

K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension *in the* Common Core



From the
Oregon Literacy Plan:
[K-12 Reading—Common Core Instruction](#)

**K-12 Teachers:
Building Comprehension
in the
Common Core**

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K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension *in* the Common Core

Before reading about the *College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards* and the [Common Core State Standards \(CCSS\) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#), please answer the following “have you ever” questions:

- *Have you ever* taught a lesson and realized that several (or more) students didn’t have the vocabulary knowledge or background knowledge to participate with full understanding? As a result, perhaps you spent time backtracking or doing your best to find ways to fill in the knowledge gaps? Or, perhaps you struggled to figure out when to incorporate background knowledge-building activities, which can often be quite time-consuming, considering your already full teaching schedule.
- *Have you ever* felt that you use the first part of the school year to review and build a foundation of knowledge and common experiences for students? Perhaps it seems like you never really introduce new content until late fall or even later in the school year.
- *Have you ever* been challenged (or felt frustrated) with inconsistencies and gaps in student background and content knowledge, particularly when working with students who have moved frequently.
- *Have you ever* felt overwhelmed when thinking about how to teach vocabulary and comprehension, particularly when thinking about what it will take to “make up the difference” for students with low language and vocabulary knowledge? Perhaps you’ve seen the consequences of the exponentially growing “language and comprehension gap” between advantaged and disadvantaged students.
- *Have you ever* had concerns about the equity of education and educational access for students to high-quality content, instruction, and texts, particularly for students from high-poverty or high-mobility situations, English-language learners, and other diverse learners (e.g., students who struggle with reading or students with learning disabilities)?
- *Have you ever* noticed “curricular incoherence” in your building? For example, as a third-grade teacher, have you ever felt that teachers in the lower grades (e.g., first or second) don’t know or understand what you need to teach in third grade? As a result, students may enter third grade “unprepared” for the third-grade curriculum? (If you’re not a third-grade teacher, think about if you’ve experienced “curricular incoherence” from your own teaching or administrative perspective.)
- *Have you ever* wanted more information, support, and materials to help teach comprehension and vocabulary? Or, if you’re a grade K–3 teacher, have you ever felt more confident about how you teach beginning reading (e.g., phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding) compared with how you teach vocabulary and/or comprehension?
- As a grade 6–12 content-area teacher, given *all* the content you are expected to teach, *have you ever* wondered how you would “teach reading” in your biology class (or other science, social studies/history, math, career and technical education, or literature class) or provide support to struggling readers?

- As a grade 6–12 content-area teacher, *have you ever* replaced student-independent reading of grade-level text with “books on tape” (or CDs) as a well-intentioned attempt to help develop content knowledge for struggling readers?
- *Have you ever* observed how some students are enthusiastically drawn to informational text or just seem to do better with comprehension when working with informational text? Perhaps some of the students you’ve observed who express interest in informational text come from cultural or linguistic backgrounds where narrative text structure isn’t as familiar.
- *Have you ever* seen or heard Oregon or national headlines about faltering student performance on assessments such as the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) or the SAT? Things such as:
 - The SAT score decline began nearly 50 years ago (Adams, 2010–2011).
 - When compared with other students internationally, the performance of U.S. high school students is only average, at best. Although younger students have demonstrated improvement in reading, as measured by the NAEP, the performance of older students has not shown improvement (Adams, 2010–2011).
 - Although scores on the history component of the NAEP have increased for some populations of students (e.g., grade 8 and Black and Hispanic students in eighth grade), less than 25% of U.S. students performed at or above the proficient level in 2010 (NAEP, National Center of Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>).
 - NAEP data show that 34% of the fourth-grade students in U.S. public schools perform below the basic level, which means they have not achieved partial mastery. (National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2009/2010458.pdf>; National Assessment Governing Board, <http://www.nagb.org/publications/readingbook.pdf>).
- Finally, *have you ever* thought about where future jobs will be in Oregon in the coming years and how K–12 education can best prepare Oregon students for future jobs whether a student’s job route is career or college? For example, the current job forecast for Oregon projects a 23% increase in health care jobs between 2008 and 2018 (<http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/OlmisZine?zineid=00000007>). What types of text will health care workers need to read? Will Oregon students be prepared to read, think, and apply content from the complex informational texts required if working as a home health aide, registered nurse, nursing aide or attendant, medical assistant, dental hygienist, health technologist, physical therapist, pharmacy technician, health educator, physician, surgeon, physician assistant, or radiologic, CAT, or MRI technician? Jobs in personal care are projected to increase by 12% between 2008 and 2018. Will Oregon students be prepared to read, think, and apply content from the complex technical manuals and other sources of informational text required for work as child-care workers, personal care (e.g., skin care specialists, hairdressers, and cosmetologists) and service workers, fitness trainers, or personal and home care aides?

If you answered “yes” to any of the “have you ever” questions, reading more about the Common Core will highlight how implementation is intended to address discrepancies and gaps observed in student background knowledge; challenges in building vocabulary knowledge and deep comprehension; and inequities in access to high-quality curricula, instruction, and texts. When reading further, you will see that the CCSS are about the “**what.**” They are intended as a structure of sameness that provides K–12 students access to a common knowledge base and **opportunities for deep comprehension**

development and understanding across all subjects. In other words, *curriculum coherence* is built through CCSS implementation. When reading, you will also see that the CCSS are *not* about the “how.” The CCSS *do not* dictate how to teach. The CCSS *do not* prescribe or script lessons. The CCSS *are not* about all that can or may be taught. Rather, the CCSS for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects are about preparing all students to be **college and career-ready in reading and writing *without the need for remediation***—starting literacy instruction in kindergarten and continuing in every grade/every subject through the end of grade 12.

Preparing Oregon’s Students: Common Core State Standards

When Oregon adopted the Common Core in October 2010, our state joined other states in the pursuit of a common, standards-based education for our students in kindergarten through high school. **Common standards can increase the likelihood that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the work place.** Because skillful reading, writing, language use, and speaking and listening are similar across the states, common standards make sense. They make possible common assessments, common achievement goals for grade-level groups, and efficiencies of scale for instructional and professional development materials. By implementing the CCSS, Oregon will benefit from an efficient, standards-aligned integration of instruction, assessment, and resources.

Instruction in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*—“the Standards”—will prepare Oregon students and students in other CCSS states to be proficient in the four strands of the English language arts (ELA) skills—*Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening*. Most importantly, **CCSS proficiency will enable Oregon students to meet the increased reading demands required for an Oregon Diploma, college, careers, and citizenship.**

Over the past 50 years or so, much of the **text used in college and career settings has increased in complexity.** College professors are assigning more readings from periodicals than ever before (Milewski, Johnson, Glazer, & Kubota, 2005). Look at a college syllabus today. It’s hard to miss the articles and other primary source reading assignments listed alongside the assigned chapters from a textbook. In a review of the word difficulty in articles published in magazines and scientific journals, Hayes and Ward (1992) found a steady increase in the complexity of vocabulary from 1930 to 1990. In today’s college courses, word and text complexity continues to increase along with expectations for how knowledge from assigned articles is used. In college classes, often the expectation is that students are accountable for *all* independent reading. In many cases, articles listed on the “recommended” reading list turn out to be more than “recommended” by expectation. An article from the *Scientific American* about the mind and brain, for example, may actually be an expected “read” for exams, papers, student presentations, and discussions with limited, if any, professor-led instruction or explanation of content and vocabulary.

The **trend of increasing text complexity and independent accountability** is also evident in today’s careers. Work place reading expectations have considerable variation, and often text complexity far exceeds grade 12 reading levels, as measured by Lexiles (Stenner, Koons, & Swartz, in press). The ability to read and comprehend complex text is required when using technology in the travel and hospitality industry, converting and updating electronic medical records, following directions as hair and cosmetology products are mixed, applying repairs suggested from automotive manuals or manufacturer software, and assembling plans and coordinating a customer’s contract for a construction project. As

technology and web-based communication and commerce evolve, so does the need for highly-proficient, independent reading and comprehension.

Unfortunately, many students are unprepared for the independent reading and high-level comprehension of complex text required after grade 12. With the exception of text used in some Advanced Placement classes, **the majority of secondary-level students don't have experience in reading complex texts** (Adams, 2010–2011). A primary reason for the lack of complex text experience is that students increasingly are reading more simplified texts. The density or thickness of a textbook doesn't necessarily mean the text is high quality and filled with rich, complex content. According to an article in *Education Week*, there is actually an oversimplification of text and content.

“We cover lots and lots of things, more than anybody else in the world, but we don't do anything in great depth . . . Science textbooks in the U.S. typically are two to four times longer than those in other countries . . . and yet it's just those constant snippets of information. *While some countries expect 13-year olds to cover 10 to 15 scientific topics in depth, U.S. textbooks rush them through 30 or 40 topics*” (*Education Week*, June 24, 1994, p.10).

An analysis of schoolbooks also found that text difficulty has been significantly reduced from texts published in 1919 to those published in 1991 (Adams, 2010–2011; Hayes Wolfer, & Wolfe, 1996).

The use of more cursory, less complex informational text in the upper grades is not the only reason why many students are unprepared to read complex texts independently. In general, students today are asked to read very little informational or expository text. Glancing through elementary and middle school curricula, looking at classroom bulletin boards, or viewing hallway displays of student work—often short stories, myths, folk tales, fables, legends, fantasies, mysteries, science fiction, plays, and poetry related to the fiction genre of story or narrative text are featured. As little as 7–15% of elementary instruction occurs with expository text (Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994; Yopp & Yopp, 2000). Although reading narrative text and writing stories are, without a doubt, important, the limited use of informational text reduces opportunities for students to practice reading complex informational text from early on. While informational text is often more challenging for young children to read than narrative text, reading informational text allows students to learn and apply multiple reading strategies, **build critical background knowledge and vocabulary, and develop higher-level thinking and analytical levels of comprehension**. The use of informational text also provides opportunities to optimize the reading–writing connection as students write about what they read and read for the purpose of writing (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003).

Based on these findings, it follows, then, that stressing “knowledge of words and the world” (Hirsch, 2003) holds promise for overcoming the “fourth-grade slump” in student reading achievement (e.g., Chall & Jacobs, 1996; Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990). Instruction based on informational text that stresses content knowledge and vocabulary offers **a potential solution to the nation's stagnant reading comprehension scores** as reported by the NAEP and international comparisons of reading performance. An international comparison of fourth-grade literacy indicates that the U.S. scores lower than 10 of the 45 participating jurisdictions and lower than 12 jurisdictions in informational reading (National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008017.pdf>).

With the implementation of the Common Core, **Oregon and other CCSS states will have a blueprint for preparing students to meet current and future demands for high-level reading and writing**

skills, expository content knowledge, and comprehension strategy use, particularly at analytical and inference-making levels.

Supporting Oregon’s Students: *Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework*

If the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) *do not include interventions* to assist students who are *not reading at grade level*, or who are reading *above grade level* (see [Common Core](#), p. 6), what do states, districts, and schools do? The answer: Every Common Core **state**, and its **districts** and **schools**, needs collaborative guidance to ensure all students are moving each year toward the Common Core destination—college and career readiness at the end of grade 12. The [Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework](#) *is* that guidance for our state, districts, and schools.

The Common Core addresses the “**what**”—grade-level expectations for students, and the *Framework* addresses the “**how**”—strategies for instruction and assessment to ensure that students who are *at risk of not meeting* the grade-level expectations will be able to meet them, and that students who are reading *at grade level or above* will continue to make commensurate progress.

Good news for Oregon is the alignment and synergy between the Common Core and the *Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework* (the *Framework*). A striking example is the emphasis in the *Framework* on literacy across the content areas, which is echoed in the Common Core. While the *Framework* was completed a year prior to the Common Core, they share the same research base; they are aligned.

The *Framework*, a comprehensive reading model, was designed to support a coordinated effort among the state, districts, and schools to help all students learn to read at or above grade-level each year in school. In the *Framework*, a four-tiered **Response to Intervention (RTI)** model is used to differentiate levels of instructional support ([Instruction](#), pp.1-37-41) **based on student data**:

- Advanced—Students who are reading above grade level.
- Tier 1—Students who are reading at grade level and are *low-risk* for long-term reading difficulties.
- Tier 2—Students who are reading slightly below grade level and are *moderately at risk* for long-term reading difficulties.
- Tier 3—Students who are reading significantly below grade level and are at *high-risk* for long-term reading difficulties.

In addition to guidance on setting reading goals, assessing, and differentiating instruction, the *Framework* provides strategies to teach **comprehension and vocabulary instruction** explicitly, inviting active engagement ([Instruction](#), p. 1-20-26). *Nine features* of effective **teacher-delivery** engage students to make the progress necessary to reach grade-level reading goals and above ([Instruction](#), p. 1-42-53).

To help districts and schools implement a differentiated instruction model *gradually*, the [Professional Development for the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework](#) *portal* was developed. It features multiple series of **ready-to-use** “lesson” modules (audio presentations with Power Point slides, activities, and related resources) presenting key concepts and related understandings teachers and principals need to implement a comprehensive reading program with an RTI model. Intended for use with **professional learning communities or grade-and-department level teams**, the professional development is designed to be embedded, on-going, and reaching full implementation over time. The professional

development portal is organized around the six components of the *Framework*: Goals, Assessment, Instruction, Leadership, Professional Development, and Commitment.

“K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension *in* the Common Core” examines and illustrates reading instruction in the Common Core using *Framework* resources and implementation suggestions for **how** to support *all* students to read at grade level or above.

Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Key Features

Key features of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) include

- An emphasis on high-quality, complex informational text
- A “back-mapping” design that links all CCSS to College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards
- An integrated model of literacy that highlights instructionally powerful connections across strands.

Overall, the key features of high-quality informational text, unique CCR anchor design, and an integrated model of literacy work together to meet an essential CCSS requirement: All students must be able to **comprehend texts at grade level or above at steadily increasing complexity** as they progress through school.

