Knowledge

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- General background knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required → Cultural and historical knowledge useful

### Knowledge Demands: Content/Discipline Knowledge

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- Some everyday and general content knowledge → Extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge

## Definitions of Key Writing Types

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### Narrative

Narrative writing is organized by time. Time is central because narrative writing depicts events, whether real or imagined. Narrative writing is fundamental to novels, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, historical accounts, and plays. With practice, students' repertoire of narrative strategies expands and their control of them increases. Students learn to provide visual details of scenes, objects, or people; to depict specific actions (movements, gestures, postures, and expressions); to use dialogue and interior monologue in order to provide insight into the narrator's and characters' personalities and motives; and to manipulate pace in order to highlight the significance of certain events and create tension and suspense. Narrative writing serves a variety of purposes; frequently it is embedded in other kinds of writing, such as writing intended to inform, instruct, or persuade.

### Informative/Explanatory Text

Informative/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing can serve one or more of several closely related purposes: to increase readers' knowledge of a subject, to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or to enhance readers' comprehension of a concept. Informative/explanatory writing addresses questions, such as questions about types (What are the different types of whales?), about components (What are the parts of a motor?), about aspects of a subject such as its size, function, or behavior (How big is the United States? What is an x-ray used for? How do penguins find food?), about how things work (How does a camera work?), and about why things happen (Why is Earth warming?). To produce this kind of writing, students draw on what they already know and on primary and secondary sources. With practice, students become better able to develop a controlling idea that supports coherence and focus, and they can select examples, facts, and details that are relevant. They are also able to employ a variety of techniques that writers use to convey information, such as naming, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting one subject with another; and relating an anecdote or scenario to illustrate a point.

### Argument

The purpose of argument is to persuade in order to change the reader's point of view or to bring about some action on the reader's part. There are many techniques employed by writers to persuade readers—for example, appeals to emotions, appeals to common beliefs, and the creation of a believable authorial voice. However, the core of argument is logic and evidence. A logical argument convinces its audience of the merit and reasonableness of the claims and the proof offered in support of the claims. Writers of logical arguments provide credible evidence (facts and details) to support their assertions. Although young children are not able to produce fully developed logical arguments, they are developing a variety of ways to extend and elaborate their work around opinions or judgments. They provide examples, they offer reasons for their assertions, and they explain cause and effect. These kinds of expository structures are steps on the road to argument.

# Conventions

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Three goals undergird the Conventions standards:

- (1) Students should have a carefully specified range of broadly useful terms in order to be precise in their discussions about language. Such key terms (noted below) should be defined in grade-appropriate ways for younger students and fleshed out more fully in later grades. (For guidance on this matter, see, for example, Brock Haussamen with Amy Benjamin, Martha Kolln, and Rebecca S. Wheeler, *Grammar Alive!: A Guide for Teachers* [Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2003] and Amy Benjamin with Tom Oliva, *Engaging Grammar: Practical Advice for Real Classrooms* [Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2007].) Additional terminology may be helpful in particular instructional situations; avoiding terminology altogether may be appropriate in others.
- (2) Students must be able to observe the conventions of standard English in their formal writing and speaking for the sake of having their efforts widely understood and taken seriously.
- (3) Students need to understand that effective language use is more than simply observing a series of rules but also about making careful choices among alternatives, considering those choices in relation to task, purpose, audience, occasion, and discipline.

Many conventions-related issues are likely to arise in students' writing and speaking prior to their formal appearance in the sequence below. For example, students in kindergarten are expected to know what a complete sentence is even though the concept of a fragment is not mentioned specifically in the standards until grade 3.

Conversely, many skills and understandings introduced at lower grades will require continued attention as students advance in the grades. Students in grade 3, for instance, can ensure subject-verb agreement in simple situations, such as when the subject and verb appear next to each other in a sentence. As students' writing and speaking become more complex, however, new agreement challenges arise, such as intervening phrases suggesting a different number for the verb than the subject calls for. "Errors" with applying previously mastered skills and understandings are thus often a sign of progress in that students are stretching their ability to communicate. "Relearning" is then a matter of students becoming able to apply old skills and understandings in new, more sophisticated ways.

