OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Essential Instructional Content for 2020-2021

English Language Arts/Literacy K – 12

This document has been adapted for use by the Oregon Department of Education for Oregon educators. The following document contains information about essential English Language Arts and Literacy content for the 2020-2021 school year.

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Grade band sections have been color-coded throughout this document.

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Important Information for Oregon Educators

Standards alignment. The authors of this guidance have provided a collection of research that supports the fundamentals of college- and career-ready standards for K-12 students. These standards are designed to best support students in reaching proficiency through a carefully sequenced progression of learning in all content areas. The pre-publication draft of this document was aligned solely to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Mathematics. In order to best support Oregon educators, The Oregon Department of Education's Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment provided an additional crosswalk to Oregon's college- and career-ready standards. Please refer to specific content clusters to find information about alignment. Please also note that some elements of CCSS for English Language Arts and Mathematics, for example the articulation of lexile levels across grade bands in ELA standards, are not elements found in Oregon's 2019 English language arts standards, respectively. For questions related to standards alignment between CCSS and Oregon 2019 standards for ELA, please visit Oregon Department of Education's Content Area Standards site.

Instructional shifts. The focus and purpose of prioritizing instructional content is to support educators in addressing unfinished learning during the 2020-2021 school year. This document was developed so that educators have the appropriate tools and resources to adjust curricular content. Above all, the intent of prioritizing instructional content is to ensure *all* students have meaningful opportunities to engage with grade-level work. Likewise, the instructional shifts for ELA and Mathematics provide a roadmap for implementing the standards effectively so that students have equitable access to rigorous, grade-level instruction, texts, assignments, and tasks. When learning standards are revised, important shifts in instruction must occur if the higher expectations represented within them are to be realized. The shifts for ELA and Mathematics describe learning priorities within each content area that coincide with the transition from legacy to college- and career-ready standards. The shifts for ELA and Mathematics should inform practices related to instructional materials, classroom instruction, and assessment. While some of the alignment (see above) provided for use by Oregon educators contain only broad grade-level standards, certain indicators are also included. Educators are encouraged to consider how and to what extent the instructional shifts are reflected in planned instruction. In addition, consider how to appropriately "cluster" standards rather than attend to them individually or in isolation, thus allowing for richer learning experiences within a lesson or unit of study. Additional information about Oregon's College- and Career-Ready Standards Instructional Shifts for ELA, Mathematics, and Science can be found here.

Introduction

What is this guidance?

Based on research and the progression of the disciplines, the 2020–21 Essential Instructional Content names the priorities in mathematics (K–8) and ELA/literacy (K–12) that should be the focus of instruction for educators in the 2020–21 academic year. This document provides guidance for the field about content priorities by leveraging the structure and emphases of college- and career-ready mathematics and ELA/literacy standards. It is intended to help publishers, other designers of instructional materials, and instructional leaders find new efficiencies in the curriculum that are critical for the unique challenges that have resulted from school closures and anticipated disruptions in the year ahead, keeping at the forefront principles of equitable instruction that support all students.

Why create this guidance?

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with what the "return to school" will look like. Educators know that every school year there are students who require support in addressing unfinished learning from prior grades, a challenge that will be felt more prominently in the 2020–21 school year. Most critically, the pandemic has further illuminated inequities that have always existed. Rich, engaging instruction at grade level has typically not been offered to students of color, students experiencing poverty, and emerging bilingual students. Our position is that it is entirely possible to hold high expectations for all students, address unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work, and dial into the assets students bring with them in order to unlock the creativity and energy they bring to the joyful work of learning something new. Since time is a scarce commodity in classrooms—made more limited by anticipated closures and distance or hybrid learning models in the fall of 2020—strategic instructional choices about which content to prioritize, and what and how to assess, must be made.

This guidance names the content that should be of focus for all students, recognizing that intentional instructional choices will be essential for supporting all students to mastery, and that this is especially true for students with specialized learning needs. This document does not address the many considerations of instruction, but recognizes that it is critical for those using the guidance and supporting English learners to ensure that students have the instructional supports and scaffolds that supplement, and do not supplant, core instruction and thereby ensure students' access to grade-level content. As emphasized by the Council of the Great City Schools in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures*, "Teachers should therefore resist the inclination to 'water down' instruction and assignments for ELL students—and other students with specialized learning needs. These students require the same challenging work and cognitive demands as their peers in order to develop academic skills and grow as scholars."[1] Note that for English learners, language and content

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[1] Council of the Great City Schools, 2020

development are simultaneous and should be considered in context of math and literacy instruction. For more specific guidance about adjusting curricular content to meet the needs of English learners, please see the resources created by the English Learner Success Forum including activities and scaffolds that can be strategically built into lessons and units to deepen and accelerate English learners' content area learning in mathematics and ELA/literacy.[2] Please also see the frameworks from the Council of the Great City Schools for Re-envisioning Mathematics Instruction and Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for detailed curricular and instructional guidance for English learners.[3]

How should assessment be considered in light of this instructional guidance?

Uncovering and addressing unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work will require teachers to know what students know and can do throughout the school year. This document is not intended to serve as a guide for development of assessment products. However, the instructional guidance has implications for assessment in service of equitable grade-level instruction. Assessment should:

1. Be used to determine _how_ to bring students into grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it.

2. Center _formative_ practices.[4] Leverage such sources of information as exit tickets, student work, and student discussions. Use these sources of information to inform instructional choices in connection with high-quality instructional materials.