References and resources from the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* are woven and linked throughout “K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension *in* the Common Core” to facilitate easy access. Each key feature is introduced with research-based context and rationale and then illustrated with “**CCSS Snapshots**” and “**Classroom Snapshots.**” The snapshots are intended to link the Common Core key features to the classroom. See the following text box for an explanation of how “all” is inferred throughout the CCSS overview:

What does “all” mean within the context of CCSS implementation?

“All” is used frequently throughout the CCSS reading overview to indicate the CCSS emphasis on a common, shared curriculum. It is similar to how the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* discusses “all” within the context of a core reading program and Tier 1 instruction. Although an “exact” CCSS implementation may not fit the needs of some students, Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams can consider the nature of CCSS alignment at an individual student level. For example, an IEP team might consider how to set priorities to ensure the *essential understandings* of the CCSS are mastered by the student while still allowing time for the school, teachers, and student to address all needs. An essential understanding for a student with an intellectual or developmental disability might be the use of multiple text sources for gathering information, such as identifying coupons and sale information for a shopping trip. An essential understanding for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing would include the recognition of other forms of communication such as expressive language (e.g., ASL) when the CCSS focus on speaking and listening. Therefore, a student who is deaf or hard of hearing would retell, present, and discuss using expressive language (which might include additional finger spelling when content-specific vocabulary is used during classroom conversations). Essential understandings may also be discussed during a collaborative discussion by the IEP team. For example, an IEP team discussion might focus on

defining what the demonstration of “deep” comprehension might mean for a student with an intellectual or developmental disability. Other questions for an IEP team to consider include: What specific nonacademic needs does a student have? What goals and objectives will address those needs? How do the other identified needs relate to the student’s academic success? How can the IEP team help align curriculum, instruction, services, and needs so that individual students can be successful at grade level? For additional IEP planning information to consider within the context of standards-based reform, see McLaughlin, Nolet, Rhim, and Hederson, (1999); Quenemoen (2009a, 2009b); and Thurlow and Quenemoen (2011).

Informational Text: High-quality and Complex

Because students need grade-level literacy skills to access full content in school, the emphasis in the Common Core is to **learn to read and write** in English language arts (ELA) and to **develop those skills**, specific to the content, in all classes. The name of the standards reflects this expectation—the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*. The Standards for grade 6 and above are **predicated on all teachers using their subject-area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading and writing in each subject area**. For grades K–5, the ELA and content-area literacy standards are integrated; for grades 6–12, they are separate but parallel. Central to helping prepare students to meet CCSS expectations is the use of high-quality, complex informational text.

There’s a good chance that the books on your personal bookshelves, the magazines piled on your coffee table or on the floor of your car, your website bookmarks, the blogs you read, and your e-reader selections represent a fairly comprehensive selection of informational text. Think about the ways that we understand the world around us. When planning a trip, what sources are used to make decisions about where to stay, what to see, and what to eat? What if there’s a strange-looking spider in the backyard? What information sources might be consulted to determine if the spider is poisonous or just another friendly backyard insect? When thinking about starting a community garden in your neighborhood, what text sources do you use to research topics like community organizing, horticulture, and organic gardening? How do you determine which candidates or policy initiatives to vote for, which wellness and medical treatments to pursue, or which vehicle to purchase (or which mode of transportation works best for your individual needs and location)? Informational text holds prominence in our everyday experiences. The use of informational texts in grades K–12 also provides a context for helping students develop background, or domain knowledge, across a wide range of subject matter. And with so much information available, we all need finely-honed strategies for separating the wheat from the chaff and for helping us to manage and reconcile divergent accounts of the same topic.

Informational texts provide an ideal context for **building language and vocabulary** because of the conceptual nature and background-building potential of the subject or subject area. E. D. Hirsch (2003), for example, suggests that reading comprehension requires knowledge of *words* and of the *world*. Building knowledge of words and the world requires vocabulary that is learned and connected to other words, content-area understanding (domain knowledge), and world knowledge (e.g., Pinker, 2007). (If you’re familiar with the elementary grade comprehension emphasis on “text-to-text,” “text-to-self,” and “text-to-world (or community),” then you already have a sense of the “words and world” concept.) To learn and use vocabulary, a child also needs some beginning or foundational domain and world knowledge. To comprehend a domain or subject area, word knowledge also is required. To more fully appreciate the

knowledge of “words and the world” concept, read the passage in the box below and answer the following comprehension questions: (1) Why is it important that both motivational concurrence and temporal concurrence exist? (2) Why is motivational concurrence not found simply by looking at the act itself?

The concurrence principle implies more than the temporal concurrence of the *mens rea* and *actus reus*. The relationship between the two parts of the crime must be deeper: the impelling force or motivation behind the act that causes the social harm must have been the *mens rea* of the offense and not some other thought process such as the mental state of preparing to commit the offense (Dressler, J., 1987, p. 172).

As you read this, you may have experienced what many struggling readers experience. Maybe your comprehension was challenged by superficial vocabulary knowledge or vocabulary you just didn’t know. Perhaps you encountered unfamiliar terminology or language or had difficulty with the topic because of limitations with your background knowledge in criminal law. Maybe you even struggled a bit with the way the text was structured because, as educators, we may not have as much experience reading legal texts or legal briefs compared with our experience reading curricula, lesson plans, or school action plans. The point of the example is to illustrate how more extensive use of informational texts would help students develop deep comprehension skills across a broad range of content. Overall, when thinking about using informational texts in K–12 literacy instruction, think about the vocabulary-, language-, knowledge-, and thinking-building potential of high-quality, complex text (Adams, 2010–2011; Cervetti, Jaynes, & Hiebert, 2009; Hirsh, 2003, 2010–2011; Kintsch & Rawson, 2007; Marzano, 2004). If you are thinking about all of this “building” potential, you’re essentially thinking about the **development of deep comprehension**.

An often-discussed human tendency is the hesitation and resistance we adopt when facing challenge or complexity (e.g., Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Despite whether you struggle with word reading, comprehension, writing, balancing the school budget, a personal loss, a medical condition, disability, transition and change, losing weight, or maintaining a healthy, balanced lifestyle, one of the best ways to work through these challenges and complexities is to engage, to interact and work with the challenge, and to have conversations about the experience (e.g., Kintsch, 1998; Thagard, 2002; Siegel, 2007; Staudinger, 1996). (See the research highlight below for an example of how third-grade children perceived the challenge and complexity of writing tasks.) Engaging, interacting, and communicating are certainly positive ways of coping with challenge, but these approaches to working with an experience also build meaning (e.g., Applebee, 1996; Damasio, 1999). In other words, the **CCSS emphasize informational text so prominently because it is challenging and complex, it has deep comprehension-building potential, and because the use of informational text is an opportunity to help students learn how to engage, interact, and have conversations with the text in ways that prepare them for the type of experiences that they will encounter in college and careers.** After all, deep comprehension is an *intentional interaction between the reader and text* to extract or construct meaning (National Reading Panel, 2000). By definition, comprehension is not an automatic or passive process, or a process of hesitation and resistance. Rather, comprehension is highly *purposeful and interactive* (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). Whether reading text to extract and construct meaning or listening to text read aloud, comprehension can be seen as an active conversation between the reader or listener and the text.

Research Highlight:

In a study with third-grade children, Miller and Meece (1999) explored the effect of various writing tasks on student preferences. For example, the students participated in some low-level writing tasks, as well as some writing tasks that were considered highly challenging (e.g., writing multiple paragraphs, writing projects that included student collaboration, and writing projects that took more than one class period to complete).

When asked about the writing tasks that they preferred,

- **All of the third-grade students reported that they *disliked low-challenge tasks*.**
- Not surprisingly, high achievers tended to prefer high-challenge tasks.
- Low and average achievers had a neutral feeling about the high-challenge tasks (e.g., they didn't necessarily enthusiastically prefer them or strongly dislike them). When inquiring about student preferences, Miller and Meece learned that low and average achievers felt more hesitant and less confident with high-challenge tasks because of the task complexity. **The good news is that instruction teaches students how to effectively work with complexity** (e.g., use a graphic organizer to outline the task), **and therefore, engage with a challenge**. Results from studies with students who struggle with reading firmly substantiate the effectiveness of high-quality instruction for helping students successfully engage in a variety of challenging academic tasks.

Miller and Meece also made the following observation when analyzing their findings: Challenge and complexity are two different, but closely related, things. **When something is challenging, it not only presents some complex, difficult aspects, but it also stimulates students to engage and interact with it.**

Because informational text is emphasized so prominently in the CCSS, it is important to make the distinction between different types of texts and text structure. The CCSS Reading Standards divide text into **two main text types: literature and informational text**. An Organizational Framework for CCSS Range of Text Types is presented in Table 1. Here are a few important clarifications to note when reviewing Table 1.

First, informational text is a broad category that includes the subgenres of **exposition, argument, and functional text**. Informational text comes in many different forms, including books, magazines, handouts, brochures, CD-ROMs, journal articles, technical texts (directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps), and Internet resources, and it focuses on many different topics, including those related to history, social studies, science, arts, and technical subjects.

Second, the CCSS include **literary nonfiction** as a type of informational text and include autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience. It is distinguished by literary techniques and artistic vision.

Third, it's important to note that while much of literary nonfiction follows a narrative text structure, at grades 6-12 the Standards emphasize arguments (such as those in the Founding Documents) and other literary nonfiction that is built on **informational text structures** rather than narrative literary nonfiction that are structured as stories (such as memoirs or biographies).

Argument holds prominence in the CCSS Writing Standards as well. In fact, the first Writing Standard for K–12 focuses on developing argument skills. Even though argument is not presented as an individual category in the Reading Standards, as are Literature and Informational Text, **standards related to argument are deeply integrated into both Literature and Informational Text Standards for K–12** (e.g., see Standard 8 and the focus on identifying an author’s reasons and supporting details). Similarly, argument is also integrated throughout the Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects for grades 6–12 (e.g., see Standard 1 about citing textual evidence to support analysis and Standard 8 about distinguishing among facts and reasoned judgments).

Finally, the **Organizational Framework for CCSS Range of Text Types** (Table 1) is provided below to help clarify how the CCSS distinguish among and between types of texts for instruction in grades K–12. It is not intended as a fixed tool with an exhaustive list of examples that apply in all cases. Despite the use of the Organizational Framework for clarification purposes, we recognize that even some scholars and adult proficient readers (and authors) sometimes disagree and encounter confusing gray areas when thinking about text types and structure. News events about autobiographical authors James Frey (2003, *A Million Little Pieces*) and Greg Mortenson (2006, *Three Cups of Tea*), illustrate the complicated, sometimes confounding, nature of story and literary nonfiction. Sometimes writers also intentionally write text that blends text types. For example, *The Longitude Prize*, a text discussed as an informational text exemplar for grade 9–10 history/social studies (See *Appendix B* of the CCSS for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, p. 179), integrates narrative elements within informational text. When text blending happens, (a) use instruction to teach how the text works by showing and discussing the text’s purpose, type, structure, and features and (b) continue to explicitly teach generic comprehension strategies that work regardless of text type.

Table 1: (Organizational Framework for CCSS Range of Text Types)

	Purpose	Text Types	Text Structure	Text Features
Literature	Tells a fictional story or true story or personal account; makes a comment about life; expresses emotions	Stories (short stories, myths, folk tales, fables, legends, adventure, autobiographies, biographies, historical fiction, realistic fiction, mysteries, science fiction, fantasies, allegories, parodies, satire, graphic novels); drama; poetry	<p>Stories: Narrative (e.g., character, setting, plot, theme, problem–solution)</p> <p>Drama: Dialogic</p> <p>Poetry: Nursery rhymes, narrative and lyrical poems, limericks, haiku, free verse, odes, ballads, epics, sonnets</p>	Title, illustrations, sequential, story elements (e.g., characters, setting, plot, or theme)

Informational Text	Informs; tells true, factual-based information	<p>Literary nonfiction</p> <p>(essays about art or literature, autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, speeches, and texts written for broad audiences on a variety of topics)</p> <p>Historical, scientific, technical, economic accounts and other technical texts.</p>	Problem–solution, description, explanatory cause–effect, enumeration, categorization, sequence, comparison– contrast, narrative	Topic or theme, table of contents, photographs, realistic illustrations, navigational aids (e.g., index, table of contents, page numbers, headings), glossary, various graphical devices (e.g., diagrams, tables, charts, maps); descriptions of attributes and characteristic events; comparative/contrastive and classificatory structures; technical vocabulary; labels and captions; reference lists and endnotes; abstracts
	Convinces, persuades	<p>Argument,</p> <p>speeches, essays, opinion pieces</p>	Argumentative (e.g., author’s position, reasons, facts or evidence, opposing position, conclusion)	Starting attention-grabber such as a question, quote, humorous or emotional story; topic/thesis; author’s position (e.g., I believe/think, in my opinion); reasons (e.g., because, the reason I think this way . . .); facts/evidence (e.g., for example, for instance, the data says, according to _____); opposing opinion (e.g., however; although; on the other hand, but/yet); conclusion (e.g., finally, as a result, in conclusion)

Informational text for the K–5 and 6–12 grade bands is discussed next. CCSS and Classroom Snapshots are presented for both bands.

Informational Text: K–5

As reading development progresses, children are expected to read informational sources. However, reading informational texts requires a different skill set generally not taught until fourth grade. That is why the **Common Core Standards emphasize informational text beginning in kindergarten.**

Over the years, researchers have noted that many young children receive little exposure to, or instruction in, reading informational texts (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Duke, 1999), which can pose problems for students later on. Unlike traditional narrative texts, informational texts use organizational patterns (e.g., compare and contrast, cause and effect) making understanding more difficult for nearly all students (Duke & Billman, 2009; Williams, 2000). In addition, reading informational text also requires reading to locate (and possibly record) particular information (Dreher, 1993, Guthrie & Kirsch, 1987).

Several studies suggest that young children can benefit from exposure to informational text (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2002; Donovan, 1996; Hicks, 1995). Researchers have found that, “inattention to expository texts in early childhood settings cannot be justified on the basis that children are unable to interact productively with these texts” (Duke & Kays, 1998, 134). In fact, three beliefs appear to underlie the historic inattention to informational text in primary-grade or early childhood classrooms (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003).

