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.

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

GRADE 7 FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION (2020-2021)

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Focus Areas of Instruction	PA Academic Standards
Reading • Interacting with text through close reading, analysis, and interpretation. • Engaging and interacting with the text (deep reading of text) to discern not only the craft of the writer, but the connectivity to other texts and citing evidence to support a conclusion.	**CC.1.2.7.A / CC 1.3.7.A** *Determine two or more central ideas…analyze their development; provide objective summary… / Determine a theme or central idea…analyze its development…provide objective summary…* **CC.1.2.7.B / CC.1.3.7.B** *Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.* **CC.1.2.7.C / CC.1.3.7.C** *Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas… / Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact and how setting shapes the characters or plot.* **CC.1.2.7.D / CC.1.3.7.D** *Determine author's point of view or purpose…analyze how author distinguishes his or her position… / Analyze how an author…contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators...*
Writing • Writing routinely over extended periods (research, reflection, and revision) and shorter periods (a single sitting) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. • Employing detail in writing, sustaining a focus, and producing well-organized writing. • Gathering information, evaluating sources, citing evidence, and responding analytically. • Building knowledge on a subject through research projects and responding analytically to literary and informational sources.	**CC.1.2.7.E / CC.1.3.7.E** *Analyze the structure of the text through evaluation of the author's use of graphics, charts, and the major sections… / Analyze how the structure or form of a text contributes to its meaning.* **CC.1.2.7.F / CC.1.3.7.F** *Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used…including interpretation of figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.* **CC.1.2.7.G / CC.1.3.7.G** *Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version... / Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, stage or multimedia version…* **CC.1.2.6.H / CC.1.3.6.H** *Evaluate an author's argument by examining claims and determining if they are supported by evidence / Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of the approaches to similar themes and topics as well as their use of additional literary elements.* **CC.1.2.7.J / CC.1.3.7.J** *Acquire and use accurately…general academic and domain-specific words…gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.* **CC.1.2.7.K / CC.1.3.7.I** *Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases…choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.*
Speaking & Listening • Listening attentively and critically, responding thoughtfully, and building upon the ideas of others. • Assuming responsibility for small-group discussions. • Talking about texts in order to develop knowledge of academic language and conceptual understanding. • Discussing and making connections among multiple texts using intra-, inter-, and extratextual questions.	**CC.1.2.7.L / CC.1.3.7.K** *Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text…reading independently and proficiently / Read and comprehend literary fiction…reading independently and proficiently.* **CC.1.4.7.S** *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction. (**CC.1.4.7.S-analytical writing-encompasses all writing domains**).* **CC.1.4.7.T** *With some guidance…develop/strengthen writing… revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.* **CC.1.4.7.V** *Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources…* **CC.1.4.7.W** *Gather relevant information…using search terms effectively; assess the credibility…and quote or paraphrase…while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.* **CC.1.4.7.X** *Write routinely over extended time…(time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time…(a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.*
Language • Applying conventions of standard English include grammar, usage, and mechanics, as well as using language to convey meaning effectively. • Determining or clarifying the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words through context clues, understanding word relationships and nuances in meanings, and understanding the structure of words. • Acquiring and using general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gathering vocabulary knowledge.	**CC.1.5.7.A** *Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.* **CC.1.5.7.C** *Analyze main ideas and supporting details…and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text…* **CC.1.5.7.D** *Present claims…emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner…* **CC.1.5.7.E** *Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.* **CC.1.5.7.G** *Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking…*