While all the Conventions standards should be considered cumulative, certain ones, noted with an asterisk (\*), are particularly likely to need to be revisited by older students as they convey ever more elaborate ideas in writing and speech.

## ELA Conventions Progressive Skills: By Standard

The following standards, marked with an asterisk (\*) in the standards document, are skills and understandings that require continued attention in higher grades (after their introduction in lower grades) as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking.

### Grade 3

### Grades 4–5

### Grades 6–8

(Grade/band in which the standard is introduced)

3.1 Generate complete sentences, avoiding sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-ons.

3.2 Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

3.7 Choose words for effect.

4–5.2 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.

4–5.3 Form and choose between adjectives and adverbs (including comparative and superlative forms), placing them appropriately within the sentence.

4–5.4 Correctly use frequently confused words.

4–5.5 Use idiomatic language.

4–5.7 Use punctuation to separate items in a series.

4–5.11 Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

4–5.12 Use specialized, topic-specific language to convey ideas precisely.

4–5.13 Use figurative language to create images or make comparisons and connections between people, objects, or ideas.

4–5.14 Use punctuation for effect.

4–5.15 Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

6–8.2 Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers.

6–8.4 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

6.8.5 Recognize and correct vague pronouns with unclear or ambiguous antecedents.

6–8.8 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

6–8.9 Set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements with commas, parentheses, or dashes.

6–8.12 Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

6–8.13 Choose words and phrases to express ideas precisely and concisely, avoiding redundancy and wordiness.

# Vocabulary Instruction

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Words are not just words. They are the nexus — the interface — between communication and thought. When we read, it is through words that we build, refine, and modify our knowledge. What makes vocabulary valuable and important is not the words themselves so much as the understandings they afford.

Marilyn Adams<sup>33</sup>

The importance of students acquiring a rich and varied vocabulary cannot be overstated. Research suggests that if students are going to grasp and retain words and comprehend text, they need incremental, repeated exposure to words they are trying to learn in a variety of contexts. When students make multiple connections between new words and their own experiences they develop a nuanced and flexible understanding of the word. In this way, students learn not only what a word means, but how to use that word in a variety of contexts and apply appropriate senses of the word's meaning in order to understand different contexts.<sup>34</sup>

Initially children readily learn words from oral conversation because oral conversations are context rich in ways that aid in vocabulary acquisition: in discussion a small set of words (accompanied by gesture and intonation) is used with great frequency to talk about a narrow range of situations children are exposed to on a day to day basis. Yet as children reach school age, new words are less frequently introduced in conversation, and consequently vocabulary acquisition eventually stagnates by fourth or fifth grade unless students acquire additional words from written context.<sup>35</sup>

Written language, by contrast, contains hundreds of times as many different words as are typically used in conversational language. Yet writing lacks the interactive opportunities and nonverbal context provided by oral conversation so it presents a special challenge towards successful vocabulary acquisition without purposeful and ongoing concentration on vocabulary.<sup>36</sup> In fact, at most, between five and fifteen percent of new words encountered when reading are retained.<sup>37</sup> The weaker a student's vocabulary is, the slighter the gain.<sup>38</sup> Yet research shows that if students are going to understand what they read, they must understand upward of 95 percent of the words.<sup>39</sup>

As this "tipping point" for lexical dexterity is quite challenging for students to reach, every classroom needs to focus on providing students with high quality contextual encounters with vocabulary words that epitomize what they encounter in written texts. The aim should be to expose students to words that have the widest application— concepts that students are likely to meet again and again not just in classroom settings but outside the school walls as well. Some of these highly transferable academic words, often referred to as Tier 2 words, such as qualifying adjectives and adverbs (e.g., important, typically) are used broadly across domains and indeed in contexts that

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<sup>33</sup>Adams, M. (2009). "The Challenge of Advanced Texts: The Interdependence of Reading and Learning," in Hiebert (Ed.), *Reading more, reading better: Are American students reading enough of the right stuff?*, New York: Guilford Publications.