3. Employ _targeted_ checks for very specific subject and grade-level instructional purposes (specifically, phonics or math fluency inventories, checks for reading fluency).

This approach is being proposed as a deliberate alternative to assessment choices that have the potential to serve as a gatekeeper to grade-level content. It also deliberately recognizes the very real social-emotional needs of students—particularly students who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. After such major disruptions, it is essential that students engage, immediately and consistently, in the affirmative act of learning new ideas, not be deemed deficient because of events outside of their control. Regarding administering tests too soon, the Council of the Great City Schools notes in _Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures_ that "testing appears to put the onus of learning losses on the students themselves—the resulting label of 'deficient' or academically behind may very well further alienate and isolate the students who most need our support."[5]

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[2] https://www.elsuccessforum.org/resources

[3] https://www.cgcs.org/Page/664

[4] https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Revising%20the%20Definition%20of%20Formative%20Assessment.pdf

[5] Council of the Great City Schools, 2020

What is the purpose of this guidance?

The intention of this guidance is to inform and influence the decisions of the following:

- *Publishers of instructional materials*: to design modifications to mathematics and ELA/literacy instructional materials for the 2020–21 school year.

- *District mathematics and ELA/literacy leaders*: to design modifications to scope and sequence documents, to design professional learning scope and sequence for teachers, to design modifications to district-created instructional materials where used, and to support administrators in implementing equitable instruction and equitable structures.

- *State education agencies*: to support districts in planning and decision-making for instruction.

- *Providers of professional learning for teachers*: to design modifications to professional learning curricula for the summer of 2020 and the 2020–21 school year.

This guidance has been developed in response to current conditions. These documents are not criteria, and they do not revise college- and career-ready state standards. This guidance does not stand alone but is to be used in conjunction with those standards. This guidance does not attempt to repeat what standards already say, nor does it mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another. Further, leveraging the focus and coherence of high-quality instructional materials aligned to college- and career-ready state standards is more important than ever.

This guidance was developed with additional principles specific to current needs:

- *Generalizability and usability.* The recommendations should allow a variety of decision makers to implement valuable changes to instructional materials and instructional planning.

- *Flexibility.* The 2020–21 school year is uncertain in terms of what schooling looks like; therefore, guidance should not specify pedagogy or make assumptions that learning is happening in physical classrooms with a designated content teacher.

- *Social, emotional, academic considerations.* While this guidance does not address the many considerations of instruction in full, the grade-band and grade-level considerations include practical ideas for attending to students' social-emotional development in the context of teaching the academic content described. Emotional health and well-being of students is a

central concern of educators, particularly given the pandemic, and these suggestions demonstrate ways in which social, emotional, and academic development can be fostered in the context of grade-level college- and career-ready content. These suggestions have been informed by *Supporting Social, Emotional, & Academic Development: Research Implications for Educators* from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

This guide is intended to complement resources being released by the Oregon Department of Education to address the challenges of prioritizing instruction and addressing unfinished learning and the social-emotional and mental health needs of students. The common messages found across these materials illustrate a consensus in the field around the importance of safeguarding equity and access in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

English Language Arts/Literacy Grade-Band Essential Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year[18]

There is no one reality students have experienced as they were out of school. Nor was anybody static. Everyone had experiences that will influence them and that they can draw from. Flexibility, creativity, and empathy—and above all else, knowing what students and their families have faced—are all key to serving our students well. This has always been true, but today's circumstances have allowed us to shine a spotlight on this truth in new ways. Yes, there will be plentiful stories of unresolved, unrelenting anxiety and heartache, but connected to those will be countless examples of students' valor, resilience, accountability to family, and chances to have absorbed vital life lessons. All students will come to school having learned, whether learning entrenched in academics or focused more squarely on pragmatic life lessons. All learning and experiences have value. All deserve respect and attention as we consider the approach to K–12 literacy instruction in 2020–21.

Time is a scarce commodity in educating students—now made more compressed by months of school closures. With greater variability in returning students' experiences, how can we best accelerate all students' learning, amplify what matters most, and foster students' social-emotional development? What should be the nucleus of daily instruction when the school year starts, regardless of varying school conditions? Whether school starts back with students learning in buildings, remotely, or through hybrid offerings, each of our students in every learning community needs to be engaged in college- and career-ready study. What's always been important is especially important now.
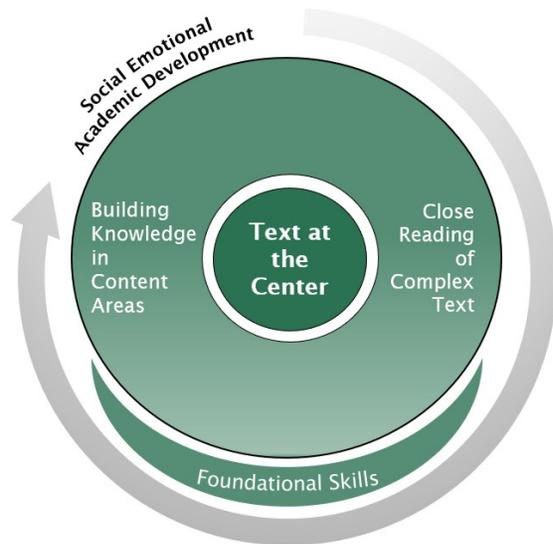
All students become proficient through deliberate practice. Practice means doing lots and lots of reading (on- and off-grade-level), combined with well-thought out instruction, to assist in understanding grade-level complex texts, while learning to express their meaning and import through speaking and writing along the way. A text-centered approach builds to students learning a lot about a lot and becoming confident, joyful readers.

