Common Core State Standards – Highlights for Language Arts

Overview

- The Standards are divided into three sections
  - A comprehensive K-5 section
  - Two content-specific sections for 6-12
    - English Language Arts
    - History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects (HST)
- The K-5 and 6-12 ELA strands focus on Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening
- The 6-12 HST strands focus on Reading & Writing
- Standards exist within each grade for K-8; standards are banded together for grades 9/10 & 11/12
- Who is responsible for Language Arts Standards?
  - K-5 lists standards for across the curriculum
  - 6-12 standards are covered in two content areas (ELA & HST)

Reading: Text complexity and comprehension

- Equal emphasis is placed on the sophistication of text and the sophistication of reading skill
- Standard #10 provides a “staircase” of increasing text complexity
- Students are expected to show an ever-growing ability to read critically, increase the number of connections (between ideas and texts), consider a wider range of textual evidence, and develop understanding of inconsistencies, ambiguities, poor reasoning, etc. in texts

As stated in the Standards: “To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genre, culture, 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 words, these texts should be chosen 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 non-fiction 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.”

Writing: Text types, responding to reading & research

- Standards include an emphasis on process writing skills (planning, revising, editing, & publishing)
- Standards also define more specific writing types (or modes): arguments, informative/explanatory, narrative, etc.
- Standard #9 focuses on the importance of writing-reading connections, requiring students to draw upon literary and informational texts in their writing.
- Skills essential for research are incorporated throughout the document

As stated in the standards: “For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought or felt…students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to know how to combine elements of different kinds of writing – for example, to use narrative strategies within argument and explanation within narrative – to produce complex and nuanced writing. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality first-draft text under a tight deadline as well as the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it.”
Speaking & Listening
- Standards include necessary skills for formal presentation as well as:
  o Interpersonal skills
  o Collaborative skills
  o Integration of information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources
  o Use of media and technology to enhance communication
  o Adapt speech to context and task

Language: Conventions, effective use & vocabulary
- Standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English
- Standards also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice
- Vocabulary Standards focus on understanding words/phrases, their relationships and their nuances, and acquiring new vocabulary

Defining College & Career Ready – According to CCSS, students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language:
  ❖ Demonstrate independence
  ❖ Build strong content knowledge
  ❖ Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
  ❖ Comprehend as well as critique
  ❖ Value evidence
  ❖ Use technology and digital media strategically and capably
  ❖ Come to understand other perspectives and cultures

Design Considerations for CCSS
❖ Focus on results rather than means
❖ An Integrated Model of Literacy
❖ Research and medial skills blended into the Standards
❖ Shared responsibility for students’ literacy development
❖ The Standards aim to align instruction with the following framework regarding the distribution of literary and informational passages by grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Literary</th>
<th>Informational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


❖ The Standards also outline a distribution of core purposes and types of writing by grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>To persuade</th>
<th>To explain</th>
<th>To convey experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>40%</td>
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