Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

The Learning Progressions

Grades K–12

elevated achievement GROUP

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Introduction

When the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects were adopted in 2010, their stated purpose was to provide a set of standards for the states to use in supporting all students to be college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school. These K–12 standards were developed out of the recognition of the value for consistent, real-world learning goals, and the need for all students, regardless of where they go to school, to be prepared for college, career, and life. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

College and Career Ready

Built on the foundation of previous work by the states, researchers, and other international models, these standards lay out a vision of what it means to be a successful and literate person in the 21st Century.

> "It is true that the future will be full of jobs that do not exist now and challenges we cannot even imagine yet, never mind anticipate accurately. But, whatever those challenges turn out to be, I can guarantee you that they will not be met by people without strong quantitative skills, people who cannot construct a sound argument, people who know little of history or geography or economics, people who cannot write well." (Tucker, 2013)

They define the skills and understandings that students need to have and be able to demonstrate in the classroom and then transfer into college and the workplace. In other words, college and career ready students will need to:

- Readily undertake close reading of all types of text.
- Habitually perform critical reading that is necessary when pulling evidence from large amounts of information.
- Actively seek wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high quality texts.
- Reflexively demonstrate cogent reasoning and use of evidence.

(National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

Fewer, Higher, Clearer

The goal to have a common set of standards is not new. Educators have wrestled for decades with the idea with various efforts being abandoned due to process, politics, and ideological wars. In order to avoid previous pitfalls, the authors of the standards adopted the mantra, "fewer, clearer, higher." (Rothman, 2011)

> **"I think these standards have the potential to lead the parade in a different direction: toward taking as evidence of your reading ability not your score on a specific skill test—but the ability to use the information you gain from reading, the fruits of your labor, to apply to some new situation or problem or project."**
>
> *— P. David Pearson, University of California–Berkley*

Fewer—narrowing the scope of content in each grade to a set of skills and understandings that lead to a set of college and career readiness standards

Clearer—the specific, coherent, and progressive development of skills based on how students' literacy knowledge, skill, and understanding develop over time

Higher—designed to be as high as the highest state standards and internationally benchmarks, as well as articulating the literacy requirements in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects

When determining the specific knowledge and skills, the authors utilized research about the essentials needed for post-secondary success. To ensure these standards were as high as the highest performing nations, they used international benchmarks as their guide. The believed this process would lead to a leaner, more-focused set of standards that could effectively drive policy and practice. (Rothman, 2011)

Efficient Structure and Organization

At first glance, the notion that these standards are fewer in number compared to the previous state-specific standards may seem misleading. However, a key design consideration was focus on results rather than means with the ultimate being career and college ready students. If a skill or topic did not meet this criteria, it was not included in these standards, thus culling out anything that was not necessary. Then these essentials were carefully organized into a structure that is patterned, parallel, and progressive from kindergarten to high school.

The Strands of Literacy

The structure of the standards is based on the strands of literacy. To that end, a logical outcome for students who meet the standards will be having the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening to be creative, purposeful, and successful in their expression of language. In other words, this structure supports students in developing the skills to gather information from text, think critically about that information, and produce their thinking around the information.

- **Reading:** With equal emphasis on text complexity and comprehension, students are expected to discern more from and make fuller use of evidence accessed from a variety of texts.
- **Writing:** Students are expected to apply the information they gathered in reading by writing to argue, to inform, or to narrate.
- **Speaking and Listening:** Students are expected to utilize formal and informal skills when communicating and acquiring oral information.
- **Language:** The "rules" standards, students are expected to develop the skills needed for effective oral and written communication, as well as, the robust vocabulary expected for college and the workforce.