Unsupported belief 1: *Young children cannot handle informational text.* No research supports the assertion that young children are unable to handle informational text (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003). In fact, research suggests that young children can learn content, as well as language and vocabulary, from informational texts (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003; Duke & Kays, 1998; Pappas, 1991a, 1991b, 1993). Just because informational text has text features that make it more challenging, it doesn’t mean young children cannot handle informational text (Duke & Tower, 2004; Williams, 2000). Studies examining children’s discussions about informational text suggest that children can participate in high-quality discussions (Fien et al., in press; Hicks, 1995; Oyler & Barry, 1996) and construct fairly complete and cohesive informational retells (Baker et al., 2011; Moss, 1997; Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008). **Students who struggle with reading can also successfully handle informational text when instruction includes the explicit teaching of text structure, procedural facilitators such as think sheets, prompt cards, and mnemonics, and the use of teacher modeling and guided feedback** (Gersten & Baker, 2000, 2001; Williams, 2008). Finally, many published accounts written by teachers discuss how they’ve used informational text successfully in early childhood and elementary classrooms (e.g., Dalton & Mallet, 1995; Fisher, 1994; Read 2001; Smith, 1992).

Unsupported belief 2: *Young children do not like informational text or at least prefer other forms of text* (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003). As a contrast to the unsupported belief that young children do not like information text, think about the girls who are devouring books in the *American Girl* series and enjoying the accompanying “story telling” dolls and accessories, or the boys who love learning about insects, the Civil War, or how to build the fastest soapbox derby car or highest-soaring, self-assembled rocket. Just as these anecdotal examples suggest, no research evidence supports the notion that children don’t like informational text. In fact, rather than singularly isolating student text preference as the potential concern, it is important to put student text preference within the context of classroom instructional activities. In other words, how texts are used in the classroom is more centrally related to how children form attitudes about texts (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003). A study by Horowitz and Freeman (1995), for example, examined the text preferences of second-grade students who listened to narrative and informational texts used during read-alouds. **When discussion followed the read-aloud, students**

seemed to prefer informational text. When no discussion followed the read-aloud, the students preferred narrative text. Research also suggests that students are more likely to select informational for independent reading if their teacher used the informational text in a read-aloud (Dreher & Dromsky, 2000; Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003).

Unsupported belief 3: *Young Children Should First Learn to Read and Then (at about Fourth Grade) Read to Learn* (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003). The research discussed in the *Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework* refutes this belief (see [Instruction](#), pp. I-11 and I-14-15). As the RAND report, *Reading for Understanding* (Snow, 2002), clearly articulates, early reading instruction also must focus extensively on comprehension skills and strategies in the earliest grades. The report states that the “successful development of beginning reading skills does not ensure that the child will automatically become a skilled reader” (p. 6), meaning that comprehension proficiency will not develop automatically from students’ mastery of decoding skills. Furthermore, **explicit comprehension instruction should not be delayed until students are able to read grade-level text independently**. Read-alouds and the use of text-based discussions are opportunities to help students learn from complex informational text, especially when students are just learning to read or if students struggle to read informational text independently (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

CCSS Snapshot (Informational Text in K–5)

CCSS Reading Standards for grades K–5 are divided into two categories: Literature and Informational Text. Ten standards focus on Literature and another 10 standards focus on Informational Text. The following snapshot presents Standard 8, from the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas section of the Reading Standards for Informational Text, as **an example of how the use of informational text is addressed in grades K–5**:

Grade	Standard 8 (Informational Text, K-5)
K	With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.
1	Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.
2	Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.
3	Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause / effect, first / second / third in a sequence).
4	Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
5	Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

The K–5 Anchor Standards for Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language also show an informational text emphasis. In the following table, notice the informational text connections and interrelationships among the Anchor Standards for the Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands:

Strand	Sub-headings	Anchor Standard
Writing	Text types and purposes	1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
Writing	Text types and purposes	2. Write informative / explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
Writing	Text types and purposes	3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structure event sequences.
Writing	Research to build and present writing	7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
Writing	Research to build and present writing	8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
Writing	Research to build and present writing	9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Speaking and listening	Comprehension and collaboration	1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Speaking and listening	Comprehension and collaboration	2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
Speaking and listening	Comprehension and collaboration	3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
Speaking and listening	Presentation of knowledge and ideas	4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, and

Strand	Sub-headings	Anchor Standard
		style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Speaking and listening	Presentation of knowledge and ideas	5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
Speaking and listening	Presentation of knowledge and ideas	6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
Language	Vocabulary acquisition and use	4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
Language	Vocabulary acquisition and use	6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Classroom Snapshot (Informational Text in K–5)

When visiting a K–5 classroom,

You would see . . .

- Time spent with informational texts.
- A classroom filled with books on topics about insects, weather, energy, reptiles, the Civil War, geography, sports, and other topics that interest elementary grade children.
- The use of **thematically-paired story and informational texts** or several informational texts grouped in a thematic unit.
- Graphic organizers related to informational text and topics (e.g., K–W–L charts, Venn Diagrams for comparing and contrasting, and semantic maps).
- Explicit comprehension strategy instruction ([Instruction](#), pp. I-22-26).
- Explicit vocabulary instruction ([Instruction](#), pp. I-20-21).
- Writing to read and reading to write activities about informational topics.
- Teachers and students using a **core set of questions** that they ask each time they encounter informational text (e.g., questions could be generic or topic-specific to guide student thinking and help

them make sense of what they are reading). See *Resources at the end of this chapter for a sample*.

- A classroom configured to enable students to read, write, and talk collaboratively with partners about informational text and topics.
- Teachers using “precision partnering” (e.g., student partner discussions with a designated first speaker, use of sentence starters, accountable listening, and teacher monitoring).
- Task-based accountability is built in for every lesson task/activity—there is clear accountability with **every student doing every task** (e.g., students all required to say, write, and/or do something as an “evidence check” of engagement).
- Teachers using engagement to structure discussions (e.g., responding of *all* students, **everyone does everything—no bystanders**) versus structuring discussions using traditional hand-raising (i.e., teacher poses a questions and students raise their hands to respond).

You would hear . . .

- Language! Talk! Instructional conversations! (Beck & McKeown, 2001; 2007a; Palinscasar & Duke, 2004; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999; Goldenberg, 1992/1993). Teacher and students talk about informational text and topics.
- Questions! Teacher and student-initiated questions about the informational text.
- Vocabulary! Teachers and students using content vocabulary (e.g., *habitat* and *molt*) from or about the informational text.
- Academic Language! Teachers and students using text-related academic language (e.g., table of contents, index, informational book, and retell) from or about the informational text.
- Teacher-facilitated read-alouds and text-based discussions (Santoro et al., 2008).
- The use of before–during–after reading components to discuss the text and apply comprehension strategies ([Instruction](#), pp. I-25-26).
- Students retelling what they learned from an informational text with a partner.

Informational Text: 6–12

The grades 6–12 Standards are divided into two sections, one for English language arts and the other for Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. This division reflects an intentional recognition of the unique, time-honored place that English language arts teachers have in developing students’ literacy skills while at the same time recognizing that teachers in other subject areas must have a role in this development as well. As noted in the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework*, in grades 9–12, teaching and supporting content-specific reading across the instructional areas is critical because **high school teachers are the sole providers of reading instruction for most high school students**.

Students receive reading instruction exclusively in the courses they are taking unless they are reading below grade level in a school that provides additional reading instruction for students needing support. As in elementary and middle school, it is important for students in high school who are reading below grade level or significantly below grade level to receive reading instruction through a separate reading class (see *Framework*, [Instruction](#), pp. I-33-35).

When thinking about helping students learn to read and comprehend informational text in grades 6–12, it’s helpful to understand how the ELA and content-area standards draw from **two areas of research: content-area reading and disciplinary reading**.

Subject-area or content-area reading focuses on teaching students how to read in different content or content areas. Content-area reading emphasizes that “all teachers are teachers of reading,” and is characterized by **generalizable routines intended to be taught by reading and content teachers** alike (Shanahan, 2010a). Many of the familiar generic comprehension strategies (e.g., KWL, SQ3R, QAR or question–answer relationships, anticipation guides, and guided note taking) were developed from research evaluating the effectiveness of these instructional routines with students who struggle with reading (e.g., Fisher, Brozo, Frey, & Ivey, 2007; Fisher & Frey, 2006; Gersten & Baker, 1998; Ogle, 1986, 1992; Raphael, 1994, 1996; Raphael & Au, 2005; Vaughn & Klingner, 1999; Vaughn, Klingner, & Bryant, 2001). However, one of the challenges of content-area reading is that many content-area teachers aren’t reading-instruction experts and some of the more generic strategies that have been used traditionally to help students understand literature can’t be applied directly to some content areas.

The concept of **disciplinary literacy** evolved from more recent research focusing on the specialized ways of learning and communicating in each different content area or discipline (e.g., Akerson, 2007; Bazerman, 1998; Hynd-Shanahan, Holschuh, & Hubbard, 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004; Shanahan, 2010b; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Wineburg, 1991). For example, scientists have a certain way of reading and understanding science text such as abstracts and journal articles. More specifically, chemistry reading requires the use of prediction; a full understanding of experiments and processes; the ability to make connections among and between connected text, graphs, charts, and formulas; and reading strategies that focus on corroboration and transformation. Historians approach informational text by considering the author and the author’s perspective, contextualizing or placing the text within its historical period and place, and corroborating or evaluating information across different sources (Wineburg, 1998). Overall, disciplinary literacy focuses on how language differs across disciplines. From this perspective, **readers need to learn the language of each discipline**. Although the activities involved in disciplinary reading have documented benefits, research on disciplinary literacy is still emerging.

With the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subject Standards*, **content-area and disciplinary literacy are both recognized**. Both also fit within the context of the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* and a response to intervention (RTI) service-delivery system, also part of the *Framework*. For example, disciplinary literacy could be considered part of core, everyday instructional practice. Content-area reading is integrated across all content areas as a core practice, as well as emphasized more deeply for students who need additional levels of support. **When thinking about the use of informational text in grades 6–12, consider how to apply the best of both approaches**. The following table illustrates features of content-area reading and disciplinary literacy:

Table 2: Content-Area Reading / Disciplinary Literacy

	Content-Area Reading*	Disciplinary Literacy*
Source	Reading experts since 1920s	Wider range of experts since 1990s
Nature of skills	Generalizable For example: KWL, SQ3R, word maps, Frayer Model, 3-Level Guides, DRTA,	Specialized For example: Consider the learning demands of the specific subject matter (e.g.,

	Content-Area Reading*	Disciplinary Literacy*
	morphological analysis, summarization, previewing, brainstorming, note taking, QAR, and reciprocal teaching	in history, place the document/text information in its historical period and place)
Focus	Use of reading and writing to study/learn information	How literacy is used to make meaning within a discipline
Students	Remedial (or whole distribution)	Whole distribution
Texts	Often encourages use of literary text	Only focuses on disciplinary text
Role of graphics	Taught more generally	Specific to the discipline

* Based on C. Shanahan (2009) and T. Shanahan (2010a).

CCSS Snapshot: (Informational Text in 6–12)

Reading Standards for English language arts (ELA), grades 6–12, are divided into two categories: Literature and Informational Text. Ten standards focus on Literature and ten on Informational Text.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects include ten standards for Informational Text that parallel the ten Informational Text standards for ELA. Central to curricular coherence in the CCSS, this parallel design builds students' **reading skills across all subject areas**. Examples of the prominence of Informational Text in the Common Core follow.

First, the table below presents Standard 8, from the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas sub-heading of the ELA Standards for Informational Text, as an example of **how the use of informational text is addressed in ELA classes grades 6–12**:

Grade	Standard 8 (ELA Informational Text, 6-12)
6	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
7	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
9–10	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims of a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
11–12	Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., <i>The Federalist</i> , presidential addresses).

Second, an informational text emphasis is prominent in the ELA Anchor Standards for Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language (6–12). See the table of Anchor Standards (pp. 14-15) that illustrates this **cross-strand emphasis on informational text throughout the CCSS**.

Third, the following table from **Reading Standards in Science and Technical Subjects** is presented to illustrate **the ten Informational Text Standards**, tailored to content-specific application, in this case, science. (*RST* is an abbreviation for Reading Science and Technology.) See <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3251> to link to CCSS versions which break down the CCSS for Literacy by grade band and subject:

Sub-heading	Reading Standards (Science and Technical Subjects)	
Key ideas and details	9-10.RST.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions.
	9-10.RST.2	Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; trace the text’s explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.
	9-10.RST.3	Follow precisely a complex multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks, attending to special cases or exceptions defined in the text.
Craft and structure	9-10.RST.4	Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to <i>grades 9–10 texts and topics</i> .
	9-10.RST.5	Analyze the structure of the relationships among concepts in a text, including relationships among key terms (e.g., <i>force, friction, reaction force, energy</i>).
	9-10.RST.6	Analyze the author’s purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text, defining the question the author seeks to address.
Integration of knowledge and ideas	9-10.RST.7	Translate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text into visual form (e.g., a table or chart) and translate information expressed visually or mathematically (e.g., in an equation) into words.
	9-10.RST.8	Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claim or a

Sub-heading	Reading Standards (Science and Technical Subjects)	
		recommendation for solving a scientific or technical problem.
	9-10.RST.9	Compare and contrast findings presented in a text with those from other sources (including their own experiments), noting when the findings support or contradict previous explanations or accounts.
Range of text complexity	9-10.RST.10	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend science / technical texts in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Classroom Snapshot: (Informational Text in 6–12)

Students benefit when teachers work together to strengthen adolescent literacy. By the Year 2019, it is predicted that 63% of all jobs will require a college degree, yet the number of college graduates in the U.S. has steadily declined (Johnson & Sengupta, 2009). Reading and writing are critical skills for success in college and career. To that end, literacy skills in the CCSS cut across all core curricula with expectations for strategy instruction in vocabulary, comprehension, and writing specific to the subject areas. **The following 6-12 Classroom Snapshot highlights implications for supporting informational text instruction in the subject areas:**

When visiting middle schools/high schools and grade 6–12 subject-area classes,

You would see . . .