<sup>34</sup>Landauer, TK, McNamara, DS, Dennis, S and Kintsch, W (2007) *Handbook of Latent Semantic Analysis*; Landauer, T. K., & Dumais, S. T. (1997). A solution to Plato's problem: The latent semantic analysis theory of acquisition, induction, and representation of knowledge. *Psychological Review*, 104(2), 211-240; Nagy, W. E., Herman, P., & Anderson, R. C. (1985). Learning words from context. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20, 233-253.

<sup>35</sup> Hayes, D and Ahrens, M: "Vocabulary simplification for children: A special case of "motherese?" *Journal of Child Language*. Vol 15(2), Jun 1988, 395-410

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Daneman & Green, 1986; Herman, Anderson, Person & Nagy, 1987; Sternberg & Powell

<sup>39</sup> Betts, E. A. (1946). *Foundations of reading instruction*. New York, NY: American Book Company; Carver, R. P. (1994). Percentage of unknown vocabulary words in text as a function of the relative difficulty of the text: Implications for instruction. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 26, 413-437; Hu, M., & Nation, P. (2000). Unknown vocabulary density and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 13(1), 403-430; Laufer, B. (1988). What percentage of text-lexis is essential for comprehension. In C. Lauren & M. Nordmann (Eds.), *Special language: From humans to thinking machines*, pp. 316-323. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

transcend the classroom.<sup>40</sup> However, the meanings of most words are specific to their domains—often referred to as Tier 3 words—including those that arise in multiple domains (e.g., chemical constituents, constituent voting patterns). To learn words, students have to read multiple selections from multiple authors within key domains of learning.

The problem is that, in any given instance, it is not the entire spectrum of a word's history, meanings, usages, and features that matters, but only those aspects that are relevant to the surrounding context. That means, first, that the reader's internal representation of the word must be sufficiently complete and well-articulated so that the intended meaning is available and, second, that the reader must understand the context well enough to select the intended meaning – which, in turn, depends on good understanding of the surrounding words of the passage.

Key to students' vocabulary development is building rich and flexible word knowledge. Students need plentiful opportunities to use and respond to the words they learn, through playful informal talk, discussion, and reading or being read to and responding to what is read. Along with attention to academic (Tier 2 words) and content-specific words (Tier 3 words), students benefit from instruction about the connections and patterns in language. Developing in students an analytical attitude toward the logic and sentence structure of their texts alongside an awareness of word parts, word origins, and word relationships provides students with a sense of how language works so that syntax, morphology and etymology can become useful cues to word in building meaning as students encounter new words and concepts in their reading.<sup>41</sup> As students are exposed to and interact with language throughout their school careers, they are able to acquire understandings of word meanings, build awareness of the workings of language, and apply word meanings to comprehend and produce language.

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<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the fact that these words transcend specific disciplines argues for them being taught and used across the curriculum by all teachers.

<sup>41</sup> Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. & Kucan, L. (2008). *Creating robust vocabulary: Frequently asked questions and extended examples*.

## APPENDIX B

# Exemplars of Reading Text Complexity and Quality, ELA K–12

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### Selecting Text Samples

The following text samples primarily serve to exemplify the level of complexity and quality that the *Standards* require all students in a given grade band to engage with while additionally suggesting the breadth of text types that students should encounter. The choices should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar **complexity**, **quality**, and **breadth** for their own classrooms. The process of text selection was guided by these criteria in the following fashion:

- *Complexity.* Appendix A describes in detail a three-part model of measuring text complexity based on qualitative and quantitative indices of inherent text difficulty balanced with educators' professional judgment. In selecting texts to serve as exemplars, the work group began by soliciting contributions from teachers, educational leaders, and researchers who have experience working with students in the grades for which the texts have been selected. These contributors were asked to propose texts that they or their colleagues have used successfully with students in a given grade band. The work group made final selections based in part on whether qualitative and quantitative measures identified by the *Standards* indicated that the proposed texts were of sufficient complexity for the grade band. For those types of texts—particularly poetry and multimedia sources—for which these measures are not as well suited, professional judgment necessarily played a greater role in selection.
- *Quality.* While it is possible to have high-complexity texts of low inherent quality, the work group solicited only texts of recognized value. From the pool of submissions gathered from outside contributors, the work group selected classic or historically significant texts as well as contemporary works of comparable literary merit, cultural significance, and/or content richness.
- *Breadth.* After identifying texts of appropriate complexity and quality, the work group applied a range of secondary criteria to ensure that the samples presented in each band represented as broad a range of sufficiently complex, high-quality texts as possible. Among the factors considered were initial publication date, authorship, and subject matter.

### Copyright and Permissions

For those exemplar texts not in the public domain, the work group is seeking permission from the rights holders for limited use by the Common Core State Standards Initiative of the National Governors Association.

While we await permissions grants from the rights holders, we will make use of texts under a conservative interpretation of Fair Use, which allows limited, partial use of copyrighted text for a nonprofit, educational purpose as long as that purpose does not impair the rights holder's ability to seek a fair return for his or her work.

Please note that these texts are included solely as exemplars in support of the *Standards*. Any additional use of those texts that are not in the public domain, such as for classroom use or curriculum development, requires independent permission from the rights holders. The texts may not be copied or distributed in any way other than as part of the overall Common Core Standards Initiative document.

### Organization and Excerpting

Texts are organized first by category, with narrative texts followed by drama and poetry and then the informational texts. Within each category, the texts are organized by date, usually of first publication, beginning with the oldest and ending with the most recent. In some cases, the date of any given work may be open to debate.

The excerpts given here are meant to stand in for the full work in most instances. Works that are not in the public domain may be represented by short excerpts or snippets while the work group awaits permission from the rights holders for full use.

### **Media Texts**

Selected excerpts are accompanied by annotated links to related media texts available online at the time of the publication of this document.

## **Kindergarten to Grade 1 Exemplar Texts**

### **Narratives**

*Little Bear* by Else Holmelund Minarik, illustrated by Maurice Sendak (1957)

*Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman (1960)

*The Fire Cat* by Esther Averill (1960)

*Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss (1960)

*Put Me in the Zoo* by Robert Lopshire (1960)

*Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel (1971)

*Owl at Home* by Arnold Lobel (1975)

*Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Suçie Stevenson (1987)

*Poppleton in Winter* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Mark Teague (2001)

*Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa* by Erica Silverman, illustrated by Betsy Lewin (2005)

### **Poetry**

“Mix a Pancake” by Christina G. Rossetti (1893)

“Singing-Time” by Rose Fyleman (1919)

“Halfway Down” by A. A. Milne (1924)

“As I Was Going to St. Ives” by Unknown, collected by Peter and Iona Opie (1951)

“Drinking Fountain” by Marchette Chute (1957)

“Poem” by Langston Hughes (1958)

“Wouldn’t You?” by John Ciardi (1961)



“In the Falling Snow” by Richard Wright (1973)

“Covers” by Nikki Giovanni (1980)

“It Fell in the City” by Eve Merriam (1985)

“Celebration” by Alonzo Lopez (1993)

“Two Tree Toads” by Jon Agee (2009)

### **Informational Texts**

*A Tree Is a Plant* by Clyde Robert Bulla, illustrated by Stacey Schuett (1960)

*My Five Senses* by Alike (1962)

*Starfish* by Edith Thacher Hurd, illustrated by Robin Brickman (1962)

*What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page (2003)

*From Seed to Pumpkin* by Wendy Pfeffer, illustrated by James Graham Hale (2004)

*Mouse in a Meadow* by John Himmelman (2005)

*Petting Zoo* by Dorling Kindersley (2005)

*Meet the Meerkat* by Darrin Lunde, illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne (2007)

“The Forest in Spring” in *National Geographic Young Explorer!* April 2009 (2009)

“Our Good Earth” in *National Geographic Young Explorer*, April 2009 (2009)

