

Understanding the Common Core Major Shifts in English Language Arts

1. In Reading, the major advances are the shift away from literature-focused standards to a balance of literature and informational texts to reflect college- and career-ready expectations. There is also a greater focus on text complexity and at what level students should be reading.
2. In Writing, there is a strong emphasis on argument and informative/ explanatory writing, along with an emphasis on writing about sources or using evidence to inform an argument.
3. The Common Core also include Speaking and Listening expectations, including a focus on formal and informal talk, which can be done through presentations and group work.
4. The Language standards put a stress on both general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
5. The Common Core also addresses reading, writing and literacy across the curriculum, and includes literacy standards for science, social studies and technical subjects. These standards complement rather than replace content standards in those subjects, and are the responsibility of teachers in those specific disciplines, making literacy a shared responsibility across educators.

Reading Strand

1. Progressive development of reading comprehension; students gain more from what they read.
2. Emphasize the importance of grade-level texts that are of appropriate difficulty and are increasingly sophisticated.
3. Reading Standards include exemplar texts (stories and literature, poetry, and informational texts) that illustrate appropriate level of complexity by grade.

Writing Strand

1. Expect students to compose arguments and opinions, informative/explanatory pieces, and narrative texts.
2. Focus on the use of reason and evidence to substantiate an argument or claim.
3. Emphasize ability to conduct research – short projects and sustained inquiry.
4. Require students to incorporate technology as they create, refine, and collaborate on writing.
5. Include student writing samples that illustrate the criteria required to meet the standards (See standards' appendices for writing samples)

Speaking and Listening

1. Focus on speaking and listening in a range of settings, both formal and informal – academic, small-group, whole-class discussions.
2. Emphasize effective communication practices.
3. Require interpretation and analysis of message as presented through oral, visual, or multimodal formats.

Language

1. Include conventions for writing and speaking.
2. Highlight the importance of vocabulary acquisition through a mix of conversation, direct instruction, and reading.
3. To be addressed in context of reading, writing, speaking and listening.