- Teachers explicitly teaching and using generic comprehension strategies ([Instruction](#), pp. I-22-26 and I-42-54). For example, teachers showing students how to interact with texts by monitoring their comprehension, posing questions, drawing on background knowledge, making and confirming predictions, summarizing, and making connections.
- Students using generic comprehension strategies when reading. You would see comprehension think sheets or prompt sheets, note-taking organizers, question charts, etc. *See Resources at the end of this chapter for samples.*
- Teachers modeling and explicitly teaching discipline-specific comprehension strategies. For example, in sciences, students must fully understand experiments or processes. Close connections exist among prose, graphs, charts, formulas, etc. Students are taught to read back and forth from the text to tables, graphs, etc. Corroboration and transformation are major reading strategies.
- Explicit subject-specific vocabulary instruction ([Instruction](#), pp. I-20-21).
- Multiple texts used during a lesson.
- Teachers using “precision partnering” (e.g., student partner discussions with a designated first speaker, use of sentence starters, accountable listening, and teacher monitoring).
- Task-based accountability built into every lesson task or activity—there is clear accountability with **every student doing every task** (e.g., students all required to say, write, and/or do something as an evidence check of engagement).
- Teachers using engagement to structure discussions (e.g., responding of *all* students, **everyone**

does everything—no bystanders) versus structuring discussions using traditional hand-raising (i.e., teacher poses a question, and students raise their hands to respond).

- Collaboration! Teachers planning and preparing texts and materials with other teachers ([Leadership](#), pp. L-12-13.) Teachers need to collaborate and organize reading comprehension instruction in all subject areas.
- Study groups, learning communities, and professional development opportunities for teachers to work together to plan and improve reading comprehension for adolescent learners.
- An emphasis on students' basic and intermediate literacy skills in the early and middle grades so that literacy in the upper grades can focus on understanding content (i.e., disciplinary literacy).
- An emphasis on subject-area reading strategies for students struggling with reading.

You would hear . . .

- Teachers and students using language, academic and content vocabulary, questions, and content-specific talk!
- Teachers and students using content-specific vocabulary during text-based discussions.
- Teachers and students using academic language and use of target vocabulary in a structured context (e.g., using words in sentences).
- Academic, content-specific discussions ([Instruction](#), p. I-47).
- Teachers modeling discipline-specific comprehension by thinking out loud ([Instruction](#), p. I-43).
- Teacher and student discussions about how pictures within text differ in their role. For example, some pictures may highlight describing/defining nouns, verbs/processes, relationships, etc. Also, differences exist between technical drawings and other drawings/photos.
- High-quality discussions with questions such as “What is the author trying to say here?,” “Does this information agree with the other information?,” or “What did John do to Alex in this story?” (Beck, McKeown, Worthy, Sandora, & Kucan, 2006; Goldenberg, 1992/1993; Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, Alexander, 2009; Soter et al., 2008).
- Teachers modeling reasoning by thinking out loud ([Instruction](#), p. I-43).
- Students expressing opinions with explained positions and reasoning.
- Teachers acknowledging clear student reasoning.
- Teachers/students summarizing a discussion when it closes ([Instruction](#), p. I-24).

Some additional considerations . . .

- Educators should be cautious applying approaches to literacy that are used in other environments without first considering the similarities and differences between those environments and the context in which they are working.
- Collaborate! Build curriculum coherence by discussing the generic reading comprehension strategies that will be introduced, practiced, and reviewed in subject-area classes.
- More research on disciplinary reading is needed. However, the activities involved in disciplinary reading developed thus far suggest learning benefits.

Classroom Snapshots (Informational Text in 6–12 Subject Areas)

The following classroom snapshot illustrates how **both content-area reading/writing instruction and disciplinary literacy instruction** (see definitions at beginning of “Informational Text: 6-12”) support informational text work in science and technical subjects, history/social studies, and English language arts. In other words, generic comprehension and writing strategies are integrated across *all* subject areas and rich, discipline-specific literacy instruction is provided:

Literacy Addressed in Subject Areas*	Science & Technical Subjects	History/Social Studies	English Language Arts
Reading in the subject areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly teach generic comprehension strategies (e.g., summarizing and question-asking/answering strategies). Students need to be taught generic comprehension strategies to learn to monitor their comprehension, to pose questions, draw on what they know, make and test predictions, and to summarize and make connections while reading (Instruction, pp. 1-22-26). The idea is not just to read like a chemist or biologist, historian, or literature professor, but to be able to study and learn from texts, including chemistry, biology, and physics, history, and literature texts. Emphasize literacy learning tools such as response journals, advanced organizers, dictionary use, Internet information web quests, etc. 		
Writing in the subject areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach students the writing skills and processes that are needed to engage with the text by writing. Have students write about what they read—responding to the text in writing, writing summaries, answering questions, and creating questions. 		
Disciplinary literacy	Teach discipline-specific reading : building prior knowledge, building specialized vocabulary, learning to deconstruct complex sentences, using knowledge of text structure and genres to predict main and subordinate ideas, mapping graphic (and mathematical) representations against explanations in the text, posing discipline-relevant questions, comparing claims and propositions across texts, using norms for reasoning within the discipline (i.e., what counts as evidence) to evaluate claims.		
	Explicitly teach students how to read, think, and interact with texts like a scientist, engineer, etc.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on analysis of investigations and determining what is and 	Explicitly teach students how to read, think, and interact with texts like an historian: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the author of the history text (compare the author’s point of view or how an author makes 	Explicitly teach students how to read, think, and interact with text like a literature professor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly teach the story grammar related to plot (e.g., plot configurations,

Literacy Addressed in Subject Areas*	Science & Technical Subjects	History/Social Studies	English Language Arts
	<p>is not known.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach note-taking strategies that apply to science and technical subjects. For example in chemistry, divide notes into substances, properties, processes, interactions, and atomic expressions categories. • Demonstrate and discuss how the text provides knowledge that allows predictions about how the world works. • Teach the knowledge required to develop a full understanding about experiments or processes. • Show students the close connections between and among prose, graphs, charts, and formulas (alternative representations of constructs). • Focus on reading strategies related to corroboration and transformation. • Explicitly teach how to use signs of meaning in reports and textbooks (e.g., abstracts, section 	<p>claims or refines vocabulary, meaning, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualize (place the document/information from text within its historical period). • Corroborate (evaluate information across sources). • Demonstrate and discuss the interpretative nature of history and how authors and sourcing are central in interpretation (consideration of bias and perspective). • Explicitly teach how narrative and argument are used (e.g., may often seem that narrative is without purpose and argument is without explicit claims). • Use multiple texts (see below). Single texts are problematic. No corroboration. • Explicitly teach frameworks for understanding (e.g., explorations of enduring themes about how people organize themselves in societies and how they manage their internal and external relationships). • Demonstrate and discuss how to weigh and analyze conflicting evidence within 	<p>character types, and scenarios of human goals).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the implications of scripts (e.g., oral narratives, narratives in other media, and written texts). • Teach how to identify themes and layers of symbolism. • Explicitly teach students how to identify patterns within a text and across texts: Patterns based on knowledge (intertextuality, author, literary tradition, and historical context) and situated perspective of the reader (black aesthetic, feminist, reader response, new criticism, Marxist, poststructuralist, and deconstructionist). • Show students how to “reject the literal” (e.g., notice, signify, configure, and build coherence) by expanding/extrapolating (e.g., fables, allegories, and symbolism) and negating/contrasting/conflicting (e.g., irony, satire, and unreliable narrator). • Map literature as a domain: archetypal themes (e.g., loss of innocence, relationships with nature,

Literacy Addressed in Subject Areas*	Science & Technical Subjects	History/Social Studies	English Language Arts
	<p>headings, figures, tables, diagrams, maps, drawings, photographs, and reference lists and endnotes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly teach specialized vocabulary: words with Greek roots (<i>cosm-</i>, <i>hypo-</i>, and <i>derm-</i>), words used in everyday discourse that have a highly specialized subject area meaning (<i>fruit</i> and <i>nursery</i>), modifiers of words that are used in ordinary discourse (<i>saturated fat</i> and <i>dark matter</i>), and common terms used in specialized ways (<i>catabolic pathway</i> and <i>lipoprotein cholesterol</i>). • Show students how taxonomic reasoning works. • Analyze syntax: embedded clauses (“an invisible gas called water vapor” and nominal apposition (“animals that eat plants, herbivores, may be found . . .”). • Explicitly teach text structure: cause and effect, sequencing, extended definitions, 	<p>texts (e.g., reconstructing accounts from the past as a means of understanding the present) and across texts (e.g., question asking, searching in relevant texts, summarizing content).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly teach how to read historic documents. Discuss complex sentence structure and arcane vocabulary. 	<p>truth, freedom, conflict, and good vs. evil), interpretive problems (e.g., symbolism, irony, and problems with point of view), plot configurations (e.g., magical realism, coming of age, science fiction, fable, and mystery), character types (e.g., trickster, detective, mythic hero, epic hero, picaresque hero, and tragic hero).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly teach how to decode symbolism (e.g., detection, manifestation, function, and sources of knowledge for interpretation). • Consider literary reasoning as a cultural practice (e.g., demonstrate a willingness to attend to language play as an end to itself, follow the assumption that details form a coherent whole even when they appear not to do so, use analogical reasoning, construct warrantable associations between the text and other traditions).

Literacy Addressed in Subject Areas*	Science & Technical Subjects	History/Social Studies	English Language Arts																																																																						
	<p>and problem–solution.</p> <p>Sample: Chemistry note taking</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="383 562 659 766"> <thead> <tr> <th>Substances</th> <th>Properties</th> <th>Processes</th> <th>Interactions</th> <th>Atomic Expression</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Substances	Properties	Processes	Interactions	Atomic Expression																<p>Sample: History events chart</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="748 562 1000 793"> <thead> <tr> <th>TEXT</th> <th>WHO?</th> <th>WHAT?</th> <th>WHERE?</th> <th>WHEN?</th> <th>WHY?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(1)</td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6">Relation:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(2)</td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6">Relation:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(3)</td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6">Relation:</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6">Main Point:</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	TEXT	WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	WHEN?	WHY?	(1)						Relation:						(2)						Relation:						(3)						Relation:						Main Point:						<p>Sample: Character change chart</p> <div data-bbox="1122 579 1377 779"> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>What is the main character like at the beginning of the story?</td> <td>What is the main character like at the end of the story? How has he or she changed?</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Crisis</p> <p>Given this character change, what do you think the author wanted you to learn?</p> </div>	What is the main character like at the beginning of the story?	What is the main character like at the end of the story? How has he or she changed?
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Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use multiple texts (e.g., textbooks, research reports, journal articles, book chapters, books about different topics), books written for different audiences (e.g., popular audience versus scientific audience), and classic texts. Use materials other than textbooks to help students become proficient readers in various forms of text within and across disciplines. 																																																																								

* Based on Lee (2010) and Shanahan (2010a). See Resources at the end of this section for full-size versions of samples.

Finally, the following text box presents **a student perspective on the use of disciplinary literacy**. Note how the student discusses her use of comprehension strategies in history before she learned from a disciplinary literacy perspective and after.

Before

Anna: “I approached reading the world history text like any other text, read the pre-questions, read the sections, and put the books down.”

After

Anna: “I like the way I am thinking as I am reading. I’m reading and analyzing all these things I’ve read before and comparing them while I’m reading. It’s kind of weird, but it’s cool. My brain is working overtime and extending its capabilities, so that’s good. I like things that really make you think, and this subject does just that. There is no real answer, so you have to analyze everything yourself and come up with your own conclusions.”

Excerpt from Feldman (2010).

Text Complexity: K-12

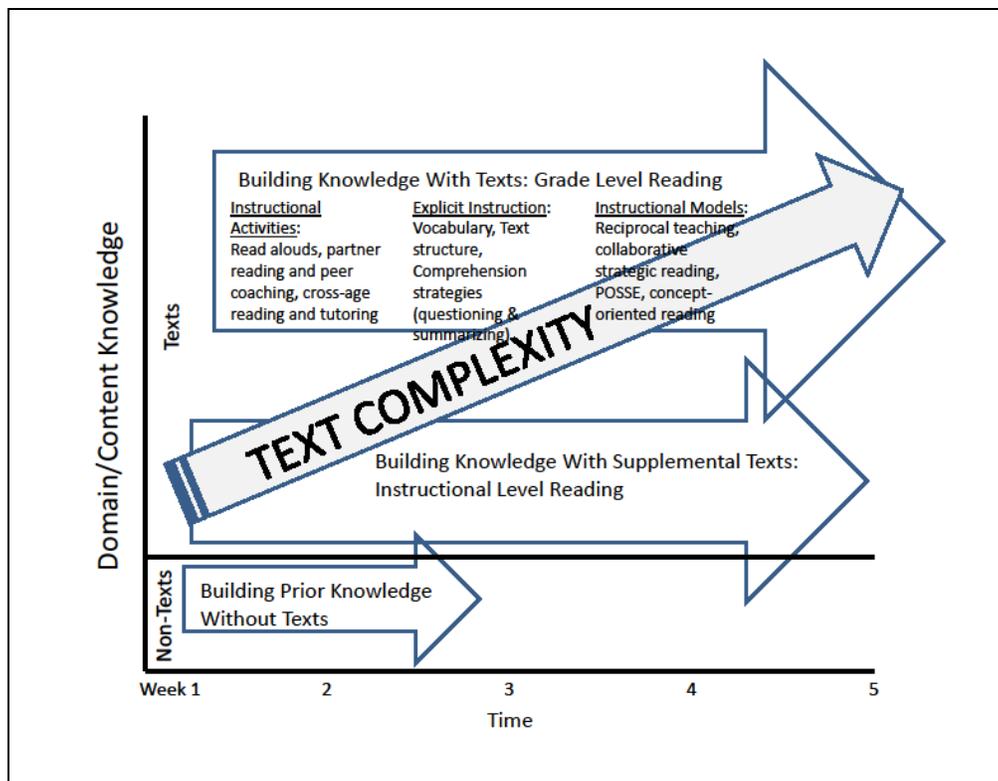
Why are complex texts so important? The answer is found in the written text itself. Research on the richness of vocabulary used in sources of spoken and written language has revealed that speech is actually “lexically impoverished” when compared with written language (Adams, 2010–2011, Hirsch, 2003). Although this may seem counterintuitive with regard to children’s literature, “the relative rarity of the words in children’s books is, in fact, greater than that in all of the adult conversation, except for courtroom testimony” (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998, p. 9). In other words, texts are valuable sources of diverse vocabulary, rich language, and varied syntax whether the text is a children’s book, scientific journal article, or an editorial about current events. **Complex text holds the vocabulary-, language-, knowledge-, and thinking-building potential of deep comprehension.**

Being able to read complex text independently and proficiently is essential for high achievement in college and in the workplace and important in numerous life tasks. If students have not developed the skills, concentration, and perseverance to read challenging texts with understanding they will read less in general (Adams, 2010–2011). **Complex texts offer students new language, new knowledge, and new modes of thinking.** As discussed previously, when access to complex texts is limited and when there is little or no accountability for the independent reading of complex texts, the consequences can be devastating for students. Unfortunately, these consequences are disproportionately harsh for students who are already in circumstances, such as poverty or high-mobility situations, that isolate them from text (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Evans & Schamberg, 2009; Hart & Risley, 2003; Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Turner & Avison, 2003).

