



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 9-10 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"> 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. Reading and analyzing seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance, including how they address related themes and concepts. 	<p>CC.1.2.9-10.A / CC.1.3.9-10.A Determine central idea...and analyze its development...including how it emerges and is shaped and refined...provide objective summary... / Determine theme/central idea...analyze in detail its development...including how it emerges and is shaped and refined...provide objective summary...</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.B / CC.1.3.9-10.B Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on an author's explicit assumptions and beliefs...</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.C / CC.1.3.9-10.C Apply strategies to analyze/interpret/evaluate how an author unfolds an analysis/series of ideas/events, including the order the points are made, introduced, developed, and draw connections / Analyze how complex characters develop...interact, advance plot, develop theme.</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.D / CC.1.3.9-10.D Determine author's point of view and analyze how rhetoric advances the point of view / Determine point of view and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.</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. Establishing and sustaining a precise controlling idea/claim/counterclaim/position, choosing sophisticated organizational strategies, including a clear and well-defined introduction, body, and conclusion with relevant evidence. Choosing an effective style, tone, and point of view. Building knowledge on a subject through research projects and responding analytically to literary and informational sources. 	<p>CC.1.2.9-10.E / CC.1.3.9-10.E Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs... / Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text...</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.F / CC.1.3.9-10.F Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.G / CC.1.3.9-10.G Analyze various accounts of subject in different mediums...which details are emphasized... / Analyze the...subject/key scene in different mediums...what is emphasized/absent...</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.H / CC.1.3.9-10.H Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing the validity of reasoning and relevance of evidence / Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.I Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance...</p>
<p>Speaking & Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening attentively and critically, responding thoughtfully, and building upon the ideas of others. 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. 	<p>CC.1.2.9-10.J / CC.1.3.9-10.J Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases...demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge...</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.K / CC.1.3.9-10.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases... choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.</p> <p>CC.1.2.9-10.L / CC.1.3.9-10.K Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text...reading independently and proficiently / Read and comprehend literary fiction...reading independently and proficiently.</p>
<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating a command of standard English: grammar, usage, mechanics, precise language, and varied sentence structures. 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. 	<p>CC.1.4.9-10.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.1.4.9-10.S-analytical writing- encompasses all writing domains).</p> <p>CC.1.4.9-10.T Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting...</p> <p>CC.1.4.9-10.V Conduct short/sustained research projects to answer a question...or solve a problem; narrow/broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources...demonstrating understanding...</p> <p>CC.1.4.9-10.W Gather relevant information from multiple...sources...assess the usefulness of each source...integrate information...selectively...avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.</p> <p>CC.1.4.9-10.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.</p> <p>CC.1.5.9-10.A Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>CC.1.5.9-10.D Present information...clearly, concisely, and logically...</p> <p>CC.1.5.9-10.E Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.</p> <p>CC.1.5.9-10.G Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking...</p>