The research base underpinning college- and career-ready standards in ELA/literacy provides a structure to approach instruction equitably and excellently in current conditions.

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[18] This document provides recommendations in English Language Arts/literacy, in these grade bands: K–1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12. Where applicable, content implications across the disciplines (history/social studies, science, and technical subjects) are addressed.

What bundle of college- and career-ready (CCR) standards best reflects the fundamentals of literacy research and will best accelerate learning for *all* students?

Focus on Standards That Represent the Major Work of ELA/Literacy Instruction: Learning to Read, Close Reading of Complex Texts, and Volume of Reading to Build Knowledge

Not all content in a given grade should be emphasized equally. Some standards require greater emphasis than others based on the literacy research about what matters most and the time and practice that they take to develop. These two literacy components of a text-centered, rich ELA/literacy classroom experience lead the way to identifying the Major Work of ELA/literacy instruction across the grades:

- Students should spend lots of time actively reading content-rich, complex text. Close reading of complex text is concentrated, demanding work that helps students discover how to learn from reading (and grow their knowledge, vocabulary, and understanding of syntax).

- Students should have a volume of reading to build knowledge and be exposed to academic language in the content areas. That volume of reading needs to be at a range of complexity levels so every student can read with minimal or no teacher support. Much of this volume should be with information-rich text, either full-length books or conceptually connected shorter texts (groups of texts that cohere together to create a picture of a topic).

In the early grades, these priorities are even more vital. The more young students read or listen to a range of content-rich texts, the more they will learn. That learning will yield accelerating returns from then on, which is one of many reasons teaching students how to read by grade 2 is so crucial and should frequently be enveloped in plenty of conversation and be as active as possible. As students learn more within and across grades, they will have greater access to more and richer texts. They will learn about the world around them and about themselves and their role in that world, and they will also learn more and more words, many of them wrapped in complex sentences. The more words students recognize, the more comfortable they will get with varied syntax and the more learning they will be able to access.

- *In grades K–12*, these instructional practices are best exemplified by 14 CCR standards (and the research that supports them) – CCSS RF.4, L.4, L.5, L.6, RI.1, RI.4, RI.9, RI.10, RL.1, RL.4, RL.10, SL.1, W.8, and W.9.[19] They cross the domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.

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[19] Requirements for W.9 begin in grade 4.

- *In grades K–3*, learning to read—the foundational standards, and the sequence of skills they point to—reign supreme (RF.1, RF.2, RF.3, and RF.4). In parallel, students should have a volume of reading that is topically connected to the anchor texts or topics under study to build knowledge and be exposed to academic language in the content areas. That volume of reading needs to be at a range of complexity levels so every student can read with minimal or no teacher support. Much of this volume should be with information-rich text, either full-length books or conceptually connected shorter texts (groups of texts that cohere together to create a picture of a topic).

By emphasizing these 14 standards, students can legitimately focus on the Major Work of ELA/literacy instruction for the grade. The standards get progressively more challenging and nuanced annually, but they all echo each other as students move through the grades.

Use Remaining Standards to Support the Major Work of ELA/Literacy Instruction

When confident that students are progressing in their ability to read with understanding, teachers can plan instruction that intentionally includes supporting standards—represented by the more than *two dozen remaining standards* in each grade level—to engage students more fully in the Major Work of the Grade. The supporting standards can be incorporated into instruction in service of the major 14 standards. For instance, in close reading lessons, supporting reading standards can help generate an effective sequence of text-specific questions that target central ideas, text structure, author's purpose, and the like, to guide students in exploring and extracting the key ideas of texts. Likewise, when devising writing assignments, the supporting standards can help guide the qualities of explanations or arguments that students should be reaching for in one grade or another.

Given the months students have been out of school coupled with the complicated realities many students are facing, it can be tempting to double-down on traditional leveled text programs that limit student reading exclusively to their designated independent reading level, reading that is neither organized by topic of study nor focused on building students' knowledge. For a sizable number of students, that translates into reading a restricted range of lower-than-grade-level complex text (one day on one topic and another day on another topic) that will hinder, rather than accelerate, students' literacy development. For students to develop the integrated, holistic, and flexible literacy skills necessary to participate in the world around them, they need and deserve regular access to grade-level complex texts. They also need lots of time to independently explore particular topics, suited to students' varied interests, through reading multiple texts that are at a range of complexity levels. Focusing solely on simple, below-level texts won't teach readers how to deal with complicated concepts, syntax, or subtle cohesive links in texts. Simple texts lack the critical rich vocabulary knowledge only available to students reading complex on-grade-level texts. In the words of Professor Alfred Tatum, Dean of the College of Education of the University of Illinois, "Leveled texts lead to leveled lives" (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Attend to Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development

As we narrow the focus and recommit to what matters most academically, research also tells us that four learning mindsets are particularly important in supporting students' academic development. They focus on students' sense of 1) belonging and safety, 2) efficacy, 3) value for effort and growth, and 4) engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive (Aspen Institute, 2019). Within classrooms, within schools, attention must be given to restoring relationships and a sense of community, so students feel safe, fully engage and work hard. We need to help students know that we believe they can succeed and that their ability and competence will grow with their effort. And more than ever, students need to see value and relevance in what they are learning to their lives and their very beings. Investing in students' social-emotional development is done by the entire system of adults in schools. This investment is key to promoting engagement in—not a substitute for—teaching academic content; it represents a change in how academic content is taught. There is a stunning opportunity to curate high-quality instructional materials aligned to healing and resilience for next year. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.