Limited access to complex texts is viewed as an equity issue (Darling-Hammond, 2010–2011; Hirsch, 2010–2011) that contributes to the often discussed language-and comprehension-gap that emerges and steadily widens between advantaged and disadvantaged students (Chall, Jacobs, Baldwin, 1990; Chall & Jacobs, 1996; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Hart & Risley, 2003; Hirsch, 2003). To address inequities in access to rich, varied, complex texts—by CCSS design, **all students will encounter *the same complex texts* in their school curriculum as part of the Common Core Standards.** In other words, the selection and use of complex texts is considered part of common instruction for all students. This is similar to how the [Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework](#) discusses the core reading program and Tier 1 instruction. For example, the *Framework* highlights the important role grade 6–12 teachers have in helping all students access required text or other text specific to a subject area (see [Instruction](#), pp. I-2, I-4, I-8, I-16; [Goals](#), pp. G-3 and G-5; [Professional Development](#), pp. PD-3 and PD-5). Text in the subject areas is typically above many students’ reading level. As a result, often in the past students read very little text, the rationale being that if students learned the content—even if they could not read the content to understand it deeply—instructional expectations were met. It is important, however, that all students, including those who are struggling readers, receive opportunities to read texts across the instructional areas. In the effort to help all students become grade-level readers or higher, teachers can select texts at students’ instructional levels to *supplement* the course text. To help students understand informational texts, teachers can (a) summarize and explicitly teach the content from text in their respective courses, (b) provide scaffolds to students for reading the selected course text, and (c) provide additional text at the students’ reading level.

Figure 1 below illustrates **different levels and types of support that can be used to help scaffold text complexity.** **First**, non-text sources (e.g., multimedia and class discussions) can be considered as foundational information for building the vocabulary, language, and content knowledge students will

encounter when reading complex text (Beck et al., 2006; Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996; Lee, 2010; Palincasar, 1986; Wolf, Crosson, & Resnick, 2005). **Second**, easier, supplemental texts can support the use of complex texts. As indicated previously, the purpose of these texts is to provide supplemental, instructional-level reading material for students. **Third**, when using grade-level complex texts, teacher scaffolding is critical (Heibert & Sailors, 2009). Instructional activities—such as the use of teacher-facilitated read alouds and discussions of text excerpts, partner reading, or peer coaching—can be used to scaffold text difficulty. Explicit instruction can also be incorporated to focus on challenging vocabulary (e.g., preteaching words), text structure, and the use of so-called *high-mileage* comprehension strategies (e.g., question asking and answering and summarizing) (Billman, Hilden, & Halladay, 2009). Additional research-based instructional models (e.g., reciprocal teaching and collaborative strategic reading) can be considered when thinking about how to help struggling readers with complex text in a whole class or subject area context (e.g., Billman, Hilden, & Halladay, 2009; Palincasar & Brown, 1984, 1986; Vaughn & Klinger, 1999; Vaughn, Klinger, & Bryant, 2001).



Based on Billman, Hilden, and Halladay (2009) and Lee (2010).

Figure 1

Finally, multiple texts can be selected strategically and used to provide students with increased access to complex text. **A strategic use of multiple texts can scaffold content by linking prerequisite content with a more sophisticated application of the content** (Billman, Hilden, & Halladay, 2009; Coyne, Kame'enui, & Carnine, 2010; Dickson, Chard, & Simmons, 1993; Larkin, 2001; Stone, 1998). For example, perhaps one text provides rich, descriptive examples and another provides a clear,

straightforward description of the topic. The strategic use of multiple texts can intentionally highlight intertextual connections, provide overlapping redundancy to reinforce or review content, and different examples that clarify complex content (see CCSS Snapshot, Text Complexity—Use Multiple Literature and Informational Texts).

Most importantly, think about the use of complex text across time and the scope of the curriculum. Within that context, **scaffolding and support are more structured and multilayered at the beginning of implementation.** Over time, the support beams from the scaffolding are removed (Dickson, Chard, & Simmons, 1993; Fisher & Frey, 2008). In other words, if scaffolding is used to provide access to complex texts while students are building knowledge and comprehension, how will these structures be gradually removed as students begin to read more complex texts independently?

Because such strong emphasis is placed on the use of complex texts, the CCSS provide guidance in how complexity should be evaluated. [Appendix A](#) of the CCSS (pp. 5–17) outlines **a three-part model for determining text complexity.** For CCSS overview purposes, see a brief summary of the three-part model in the following table. It's important to recognize that there are strengths and weaknesses with each of the three approaches in the model. Each has strong value under certain circumstances, and each has limitations. Because a comprehensive (i.e., multifaceted), empirically-validated text complexity metric has not yet been developed, the CCSS recommend that multiple quantitative measures be used whenever possible and that the quantitative results be confirmed or overruled by qualitative and/or matching the reader to the text and task:

Table 3: Three-Part Text Complexity Model

Text Complexity Approach	What Is Evaluated?		How Is It Evaluated?
1. Qualitative evaluation of the text	Levels of meaning, structure, language, conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning: texts with single, clear explicit meaning are easier than texts with multiple, implicit, hidden, or obscure meanings. • Structure: low structural complexity (simple, well-marked, conventional structures) vs. high complexity (complex, subtle, unconventional structures); role of graphics. • Language conventionality/clarity (literal, clear, everyday, language vs. figurative, ironic, ambiguous, purposefully misleading, archaic, unfamiliar language. • Knowledge demands: texts that make few assumptions about readers' life experiences vs. texts that make many subjective assumptions. 	Attentive adult reader
2. Quantitative evaluation of the text	Readability measures and other scores of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word frequency counts, word length, sentence length (e.g., Flesch-Kincaid Grade-Level test, Dale-Chall Readability Formula) 	Readability tools and formulas

Text Complexity Approach	What Is Evaluated?		How Is It Evaluated?
	text complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lexile Framework: complexity based on word frequency and sentence length as proxies for semantic and syntactic complexity (MetaMetrics) (Appendix A, p. 8) • Text cohesion: cohesiveness of text, how tight the text holds together, e.g., does the text help the reader by signaling relationships among words, sentences, and ideas by using repetition, concrete language, etc. (Coh-Metrix) (Appendix A, p. 8) 	
3. Matching reader to text and task	Reader variables generated by the text assigned and the questions posed	<p>Reader considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive capabilities: attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, and visualization • Motivation: purpose for reading, interest in content, and self-efficacy as a reader • Knowledge: vocabulary and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of comprehension strategies, and experiences <p>Task considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader’s purpose: purpose might shift during the course of reading • Type of reading: skimming, getting the gist, studying, reading with intent to retain information, etc. • Intended outcome: increasing knowledge, identifying a solution to a problem, etc. 	Educator use of professional judgment

The *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* ([Instruction](#), p. I-34) discusses the use of Lexile measures as one way to assist teachers with identifying appropriate text for the range of learners in their classrooms. The Oregon School Library Information System (OSLIS) (<http://www.oslis.org/>) provides research databases of articles, many of them Lexiled (every Oregon district has an access code for OSLIS databases). Teachers may find Lexile measures useful as the **quantitative evaluation of text** described in the Three-part Text Complexity Model.

CCSS Snapshot (Text Complexity)

Text complexity is addressed in Reading Standard 10. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade staircase of increasing text complexity that climbs from beginning reading to the college- and career-readiness level. Regardless of reading skills or reading level, **all students must show a steadily-growing ability to discern big-idea meaning and make fuller use of text.** For example, progression might be seen in a student’s ability to make more connections and increase the number of main ideas identified among and between texts. Text complexity in the Standards is defined in grade bands 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR (College and Career Readiness).

Students in the first year of a given band are expected by the end of the year to read and comprehend proficiently within the band, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. Students in the last year of a band are expected to read and comprehend independently and proficiently within the band by the end of the year (with no scaffolding). **The following CCSS Snapshot shows the progression of Reading Standard 10 in ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.** (Note that Standard 10 for Literature and Standard 10 for Informational Text in ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects is worded identically, except for text types.)

Grade(s)	Standard 10 for <i>both</i> ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (individual text types omitted)
K	Actively engage in group [<i>literature & informational</i>] reading activities with purpose and understanding.
1	With prompting and support, read [<i>literature & informational texts</i>] of appropriate complexity.
2	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
3	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
4	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
5	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
6	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 6–8 text complexity

Grade(s)	Standard 10 for <i>both</i> ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (individual text types omitted)
	band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
7	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
8	By the end of the year, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
9–10	<p>By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p> <p>By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects</i>] in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>
11–12 College and Career	<p>By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p> <p>By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend [<i>literature & informational texts, including history / social studies, science, and technical subjects,</i>] in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>
<p>When reviewing Reading Standard 10, notice how scaffolding is emphasized within grade bands. Students at the beginning of the grade band are expected to comprehend complex text <i>with scaffolding as needed</i>. Students in the last year of a band are expected to read and comprehend independently and proficiently within the band by the end of the year. Overall, instructional scaffolding is support that teachers and materials provide to students during instruction. In a building project, scaffolds provide considerable external support at the outset of construction and then are removed in stages as internal structures become stronger and better able to function independently. It is the same with the instructional supports provided to help students read complex text. Some students may require substantial supports during the initial stages of learning. As students progress in their understanding and knowledge, these supports are gradually withdrawn so that students can apply skills and strategies independently (Coyne, Kame’enui, & Carnine, 2010).</p>	

CCSS Snapshot (Text Complexity—Use Multiple Literature and Informational Texts)

In the overview provided about text complexity, the **strategic use of multiple texts is suggested as a way to help students engage more meaningfully with complex text**. In other words, multiple texts

about similar or related topics can be strategically integrated within the curriculum to give students the opportunity to find logical and purposeful connections among texts using reading skills and strategies.

Standard 9 for both ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

emphasizes the use of multiple texts. In the following table for Standard 9, Literature and Informational Text Standards for ELA are displayed side-by-side and Informational Text Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects are displayed in grade bands:

Grade(s)	Standard 9 for <i>both</i> ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (side-by-side—Literature and Informational Text)
K	With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
K	With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).
1	Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
1	Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).
2	Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.
2	Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.
3	Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).
3	Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.
4	Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.
4	Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
5	Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

Grade(s)	Standard 9 for <i>both</i> ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (side-by-side—Literature and Informational Text)
5	Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
6	Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
6	Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).
7	Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
7	Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
8	Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
8	Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
6–8 (History/SS)	Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.
9–10 (History/SS)	Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
11–12 (History/SS)	Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
6–8 (Science/Tech Subj)	Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic.
9–10 (Science/Tech Subj)	Compare and contrast findings presented in a text to those from other sources (including their own experiments), noting when the findings support or contradict previous explanations or accounts.

Grade(s)	Standard 9 for <i>both</i> ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (side-by-side—Literature and Informational Text)
11–12 (Science/Tech Subj)	Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible.
9–10 (ELA)	Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
9–10 (ELA)	Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including how they address related themes and concepts.
11–12 (ELA)	Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
11–12 (ELA)	Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

Classroom Snapshot (Text Complexity—Use Multiple Literature and Informational Texts)

Thinking about **text complexity** when planning and implementing instruction is important for two reasons. **First**, the use of complex texts includes the organization of reading within a curriculum so that each text bootstraps the language and knowledge that will be needed for the next topic and text. Therefore, the knowledge addressed in the text needs to be considered within the context of the lesson, the grade-level curriculum, and the K–12 curriculum. **Second**, even though the ideal result of CCSS implementation is that all students will enter a class with more similar skills and background knowledge, today’s reality includes classrooms of students with a diverse range of knowledge and reading skills. When considering the use of grade-level, complex text for the full range of student learners in a classroom, **high-quality scaffolding** that initially provides instructional and material support and gradually withdraws the support over time is necessary for student success. The following snapshot provides suggestions that can be considered when **using complex text for a full range of student learners**:

Thinking about text complexity? . . .

- Work collaboratively with other teachers to select texts that are appropriate for your students. Lexile measures alone show the level of decoding required but not the level of comprehension demanded to understand the text. Examine the sentence structure and complexity of the text when selecting reading material. Consider qualitative, quantitative, and reader-task dimensions (see Table 3).
- Use materials beyond the textbooks to help students become proficient readers in various forms of

texts. Teach routines that structure students' reading and engage them in the content. Provide reading practices that require students to read a lot and think with purpose.

