

# An Introduction to the Common Core Standards

Denise Jordan, Assistant Principal  
The Anderson School,  
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# What are the Common Core Standards?

- A set of **learning standards** that provide a clear picture of what students need to learn each year in order to graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and careers.
- The standards are a set of **expectations** for the knowledge and skills students need.
- The standards don't tell teachers what to teach and how to teach it.



# Where did they come from?

- The standards were created by educators and education experts based on research from the top-performing countries.
- The National Governors Association went through a 2-year process to develop them.
- 45 states have adopted them.
- They are designed to reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills our students need:
  - The ability to think creatively,
  - to solve real world problems,
  - to make effective arguments,
  - and to engage in debate.



# What is changing in the ELA Standards?

- In addition to an emphasis on stories and literature, students will read more texts that **provide facts and background knowledge** in areas including science and social studies.
- There will also be an increased emphasis on building a strong **academic vocabulary** so that students can read and understand challenging material.
- Students will read **more challenging texts** and be asked more questions that will require them to refer to what they have read (called using text evidence).
- **Text complexity** is key. This refers to texts that are increasingly longer and more complex in terms of the concepts, the vocabulary, the sentence structure, and the way the text is organized.



# Is anything mandated by the Common Core ELA Standards?

- The Common Core Standards require some critical types of content:
  - classic myths from around world,
  - foundational U.S. documents such as the Constitution,
  - classic American literature,
  - Shakespeare.

The rest of the choices are up to the teachers.



# What is the focus of the Writing Standards?

- There is a strong focus on students being able to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence. Opinion writing—which is a basic form of argument—extends down into the earliest grades.
- Research—both short, focused projects and longer term in depth research—is emphasized throughout the standards but most prominently in the writing strand .
- Both research and argument are emphasized because so much of work like this is needed for the current and future workplace.
  - Short, focused projects and longer term projects are commonly required in the workplace.
  - Written analysis and presentation of findings is often critical in the workplace.



# So what about the Math Standards?

- The Math standards focus on understanding concepts deeply, and in order to do that, the focus will shift to certain **key topics**. There is an emphasis of **depth** over **breadth**.
- Making connections between topics, within the grade and across the grades, is key.
- Students need a mastery of complex ideas. They must prove that they know why the math works and how it works.
- Students must develop speed and accuracy. This means practice, with multiple problems on the same idea.
- Students need to know how to use math in the real world (know which math to use in which situation).
- Students need to become strong, efficient problem solvers.



# Standards for Mathematical Practice

## 1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Check answers to problems using a different method

Ask, "Does this make sense?"

Understand the approaches of others to solving complex problems

## 2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

Represent a situation with symbols

Understand the relationships of quantities in a problem

Create a representation of the problem, attending to the meaning of the quantities

Flexibly use different operations

## 3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

Understand and use what they know to construct their arguments

Make conjectures and use logic to test them

Analyze situations by breaking them into cases, and can recognize and use counterexamples

Justify their conclusions and communicate them

## 4. Model with mathematics.

Apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life

## 5. Use appropriate tools strategically.

Make sound decisions about which tool to use when (from pencil to ruler to protractor, etc.)

## 6. Attend to precision.

Communicate precisely to others

Use clear definitions in discussion with others and in their own reasoning

Take care to specify units of measure and label correctly

Calculate accurately

Explain carefully

## 7. Look for and make use of structure.

Notice patterns or structures

Step back for an overview and shift perspective

## 8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Notice if calculations are repeated

Look for efficient shortcuts

Attend to details while overseeing the process



# Key Points in Mathematics

- The K-5 standards provide students with a *solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals*—which help young students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts and procedures, and move into applications.
- The K-5 standards build on the best state standards to provide detailed guidance to teachers on how to navigate their way through knotty topics such as *fractions, negative numbers, and geometry*, and do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade.
- The standards stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding, to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels - rather than the current practices by which many students learn enough to get by on the next test, but forget it shortly thereafter, only to review again the following year.
- Having built a strong foundation K-5, students can do hands-on learning in geometry, algebra and probability and statistics. Students who have completed 7th grade and mastered the content and skills through the 7th grade will be *well-prepared for algebra* in grade 8.
- The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich *preparation for high school mathematics*.
- The high school standards call on students to *practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges*; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.
- The high school standards set a *rigorous definition of college and career readiness*, by helping students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.
- The high school standards *emphasize mathematical modeling*, the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations, understand them better, and improve decisions. For example, the standards state: "Modeling links classroom mathematics and statistics to everyday life, work, and decision-making. It is the process of choosing and using appropriate mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations, to understand them better, and to improve decisions. Quantities and their relationships in physical, economic, public policy, social and everyday situations can be modeled using mathematical and statistical methods. When making mathematical models, technology is valuable for varying assumptions, exploring consequences, and comparing predictions with data."