For all grades there are standards in each of the strands with reading being sub-divided into standards for literature and standards for informational text. In grades K-5 there is an additional section for reading, the standards for Foundational Skills. The grade-specific standards are organized as single levels for each grade from kindergarten to eight grade. Then as grade-bands that span two years for high school. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

Anchor Vs. Grade-Specific Standards

The authors started their writing by beginning with the end in mind. The College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards were developed first. These CCR standards define the ultimate expectations in each strand and anchor the grade-specific standards. These standards define the end-of-year expectations and are structured to build on each other from kindergarten to the CCR. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

Literacy in the Content Areas

In the real world we are expected to read, write, listen, and speak in everything we do. Therefore, it is unrealistic and unfair for students to only be supported in developing these literacy skills during English language arts instruction. These standards clearly articulate a shared responsibility for literacy development. In the elementary grades, there are expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language across a range of subjects and text types. For grades 6–12 the standards are unequivocal. There are distinct reading and writing standards for all content areas that correlate to the reading and writing standards for English language arts. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

THE STANDARDS	
DO focus on what is most essential for a literate person in the 21st Century to know and be able to do	**DO NOT** state all or even most of what can or should be taught, nor how teachers should teach it
DO set grade-specific standards, providing clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students	**DO NOT** define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations or the supports needed for English learners or students with special needs
DO specify the knowledge and skills to be taught in each grade, based on state and international comparisons and the collective experience and professional judgment of educators and researchers	**DO NOT** dictate the specific way that literacy should be taught or the order of concepts within a grade level

Clear Learning Progressions

With the CCR standards serving as the ultimate goal, the grade-level standards were intentionally crafted as a clear and cumulative path from kindergarten to college and career readiness.

> "The standards for college and career readiness then became the anchor standards for the entire program. The standards writers developed a careful sequence or 'staircase' as they called it, of corresponding grade-level standards that would lead students to the standards for college and career readiness.
>
> In doing so, the standards writers paid careful attention to learning progressions. In recent years, research and practitioners have outlined models that describe the knowledge and skills within a subject area and the sequence in which they typically develop over time." (Rothman, 2011)

There are 32 Career and College Readiness standards, ten for Reading, ten for Writing, six for Speaking and Listening, and six for Language. Each CCR anchor standard has a corresponding grade-level standard that translates the CCR into grade-appropriate skills. The only caveat is that there are 20 reading standards for each grade level (ten for literature and ten for informational text) which share the same 10 CCR standards. And, the anchor standards for Reading and Writing also apply to the standards for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

An Example of Progression

CCR Reading 1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

11–12.RL.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
9–10.RL.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
8.RL.1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
7.RL.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
6.RL.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
5.RL.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
4.RL.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
3.RL.1	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
2.RL.1	Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why,* and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
1.RL.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
K.RL.1	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

Higher Metacognition

Metacognition is a word that gets thrown around a lot in educational research, where it is often touted as a powerful key to deeper and more meaningful learning. In practice, however, the concept is often vague and less than useful. "Thinking about thinking" is not exactly a helpful strategy to put in practice in the classroom.

But metacognition can't be dismissed as just a trendy buzzword. Recent research has shown that students who were taught metacognitive strategies made an average of eight months more progress than students who were not. And that was over the course of just one year. (Emeny, 2013) It's clear from this data that metacognition is important, but what is it really, and how can it be taught?

Metacognition and Student Ownership

Metacognition requires students to examine, externalize, and apply their thinking, such as:

- "What it means to learn something,
- Awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses with specific skills or in a given learning context,
- Planning what's required to accomplish a specific learning goal or activity,
- Identifying and correcting errors, and
- Preparing ahead for learning processes." (Chick, 2017)

Metacognition is related to the concept of student ownership—a mindset that leads to elevated academic achievement and that teachers can actively develop in themselves and in their students. Students who own their learning are not just "doing school" or "understanding school" on a superficial level. They can state what they are learning and why, can explain how they learn best, can articulate when they are learning and when they are struggling, and understand their role in any academic setting. This is one type of "thinking about thinking" that leads to greater academic success. (Crowe & Kennedy, 2018)

Supporting Metacognition in Literacy

For conceptual clarity, the authors divided the standards into the four literacy strands but make it clear that skills within the standards are closely connected and should be integrated in the classroom.

> "To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technical society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new." (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a)

And, these standards cannot be met unless:

- There is integration of the skills across the literacy and the content-areas.
- Students are clear about what skill they are learning and how they will utilize it in the present and future learning.
- Students are aware of and can articulate their learning and thinking processes.

