

CCSS INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE GUIDE



This guide provides concrete examples of what the Core Actions for implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in grades K-2 look like in daily planning and practice. It is designed as a developmental tool for teachers and those who support teachers and can be used to observe a lesson and provide feedback or to guide lesson planning and reflection. For all uses, refer to the CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy (corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).

The Shifts required by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy are¹:

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
2. Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

Date:

Class:

Teacher:

Unit or Lesson:

Standards Addressed:

The Core Actions should be evident in planning and observable in instruction. For each lesson, artifacts or observables might include: lesson plan, text(s) and materials, tasks, teacher instruction, student discussion and behavior, and student work. This guide includes two independent sections: Reading Comprehension and Reading Foundational Skills. Use the appropriate section based on the lesson being taught; it is not expected that both a reading foundational skills lesson and a reading comprehension lesson would be observable during each ELA or Literacy lesson. When observing only a portion of either type of lesson, some indicators may be appropriately left blank.

CORE ACTION 1: Focus each lesson on a high quality text (or multiple texts).



INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
<p>A. A majority of read aloud time is spent reading, listening to, speaking, or writing about text(s).</p>		<p>Notes:</p>
<p>B. The text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the grade and time in the school year.²</p>		
<p>C. The text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information; where appropriate, the texts are richly illustrated.</p>		

¹ Refer to Common Core Shifts at a Glance (achievethecore.org/ELALitShifts) for additional information about the Shifts required by the CCSS.
² Refer to achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/text-complexity/ for text complexity resources.

CORE ACTION 2: Employ questions and tasks that are text dependent and text specific.



INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. Questions and tasks address the text by attending to its particular structure, concepts, ideas, events and details.	 1 Questions and tasks do not refer directly to the text and instead elicit opinion answers. 2 3 Questions and tasks repeatedly return students to the text to build understanding. 4	Notes:
B. Questions and tasks require students to use details from text to demonstrate understanding and to support their ideas about the text. These ideas are expressed through both written and spoken responses.	 1 Questions and tasks can be answered without reference to evidence from the text. 2 3 Questions and tasks require students to cite evidence from the text. 4	
C. Questions and tasks attend to the academic language (i.e., vocabulary and syntax) in the text.	 1 Questions and tasks do not explicitly attend to academic language or focus exclusively on domain-specific vocabulary. 2 3 Questions and tasks intentionally support students in developing facility with academic language. 4	
D. Questions are sequenced to guide students in delving deeper into text and graphics. These inferences should relate to key ideas of the text.	 1 Questions do not follow a clear sequence or are all at the same level of depth. 2 3 Questions are sequenced to support and challenge students in deep examination of the text. 4	

CORE ACTION 3: Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.



INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. The teacher uses strategies to keep all students persevering with challenging tasks.	Students persist in efforts to seek evidence for their responses by returning to the text or recalling portions of the text read aloud.	 1 2 3 4	Notes:
B. The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations and plans tasks where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking.	Students build on each other's observations or insights about the text when discussing or collaborating.	 1 2 3 4	
C. The teacher acts on knowledge of individual students to promote progress toward independence in grade-level literacy tasks.	When possible, students demonstrate independence in completing literacy tasks.	 1 2 3 4	

Scale:
 1 = The teacher does not provide students opportunity and very few students demonstrate this behavior.
 2 = The teacher provides students opportunity inconsistently and few students demonstrate this behavior.
 3 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and some students demonstrate this behavior.
 4 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and all students demonstrate this behavior.



READING
FOUNDATIONAL
SKILLS

CORE ACTION 4: Ensure that instruction and materials explicitly and systematically provide all students with the opportunity to master foundational skills.

INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED		Notes:
A. The foundational skills being taught are aligned to the standards for this grade.	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Foundational skills are unconnected to the standards for the grade.</p>	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Foundational skills addressed fully align with the standards for the grade.</p>	
B. Instruction and materials address foundational skills by attending to phonological awareness, concepts of print, letter recognition, phonetic patterns and word structure. (Note: not all elements will be addressed in each lesson.)	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials are disjointed and fail to comprehensively address the foundational skills.</p>	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials coherently address the foundational skills.</p>	
C. The teacher focuses the majority of student reading time on reading, listening to, speaking or writing about text.	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>There is no text under consideration in this lesson.</p>	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>The lesson is focused on a text.</p>	
D. Instruction and materials provide ample opportunity for students of all abilities to practice newly acquired foundational skills.	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials fail to provide sufficient opportunity for students of all abilities to practice newly acquired foundational skills.</p>	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials provide ample opportunity to practice newly acquired foundational skills for the range of students in the classroom.</p>	
E. Whenever possible, instruction and materials connect acquisition of foundation skills to making meaning from reading.	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials do not connect foundational skills to making meaning from reading.</p>	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials connect foundational skills to making meaning from reading.</p>	
F. Instruction and materials are responsive to students' understanding of the skills being taught through careful monitoring of student progress.	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials do not monitor or adapt to student progress.</p>	<p>1 → 2 → 3 → 4</p> <p>Instruction and materials monitor and respond flexibly to student progress.</p>	

CORE ACTION 5: Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.



READING
FOUNDATIONAL
SKILLS

INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. The teacher uses strategies to keep all students persevering with challenging tasks.	Even after reaching a point of frustration, students persist in efforts to achieve foundational reading skills.	Scale: 1 = The teacher does not provide students opportunity and very few students demonstrate this behavior. 2 = The teacher provides students opportunity inconsistently and few students demonstrate this behavior. 3 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and some students demonstrate this behavior. 4 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and all students demonstrate this behavior.	Notes:
B. The teacher orchestrates conversations and plans tasks in which students talk about each other's thinking.	When discussing and practicing foundational skills, students actively respond to teacher prompts and build on each other's contributions.	1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4	

CCSS INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE GUIDE



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
ARTS /
LITERACY



GRADES 3-5



DAILY

This guide provides concrete examples of what the Core Actions for implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in grades 3-5 look like in daily planning and practice. It is designed as a developmental tool for teachers and those who support teachers and can be used to observe a lesson and provide feedback or to guide lesson planning and reflection. For all uses, refer to the CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy (corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).

The Shifts required by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy are¹:

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
2. Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

Date:

Class:

Teacher:

Unit or Lesson:

Standards Addressed:

The Core Actions should be evident in planning and observable in instruction. For each lesson, artifacts or observables might include: lesson plan, text(s) and materials, tasks, teacher instruction, student discussion and behavior, and student work. When observing a portion of a lesson, some indicators may be appropriately left blank.

CORE ACTION 1: Focus each lesson on a high quality text (or multiple texts).

INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. A majority of the lesson is spent reading, speaking, or writing about text(s).	<p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>There is no text under consideration in this lesson.</p> <p>The lesson is focused on a text or multiple texts.</p>	Notes:
B. The text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the grade and time in the school year. ²	<p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>The text(s) are below both the quantitative and qualitative complexity expected for the grade and time in the school year.</p> <p>The text(s) are at or above both the qualitative and quantitative complexity expected for the grade and time in the school year.</p>	
C. The text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.	<p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>The quality of the text(s) is low – they are poorly written and do not provide useful information.</p> <p>The quality of the text(s) is high – they are well written and/or provide useful information.</p>	

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² Refer to achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/text-complexity/ for text complexity resources.

CORE ACTION 2: Employ questions and tasks that are text dependent and text specific.

INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. Questions and tasks address the text by attending to its particular structure, concepts, ideas, events and details.	 <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Questions and tasks do not refer directly to the text and instead elicit opinion answers.</p> <p>Questions and tasks repeatedly return students to the text to build understanding.</p>	Notes:
B. Questions and tasks require students to use details from text to demonstrate understanding and to support their ideas about the text. These ideas are expressed through both written and spoken responses.	 <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Questions and tasks can be answered without reference to evidence from the text.</p> <p>Questions and tasks require students to cite evidence from the text.</p>	
C. Questions and tasks attend to the academic language (i.e., vocabulary and syntax) in the text.	 <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Questions and tasks do not explicitly attend to academic language or focus exclusively on domain-specific vocabulary.</p> <p>Questions and tasks intentionally support students in developing facility with academic language.</p>	
D. Questions are sequenced to guide students in delving deeper into text and graphics. These inferences should relate to key ideas of the text.	 <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Questions do not follow a clear sequence or are all at the same level of depth.</p> <p>Questions are sequenced to support and challenge students in deep examination of the text.</p>	

CORE ACTION 3: Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.

INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. The teacher provides the conditions for all students to focus on text.	Students persist in efforts to read, speak and/ or write about demanding grade-level text(s).	<p>1 2 3 4</p>	Notes:
B. The teacher expects evidence and precision from students and probes students' answers accordingly.	Students habitually provide textual evidence to support answers and responses.	<p>1 2 3 4</p>	
C. The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations and plans tasks where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking.	Students use evidence to build on each other's observations or insights during discussion or collaboration.	<p>1 2 3 4</p>	
D. The teacher acts on knowledge of individual students to promote progress toward independence in grade-level literacy tasks.	When possible, students demonstrate independence in completing literacy tasks.	<p>1 2 3 4</p>	
E. When appropriate, the teacher explicitly and systematically attends to strengthening students' reading foundation skills.	Students demonstrate use of word level diagnostic skills, activating such strategies as needed to read with grade-level fluency and comprehension.	<p>1 2 3 4</p>	

Scale:
 1 = The teacher does not provide students opportunity and very few students demonstrate this behavior.
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 3 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and some students demonstrate this behavior.
 4 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and all students demonstrate this behavior.

CCSS INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE GUIDE



This guide provides concrete examples of what the Core Actions for implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts in grades 6-12 look like in daily planning and practice. It is designed as a developmental tool for teachers and those who support teachers and can be used to observe a lesson and provide feedback or to guide lesson planning and reflection. For all uses, refer to the CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy (corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).

The Shifts required by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy are¹:

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Date:

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Teacher:

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The Core Actions should be evident in planning and observable in instruction. For each lesson, artifacts or observables might include: lesson plan, text(s) and materials, tasks, teacher instruction, student discussion and behavior, and student work. When observing a portion of a lesson, some indicators may be appropriately left blank.

CORE ACTION 1: Focus each lesson on a high quality text (or multiple texts).

INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	
A. A majority of the lesson is spent reading, speaking, or writing about text(s).		Notes:
B. The text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the grade and time in the school year. ²		
C. The text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.		

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² Refer to achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/text-complexity/ for text complexity resources.

CORE ACTION 2: Employ questions and tasks that are text dependent and text specific.

INDICATORS	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	Notes:
A. Questions and tasks address the text by attending to its particular structure(s), concepts, ideas, and details.		
B. Questions and tasks require students to cite evidence from the texts to support analysis, inferences, and claims.		
C. Questions and tasks attend to the academic language (i.e., vocabulary and syntax) in the text.		
D. Questions are sequenced to guide students in delving deeper into text and graphics. These inferences should relate to key ideas of the text.		

CORE ACTION 3: Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.

INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR	EVIDENCE OBSERVED OR GATHERED	Notes:
A. The teacher provides the conditions for all students to focus on text.	Students persist in efforts to read, speak and/ or write about demanding grade-level text(s).	1 2 3 4	
B. The teacher expects evidence and precision from students and probes students' answers accordingly.	Students habitually provide textual evidence to support answers and responses.	1 2 3 4	
C. The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations and plans tasks where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking.	Students use evidence to build on each other's observations or insights during discussion or collaboration.	1 2 3 4	
D. The teacher acts on knowledge of individual students to promote progress toward independence in grade-level literacy tasks.	When possible, students demonstrate independence in completing literacy tasks.	1 2 3 4	

Scale:
 1 = The teacher does not provide students opportunity and very few students demonstrate this behavior.
 2 = The teacher provides students opportunity inconsistently and few students demonstrate this behavior.
 3 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and some students demonstrate this behavior.
 4 = The teacher provides students opportunity consistently and all students demonstrate this behavior.

This tool is for use by teachers, those providing support to teachers, and others working to implement the CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy – it is not designed for use in evaluation. The guide is intended for use in conjunction with the CCSS Instructional Practice Guide: Supplement for Reflection Over the Course of the Year. Both tools are available at achievethecore.org/instructional-practice.

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