

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 3 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"> Continuing the development of word recognition skills, vocabulary, and comprehension skills/strategies. Practicing fluency daily focusing on repeated readings and continued 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. Learning new words, facts, and ideas from reading, as well as interpreting and summarizing texts. Reading and discussing a variety of interesting and appropriate texts from multiple genres. 	<p>CC.1.1.3.D Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words...</p> <p>CC.1.1.3.E Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension...</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.A / CC.1.3.3.A Determine the main idea...recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea / Determine the central message, lesson, or moral in literary text....</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.B / CC.1.3.3.B Ask and answer questions about the text and make inferences from text; refer to text to support responses.</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.C / CC.1.3.3.C Explain how a series of events, concepts, or steps in a procedure is connected within a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect / Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.D / CC.1.3.3.D Explain the point of view of the author.</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.E / CC.1.3.3.E Use text features...to locate and interpret information... / Refer to parts of texts when writing or speaking about a text using such terms as chapter, scene, and stanza and describe how each successive part builds upon earlier sections.</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.1.2.3.F / CC.1.3.3.F Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in grade-level text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral meaning as well as shades of meaning among related words.</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.G / CC.1.3.3.G Use information gained from text features to demonstrate understanding of a text / Explain how specific aspects of...illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story...</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.H / CC.1.3.3.H Describe how an author connects sentences and paragraphs in a text to support particular points / Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters.</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 text being read. 	<p>CC.1.2.3.J / CC.1.3.3.J Acquire and use grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.K / CC.1.3.3.K Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases...choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.</p> <p>CC.1.2.3.L / CC.1.3.3.L Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text...reading independently and proficiently / Read and comprehend literary fiction...reading independently and proficiently.</p> <p>CC.1.4.3.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.1.4.3.S-analytical writing-encompasses all writing domains).</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 words encountered through listening and reading. Appreciating non-literal meanings, shadings of meaning, and relationships to other words. Understanding new words within context and with explanations. 	<p>CC.1.4.3.T With guidance and support...develop and strengthen writing...by revising and editing.</p> <p>CC.1.4.3.X Write routinely over extended time...for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes...</p> <p>CC.1.5.3.A Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions...</p> <p>CC.1.5.3.C Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate detail.</p> <p>CC.1.5.3.D Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details; speak clearly with adequate volume, appropriate pacing, and clear pronunciation.</p> <p>CC.1.5.3.E Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.</p> <p>CC.1.5.3.G Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English...</p>