- Preteach critical content vocabulary ([Instruction](#), pp. I-20-21). Build prior knowledge of topics without texts and then expand knowledge with reading, as opposed to assigning a reading followed by questions to answer independently.
- Teach students how to examine the text for signals of meaning—headings, subtopics, visuals, diagrams, etc.—and how they relate to the text.
- Teach students to deconstruct complex sentences to better understand the text.
- Devise a core set of questions that students can ask as they read assigned materials, to guide their thinking and help make sense of what they are reading (see Resources at the end of this chapter for a sample set of “**Common Questions**”).
- Use read-alouds to scaffold student understanding. Read-alouds don't necessarily need to focus on an entire selection of text but can be used with excerpts of text. (Note that read-alouds/listening to audio recordings of text in the upper grades, however, should not be used as a substitute for independent reading by students. Upper-grade read-alouds can, however, supplement and enrich student independent reading).
- Incorporate peer-assisted instruction to support reading of complex texts (e.g., Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997). (See also “EL Student Focus: Small Groups,” [Instruction](#), p. I-7.)
- Consider the use of cross-age reading and tutoring programs.
- Consider instructional models that combine strategy instruction with scaffolded support for reading (e.g., reciprocal teaching [Palincasar & Brown, 1984; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994] ([Instruction](#), p. I-46); collaborative strategic reading [Klinger, Vaughn, & Schumn, 1998; Klinger & Vaughn, 1999], POSSE [Englert & Mariage, 1991]; and concept-orientated reading instruction [Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Swan, 2003]).
- Teach comprehension strategies, especially the use of summarizing and questioning (see [Instruction](#), pp. I-22-24)
- Use instructional scaffolding! Scaffolding! Scaffolding! ([Instruction](#), p. I-16) For example, pair easier texts with complex texts—introduce vocabulary and build some background knowledge with an easier text and then incorporate use of the more complex text).
- Strategically pair or group multiple texts. For example, pair an informational text and a narrative text, select texts by the same author for an author study, thematically group texts (e.g., for a Civil War unit, select short stories by Virginia Hamilton, historical fiction such as *Which Way Freedom* [Hansen, 1986], and a text discussing art history from that historical period).
- [Appendix A](http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/commoncore/ela-appendix-a.pdf) (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/commoncore/ela-appendix-a.pdf>) of the CCSS provides useful examples that illustrate how to apply a qualitative–quantitative read and task analysis to a selection of text. See pp.12–17 for sample annotated texts.
- [Appendix B](http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/commoncore/ela-appendix-b.pdf) (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/commoncore/ela-appendix-b.pdf>) of the CCSS provides text examples that exemplify the level of complexity and quality of text that the Standards require. Additionally, the exemplars are suggestive of the breadth of texts that students should encounter in the text types required by the Standards. The choices are designed to serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality, and range.

Back-mapping for College and Career Readiness

The **College and Career Readiness (CCR)** Anchor Standards, the backbone of the Standards, describe the literacy skills all students need **when they graduate**. The grade-specific **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** describe the literacy skills, corresponding to the CCR Anchor Standards by number, all students need **when they finish each grade**. Keeping the college and career focus at the forefront of kindergarten through grade 12 implementation is critical to ensure rigor from grade to grade; that is why the CCRs are placed *before* the grade-specific standards in the CCSS. For example, for K–5, the CCRs are presented on page 10 of the [Common Core State Standards](#). Reading Standards for Literature (K–5) begin on page 11. CCRs are presented on page 35 for grades 6–12. Reading Standards for Literature (6–12) begin on page 36.

Although a superficial glance at the CCSS might make it seem initially that the CCSS are general and not fully specified, deeper consideration reveals that the CCSS are specified by a unique “back-mapping” design. **Back-mapping considers the end result first** (i.e., what we want all students to do when they graduate). Then, standards for each grade level, working backward from grade 11/12, to 9/10, to 8, etc., are identified to enable students to reach the final result (i.e., literacy skills for college and career readiness at graduation). A back-mapping design supports the preparation of all students to be successful in school, from the beginning of school, and proficient in reading, writing, and speaking and listening required for an Oregon Diploma. From a design perspective, there isn’t a standard in the CCSS that is not required for student success after high school or that is not linked to the CCR Anchor Standards.

CCSS Snapshot (Back-mapping):

The following example illustrates the **K-12 rigor and emphasis resulting from the CCSS back-mapping design for Standard 1** of the Key Ideas and Details Sub-heading of the English Language Arts Standards for Literature and Informational Text (K–12) **and** the Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (6–12) Standards for Informational Text. (*Note: Standard 1 for Literature and Standard 1 for Informational Text in ELA are worded identically at each grade level except for text types; the parallel structure in Standard 1 is reflected throughout.*)

Grade	Standard 1 (Literature and Informational Text for ELA <i>combined</i> for purposes of comparison and Informational Text in the Subject Areas)
K	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text. [<i>Literature and Informational Text</i>]
1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. [<i>Literature and Informational Text</i>]
2	Ask and answer such questions as <i>who, what, where, when, why, and how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. [<i>Literature and Informational Text</i>]
3	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. [<i>Literature and Informational Text</i>]

Grade	Standard 1 (Literature and Informational Text for ELA <i>combined</i> for purposes of comparison and Informational Text in the Subject Areas)
4	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. <i>[Literature and Informational Text]</i>
5	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. <i>[Literature and Informational Text]</i>
6	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. <i>[Literature and Informational Text]</i>
7	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. <i>[Literature and Informational Text]</i>
8	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. <i>[Literature and Informational Text]</i>
6–8 (History/SS)	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
9–10 (History/SS)	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
11–12 (History/SS)	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
6–8 (Science/ Tech Subj)	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.
9–10 (Science/ Tech Subj)	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions.
11–12 (Science/ Tech Subj)	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to important distinctions the author makes and to any gaps or inconsistencies in the account.
9–10 (ELA)	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. <i>[Literature and Informational Text]</i>
11–12	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly

Grade	Standard 1 (Literature and Informational Text for ELA <i>combined</i> for purposes of comparison and Informational Text in the Subject Areas)
(ELA)	as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. [<i>Literature and Informational Text</i>]
<p>What are some things that you notice about the Standard 1 progression? Perhaps you noted one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills get more specific and demanding. • Details are recognized as a support for a broader interpretation of text. • Text difficulty (including ambiguity) is a critical criterion in determining the progression. • An emphasis on informational text starts from the earliest grades. • The CCSS have a specific consideration of history/social studies and science and technical subjects. • The CCSS have a strong emphasis on using information as evidence. <p>In essence, skills that become more specific and demanding, use of informational text from the earliest grades, and the use of text with higher levels of complexity illustrate how back-mapping is used to build college and career readiness.</p>	

To see how comparing and contrasting information expands in complexity through the CCSS back-mapping design across the grade levels and subject areas, **see the Standard 9 table located under Text Complexity (pp. 32-34)**. It displays a side-by-side view of Standard 9 for Literature and Informational Text (K–12) and a grade-band view of Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (6–12).

Using the Standard 9 table, did you notice. . . ?

- Multiple texts are emphasized from the earliest grade levels.
- Different kinds of information should be included in analysis, synthesis, and comparative evaluation, particularly in science.
- The CCSS emphasize canonical literary works.
- The CCSS have requirements for analysis, synthesis, and comparative evaluation.

Overall, advanced literacy, such as the ability to integrate information from diverse sources, requires a solid foundation of **comparing and contrasting information**. Back-mapping illustrates how complex skills related to analysis, synthesis, and comparative evaluation develop from analyzing stories in the same genre and comparing and contrasting their approaches with similar themes and topics (grade 6); comparing and contrasting the plots, setting, and themes (grade 4); and comparing and contrasting the adventures of characteristics in familiar stories (kindergarten).

Using an Integrated Model of Literacy

Many aspects of literacy, such as listening and speaking, reading and writing, and reading and spelling, are viewed as “two sides of the same coin” (Perfetti, 1997, p. 28). According to Linnea Ehri, for example, “learning to read and learning to spell are one and the same, almost” (1997, p. 237).

“People read the spellings of words. People spell the spellings of words. People read the spellings they have spelled. The lack of clear distinction between these terms [spelling and reading] raises the possibility that we have been misled by our language and that reading and spelling are more similar than we recognize (Ehri, 1997, p. 238).”

Following this same pattern of thinking, we write about what we read, and we read what we write. From a writing perspective, a writer needs to wear multiple hats (Gleason, 1995). Each hat represents a different category of tasks and requires a different set of skills and strategies. For example, writers need to be thinkers and organizers. When wearing the Thinker–organizer hat, the writer determines purpose, anticipates audience, generates ideas, mentally organizes content, and translates ideas. When the writer is wearing the Author hat, he or she organizes the thinker’s ideas, generates written ideas, and communicates with an audience. As the reader, the writer connects what is read, obtains ideas, and tells the editor what to edit. Finally, with the Editor hat, the writer hand-writes or types, punctuates, capitalizes, and indents, and *spells*... Now we’re back to the notion that spelling and reading are one and the same, *almost*. Even though the hats are different, **the use of language, vocabulary, reading, writing, and thinking are interconnected and interrelated.**



(Gleason, 1995)

Reading and writing influence each other (e.g., Raphael & Englert, 1990; Shanahan, 1988; Shanahan & Lomax, 1986). Both require the learner to interact with text and actively construct meaning (Englert & Mariage, 1991; Englert et al., 1991). Meaningfulness of a text depends on the knowledge and thought applied during the writing of the text. Meaning also depends on the knowledge applied during reading. An author’s printed message can be interpreted and evaluated only to the extent that a reader can process the text and call forth vocabulary, syntactic, rhetorical, topical, analytic, and social knowledge (Adams, 1998). Learning from text depends on language, knowledge, modes of thought, as well as reading skill (Adams, 2010–2011). It’s all interrelated.

When approaching literacy from an integrated perspective, **instruction focuses on making the common structures and processes across text visible to students** (Englert & Mariage, 1991; Englert

et al., 1991). For example, when reading narrative text, a reader will build comprehension around story grammar (e.g., main character, plot, setting). When writing a narrative, a writer uses the same text structure elements (story grammar). Retelling a story or telling a friend about what you did on summer vacation also requires the use of story elements. The structures and processes of text can be made visible to students through the use of graphic organizers, think sheets, maps, and note sheets. The visual presentation of text structure might begin very simply with a cloze or sentence starter. For example, when thinking about argument, “I like/didn’t like _____.” and “Why?/Because . . .” could be used as an organizational frame for kindergarten and first-grade students. The organizational frame could be applied to reading, writing, speaking and listening when reading or listening to a book (e.g., “Did you like the book? Why?”), writing about the weather (e.g., “Did you like the rain, the hot sun, or the snow? Why?”), or discussing food served in the school cafeteria (e.g., “David just said that he didn’t like the pizza. Why didn’t he like the pizza today?”). Of course, the organizational frame would increase in complexity as students enter the upper grades and learn to identify positions, reasons, evidence, opposing positions, and rebuttals. The Classroom Snapshot, “Integrated Model of Literacy” illustrates how text structure can be emphasized in an integrated approach to literacy (Gleason, 1995).

Overall, **by knowing text patterns, students can build common, shared understandings about how text works** (Englert & Mariage, 1991). Think sheets, used as note-taking tools with prompts, help remind students of the thinking strategies and dialogue that good readers, writers, speakers, and thinkers use (Dickson, Chard, & Simmons, 1993). *See the Resources section at the end of this chapter for samples.* By using a structure of sameness, students have opportunities to engage in self-instructional training and receive continuous reinforcement and practice when text structure is encountered. Approaching text complexity from the perspective of integration is, in effect, another form of scaffolding.

CCSS Snapshot: (Integrated Model of Literacy)

The CCSS are constructed using an integrated model of literacy and are *cross-referenced across all four strands*—Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening—so they can be clustered for instruction. As an intertwined strand of DNA, the CCSS are bundled in a manner that facilitates a systematic link of knowledge, concepts, and vocabulary across strands. The idea is that knowledge builds on knowledge. The integrated approach to literacy addresses the need for college- and career-ready students to be proficient in reading complex information text in a variety of subject areas.

The following examples illustrate how the CCSS use an integrated model of literacy:

- The CCSS **Language Standards serve as the glue that connects the other strands.** Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening are linked together by the Language and Vocabulary strand that includes conventions and vocabulary.
- Writing Standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening Standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.
- Argument holds prominence in the CCSS Writing Standards. In fact, the first Writing Standard for K–12 focuses on the development of argument writing skills. Even though argument is not presented as an individual category in the Reading Standards, as are Literature and Informational Text, Standards related to argument are deeply integrated in both Literature and Informational Text Standards for K-12 (e.g., see Standard 8 and the focus on identifying an author’s reasons and supporting details). Similarly, argument is also integrated throughout the Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social

Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects for grades 6–12 (e.g., see Standard 1 about citing textual evidence to support analysis, Standard 8 about distinguishing among facts and reasoned judgments).

- In the CCSS, usually several standards can be addressed by a single rich task. For example, when editing their writing, students address Writing Standard 5, “Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach” as well as Language Standards 1–3, which deal with conventions of standard English and knowledge of language. When drawing evidence from literary and informational texts, as discussed in Writing Standard 9, students are also demonstrating their comprehension skill in relation to specific standards in Reading. When discussing something they read or wrote, students are also demonstrating their speaking and listening skills.

