



The Common Core

requires educators to implement these 6 fundamental shifts in their curriculum design

Shift #1: Balance Informational & Literary Text (PK-5)

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- Teachers must include a balance of informational and literary texts in all aspects of the elementary ELA curriculum.
- Depending on the grade level, 50-55% of what students read is informational (science, social studies, the arts, etc.)
- The objective is to build integrated knowledge within and across grade levels, beginning in students' early years.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- Teachers in all subject areas have an active role in advancing students' literacy.
- The purpose is to build students' background knowledge and vocabulary, so they are able to read and comprehend the rich variety of text that they will encounter in their future education, their careers, and their daily lives.

Shift #2 Build Knowledge in the Disciplines (6-12)

Shift #3 Staircase of Text Complexity

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- The staircase is a metaphor to remind educators that students must work with texts that become increasingly more complex as they progress through grade levels.
- Students who struggle greatly to read texts within (or even below) their grade band must be given the support needed to enable them to read at a grade-appropriate level of complexity" (CCSS, Appendix A, page 12).



IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- This shift calls for classroom instruction that is focused on a common text (including read-alouds), that engages students in rigorous discussion that encourages them to construct meaning from that text and that holds them accountable for supporting their reasoning with evidence drawn from the text. It does not rely on readers' different knowledge backgrounds and the experiences they bring with them to school.
- Educators should structure all post-reading discussions, activities, and questions to draw on a full range of insights and knowledge contained within the text in terms of both content and language.
- (Adapted from the Publishers' Criteria for the CCSS in ELA and Literacy, Grades K-2)

**Shift #4:
Text-Based
Answers**

**Shift #5:
Write from
Sources**

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- In the elementary grades, the Common Core requires a balance between writing prompts to persuade, to explain, and to convey experience.
- In high school, this shift requires educators to construct learning experiences that require students to write to persuade (40%) and explain (40%) more often than to convey experience (20%).

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- Educators must provide direct instruction while offering support for vocabulary when students are not likely to be able to determine meanings from the text alone.
- Selected text and subsequent instruction should require students to think about words: how and why specific words are used, how changing one word can change the meaning of a text, how one word can have varied but related meanings based on context, and why another word might be more appropriate.

**Shift #6:
Build
Academic
Vocabulary**