Adapt Curriculum Materials in the 2020–21 School Year

The specific grade-band guidance that follows reflects a "map" of sorts to college- and career-ready standards by answering the question: How can we do more with less? Decision makers, whether they are guiding policy that affects students and their teachers or thinking about how to modify the instructional materials they've developed, need to strip away what isn't central. The most important priorities in each grade-band are clearly signaled. Opportunities are highlighted for maximizing instructional time—and student impacts—by designing learning around anchor texts, related topical reading to build knowledge, and in the primary grades, developing foundational reading skills. Recommendations are also made for integrating fluency instruction within relevant grade-level work. The really good news is that the high-quality curricula in use in districts around the country already share these priorities.

With varying school conditions and compressed instructional time, publishers, and instructional designers and leaders will need to find new efficiencies. Some standards and instructional practices will need to be omitted entirely or almost entirely during the 2020–21 school year. Instruction that distracts from the focus on students reading and sharing new knowledge through discussions and in writing is unproductive. The number of lessons, the number of texts encountered, and the number of units—even in the best curricula in use—will need to be reduced. In fact, several publishers of high-quality materials are developing specific guidance about how to adjust pacing of each grade level's units in a way that aligns with these priorities. Teachers, students, and families need to be reassured that the omission of some units and lessons from the curriculum in the upcoming school year will not compromise the acquisition of key literacy knowledge and skills at grade level. Students can still thrive. Now is the time to deliver even more thoughtfully on the promise of deep learning in literacy, especially that which enables students to connect learning to their worlds in meaningful ways.

How should literacy assessment be considered in light of this instructional guidance?

Grasping where students are vis a vis accessing grade-level texts and content is of great importance both as students return to school and move through the school year. Understanding where students are will allow teachers to provide students with targeted, meaningful supports. As noted in the introduction, this document is not intended to serve as a guide for development of assessment products. However, the instructional guidance has implications for an assessment system designed in service of equitable grade-level instruction. Assessment will:

1. Be used to determine _how_ to bring students into grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it.

2. Center _formative_ practices (FAST SCASS, 2018). Leverage such sources of information as exit tickets, student work, and student discussions. Use these sources of information to inform instructional choices in connection with high-quality instructional materials.

3. Employ _targeted_ checks for very specific subject and grade-level instructional purposes.

In literacy, assessment will be most useful, efficient, equitable, and supportive of social, emotional, and academic development when it takes place within the instructional triangle of teacher, student, and grade-level content. This means that assessment must occur as close to instruction as possible, and in the mode in which it will provide the most meaningful guidance. Listening to students read out loud, analyzing students' writing, and engaging with students in conversations about what they have read are the most efficient ways to understand what students know and can do, and where they need extra practice or other supports to access grade-level work. The point of assessment in this use case isn't to generate data about what students get right and wrong, it's to understand how to support students as they work. A single multiple choice item will not provide that, nor will a single generalized "reading comprehension" test or "reading skills" test. Targeted periodic checks used strategically throughout the year can. Three specific areas of literacy development, supported by the research, warrant strategic assessment in the upcoming year:

- **In grades K–2: ongoing measurement of foundational skills to support students' decoding and fluency development.** A settled body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is critical to early childhood instruction because most students depend on it to learn to read and write in English. This translates into teaching students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002). For example, in grades K-1, at the end of each week, teachers can administer a 10 word dictation activity which asks students to encode seven words that use the weeks taught sound/spelling patterns and three words that focus on previously taught sound and spelling patterns (using a mix of pseudo and real words) to identify students who need additional support in mastering taught sound/spelling patterns.

- **In grades 2–12: periodic measurement of fluency with grade-level text to monitor progress and provide additional supports.** Research shows that reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995). Administering fluency checks at the beginning of the year with grade level text, (and readministering checks as needed throughout the year), allows teachers to identify students who need specific, targeted support to fluently read grade-level text. Such checks should attend to students' use of appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression using nationally verified norms. Teachers can administer additional regular fluency checks in lots of low-stress ways (e.g., choral reading, buddy reading).

- **In grades K–12: pre-assessing knowledge of the topics of the complex texts under study to determine how to bring students into the unit of study, not whether to bring them into it**. Research is clear that students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988). The very purpose of such targeted checks is to identify students who may need additional opportunities to build their knowledge about topics under study. For example, at the beginning of each unit, teachers can ask students to share what they know about the topic of each unit. This should be informal and brief (e.g., "tell me what you know about sea mammals"). Such pre-checks should not take more than 20 minutes of instructional time or be graded.

Though these three areas do not represent the entirety of students' literacy development, time is a precious resource and is especially so in the upcoming year. Periodically monitoring and tracking student progress in these three areas will give teachers concrete information that can inform vital instructional decisions.

This approach is being proposed as a deliberate alternative to assessment choices that have the potential to serve as a gatekeeper to grade-level content. It also deliberately recognizes the very real social-emotional needs of students—particularly students who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. After such major disruptions, it is essential that students engage immediately and consistently in the affirmative act of learning new content, not be deemed deficient because of events outside of their control. Regarding administering tests too soon, the Council of the Great City Schools notes in in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures* that "testing appears to put the onus of learning losses on the students themselves—the resulting label of 'deficient' or academically behind may very well further alienate and isolate the students who most need our support" (CGCS, 2020).

The tables that follow include a description of what to do, why to do it, and specific suggestions within each grade band for how to integrate social-emotional academic development into ELA/literacy instruction.