Classroom Snapshot: (Integrated Model of Literacy)

The following text box focuses on the use of text structure as an application of integration. Following the text box, see “**Sample Think Sheets**”:

Strategies for Reading*	Strategies for Writing*	Integration of Reading, Writing, Language, Speaking and Listening*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that a common set of questions (see <i>Resources at the end of this chapter for “Common Questions”</i>) can be asked about each type of text (e.g., literature, informational, and argument literature). Keeping track of the answers on a note sheet, think sheet, or graphic organizer will show how texts are written in some predictable ways. • Demonstrate how text structure works by pausing during reading to show students how to answer questions that relate to text type (e.g. for literature, ask story element questions such as “Who is the main character?” and “Where does the story take place?”). Write responses on the think sheet. • Provide guidance and practice by having students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that the same text questions that were used to guide reading can be used when writing (e.g., use story elements when writing a narrative or argumentative elements, such as reasons, facts, and evidence, when writing an opinion essay). (see <i>Resources at the end of this chapter for “Common Questions”</i>) • Teach students how to translate the information from the think sheets to writing. Model how the translation from think sheet to writing works. • Provide demonstration, guided practice, and independent practice until students are proficient at using the think sheets for writing (the same or modified versions of the think sheets used for reading). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the parts of the text with students and talk about how the same parts are found when reading or writing. • Examine models of writing, analyze the critical features contained in them, and talk about how those compositions could be improved. • When reviewing content from a unit, demonstrate/practice by rereading part of a text for review (e.g., informational text about bats). Then use the think sheet to complete the “unanswered questions” on the think sheet. Or, if focusing on literature, have students reconstruct the author’s story in their own words using the think sheet as a guide (or have students write a narrative summary from the perspective of one

Strategies for Reading*	Strategies for Writing*	Integration of Reading, Writing, Language, Speaking and Listening*
<p>read the text themselves, ask themselves the text questions, and fill in the information on think sheets.</p>		<p>of the characters).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use think sheets to generate original content for compositions. • Use think sheets as an editing tool in the revision phase of writing. For example, students check their writing to make sure all of the text structure elements are included. • Use think sheets for retelling and class presentations about the text. • Include a vocabulary section on the think sheet to focus on student <i>use</i> of words when discussing reading texts, writing, or retelling/presenting.

* Based on Gleason (1995). See also Dickson (1999), Dickson, Chard, and Simmons (1993), and Simmons et al. (1994) for other examples of reading–writing integration.

If students don't know the meanings of individual words, it is virtually impossible to understand the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph. There is little argument that vocabulary knowledge positively affects reading comprehension and academic achievement (Biemiller, 2001; Wagner, Muse, & Tannenbaum, 2007). Learning, as a language-based activity, is fundamentally and profoundly dependent on vocabulary knowledge (Baker, Simmons, Kame'enui, 1998). Students must have access to the meanings of words that teachers, other adults, films, or books use to guide them into contemplating known concepts in novel ways (Adams, 2010–2011). Simply stated, **knowing the meanings of words helps students learn and think.**

CCSS Snapshot (Integrated Model of Literacy: Language—Conventions, Usage, and Vocabulary)

The CCSS Language Standards for ELA serve as glue that connects the other three strands together. In other words, even though Language is an independent strand in the ELA CCSS, the intent is *not* for it to be isolated. The following CCSS Snapshot illustrates **how elements of the Language strand are incorporated into the other three strands:**

Strand	Standards	
Reading	R.CCR.4.	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
Writing	W.CCR.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
Speaking and Listening	SL.CCR.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language Standards 1, 2, and 3 relate the essential rules of standard written and spoken English that enable speakers and writers to select from among alternatives to craft written or spoken expression. Language Standards 4, 5, and 6 focus on “vocabulary acquisition and use.”

However, the Language strand “glue” is noticeable in standards relating to usage, vocabulary, and word choice that are threaded throughout the other three strands. For example, Reading Standard 4 for ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (6–12), is about vocabulary—determining the meaning of words and analyzing how word choice shapes meaning and tone. In the Writing strand, Writing Standard 3 calls for use of effective techniques including word choice. The Speaking and Listening strand addresses word choice in Speaking and Listening Standard 3, and Speaking and Listening Standard 6 even refers back to Language Standards 1 and 3!

The following CCSS Snapshot presents the **CCSS anchor standards specifically for vocabulary—three in Language strand and one in Reading.** When reviewing the standards, note the emphasis on expressive vocabulary *use*. Students not only need to recognize words and know word meanings, they need to use words accurately, demonstrate their understanding of words, and be able to analyze words. **Language Standard 6 and Reading Standard 4 both emphasize general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in texts.** Academic language and domain-specific vocabulary are prioritized in the Common Core and need to be integrated throughout reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Sub-headings	Anchor Standards for Vocabulary (Language and Reading Strands)	
Vocabulary acquisition and use	L.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues , analyzing meaningful word parts , and consulting general and specialized reference materials , as appropriate.
	L.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings .
	L.6	Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.
Craft and structure	ELA R.4 RH.4 RST.4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text , including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Classroom Snapshot: (Integrated Model of Literacy: Language—Conventions, Usage, and Vocabulary)

The *Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework* provides a thorough overview of research-based vocabulary instruction; a few implications for classroom instruction are highlighted in the following table. When reviewing the Classroom Snapshot, remember the importance of providing students multiple exposures to new words and the use of instructional activities that promote interactions with words at different levels and with depth (Beck & McKeown, 2007a; 2007b; Nagy, 1989, 2007; Stahl, 1999; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Most importantly, emphasize expressive vocabulary use. (See the [Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework](http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568) <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568>, [Instruction](#), p. I-14 (grades K–3) and pp. I-20-21 (grades 4–12) for information about vocabulary instruction.)

Thinking about integrating vocabulary instruction? . . .

- **Vocabulary and comprehension are interrelated skills**; therefore, strategies to teach comprehension must incorporate vocabulary instruction.
- Vocabulary and comprehension must be structured and explicitly taught.
- Students are exposed to roughly 3,000 new words throughout the year. Ten percent of these words should be taught systematically, across all subject areas. Divided by the range of content students need to know (e.g., math, science, history, literature), of these 300–350 words, *roughly* 60 words can be taught within one subject area each year. Consequently, vocabulary for instruction needs to be carefully selected.
- It is important to choose student-friendly definitions when discussing the meaning of vocabulary words. A resource to consider for helping development of student-friendly definitions: *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*.

- Overall, remember four important considerations when selecting words to teach: (1) text factors (e.g., the natural context in which the word appears), (2) the importance of the word (e.g., how often the student will come across the word), (3) student factors (e.g., specific considerations pertaining to the learning needs of the student), and (4) whether the word is a Tier 1, 2, or 3 word. ([Instruction](#), p. I-20.)
- Some vocabulary will be taught briefly, using brief instruction, but more complex words without familiar synonyms may require systematic, elaborate instruction. Because instructional time is limited, it is important that the number of words taught is manageable (i.e., approximately 10 words) for teachers and students.
- It is interesting to note that even weak readers' vocabulary knowledge is strongly correlated with the amount of reading they do (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Students should be encouraged to read often and in varying contexts.
- Some general considerations for teaching new vocabulary: have students use the context of the text to determine a word's meaning; provide a model, definition, or synonym for the word; and frequently use the word throughout the school day and embed it within other instructional activities. If the vocabulary concept is unfamiliar to students, consider using diagrams, concept maps, or semantic feature analyses.
- It's important to have students *use* vocabulary content words in multiple contexts. This can include but is not limited to discussing the word in relation to previous knowledge and discussing the word in the context of stories, pictures, video, etc.
- For vocabulary instruction to be meaningful, words must be carefully considered and instruction must be carefully planned. It is recommended that teachers use the procedures outlined in the "Selecting Words" section of the [Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework](#) (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568>), ([Instruction](#), p. I-20). Consider working in school teams ([Leadership](#), pp. L-12-13) to identify words in the same curriculum materials, thereby reducing the burden on individual teachers.
- Because language and vocabulary are integrated into all of the CCSS strands, consider implementing teacher study groups within your school that focus on language and vocabulary. This can be particularly helpful when planning vocabulary instruction. Consider the following resource to guide study group preparation and implementation: Dimino, J., & Taylor, M. J. (2009). *Learning how to improve vocabulary instruction through teacher study groups*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Learning vocabulary requires practice, review, and deep processing. Instruction that includes practice and review activities requiring students to think deeply about a word and its relationships is more likely to be effective. Overall, review must be sufficient to enable a student to know and use vocabulary without hesitation, be distributed over time, cumulative with vocabulary integrated into more complex tasks, and varied so vocabulary use can be applied to multiple contexts and used to illustrate a wide application of student understanding.
- Finally, good vocabulary instruction gets students excited about words and builds word consciousness (Graves, 2006; Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002). When word consciousness is developed, students have an understanding and interest in words, how words are used, and the importance of words in learning and communicating. Effective vocabulary instruction should nurture an appreciation of words and their use (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Vocabulary should be

loved, exciting, and fun. Remember, even as students are still developing word reading and decoding skills, a listening and speaking vocabulary can simultaneously be developed through oral language.

Looking Ahead

As Oregon and the other Common Core states move forward with the goal of preparing all students to be **college and career-ready in reading and writing *without* the need for remediation**, here are some important considerations.

First, developing assessments aligned with the CCSS requires ongoing work. Assessment tasks will parallel the type of instructional formats and the instructional objectives addressed in the Standards. In other words, assessment tasks will reflect the increased emphasis on expressive language, vocabulary use, writing, and deep comprehension addressed in the CCSS. More open-ended questions and prompt-based, writing production tasks will be used. The CCSS include sample performance tasks in [Appendix B](#) (“Text Exemplars and Performance Tasks”). The **performance tasks are aligned with text exemplars** selected for grade bands K–1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR. Note the emphasis on expressive language and production responses in the following performance tasks for K–1.

- *Ask and answer questions* about animals (e.g., hyena, alligator, platypus, scorpion) they encounter in Steve Jenkins and Robin Page’s *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* (RI.K.4).
- After listening to Gail Gibbons’ *Fire! Fire!*, students *ask questions* about how firefighters respond to a fire and *answer* using *key details* from the text (RI.1.1).
- Students (*with prompting and support*) read “Garden Helpers” in *National Geographic Young Explorers* and demonstrate their understanding of *the main idea of the text—not all bugs are bad—by retelling key details* (R1.K.2).

Second, classroom materials (e.g., aligned assessments and commercially published curricula and materials) will take time to develop. It is important to know that developed assessments, for example, may not assess the range of skills within each domain (e.g., comprehension), because even aligned (standardized) assessments are unlikely to be precise enough to provide information about students’ performance with discrete skills.

Third, the purpose of the CCSS is to improve the educational achievement of students in Oregon and other CCSS states by focusing on higher-learning goals, providing a common educational opportunity for all students, and focusing attention on fewer, higher, more rigorous standards. The CCSS provide an opportunity to build curricular coherence across grades K–12. As referred to in the introductory “have you ever” questions, teachers often spend a great deal of time at the beginning of each year reviewing and preparing material students need to know in order to learn the next topic. Implementing the Common Core with shared understandings of content across grades provides a more efficient focus on *what* students at each grade level need to learn. There is also the aspiration that, in time, all students will begin each school year knowing the content they need to know. While the CCSS do *not* dictate *how* to teach, the [Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework](http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568) (http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568) provides research-based guidance about effective teacher delivery. The nine features of effective instruction, explained with examples in the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* ([Instruction](#), pp. I-42-55), are aligned

with and can be applied when implementing CCSS-related content. The first universally applicable feature, **Teacher Modeling**, will be especially helpful to students as they work to attain the CCSS.

Finally, CCSS implementation will require a full collaborative effort of all stakeholders. The essential requirement of the CCSS is that **all students must be able to comprehend texts at grade level or above of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school:**

- This requirement is essential, but certainly not easy—*and it will take time*.
- Teachers will need ongoing professional development to help them reach and support all students.
- That is why the [Professional Development for the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework](#) portal was developed—to help schools implement a differentiated instruction model **gradually** while they are transitioning.

The CCSS emphasize the use of informational text, argument in reading (and writing), and multiple, complex texts *prominently* because these things are complicated and challenging. **Challenge and complexity is often where optimal potential for deep comprehension-building is found.** When looking ahead, consider CCSS implementation an opportunity to help students learn how to engage, interact, and have conversations with texts in ways that prepare them for the type of experiences that they will encounter in college and careers.

Thank you for “Just reading it”! If you have questions about the teaching of reading related to the Common Core Standards or the intent of the CCSS in addressing the issues highlighted in the introductory “have you ever” questions, be sure to check the [Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework](http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568) (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2568>). Easy-to-use, online guidance (“book-marked” by topics and sub-topics), the *Framework* will likely address your questions about teaching reading across the subject areas. The *Framework* provides context and support for teaching the expectations for reading laid out in the CCSS. That is because, as discussed above, close alignment between the *Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework* and the Common Core Standards makes using them in tandem a winning strategy to ensure the reading success of all Oregon students. *And reading opens doors!*

Be sure to see the template resources for teachers at the conclusion of this section.

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Resources*

* Many research-based resources and texts related to the CCSS are available. The resources cited below are intended to help generate ideas for planning and provide additional context about CCSS implementation. The resources do not represent any exclusive endorsement by ODE.

CCSS

Common Core State Standards Initiative: <http://corestandards.org/>

Oregon Department of Education, Common Core Standards—English Language Arts and Literacy: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3251>

Alliance for Excellent Education has policy and information briefs about the Common Core Standards and Adolescent Literacy, visit http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/adlit

American Educator has included several articles and special issues focused on topics related to the CCSS. Good for general context and as potential learning community/teacher study group materials. Some articles/issues to explore:

Either it Works Together or Not at All: How a Common Core Curriculum Could Make Our Education System Run Like Clockwork (Winter 2010–2011, Vol. 34, #4):

<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/winter1011/index.cfm>

Background Knowledge: The Case for Content Rich Language Arts and a Knowledge-Rich Curriculum Core for the Early Grades (Spring 2006, Vol. 30, #1):

<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/spring2006/index.cfm>

It's Time to Tell the Kids: If You Don't Do Well in High School, You Won't Do Well in College (or on the Job) (Spring 2004, Vol. 28, #2):

<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/spring2004/index.cfm>

The Fourth Grade Plunge: The Cause, The Curse (Spring 2003, Vol. 27, #1):

<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/spring2003/index.cfm>

Overcoming the Language Gap (Summer 2001, Vol. 25, #2):

<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/summer2001/index.cfm>

The Unique Power of Learning to Read and How to Unleash It (Spring/Summer 1998, Vol. 22, #1 & 2): <http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/springsummer1998/index.cfm>

Disciplinary Literacy

History: <http://historicalthinkingmatters.org>

Mathematics: Paulos, J. (2008). *When the Mathematicians Read the Newspaper*. New York: Springer-Science + Business Media.

