

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 1 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"> Developing foundational skills (book handling, print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics/word recognition, and fluency). Developing word recognition skills, vocabulary, and comprehension skills/strategies. Practicing fluency daily focusing on repeated readings and many opportunities to practice reading. Engaging in direct, explicit, systematic, differentiated instruction and interventions. Participating in daily structured language and literacy learning task opportunities and collaborative learning. 	<p>CC.1.1.1.B <i>Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print...</i></p> <p>CC.1.1.1.C <i>Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes)...</i></p> <p>CC.1.1.1.D / CC.1.1.1.E <i>Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words... / Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension...</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.A / CC.1.3.1.A <i>Identify the main idea and retell key details of text / Retell stories including key details and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.B / CC.1.3.1.B <i>Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.C / CC.1.3.1.C <i>Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas... / Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story using key details.</i></p> <p>CC.1.3.1.D <i>Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.E / CC.1.3.1.E <i>Use various text features...to locate key facts or information... / Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information...</i></p>
<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing for different purposes and audiences. Engaging in systematic and explicit instruction in basic writing skills including handwriting, spelling, and grammar. Writing daily with guidance for a variety of purposes. Focusing on the writing process as a means of improving writing. 	<p>CC.1.2.1.G / CC.1.3.1.G <i>Use the illustrations and details...to describe its key ideas / Use illustrations and details...to describe characters, setting, or events.</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.H / CC.1.3.1.H <i>Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text / Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.K / CC.1.3.1.I <i>Determine... the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases...</i></p>
<p>Speaking & Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging daily in one-to-one, small group, and whole class conversations including discussions and collaborative communication. Establishing skills of collaborating, being a good listener, taking turns, and supporting ideas with facts. Developing and asking questions about topics being studied and texts being read. 	<p>CC.1.2.1.J / CC.1.3.1.J <i>Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading, and being read to, and responding to texts, including words that signal connections and relationships...</i></p> <p>CC.1.2.1.L / CC.1.3.1.K <i>Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text, reading independently and proficiently / Read and comprehend literature, reading independently and proficiently.</i></p> <p>CC.1.4.1.B / CC.1.4.1.H / CC.1.4.1.N <i>Identify and write about one specific topic / Form an opinion by choosing among given topics / Establish who and what the narrative will be about.</i></p> <p>CC.1.4.1.C / CC.1.4.1.I / CC.1.4.1.O <i>Develop the topic with two or more facts / Support the opinion with reasons related to the opinion / Include thoughts and feelings to describe experiences and events.</i></p>
<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics, as well as learning other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. Determining or clarifying the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening and reading. Developing an understanding of new words within context with prompting and support. Acquiring new words with explanations that make understanding more concrete. Encountering new words with high frequency. 	<p>CC.1.4.1.D / CC.1.4.1.J / CC.1.4.1.P <i>Group information and provide some sense of closure / Create an organizational structure that includes reasons... / Recount two or more appropriately sequenced events...</i></p> <p>CC.1.4.1.E / CC.1.4.1.K / CC.1.4.1.Q <i>Choose words and phrases for effect / Use a variety of words...</i></p> <p>CC.1.4.1.F / CC.1.4.1.L / CC.1.4.1.R <i>Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling...</i></p> <p>CC.1.4.1.X <i>Write routinely over extended time...for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes...</i></p> <p>CC.1.5.1A <i>Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.</i></p> <p>CC.1.5.1B <i>Confirm understanding of a text read aloud...by answering questions about key details...</i></p> <p>CC.1.5.1C <i>Ask and answer questions...to gather additional information or clarify something...</i></p> <p>CC.1.5.1D <i>Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas...</i></p> <p>CC.1.5.1E <i>Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.</i></p> <p>CC.1.5.1G <i>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English...</i></p>