Grades K–1 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

Learning new language skills, particularly how to read, is a hallmark of kindergarten and grade 1. Students learn about the alphabet and its role in reading. They learn how to listen carefully to the sounds inside words: to play with those sounds, to rhyme. They learn to match words with beginning sounds, blend sounds into words, and use a whole range of word analysis skills. Lots of practice with all these foundational skills are potent steps toward their becoming joyful and competent readers. Through regular opportunities to think, talk, and write about rich stories and other read-aloud books, students' vocabulary and knowledge about how the world works grow exponentially. They learn to confer with their peers about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others, asking questions to clear up confusions, and following rules for discussions. Students also begin to experiment with writing and are encouraged to use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas, and feelings.

Teach Students to Read (K–1)

Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice
See RF.1, RF.2, RF.3 and RF.4 for grades K–1 guidance.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Utilize a systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills lessons that follows a carefully designed progression, ideally 45 minutes to 60 minutes daily.[20]   - Focus time and attention on phonological and phonemic awareness starting in early kindergarten with an increasing emphasis on phonics in early/mid-K through grade 3.   - Instructional time to include: - explicit teacher modeling of new content.   - opportunities for student practice of targeted skill(s) through speaking, reading, writing, and/or listening.   - reading of decodable text (sentences or text containing previously taught sound/spelling patterns and high-frequency words) that students read and reread for automaticity/accuracy.*[21]

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[20] Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect traditional school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

[21] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts
See RF.4 for grades K–1 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Model and support fluent reading by reading with students (echo reading and choral reading) and listening to students as appropriate throughout daily reading instruction.
- Focus on decoding grade-appropriate texts with accuracy and automaticity before moving to a focus on fluency.
- Incorporate regular, repeated reading practice (e.g., 10–20 minutes daily) with decodable texts to support accuracy and automaticity with taught sound and spelling patterns.*
- Even when improving fluency is the focus, ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed.*

Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress
See RF.1, RF.2, RF.3, and RF.4 for grades K–1 guidance.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Administer brief diagnostic screener at the beginning of the year and at periodic checkpoints throughout the school year:
  - Prioritize letter inventory, phonological awareness, and grade-level-appropriate sound and spelling patterns for each student
- Collect formative data during daily lessons (e.g., checklists, sampling dictation responses, monitoring of student work); respond to data and adjust instruction accordingly. Ensure frequent opportunities to formatively assess:
  - students' phonological awareness, connecting to phonics as appropriate.
  - students' ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level-appropriate phonics instruction.
- Support students' decoding and fluency development through additional small group or individual support; opportunities to amplify or embed practice with needed skills within existing instruction or practice opportunities; modified student practice or scaffolds.*

Facilitate SEAD (Social, Emotional, and Academic Development) Through Building of Foundational Reading Skills

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Promote a sense of belonging by including language routines, such as choral reading and word games, so students see themselves as a part of a learning community.

- Empower students to monitor their own decoding skills and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Engage students in reading and rereading to build habits as increasingly independent readers.

Rationale and Research

Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice
- A body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is a critical part of early childhood instruction, and it is crucial for students as they are learning to read and write in English (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
- This means supporting students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002).

Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts
- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Fluent reading depends on a reader's understanding of the orthographic relationships that form the basis of decoding.

Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress
- Overall reading fluency in elementary school readers is a good predictor of reading comprehension in the secondary school years (Stanley et al., 2017). To ensure fluency develops, it is critical that frequent, ongoing, informal assessment of taught foundational skills takes place and immediate re-teaching and support be provided if needed.

Keep Text at the Center of
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction

Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts through Read-Aloud
See Appendix A for guidance[22] for text read aloud in grades K–1.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Focus all students on the same rich, read-aloud anchor texts (as defined by the chart below) multiple times a week, as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.
- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with the anchor texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc. *[23]

Grade Band	Lexile Range
K–1	Texts for read-aloud should be in the 2–3 band (or higher)
2–3	420–820 Texts for read-aloud only should be in the 4–5 band (or higher)
For all grade bands also consider qualitative features (such as levels of meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands) as well as readers and tasks.	

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[22] See Appendix A from the CCSS.

[23] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Text Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the anchor text read aloud to build understanding.
- Create text-based tasks that take varied forms (e.g., drawing, discussion, writing, dramatic play, speaking).*

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Use text-based questions/tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts
See SL.1 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions about anchor texts—daily if possible—for students to process and extend their learning:*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.*
  - Ask students to reflect on each other's thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others' perspectives.*
- Step in (and out) of discussions to keep students focused and encourage them to construct longer and deeper responses.*

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts
See W.8 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Recall Information From Provided Sources.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading (or listening to) to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.*
- Include writing tasks connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.*
- Reserve non-text-based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).*
- Support students to make use of knowledge gained from the anchor text in their writing without requiring direct text evidence.
- Within these writing opportunities, address and support students' ability to demonstrate command of writing and conventions, including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure that the richness and complexity of texts read aloud are regularly available to every student, and that community is built by reading and listening to texts as a learning community.
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

Rationale and Research

Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts through Read-Aloud
- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).
- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. As a result, leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction.

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print (Adams, 2011).

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts
- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts
- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Across Content Areas

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics *See W.8 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.

Grade	Literary	Informational
K–1	50%	50%

- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support. This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across ELA, science, history, and the arts.*[24]
- Eliminate skills-paced calendars and generalized theme-based units in favor of organizing units around topics that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading.

