



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS GUIDANCE

### ELA Standards Overview

In July 2010, the District of Columbia adopted the [Common Core State Standards](#). In doing so, the District of Columbia joined 42 other states in formally signing on to the state-led initiative, which was coordinated by the [National Governor's Association](#) (NGA) and the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) (CCSSO).

With the aim of ensuring students across the country graduate from high school prepared to succeed in postsecondary courses and workforce training programs, the Common Core State Standards were created in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts and define the knowledge and skills students should acquire in their pre-K through grade 12 academic careers.

#### The grade-level standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable, and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based.

In the District of Columbia, the new standards began implementation in the 2011-12 school year, and was fully implemented in the 2014-15 school year.

### ELA Shifts

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy build on the best of existing standards and reflect the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in college, career, and life. Understanding how the standards differ from previous standards—and the necessary shifts they call for—is essential to implementing the standards well.

The following are key shifts called for by the Common Core:

#### **Shift 1: Regular practice with complex texts and their academic language**

Rather than focusing solely on the skills of reading and writing, the ELA/literacy standards highlight the growing complexity of the texts students must read to be ready for the demands of college, career, and life. The standards call for a staircase of increasing complexity so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. The standards also outline a progressive development of reading comprehension so that students

	<p>advancing through the grades are able to gain more from what they read.</p> <p><b>Shift 2: Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational</b></p> <p>The Common Core emphasizes using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information. Rather than asking students questions they can answer solely from their prior knowledge and experience, the standards call for students to answer questions that depend on their having read the texts with care.</p> <p><b>Shift 3: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction</b></p> <p>Students must be immersed in information about the world around them if they are to develop the strong general knowledge and vocabulary they need to become successful readers and be prepared for college, career and life. Informational texts play an important part in building students’ content knowledge. Further, it is vital for students to have extensive opportunities to build knowledge through texts so they can learn independently.</p> <p>Read more about the ELA shifts <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>EdReports Review Process</b></p>	<p>EdReports reviewers use <a href="#">review tools</a> to create free, evidence-rich reports of programs that are comprehensive (year-long) and coherent (lessons connected to one another day-to-day, unit-to-unit), with a sequenced learning path to prepare students for grade-level mastery. These reports are developed to provide educators, stakeholders, and leaders with independent, evidence-rich information about the quality of instructional materials from those who will be using them in classrooms.</p> <p>Expert educators use the tools to evaluate full sets of instructional materials against criteria. The tools are built from the experience of educators, curriculum experts, and leading rubric developers and organizations that have conducted reviews of instructional materials, lessons, and tasks.</p> <p>Each report found on <a href="#">EdReports.org</a> represents hundreds of hours of work by educator reviewers. Working in teams of four to five, reviewers use educator-developed review criteria, evidence guides, and key documents to thoroughly examine their sets of materials. After receiving more than 25 hours of training on the EdReports review tools and process, teams meet weekly over the course of several months to share evidence, come to consensus on scoring, and write the evidence that ultimately is shared on the website.</p> <p>All team members look at every grade and indicator, ensuring that the entire team considers the program in full. Final reports are the result of multiple educators analyzing every page, calibrating all findings, and reaching a unified conclusion.</p>
<p><b>Characteristics of High-Quality ELA Materials</b></p>	<p>The EdReports ELA review criteria identifies the indicators for high-quality instructional materials. The review criteria supports a sequential review process that reflect the importance of alignment to the standards then consider other high-quality attributes of curriculum as recommended by educators.</p> <p>For ELA, our review criteria evaluates materials based on:</p> <p><b>Text Quality and Complexity, and Alignment to Standards with Tasks Grounded in Evidence</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are quality anchor texts at grade-level text complexity? Do they represent the rigor and balance addressed in the standards?</li> <li>● Are the tasks and questions in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language aligned to grade-level standards? Do they support student learning?</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Knowledge with Texts, Vocabulary, and Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do the materials build students’ knowledge across topics and content areas?</li> <li>● Do questions and tasks build to culminating tasks that demonstrate students’ ability to analyze components of texts and topic?</li> <li>● Do the materials promote mastery of grade-level standards by the end of the year?</li> </ul> <p><b>Instructional Supports and Usability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do the materials support teachers to fully utilize the curriculum, understand the skills and learning of their students, and support a range of learners?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Related ELA Links and Resources</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Why Materials Matter Research and Data</a>  <a href="#">EdReports Review Tools</a>  <a href="#">OSSE Literacy and English Language Arts</a>  <a href="#">OSSE Common Core State Standards</a></p>