

READING	Expanded Definitions
Balancing informational and literary texts	Teachers must include a balance of informational and literary texts in all aspects of the elementary ELA curriculum. Depending on the particular grade level, 50-55% of what students read is informational (science, social studies, the arts, etc.).
Emphasizing informational text 6-8 ----- Emphasizing informational text 9-12	<p>Common Core State Standards require the use of informational texts throughout the school day. ELA classes in grades 6-8 must emphasize literary nonfiction as the informational text within their classrooms. All other content areas must emphasize the reading of informational text within their disciplines. The combination of all informational reading (ELA and all other content areas) should equal 55% of a student's total classroom reading.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Common Core State Standards require the use of informational texts throughout the school day. ELA classes in grades 6-12 must emphasize literary nonfiction as the informational text within their classrooms. All other content areas must emphasize the reading of informational text within their disciplines. The combination of all informational reading (ELA and all other content areas) should equal 70% of a student's total classroom reading.</p>
Building knowledge systematically around topics and themes	Curricular or instructional level “texts—within and across grade levels—need to be selected around topics or themes that systematically develop the knowledge base of students. Within a grade level, there should be an adequate number of titles on a single topic that would allow students to study that topic for a sustained period. The knowledge students have learned about particular topics in early grade levels should then be expanded and developed in subsequent grade levels to ensure an increasingly deeper understanding of these topics. Students in the upper elementary grades will generally be expected to read these texts independently and reflect on them in writing. However, students in the early grades (particularly K–2) should participate in rich, structured conversations with an adult in response to the written texts that are read aloud, orally comparing and contrasting as well as analyzing and synthesizing, in the manner called for by the <i>Standards</i> . Preparation for reading complex informational texts should begin at the very earliest elementary school grades. “(Common Core State Standards, p. 33)
Knowledge in the disciplines	Content area teachers must incorporate reading and writing instruction into their curriculum in order for students to learn through domain specific text. Students are expected to use of multiple texts to compare themes, points of view, texts by same author, digital media with text(s), primary sources with other texts, etc.
Use of multiple texts and Comparing and integrating multiple texts	*See each individual section for the CCSS related to each particular grade level, grade band, or content area.

<p>Asking text-based questions to focus rigorous conversations and writing assignments dependency on comprehension of text</p>	<p>Questions should be grounded in the text and need to be worth thinking about and answering. Questions should ask students to think about what they have heard or read and then ask them to draw evidence from the text in support of their ideas about the reading.</p> <p><i>A good answer will require thinking about the text carefully and finding evidence in the text. It will not rely on students' different knowledge backgrounds and the experiences they bring with them to school.</i></p> <p>The majority of questions posed to students must be based on the text under consideration. This includes read-alouds. Discussions, activities, and questions after the reading has taken place should draw on a full range of insights and knowledge contained within the text in terms of both content and language.</p> <p>Adapted from the Publishers' Criteria for the CCSS in ELA and Literacy, Grades K-2.</p>
<p>Sophisticated teacher questioning which requires close analysis of (short) texts with evidence to back up claims and conclusions</p>	<p>In order to demand close attention to the details of text and its influence on the reader, a high-quality sequence of text-dependent questions needs to be presented to students. High-quality text-dependent questions will often move beyond what is directly stated to require students to make nontrivial inferences beyond what is explicitly stated in the text to what logically follows from the evidence in the text. An effective set of questions will begin with relatively simple questions requiring attention to specific words, details, and arguments and then move on to explore the impact of those specifics on the text as a whole. Good questions will often linger over specific phrases and sentences to ensure careful comprehension. Evidence will play a crucial role in student writing, speaking, and listening, as an increasing command of evidence in texts is essential to making progress in reading as well as the other literacy strands.</p> <p>Adapted from the Publishers' Criteria for the CCSS in ELA and Literacy, Grades 3-12</p>
<p>Increasing text complexity</p>	<p>In order to prepare students for the complexity of college and career ready texts, it is critical for students at each grade level to have access to the same, grade-appropriate, high-quality text that is not paraphrased into simpler language. All students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered. For students reading below grade level to have opportunities to read these challenging texts, teachers need to create more time and space in the curriculum for this close and careful reading and provide appropriate and necessary scaffolding and supports so that it is possible. Access to grade-appropriate, high-quality text is not sufficient. Students <i>at every grade level</i> must have explicit instruction in comprehending more complex texts in order to be prepared for the higher levels of reading required for college and career.</p> <p><i>Instruction will require multiple close readings, in-depth vocabulary study, and critical thinking about the ideas and concepts in text.</i></p> <p>At the middle and high school levels, it is vital that the all teachers have an understanding of the characteristics of complex text, an ability to evaluate the complexity of reading material which supports deep content knowledge, and an understanding of what explicit instruction of complex texts looks like in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Exchanging "mile-wide and inch-deep" content/instruction in the disciplines for skill acquisition and deep knowledge-building will result in more students having more choices for post-high school education.</i></p> <p>Adapted from Vermont's Transition to the Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts, 2011</p>