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics *See W.8 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See also SL.1 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from grades K–1 – Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.*
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

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[24] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts."

- Regularly ask students to participate in shared research tasks where they explore multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)*
- Promote independent reading by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts.*
- Ask students to integrate what they have just read or listened to with what they have read or listened to previously to build a more coherent understanding of a topic.
- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.*

Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others.

Rationale and Research

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications. (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

Grades 2–3 ELA/Literacy Consideration for the 2020–21 School Year

Students in grades 2 and 3 become more independent readers and writers. These are pivotal years for students; automating the patterns they learned in K and 1 so they read with fluency and confidence will serve as a foundation for the reading demands in later grades. Students continue to learn and practice rules for matching sounds to letters that make up words, and they learn new concepts—such as words that share the same root (e.g., add and additional)—that help them figure out the meanings of new words. They also come to appreciate that some words and phrases have meanings that are not literal (e.g., a piece of cake, hang in there). Recognizing and understanding words help students read increasingly challenging stories and books and continue to build knowledge about the world. In addition to reading stories, students spend time with books or articles on subjects such as science, history, and the arts. Writing becomes an exciting way for students to use newly learned words and phrases to express ideas. They are writing clear sentences and paragraphs on a range of topics, drawing on an expanding vocabulary. They also become more confident speakers and listeners as they learn to paraphrase, clarify, explain, and report on information they hear.

Teach Students to Read (2–3)

Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice *See RF.3 and RF.4 for specific guidance for grades 2–3.*
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Utilize a systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills lessons that follows a carefully designed progression, ideally 45 minutes to 60 minutes daily for grade 2 and as students' decoding and fluency development demands in grade 3.[25]   - Focus time and attention on phonemic awareness starting in early kindergarten with an increasing emphasis on phonics in early-/mid-K through grade 3.   - Emphasize fluency in grades 2 and 3.   - Instructional time to include: - explicit teacher modeling of new content.   - opportunities for student practice of targeted skill(s) through speaking, writing, and/or listening.

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[25] Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect traditional school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

- ○ in grade 2, some reading of decodable text (sentences or text containing previously taught sound/spelling patterns and high-frequency words) that students read and reread for fluency.
- ○ in grade 3, reading mostly grade-level complex text. Support students phonics development through use of decodable text only as needed.*

Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts
See RF.4 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Model and support fluent reading by reading with students (echo reading and choral reading) and listening to students as appropriate throughout daily reading instruction.
- Select an excerpt from grade-level anchor text at the center of instruction for fluency practice. Allow for regular repeated reading to build accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
- Incorporate engaging, focused fluency activities.
- In grade 2, allow for reading fluency practice work (e.g., 10–20 minutes daily if possible) with decodable texts that match the taught sound and spelling patterns (see foundational skills for details).*
- Even when improving fluency is the focus, ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed.*[26]

Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress
See RF.3 and RF.4 for specific guidance for grades 2–3.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Administer brief diagnostic screener at the beginning of the year and at periodic checkpoints throughout the school year.
  - ○ Prioritize assessing grade-level-appropriate sound and spelling patterns and reading fluency with grade-level text.
- Collect formative data during daily lessons (e.g., checklists, sampling dictation responses, monitoring of student work); respond to data and adjust instruction accordingly. Ensure frequent opportunities to formatively assess:
  - ○ students' ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level-appropriate phonics instruction in grade 2.
  - ○ fluency with grade-level text (including decodable texts in grade 2).

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[26] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging, safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, and a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect the samples included below in "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

- Support students' decoding and fluency development through additional small group or individual support; opportunities to amplify or embed practice with needed skills within existing instruction or practice opportunities; modified student practice or scaffolds.*

Facilitate SEAD (Social, Emotional, and Academic Development) Through Building of Foundational Reading Skills

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Promote a sense of belonging by including language routines, such as choral reading and word games, so students see themselves as a part of a learning community.
- Empower students to monitor their own decoding skills and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Engage students in reading and rereading to build habits as increasingly independent readers.

Rationale and Research

Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice
- A body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is a critical part of early childhood instruction, and it is crucial for students as they are learning to read and write in English (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
- This means supporting students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002).

Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts
- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Fluent reading depends on a reader's understanding of the orthographic relationships that form the basis of decoding.

Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress
- Overall reading fluency in elementary school readers is a good predictor of reading comprehension in the secondary school years (Stanley et al., 2017). To ensure fluency develops, it is critical that frequent, ongoing, informal assessment of taught foundational skills takes place and immediate re-teaching and support be provided if needed.

**Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction**

Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts
See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance for grades 2–3.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts multiple times a week, as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.
- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with the anchor texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc.*[27]

Grade Band	Lexile Range
2–3	420–820 Texts for read-aloud only should be in the 4–5 band (or higher)
4–5	740–1010

When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).

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[27] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 2–3 – Text Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text (read or listened to) and build understanding.
- Create text-based tasks that take varied forms (e.g., drawing, discussion, writing, dramatic play, speaking).*
- Allow time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions of what is read.

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Use text-based questions/tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts
See SL.1 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions about anchor texts texts—daily if possible—for students to process and extend their learning.*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.*
  - Ask students to reflect on each other's thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others' perspectives.*
- Step in (and out) of discussions to keep students focused and encourage them to construct longer and deeper responses.*

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts
See W.8 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Recall Information From Provided Sources.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading (or listening to) to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.*
- Include writing tasks connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.*
- Reserve non-text based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in -(reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).*
- Support students to ground their writing in knowledge gained and evidence from the anchor text.
- Within these writing opportunities, address and support students' ability to demonstrate command of writing and conventions, including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure that the richness and complexity of grade-level text is regularly available to every student, and no student is denied such access through the exclusive practice of assigning leveled or alternative texts.
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

Rationale and Research

Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts
- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).
- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. As a result, leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction.