In short, students must take ownership of their learning.

However, what support for metacognition often looks like in literacy is a lot of teacher-led modeling and thinking out loud of comprehension skills. Then giving students texts to read and write about in the hope that they will emulate what was modeled and apply the strategies to future texts. But, what's missing from this approach is supporting students to think about the connection between the skills they are using to gather information from a text, analyze it, and produce their own thinking about it. And most importantly how students can continue to integrate those skills.

Most teachers will tell you that in practice, neglecting the opportunity for students to reflect does not work very well. And it really doesn't work for students who may already be struggling. For many students, it's better to "show them the [metacognitive] toolkit and teach them how to use it one tool at a time…teaching one's brain to control the thought processes it has for the purpose of directing it towards the management of their own learning." (Emeny, 2013)

Fostering metacognition requires a balance of explicit instruction, teacher modeling, student-centered exploration, and responsive coaching that helps students first learn the skills and thought processes to access, analyze, and communicate textual information and then to use them on their own. These metacognitive skills come naturally to some students but not to others. Teachers must play an active role in teaching them to support students to own their learning.

Integration Leads to Metacognition

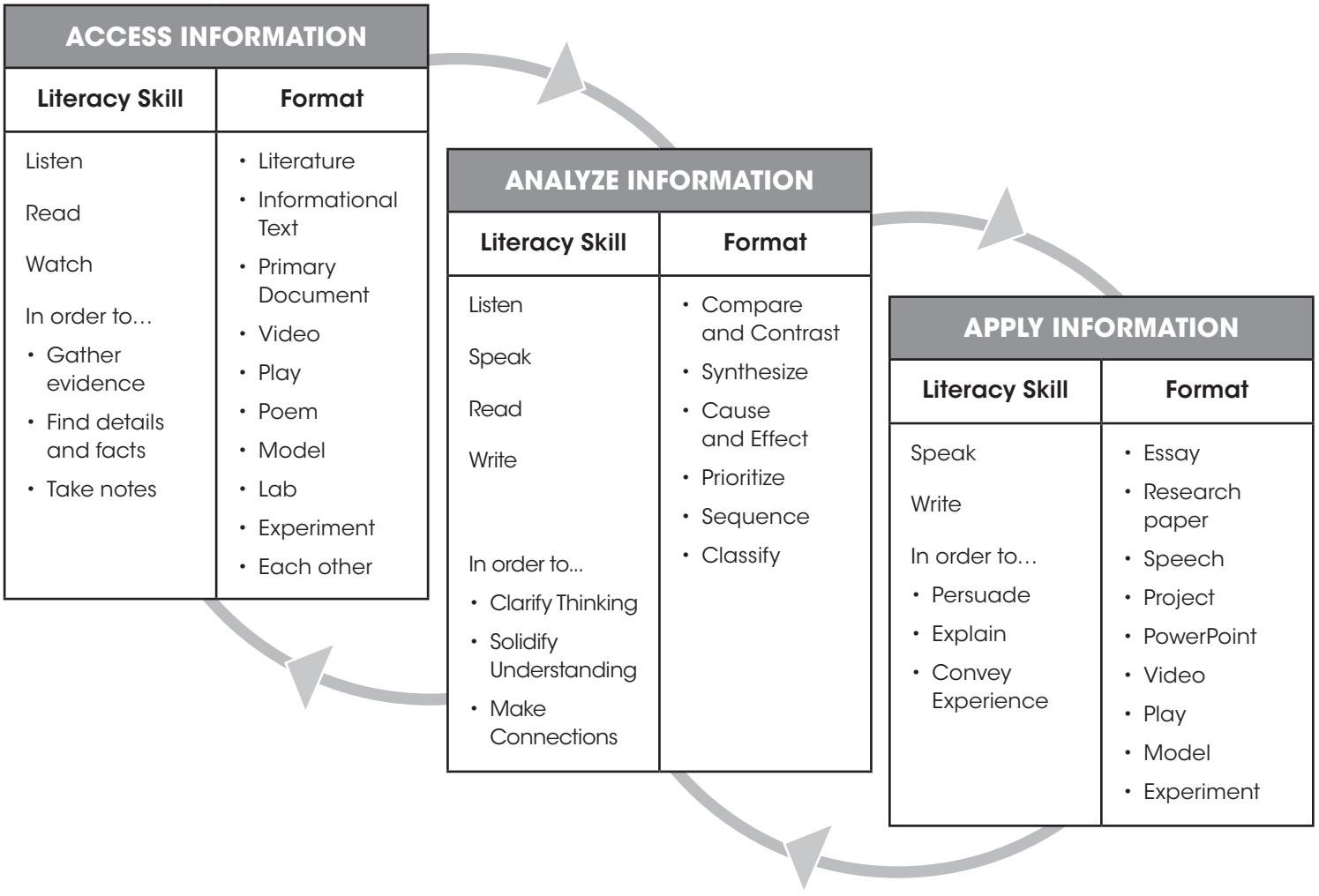
These standards have set higher expectations for students to do more with texts. They expect students to be able to:

- Access information by reading and researching a variety of sources.
- Analyze information by critiquing, clarifying, examining, and discussing it.
- Apply their new learning by communicating it to others through written and spoken language.

> "Writing about text was more powerful than just reading it or reading it and rereading it/studying it/ discussing it."
>
> – Timothy Shanahan

These expectations can be met through units and lessons that provide an integrated approach and that support conceptual redundancy of skills-based learning outcomes that drive all learning. (Crowe and Kennedy, 2018)

A Framework for an Integrated Unit

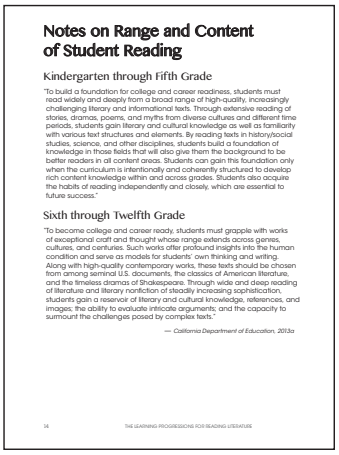


Using This Book

Designed as a tool to be used in developing curriculum and planning instruction, the rest of this book will focus on the embedded learning progressions for all literacy standards, attempting to clearly show how they build on one another as they progress to college and career readiness.

The pages that follow are organized by strand, then content-area and include the following information for each of the Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:

1. The **Notes on Range and Content** from the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects



Notes on Range and Content of Student Reading

Kindergarten through Fifth Grade

"To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in those fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can gain this foundation only when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades. Students also acquire the habits of reading independently and closely, which are essential to future success."

Sixth through Twelfth Grade

"To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students' own thinking and writing. Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal U.S. documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts."

— *California Department of Education, 2013a*

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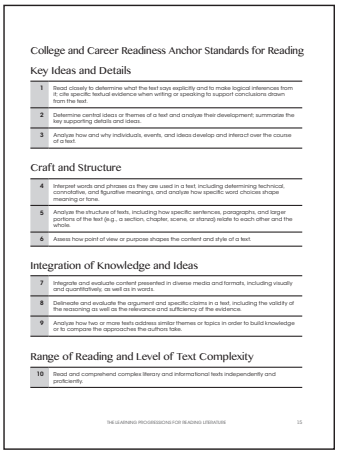
2. The **Career and College Readiness Anchor Standards** for each strand



College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5	Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

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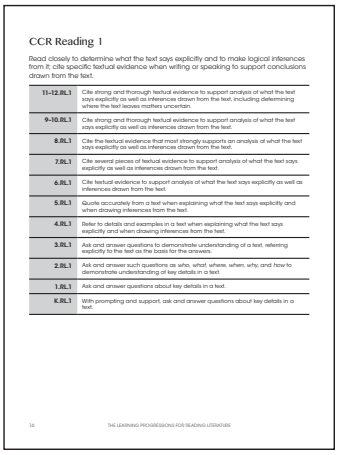
3. A **Learning Progression** for each standard, which shows how the expectations develop across each grade level



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