WRITING	Comments/Details
Writing to/from sources	<p>Much of a student's writing must emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument rather than personal writing in response to prompts that ask students to detail personal experiences or opinions. Student writing needs to analyze and synthesize sources and present careful analysis, well-defended claims, and clear information. To complete a "writing to/from source" assignment, the student must have read and analyzed a text to respond to the prompt.</p> <p>A typical writing prompt for students after reading Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" might ask students to discuss the idea of freedom and what it means to her/him (the student). However, a "writing to/from sources" assignment would be: What does freedom mean to the author? How does the author define freedom?</p> <p>In this assignment students cannot answer the question without having read and analyzed the text and used evidence from it to support his/her conclusion.</p> <p>Adapted from the Publishers' Criteria for the CCSS in ELA and Literacy, Grades 3-12</p>
Increase focus on argument opinion and informative writing	<p>The CCSS cultivates the development of three mutually reinforcing writing capacities: writing to persuade, to explain, and to convey real or imagined experience. With the demands of college and career readiness, the need to emphasize informational writing is overwhelming. In addition, a combination of short constructed-responses to text-dependent questions and analytic writing must be included. Short constructed responses build content knowledge and provide opportunities for reflection on a specific aspect of a text or texts. This type of writing allows students to build sophisticated understandings of vocabulary, text structure and content and to develop needed proficiencies in analysis.</p> <p>All analytic writing should emphasize the use of evidence and allow teachers to assess students' ability to paraphrase, infer and integrate the ideas they have gleaned from what they have read. It is important to note that all forms of writing are not independent of each other. For example, arguments and explanations often include narrative elements to "hook" the audience.</p> <p>Adapted from the PARCC Model Content Frameworks: English Language Arts/Literacy grades 3-11, 2011</p>
<p>All writing should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • argument writing • informative/ explanatory writing 	<p>With the demands of college and career readiness, the need to emphasize informational writing is overwhelming. A combination of short constructed-responses to text-dependent questions and analytic writing must be included in the curriculum. Short constructed responses build content knowledge and provide opportunities for reflection on a specific aspect of a text or texts. This type of writing allows students to build sophisticated understandings of vocabulary, text structure and content and to develop needed proficiencies in analysis.</p> <p>All analytic writing should emphasize the use of evidence and allow teachers to assess students' ability to paraphrase, infer and integrate the ideas they have gleaned from what they have read.</p> <p>Adapted from the PARCC Model Content Frameworks: English Language Arts/Literacy grades 3-11, 2011</p>
Multiple short research projects	<p>Students must have extensive practice with short, focused research projects in addition to more sustained research efforts in grades 9-12. Short research projects typically take one to two weeks of instruction and occur at a minimum quarterly.¹ This enables students to repeat the research process many times and develop the expertise needed to conduct research independently.</p> <p>¹ PARCC Model Content Frameworks: English Language Arts/Literacy grades 3-11, 2011</p>

LANGUAGE	Comments/Details
Address the vocabulary gap	<p>Students must develop academic vocabulary (Tier 2 words) which is prevalent in complex texts throughout reading, writing, listening, and speaking instruction. Students need to learn how to gather as much information as they can about the meaning of these words from the context of how the words are being used in the text. Teachers must provide direct instruction while offering support for vocabulary when students are not likely to be able to figure out their meanings from the text alone. As the meanings of words vary with the context, the more varied the context provided to teach the meaning of a word is, the more effective the results will be. Selected text and subsequent instruction should require students to think about words: how and why specific words are used, how changing one word can change the meaning of a text, how one word can have varied but related meanings based on context, and why another word might be more appropriate. Additionally, teachers need to provide opportunities both in and out of classroom contexts for instruction that is driven by the diverse vocabulary levels of students, including providing more instruction for students with weaker vocabularies rather than offering them fewer words than their peers.</p> <p>Application of vocabulary skills: Students need to engage in academic discussions. Teachers need to plan engaging discussions around grade-level topics and texts that students have studied and researched in advance. Speaking and listening prompts and questions should offer opportunities for students to share preparation, evidence, and research. Activities should highlight strengthening students' listening skills as well as their ability to respond.</p> <p>Adapted from the Publishers' Criteria for the CCSS in ELA and Literacy, Grades 3-12</p>