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print. (Adams, 2011).

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts
- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts
- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Across Content Areas

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.   - Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support. This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across ELA, science, history, and the arts.

Grade	Literary	Informational
2–3	50%	50%

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See also SL.1 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 for specific guidance for grades 2–3– Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Regularly ask students to participate in shared research tasks where they explore multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)*[28]   - Promote independent reading by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts.*

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[28] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Across Content Areas."

- Ask students to integrate what they have just read or listened to with what they have read or listened to previously to build a more coherent understanding of a topic.
- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and chosen by students.

Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others.

Rationale and Research

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Nonfiction texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).
- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

Grades 4–5 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

Building the stamina and skills to read widely and deeply from a range of challenging fiction, informational texts, and other materials is fundamental to grades 4 and 5. Building knowledge about subjects through informal research projects and responding analytically to literary and informational sources in history, science, and the arts are key to students' continuing success. Through wide reading on a topic and attention to vocabulary, students learn variations in word meanings: synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and words with more than one meaning. Students solidify fundamental language skills as they use roots, prefixes, or suffixes to analyze the meanings of complex words. Students also make essential strides in their ability to explain plainly and in detail what books say—both explicitly and what is implied from its details. By devoting significant time and effort to producing numerous written pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year, students are writing effective summaries, book reports, essays, and descriptions of characters or events.

**Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction**

Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts
See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts, multiple times a week,[29] as school disruptions allow.   - Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.

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[29] Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect in school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with grade-level texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc.*[30]

Grade Band	Lexile Range
4–5	740–1010

When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Text Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text and build understanding.
- Design instruction to cultivate every student's ability to read carefully and grasp information—both what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.
- Encourage students to cite specific text evidence (quotes and examples) when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener and constructively evaluating others' use of evidence.*
- Provide time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions.

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

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[30] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled, *Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts.*

- Use text-based questions and tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design daily opportunities for students to process and extend their learning through collaborative, small-group, or partner text-based discussions.*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.*
  - Have students reflect on each other's thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others' perspectives.*

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
See W.9 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Writing to Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.*
- Include writing assignments connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.*
- Reserve non-text-based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).*
- Vary writing assignments (short on-demand pieces or longer multi-day pieces) throughout the week, if possible.

Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts
Extend RF.4 through grades 4–5 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Engage in fluency exercises—daily if possible—through regular and repeated readings of texts.
- Attend to prosody (pitch, stress, and timing) as students read aloud.
- Fulfill public speaking demands by having students select grade-level seminal texts and speeches to practice and perform with peers.*
- Ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed, even when improving fluency is the focus.

Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express their comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Include collaborative conversations that require students to integrate the perspective of their peers into their own critical thinking.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

Rationale and Research

Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts
- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).

- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. Leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print (Adams, 2011).

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Reading prosody and word identification accuracy predicts more than half of the variance in a standardized test of reading comprehension administered to struggling ninth-grade readers. Many students can experience reading improvement in minutes (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

**Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about
Topics Under Study in ELA, History, Science, and Technical Subjects**

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts or topic under study to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.*[31] This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across content areas of ELA, science, history, the arts, and technical subjects.

Grade	Literary	Informational
4–5	50%	50%

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance from each grade level – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from each of grades 4–5 – Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Ask students regularly to research, then express—orally and in writing—information gained from multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic.*
- Promote independent reading, by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)*

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[31] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' belonging, sense of efficacy, and growth mindset as well as a sense that what they are learning has relevance. These reflect the samples included in "Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts."

- Integrate what students have just read (and learned) with what they have previously read (and learned) to build a more coherent understanding of a topic. Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and texts chosen by students.

Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others or after recognizing independently that another approach is indicated in light of audience and purpose.

Rationale and Research

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).
- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

Grades 6–8 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

In the middle school grades, students analyze, define, compare, and evaluate ideas with more precision when reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of a range of more challenging books and articles as they address various topics. In particular, students' ability to cite specific evidence and make use of the academic language and knowledge they've encountered in their own reading when writing in response to texts matures. As they work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, students also learn to question an author's or speaker's assumptions and assess the accuracy of his or her claims. Students continue to expand their vocabularies and use new words in their stories, reports, and essays. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to readers or listeners or constructively evaluating others' use of evidence. This ability helps students in every facet of their studies.

**Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction**

Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts
See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts multiple times a week[32] as school disruptions allow.   - Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.   - Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with grade-level texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc. *[33]

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[32] Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect in school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions allow.

[33] Asterisk (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

Grade Band	Lexile Range
6–8	925–1185

When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Text Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text and build understanding.
- Design instruction to cultivate every student's ability to read carefully and grasp information—both what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.
- Encourage students to cite specific text evidence (quotes and examples) when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener and constructively evaluating others' use of evidence.*
- Provide time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions.

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Use text-based questions and tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this, rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design daily opportunities for students to process and extend their learning through collaborative, small-group, or partner text-based discussions:*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.*
  - Have students reflect on each other's thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others' perspectives.*
  - Teach the language of argumentation to facilitate students taking positions on what they're reading and hearing from others.*

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
See W.9 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Writing to Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.*
- Include writing assignments connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.*
- Reserve non-text-based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).*
- Vary writing assignments (short on-demand pieces or longer multi-day pieces) throughout the week, if possible.

Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts
Extend RF.4 through grades 6–8 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Engage in fluency exercises—daily if possible—through regular and repeated readings of texts. (This includes all students except those who demonstrate oral fluency with grade-level texts.)
- Attend to prosody (pitch, stress, and timing) as students read aloud.
- Fulfill public speaking demands by having students select grade-level seminal texts and speeches to practice and perform with peers.*
- Ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed, even when improving fluency is the focus.

Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express their comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Include collaborative conversations that require students to integrate the perspective of their peers into their own critical thinking.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

Rationale and Research

Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts
- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).

- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. Leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print. (Adams, 2011).

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Reading prosody and word identification accuracy predicts more than half of the variance in a standardized test of reading comprehension administered to struggling ninth-grade readers. Many students can experience reading improvement in minutes (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

**Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about
Topics Under Study in ELA, History, Science, and Technical Subjects**

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts or topic under study to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.*[34] This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across content areas of ELA, science, history, the arts, and technical subjects.

Grade	**Literary**	**Informational**
6–8	45%	55%

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance from each grade level – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from each of grades 6–8 – Integrating Information and Knowledge
From Texts on the Same Topic.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

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[34] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' belonging, sense of efficacy, and growth mindset as well as a sense that what they are learning has relevance. These reflect the samples included in "Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts."

- Ask students regularly to research, then express—orally and in writing—information gained from multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic.*
- Promote independent reading, by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)*
- Integrate what students have just read (and learned) with what they have previously read (and learned) to build a more coherent understanding of a topic. Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and chosen by students.

Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:
- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others or after recognizing independently that another approach is indicated in light of audience and purpose.

Rationale and Research

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics
- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

Grades 9–12 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

At this level, students are expected to understand more from and make fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of text evidence to support their inferences. As they address different aspects of the same topic, students make more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within (and across) books, essays, articles, or other resources. Students learn to evaluate intricate arguments and surmount the challenges posed by complex written materials and other resources independently and confidently. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, they expand their literary and cultural knowledge and better understand references and images. They also work to develop the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce logical, well-reasoned writings and presentations that are supported by evidence. By writing and participating in a variety of conversations, they will practice asserting and defending claims and showing what they know about a subject using appropriate examples and evidence. These literacy practices that allow students to gain knowledge and skills through the careful study of texts and topics are not only left to ELA, but should also find their rightful place as practices required by the disciplines in science, technical subjects, history, and social studies.

**Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction**

Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts
See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12.
Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices
- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts multiple times a week[35], as school disruptions allow.   - Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.

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[35] Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect in school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with grade-level texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc. *[36]

Grade Band	Lexile Range
9–10	1050–1335
11–CCR	1185–1385

When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Text Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text and build understanding.
- Design instruction to cultivate every student's ability to read carefully and grasp information—both what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.
- Encourage students to cite specific text evidence (quotes and examples) when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener and constructively evaluating others' use of evidence.*
- Provide time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions.

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

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[36] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging, efficacy, effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect the samples included in "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

- Use text-based questions and tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design daily opportunities for students to process and extend their learning through collaborative, small-group, or partner text-based discussions.*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.*
  - Have students reflect on each other's thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others' perspectives.*
  - Teach the language of argumentation to facilitate students taking positions on what they're reading and hearing from others.

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
See W.9 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Writing to Evidence.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.*
- Include writing assignments connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.*
- Reserve non-text-based writing tasks to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, writing personal stories).*
- Vary writing assignments (short on-demand pieces or longer multi-day pieces) throughout the week, if possible.

Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts
Extend RF.4 through grades 9–12 – Fluency of Grade Level Text.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Engage in fluency exercises—daily if possible—through regular and repeated readings of texts. (This includes all students except those who demonstrate oral fluency with grade-level texts.)
- Attend to prosody (pitch, stress, and timing) as students read aloud.
- Fulfill public speaking demands by having students select grade-level seminal texts and speeches to practice and perform with peers.*
- Ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed, even when improving fluency is the focus.

Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express their comprehension, knowledge and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Include collaborative conversations that require students to integrate the perspective of their peers into their own critical thinking.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

Rationale and Research

Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts
- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).

- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. Leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading
- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax
- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print (Adams, 2011).

Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts
- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Reading prosody and word identification accuracy predicts more than half of the variance in a standardized test of reading comprehension administered to struggling ninth-grade readers. Many students can experience reading improvement in minutes (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

**Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about
Topics Under Study in ELA, History, Science, and Technical Subjects**

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics *See W.8 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*	

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts or topic under study to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.*[37] This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across content areas of ELA, science, history, the arts, and technical subjects.

Grade	Literary	Informational
9–12	30%	70%

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
See W.8 for specific guidance from each grade level – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12– Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from each of grades 9–12– Integrating Information and Knowledge

From Texts on the Same Topic.

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

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[37] Asterisks (*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

- Ask students regularly to research, then express—orally and in writing—information gained from multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic.*
- Promote independent reading by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)*
- Integrate what students have just read (and learned) with what they have previously read (and learned) to build a more coherent understanding of a topic. Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and chosen by students.

Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others or after recognizing independently that another approach is indicated in light of audience and purpose.

Rationale and Research

Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics

- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics
- Building knowledge and domain- specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).
- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications. (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

Appendix

ELA/Literacy Selected Research: K–12

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