### **Read-Aloud Narratives**

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum (1900)

*Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, illustrated by Garth Williams (1932)

*Mr. Popper’s Penguins* by Richard Atwater (1938)

*Finn Family Moomintroll* by Tove Jansson, translated by Elizabeth Portch (1948)

*A Story A Story* by Gail E. Haley (1970)

*The Paper Crane* by Molly Bang (1985)

### **Read-Aloud Poetry**

“The Owl and the Pussycat” by Edward Lear (1871)

“April Rain Song” by Langston Hughes (1932)

“The Fox’s Foray” – Traditional rhyme in Opie / *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book* (1955)

*Over in the Meadow* by John Langstaff, illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky (1957)

*Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin* by Lloyd Moss, illustrated by Marjorie Priceman (1995)

### **Read-Aloud Informational Texts**

*The Year at Maple Hill Farm* by Alice and Martin Provensen (1978)

*Fire! Fire!* by Gail Gibbons (1984)

*Follow the Water from Brook to Ocean* by Arthur Dorros (1991)

*Amazing Whales!* by Sarah L. Thomson (2005)

*Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life* by Molly Bang & Penny Chisholm, illustrated by Molly Bang (2009)

### **Grades 2–3 Exemplar Texts**

#### **Narratives**

*My Father’s Dragon* by Ruth Stiles Gannett, illustrated by Ruth Chrisman Gannett (1948)

*Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima (1955)

*Amos & Boris* by William Steig (1971)

*The Treasure* by Uri Shulevitz (1978)

*The Stories Julian Tells* by Ann Cameron (1981)

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (1985)

*Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens (1995)

*The Raft* by Jim LaMarche (2000)

*The Lighthouse Family: The Storm* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Preston McDaniels (2002)

*The One-Eyed Giant (Book One of Tales from the Odyssey)* by Mary Pope Osborne (2002)

#### **Poetry**

“Autumn” by Emily Dickinson (1893)

“Who Has Seen the Wind” by Christina G. Rossetti (1893)

“Afternoon on a Hill” by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1917)

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost (1923)

“Something Told the Wild Geese” by Rachel Field (1934)

“Grandpa’s Stories” by Langston Hughes (1958)

“A Bat Is Born” by Randall Jarrell (1964)

“Knoxville, Tennessee” by Nikki Giovanni (1968)

“Weather” by Eve Merriam (1969)

“Eating While Reading” by Gary Soto (1995)

### **Informational Texts**

*A Medieval Feast* by Aliko (1983)

*Maps & Globes* by Jack Knowlton, pictures by Harriet Barton (1985)

*Sunshine Makes the Seasons* by Franklyn M. Branley (1985)

*From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons (1991)

*Throw Your Teeth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions Around the World* by Selby B. Beeler, illustrated by

G. Brian Karas (1998)

*So You Want to Be President?* By Judith St. George, illustrated by David Small (2000)

*Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs* by Kathleen V. Kudlinski, illustrated by S.D. Schindler (2005)

*Bat Loves the Night* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies (2008)

*Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11* by Brian Floca (2009)

*Where Do Polar Bears Live?* by Sarah L. Thomson, illustrated by Jason Chin (2010)

### **Read-Aloud Narratives**

“How the Camel Got His Hump” in *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling (1902)

*The Thirteen Clocks* by James Thurber (1950)

*The Cricket in Times Square* by George Selden, illustrated by Garth Williams (1960)

*The Search for Delicious* by Natalie Babbitt (1969)

*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis (1999)

### **Read-Aloud Poetry**

“The Jumblies” by Edward Lear (1871)

“The Pied Piper of Hamelin” by Robert Browning (1888)

“Your World” by Georgia Douglas Johnson (1918)

“The Song of the Jellicles” by T.S. Eliot (1939)

“Fireflies” by Paul Fleischman, illustrated by Eric Beddows (1988)

### **Read-Aloud Informational Texts**

*Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman (1987)

*A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder* by Walter Wick (1997)

*The Museum Book: A Guide to Strange and Wonderful Collections* by Jan Mark, illustrated by  
Richard Holland (2007)

