

PA Core Standards: English Language Arts

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty as the school year unfolds. Educators know that every school year there are students who require support in addressing unfinished learning from prior grades, a challenge that will be felt more prominently in the 2020–21 school year. It is vitally important that educators are supported to make deliberate instructional choices that allow all students to effectively engage with grade-level work.

The most effective and equitable way to support students in their learning is to ensure that the vast majority of time is spent engaging with grade-level content, remediating with precision and accelerating as needed. It is entirely possible to hold high expectations for all students while addressing unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work. Since time is a scarce commodity in classrooms — made more limited by anticipated closures and remote or hybrid learning models in the fall of 2020 — strategic instructional choices about which content to prioritize must be made.¹

Assessing students at the start of the year will identify learning gaps and provide data to inform grade level instruction — as well as incorporating both remediation and acceleration along the way. Diagnostic Assessments determine student strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills. Administering diagnostic assessments permits the instructor to intervene at the point where students begin to struggle or when they are performing below grade level expectations (running record, informal reading assessments, surveys, initial writing prompts, Classroom Diagnostic Tests [CDT]). Diagnostic assessments allow teachers to adjust the curriculum to meet the unique needs of all students. While some concepts have greater emphasis in a particular year, all standards deserve a defined level of instruction. Neglecting concepts may result in learning gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

This guidance document is designed to identify and define areas of high-level focus in English Language Arts instruction supported by key PA Academic Standards. Note that while all standards deserve a defined level of instruction, neglecting key concepts may result in learning gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

The focus areas detailed in each grade level, as stated in the [Pennsylvania State Literacy Plan](#) (PaSLP), offer guidance as to where instruction should occur to meet 2020-2021 critical grade level expectations of the standards:

- Reading at the secondary level is characterized by increasing text complexity and focusing on informational text.
- Strategic writers create writing appropriate to task, i.e., on-demand, drafting or redrafting over time.
- Students must become effective speakers and listeners.
- Key concepts for the knowledge of language include understanding how language functions, making effective choices for meaning, and comprehending more completely when reading or listening.

¹ Adapted from 2020–21 Priority Instructional Content in English Language Arts/literacy and Mathematics, Student Achievement Partners/Achieve the Core. May 2020

GRADE 4 FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION (2020-2021)

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Focus Areas of Instruction	PA Academic Standards
<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning new words, facts, and ideas from reading, as well as interpreting and summarizing texts. • Reading and discussing a variety of texts from multiple genres. • Shifting gradually to deeper comprehension, combining literacy skills and content knowledge. • Engaging in word study instruction and fluency practice as needed. • Interacting with text through close reading, analysis, and interpretation. 	<p>CC.1.1.4.D Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words...</p> <p>CC.1.1.4.E Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension...</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.A / CC.1.3.4.A Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text / Determine a theme of a text from details in the text; summarize the text.</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.B / CC.1.3.4.B Refer to details and examples...to support what the text says explicitly and make inferences / Cite relevant details...to support what the text says explicitly and make inferences.</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.C / CC.1.3.4.C Explain events, procedures, ideas...including what happened and why, based on specific information... / Describe in depth a character, setting, or event...drawing on specific details...</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.D / CC.1.3.4.D Compare and contrast an event or topic told from two different points of view.</p>
<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing routinely over extended periods (research, reflection, and revision) and shorter periods (a single sitting) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. • Engaging in systematic and explicit instruction in basic writing skills including handwriting, spelling, and grammar. • Employing detail in writing, sustaining a focus, and producing well-organized writing. • Gathering information, evaluating sources, citing evidence, and responding analytically. • Focusing on the writing process as a means of producing and improving writing. 	<p>CC.1.2.4.E / CC.1.3.4.E Use text structure to interpret information... / Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose and refer to the structural elements of each...</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.F / CC.1.3.4.F Determine the meaning of words and phrases...including figurative language.</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.G / CC.1.3.4.G Interpret various presentations of information within a text...and explain how the information contributes to an understanding... / Make connections between the text of a story or drama... identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.H / CC.1.3.4.H Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points... / Compare and contrast similar themes, topics, and patterns of events...including texts from different cultures.</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.J / CC.1.3.4.J Acquire and use grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being and that are basic to a particular topic.</p> <p>CC.1.2.4.K / CC.1.3.4.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases...choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.</p>
<p>Speaking & Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening attentively and critically, responding thoughtfully, and building upon the ideas of others. • Participating in a variety of structured conversations: partner, small group, whole class. • Engaging in collaborative communication and taking part in discussions. 	<p>CC.1.2.4.L / CC.1.3.4.K Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text...reading independently and proficiently / Read and comprehend literary fiction...reading independently and proficiently.</p> <p>CC.1.4.4.S Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and informational texts. (CC.1.4.4.S-analytical writing-encompasses all writing domains).</p> <p>CC.1.4.4.T With guidance and support...develop and strengthen writing...by revising and editing.</p> <p>CC.1.4.4.V Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects...</p>
<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying conventions of standard English including grammar, usage, and mechanics, as well as using language to convey meaning effectively. • Determining or clarifying the meaning of words through context clues, understanding word relationships and nuances in meanings, acquiring and using content specific words, and understanding the structure of words. 	<p>CC.1.4.4.X Write routinely over extended time...for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes...</p> <p>CC.1.5.4.A Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions...</p> <p>CC.1.5.4.C Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.</p> <p>CC.1.5.4.D Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly with adequate volume, appropriate pacing, and clear pronunciation.</p> <p>CC.1.5.4.E Differentiate between contexts that require formal English versus informal situations.</p> <p>CC.1.5.4.G Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English...</p>