In the next section, a few of the ELA standards have been laid out in order, from K to 9, so that you can see the progression from grade to grade. The Anderson School accelerates its curriculum, so we follow the standards for the next instructional year (first grade teachers use second grade standards, for example).



## Standards for Reading Literature, across the grades

K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details.</li> <li>• With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students retell stories, including key details, and show that they understand the lesson or moral of a story.</li> <li>• Students identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students retell stories and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.</li> <li>• Students acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students recount stories and determine the central message, lesson, or moral, explaining how it is developed in the text.</li> <li>• Students distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students determine the theme of a story, play, or poem from details in the text and summarize the text.</li> <li>• Students compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are told, including the difference between first- and third-person accounts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students determine the theme of a story, play, or poem from details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic, and students summarize the text.</li> <li>• Students describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students determine the theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. Students also provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Students explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. Students also provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Students analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot. Students also provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Students analyze how differences in the POV of characters and the audience create such effects as suspense or humor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details. Students provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>• Students analyze a particular POV or cultural experience reflected in a non-US work of literature.</li> </ul>

**Texts become more challenging and complex as the students move up through the grades.**



Standards build on each other from grade to grade, become increasingly challenging, and expect more independent work from the students.

## Reading Literature

### Kindergarten

- With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details.
- With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.



Standards build on each other from grade to grade, become increasingly challenging, and expect more independent work from the students.

Reading Literature	
Kindergarten	Grade One
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details.</li><li>• With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students retell stories, including key details, <b>and show that they understand the lesson or moral of a story.</b></li><li>• <b>Students identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.</b></li></ul>



Standards build on each other from grade to grade, become increasingly challenging, and expect more independent work from the students.

Reading Literature		
Kindergarten	Grade One	Grade Two
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details.</li><li>• With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students retell stories, including key details, and show that they understand the lesson or moral of a story.</li><li>• Students identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students retell stories and <b>determine their central message, lesson, or moral.</b></li><li>• Students acknowledge differences in the <b>points of view of characters,</b> including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.</li></ul>



Standards build on each other from grade to grade, become increasingly challenging, and expect more independent work from the students.



Reading Literature			
Kindergarten	Grade One	Grade Two	Grade Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details.</li><li>• With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students retell stories, including key details, and show that they understand the lesson or moral of a story.</li><li>• Students identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students retell stories and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.</li><li>• Students acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students recount stories and determine the central message, lesson, or moral, <b>explaining how it is developed in the text.</b></li><li>• Students <b>distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator</b> or those of the characters.</li></ul>



## Reading for Information

K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With help from the teacher, students ask and answer questions about key details in a text.</li> <li>• With help from the teacher, students identify what person, place, thing, or idea a picture shows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students ask and answer questions about key details in a text.</li> <li>• Students use the illustrations and details in a text to describe key ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students ask and answer such questions as <i>who</i>, <i>what</i>, <i>where</i>, <i>when</i>, <i>why</i>, and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.</li> <li>• Students explain how specific images or illustrations are useful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students ask and answer questions about what they read by referring directly to parts of the text.</li> <li>• Students use information gained from images or illustrations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.</li> <li>• Students interpret information presented in charts, graphs, or other visual sources of information and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from text.</li> <li>• Students draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students cite evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Students integrate information presented in different media or formats (such as visually or through numbers) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students cite several pieces of evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Students compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each portrayal of the subject (such as how the delivery of a speech affects its impact).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students cite evidence from the text that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Students evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media (such as print or digital text, video, or multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students cite strong and thorough evidence from the text to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• Students analyze various accounts of a subject told in different media (such as a person's life story recounted in print, video, and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.</li> </ul>



## Reading for Information

### Grade 4

- Students refer to **details and examples** in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- Students **interpret information** presented in **charts, graphs, or other visual sources** of information **and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text.**

### Grade 5

- Students **quote accurately** from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from text.
- Students **draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.**

### Grade 6

- Students **cite evidence** from the text to **support analysis** of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Students **integrate information** presented in different media or formats (such as visually or through numbers) as well as in words **to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.**



# What other standards are represented in the Common Core?

- In addition to the Reading Literature, Reading for Information, and Informational Writing standards (highlighted in this document) there are also standards for Listening, Speaking, Narrative Writing, Opinion and Argumentative Writing, and Language standards (which include conventions). Science is included in the ELA standards, and there are new draft standards for Social Studies.
- Go to <http://www.corestandards.org/> to see the standards in full.



# Additional Resources for Parents

- DOE Family Page with Common Core Resources  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/ForFamilies/default.htm>
- New York State Education Department's EngageNY site, with Parent Guides to the Common Core Standards and other resources  
<http://engageny.org/parent-guides-to-the-common-core-standards>
- National PTA Parents' Information on the Common Core  
<http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3008&RDtoken=10519&userID>