*What the World Eats* by Faith D’Aluisio, photographed by Peter Menzel (2008)

*Wild Tracks! A Guide to Nature’s Footprints* by Jim Arnosky (2008)

### **Grades 4–5 Exemplar Texts**

#### **Narratives**

*Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1865)

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)

*The Black Stallion* by Walter Farley (1941)

*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1943)

*Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt (1975)

“Zlateh the Goat” by Isaac Bashevis Singer (1984)

*M. C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton (1993)

*The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich (1999)

*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis (1999)

[Also a read-aloud narrative at Grades 2–3]

*Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin (2009)

#### **Poetry**

“The Echoing Green” from *Songs of Innocence* by William Blake (1789)

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus (1883)

“Casey at the Bat” by Ernest Lawrence Thayer (1888)

“A Bird Came Down the Walk” by Emily Dickinson (1893)

“Fog” by Carl Sandburg (1916)

“Dust of Snow” by Robert Frost (1923)

“Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf” by Roald Dahl (1982)

“They Were My People” by Grace Nichols (1988)

“Words Free As Confetti” by Pat Mora (1996)

### **Informational Texts**

*Discovering Mars* by Melvin Berger (1992)

*Let’s Investigate Marvelously Meaningful Maps* by Madelyn Wood Carlisle (1992)

*Hurricanes: Earth’s Mightiest Storms* by Patricia Lauber (1996)

*The Kid’s Guide to Money* by Steve Otfinoski (1996)

*Toys: Amazing Stories behind Some Great Inventions* by Don Wulffson (2000)

“Good Pet, Bad Pet” by Elizabeth Schleichert from *Ranger Rick* (2002)

“Ancient Mound Builders” by E. Barrie Kavash from *Cobblestone* (2003)

*About Time: A First Look at Time and Clocks* by Bruce Koscielniak (2004)

*England the Land* by Erinn Banting (2004)

*A History of US* by Joy Hakim (2005)

*My Librarian Is a Camel* by Margriet Ruurs (2005)

*Horses* by Seymour Simon (2006)

*Quest for the Tree Kangaroo* by Sy Montgomery (2006)

*Volcanoes* by Seymour Simon (2006)

*We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* by Kadir Nelson (2008)

“Kenya’s Long Dry Season” by Nellie Gonzalez Cutler from *Time for Kids* (2009)

“Seeing Eye to Eye” by Leslie Hall from *National Geographic Explorer* (2009)

“Computer” from *Britannica Junior Encyclopedia* (2010)

“Telescopes” by Ronan, Colin A. from *The New Book of Knowledge* (2010)

“Underground Railroad” by Henrietta Buckmaster from *The New Book of Knowledge* (2010)

### **Grades 6–8 Exemplar Texts**

#### **Narratives**

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1869)

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (1876)

*A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L'Engle (1962)

*The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper (1973)

*Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep (1975)

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor (1976)

“The People Could Fly” from *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* by Virginia Hamilton (1985)

*The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks* by Katherine Paterson (1990)

“Eleven” from *Woman Hollering Creek: And Other Stories* by Sandra Cisneros (1992)

*Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad* by Rosemary Sutcliff (1993)

### **Drama**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare (1596)

*The Diary of Anne Frank* by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett (1958)

### **Poetry**

“Paul Revere's Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1861)

“O Captain, My Captain” by Walt Whitman (1865)

“Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll (1872)

“Twelfth Song of Thunder” from *The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony* Navajo tradition (1887)

“The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson (1893)

“The Song of Wandering Aengus” by W. B. Yeats (1899)

“Chicago” from *Chicago Poems* (1914) by Carl Sandburg

“Stopping by a Wood on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost (1923)

“I, Too” by Langston Hughes (1925)

“The Book of Questions” by Pablo Neruda (1973) translated by William O'Daly

“Oranges” from *Black Hair* (1985) by Gary Soto

“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” from *Acolytes* (2007) by Nikki Giovanni