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices:

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Instruction

The What Works Clearinghouse, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, has many helpful resources, visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Doing What Works is an extension of the What Works Clearinghouse focused on how to bring research into implementation and practice. For resources and video clips of research-based education practices, visit <http://dww.ed.gov>

The Center on Instruction (COI), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, develops and identifies free resources that Regional Comprehensive Centers and state, district, and local educators can use in their pursuit of high-quality instruction, visit <http://centeroninstruction.org/>

Time to Act is a Carnegie Corporation report focused on adolescent literacy for college and career success: <http://carnegie.org/programs/past-commissions-councils-and-task-forces/carnegie-council-for-advancing-adolescent-literacy/time-to-act/>

Research to Practice and Content for Professional Development

The Research to Practice Conference, sponsored by the Center on Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of Oregon, is an annual Oregon-based conference focused on research-based practices. Some previous conference topics included improving vocabulary and comprehension, writing instruction, and adolescent literacy. For conference materials and video clips of conference presentations by national speakers, visit <http://ctl.uoregon.edu/pd/cf10>

The What Works Clearinghouse, U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, has several research-based practice guides with practical recommendations for educators to help them address the everyday challenges they face in their classrooms and schools. Developed by a panel of nationally recognized experts, practice guides consist of actionable recommendations, strategies for overcoming potential roadblocks, and an indication of the strength of evidence supporting each recommendation, visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>

The Center on Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of Oregon offers PowerPoint presentations and webinars about professional development of reading instruction, visit <http://ctl.uoregon.edu/pd/cf09>

Finally, a few texts to consider for teacher study groups and professional learning communities:

The *American Educator* articles and issues cited above in the CCSS section.

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction. Solving problems in the teaching of literacy*. New York: Guilford.

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., Worthy, J., Sandora, C. A., & Kucan, L. (2006). *Improving comprehension with questioning the author: A fresh and expanded view of a powerful approach*. New York: Scholastic.

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Common Questions

<u>Living Things</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Holidays</u>
<p>➤ Animals</p> <p>* What types of animals are _____?</p> <p>* What do they look like?</p> <p>* What do they eat?</p> <p>* Where do they live?</p> <p>* How do they survive?</p> <p>* What are their challenges? (What threatens their survival?)</p> <p>* What is unusual or interesting about them?</p> <p>* How are they useful or important?</p>	<p>➤ Martin Luther King, Jr.</p> <p>➤ George Washington</p> <p>➤ Abraham Lincoln</p> <p>* Who was he/she?</p> <p>* Why is he/she famous?</p> <p>What were his/her accomplishments?</p> <p>* When did he/she live?</p> <p>* Were there any unusual or interesting things about him/her?</p>	<p>➤ Presidents' Day</p> <p>➤ Valentine's Day</p> <p>➤ Columbus Day</p> <p>➤ Veterans Day</p> <p>* What is it?</p> <p>* Why do we celebrate it?</p> <p>* How do we celebrate it?</p> <p>* What are the customs and traditions?</p> <p>* Why is it important?</p> <p>* When was it first celebrated?</p>
<u>Nonliving Objects</u>	<u>Events</u>	<u>Places</u>
<p>➤ Rocks</p> <p>➤ Furniture</p> <p>➤ Clothing</p> <p>* What is it?</p> <p>* What does it look like, feel like, and smell like?</p> <p>* Where is it found?</p> <p>* How is it made?</p> <p>* Are there different types?</p> <p>* What is unusual or interesting about it?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">* How is it useful or important?</p>	<p>➤ Historical Events; e.g., The Stamp Act, and Boston Tea Party</p> <p>➤ Community Events; e.g., parade, circus, and play/show</p> <p>* When did this event occur?</p> <p>* Where did it occur?</p> <p>* Why did it occur?</p> <p>* What happened?</p> <p>* How did it end?</p> <p>* Was there anything unusual or interesting that happened?</p> <p>* Why was it important?</p>	<p>➤ Home, school, town, farm, community, state, region, country, continent, and ecosystem</p> <p>* Where is it located?</p> <p>* How long does it take to get there?</p> <p>* What is the weather like?</p> <p>* What are the physical features? (e.g., What do the houses and buildings look like? Is it rural or urban?)</p> <p>* What are the cultural (human) features? (e.g., What are the people like? What language do the people</p>

	<p>* What did people learn from it?</p>	<p>speak? What food do the people grow and eat?)</p>
<p><u>Groups/Organizations/Institutions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community groups; e.g., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, sports teams ➤ Businesses—grocery store and bank ➤ Government ➤ Labor unions <p>* What is its name?</p> <p>* Where is it located?</p> <p>* What is its organizational structure?</p> <p>* Does it have a leader?</p> <p>* How is its leader chosen?</p> <p>* Does it have members?</p> <p>* What makes its members similar?</p> <p>* How are its members determined?</p> <p>* What is its purpose?</p> <p>* When did it first begin?</p> <p>* Does it have a symbol or flag?</p> <p>* How can people participate?</p>	<p><u>Problem Solving</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Historical events; e.g., Revolutionary War, Civil Rights Movement, Great Depression ➤ Current events; e.g., unemployment ➤ Community conflicts ➤ Conflicts with friends and family <p>* What is the problem?</p> <p>* What started the problem? Why did the problem occur?</p> <p>* What information is needed to solve the problem?</p> <p>* How does the problem affect people?</p> <p>* Is there more than one way to solve the problem? If so, what are the different ways?</p> <p>* How can the problem be solved?</p>	<p><u>Theories/Concepts/Ideas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Money management ➤ Voluntarism ➤ “Eco-friendly” and “green technology” <p>* What is it called?</p> <p>* What is its big idea?</p> <p>* Who uses it? Who does it?</p> <p>* How is it used? How does it work?</p> <p>* Why is it used?</p> <p>* Why is it important?</p> <p>* Who first thought of it?</p> <p>* When was it first thought of?</p> <p>* Are there other related theories/concepts?</p>
<p><u>Human Innovations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inventions ➤ Technology ➤ Buildings and structures ➤ Navigation; e.g., globes and maps <p>* Why was it created?</p> <p>* How was it created</p>	<p><u>Stories</u></p> <p>* What happened? (What happened first?—next?—at the end?) (plot)</p> <p>* Who is the main character(s)?</p> <p>* Where did the story take place? (setting)</p> <p>* What is the theme?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">* What is the problem? How was the problem solved?</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Why is it important?* How is it used?* Where is it used?* What tools were used to create it?* What are the parts?<ul style="list-style-type: none">* How do the parts work and fit together?	
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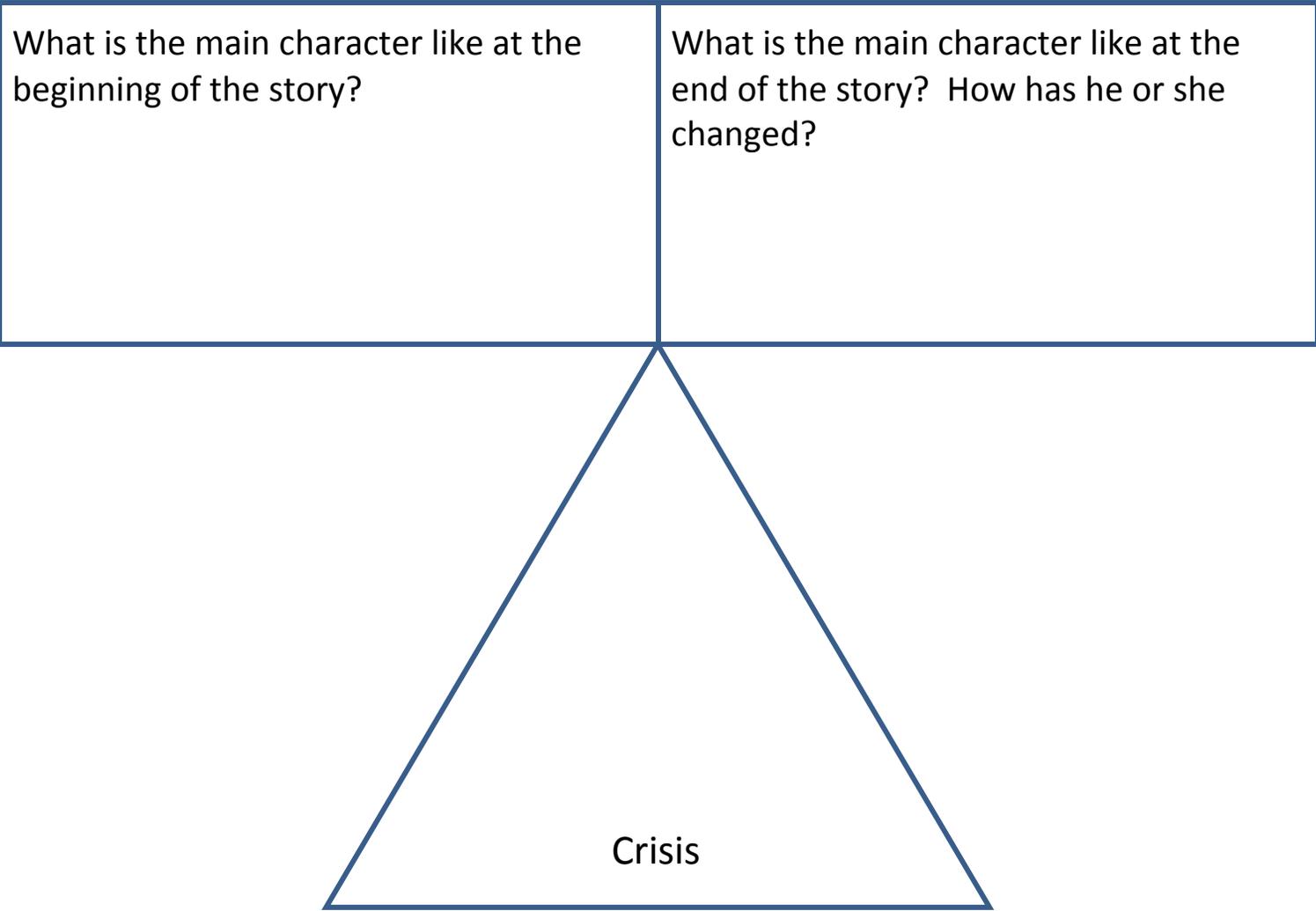
Substances	Properties	Processes	Interactions	Atomic Expression

TEXT	WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	WHEN?	WHY?
(1)					
Relation:					
(2)					
Relation:					
(3)					
Relation:					

Main Point: _____

What is the main character like at the beginning of the story?

What is the main character like at the end of the story? How has he or she changed?



Crisis

Given this character change, what do you think the author wanted you to learn?

Name _____ Date _____



Who (Main Characters)



What Happened-First



What Happened-Next



What Happened-End

I



this story.

I liked



/ didn't like



because

See also the
"Gist Log" in
Vaughn & Linan-
Thompson
(2004, p. 112).

Main Idea Chart

Paragraph/ Section/Page	Main Idea	Details

Characters:

Setting:

Goal/Problem/
Conflict:

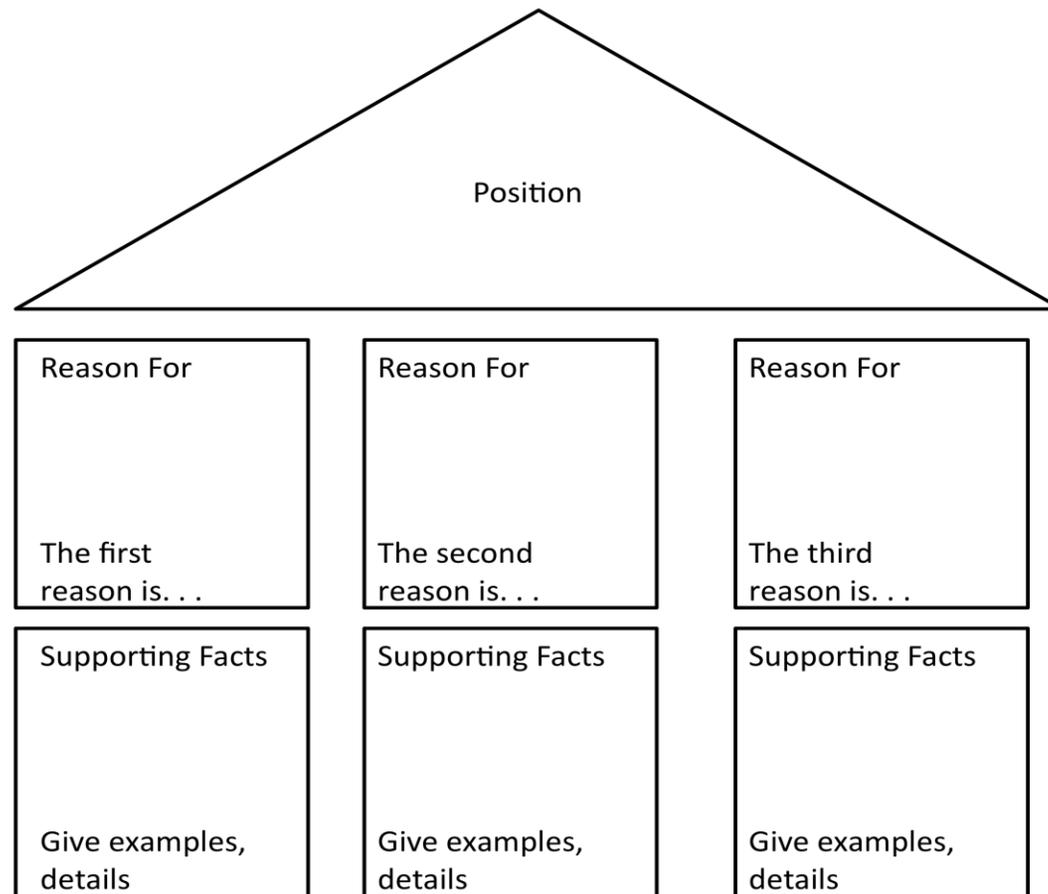
Major Events:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Ending/Resolution:

Theme:

Reznitskaya et al.
(2008).
See also Gleason
(1999).



Smith &
Tompkins
(1988).