### **Informational Texts (English Language Arts)**

“Allegory of the Cave” from *The Republic* by Plato (380 BCE) translated by G.M.A. Grube

“Letter on Thomas Jefferson” by John Adams (1822)

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass (1845)

“Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln (1863)

“Lee Surrenders to Grant” by Horace Porter (1865)

“Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” by Winston Churchill (1940)

*Travels with Charley: In Search of America* by John Steinbeck (1962)

“Address to the Nation on Civil Rights” by John F. Kennedy (1963)

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (1969)

“Address to Students at Moscow State University” by Ronald Reagan (1988)

## **Grades 9-10 Exemplar Texts**

### **Narratives**

The Odyssey by Homer (8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) translated by Robert Fagles

“The Nose” by Nikolai Gogol (1836) translated by Ronald Wilks

“The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry (1906)

*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (1939)

*Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (1953)

“I Stand Here Ironing” by Tillie Olsen (1956)

*The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara (1975)

*The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan (1989)

*In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez (1994)

*The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak (2005)

### **Drama**

*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare (1592)

*The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams (1944)

*Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco (1959) translated by Derek Prouse

*Master Harold...and the Boys* by Athol Fugard (1982)

### **Poetry**

“Song” by John Donne (1635)

“Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1810)

“The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe (1845)

“We Grow Accustomed to the Dark” by Emily Dickinson (1893)

“Loveliest of Trees” by A. E. Houseman (1896)

“Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” by James Weldon Johnson (1900)

“Domination of Black” by Wallace Stevens (1916)

“Yet Do I Marvel” by Countee Cullen (1925)

“Women” by Alice Walker (1970)

“I Am Offering This Poem to You” by Jimmy Santiago Baca (1977)

### **Informational Texts (English Language Arts)**

“Preface to Lyrical Ballads” by William Wordsworth (1800)

“Speech to the Second Virginia Convention” by Patrick Henry (1775)

“Second Inaugural Address” by Abraham Lincoln (1865)

“State of the Union Address” by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1941)

“I Am an American Day Address” by Learned Hand (1944)

“Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience” by Margaret Chase Smith (1950)

“Address at the March on Washington” by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963)

“Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech” by Elie Wiesel (1986)

“A Quilt of a Country” by Anna Quindlen (2001)

### **Grades 11-12 Exemplar Texts**

#### **Narratives**

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813)

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (1848)

“At Home” by Anton Chekov (1887) translated by Constance Garnett

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)

*As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner (1930)

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (1937)



*Black Boy* by Richard Wright (1945)

*The Adventures of Augie March* by Saul Bellow (1949)

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (1970)

*Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina García (1992)

*The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003)

## **Drama**

*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare (c1611)

*The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (1895)

*Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (1949)

*A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry (1959)

## **Poetry**

“A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” by John Donne (1633)

“Ode on a Grecian Urn” by John Keats (1820)

“Song of Myself” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman (c1860)

“Because I Could Not Stop for Death” by Emily Dickinson (1890)

“Mending Wall” by Robert Frost (1914)

“Ode to My Suit” by Pablo Neruda (1954) translated by Margaret Sayers Peden

“Sestina” by Elizabeth Bishop (1983)

“The Latin Deli: An Ars Poetica” by Judith Ortiz Cofer (1988)

“Demeter’s Prayer to Hades” by Rita Dove (1995)

“Man Listening to Disc” by Billy Collins (2001)

## **Informational Texts (English Language Arts)**

*The Declaration of Independence* by Thomas Jefferson (1776)

*The Crisis* by Thomas Paine (1776)

*Walden* by Henry David Thoreau (1854)

“Society and Solitude” by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1857)

“The Fallacy of Success” by G.K. Chesterton (1909)

*The American Language* by H.L. Mencken (1938)

“Politics and the English Language” by George Orwell (1946)

“Abraham Lincoln and the Self-Made Myth” by Richard Hofstadter (1948)

“Letter from Birmingham City Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963)

“Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan (1990)

“Take the Tortillas Out of Your Poetry” by Rudolfo Anaya (1995)