

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS Frequently Asked Questions

First, a word about the Center for College & Career Readiness...

The Center is a non-profit, non-partisan research and training organization whose mission is to help schools, districts, and policy makers deliver education which results in citizens who are ready to work, contribute to society, and pursue their dreams.

The Center employs experts in a variety of standards used globally to establish educational outcomes and measure educational progress. We work with Catholic Identity Standards (Catholic Schools), Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (US Texas), ISCED (International Education Index), National Education Technology Standards (US), and the Common Core State Standards, among others.

Our mission is to educate and inform. We support districts and states working to ensure that their educational standards are appropriate for their local communities, while meeting the highest levels of educational outcome.

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards are a set of documents which describe educational goals at each grade, K-12, in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The documents also include “Literacy Standards” focused on reading and writing for Social Studies and Science.

The goal of the Common Core State Standards initiative is to guide schools to create more rigorous curriculum and implement more effective teaching practices to increase the level of student performance by the time they graduate.

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the following elements (analysis by the Center for College & Career Readiness):

- Students should be able to read literature and informational text with equal proficiency.
- By the time they graduate High School, students should be able to read at a level which allows them to enter job-training programs, community college or university without the need for remedial courses. Students should be able to read at a level of proficiency adequate for entrance into the United States Armed Services and at a level of proficiency equivalent to that required by the United States Citizenship exam. (Reading level comparisons from www.Lexile.com).

- Student mastery of knowledge should go beyond memorization, to include the ability to use new knowledge in new, complex situations that mirror the real world.
- Students must be allowed time to master the fundamentals of literacy:
 - o Basic Math Skills (Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Fractions, Algebra)
 - o Basic Reading, Writing and Language Skills

Curriculum should ensure sufficient depth so that students can master the fundamentals prior to moving into other subject areas where students will struggle if they do not have a solid basic skill set.

- The outcome of a rigorous education should be the ability to analyze what other people are saying, writing or doing and independently make sense of and evaluate that content and those activities. A student should be able to think for themselves, as compared to memorizing what someone else believes is the truth.

From the Standards (www.CoreStandards.org):

“The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.”

Who created the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards were written by the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. They were created by educational researchers using a body of research which goes back more than 30 years. (See the Sources section of the Standards documents.)

The Common Core State Standards were published in 2010. They have been strongly supported by the United States Chamber of Commerce, the US Armed Services support organizations for families, organizations seeking to establish greater accountability for teachers, higher education organizations, and ACT and the College Board (publishers of the SAT).

Who chooses to “mandate” the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards are voluntarily adopted by States and/or by Districts. In the latter case, for instance, the Anchorage School District in Alaska adopted the Common Core Standards while the state of Alaska has not adopted the standards.

In supporting the Common Core State Standards, many of the organizations making public statements of support noted that the standards were created by the states, for the states, and were voluntary. (See <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/statements-of-support> for a list of statements of support.)

How did the Federal Government become involved?

The Federal Government's primary involvement in public education is through Federal Funding programs, such as Title I (Improving Academic Achievement Among the Disadvantaged), Title II (Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals), Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students), and the other funding programs included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In 2001, the ESEA was called "No Child Left Behind". The requirements of the 2001 ESEA act, or "No Child Left Behind", remain the primary requirements of the Federal Government for public schools, should those schools seek to be included in Federal Funding programs.

The Federal Government supports the Common Core State Standards by requiring Race to the Top awardees to adopt "common standards" shared by multiple states. Race to the Top does not specify which standards are to be adopted, however. The Federal Government does not require states or districts to adopt Common Core State Standards or any other specific set of standards.

The Race to the Top grant initiative includes four broad goals (see below, and at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>).

The Race to the Top grant initiative requires that state awardees participate in a common set of standards and that state awardees collaborate with other states to create common assessments. Both the standards and assessments must be "supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation" (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>).

Race to the Top Goals:

- [Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;](#)
- [Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;](#)
- [Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most;](#) and
- [Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.](#)

Do the Common Core State Standards require schools to collect data about students?

No. The Common Core State Standards do not mention data collection of any type. The Common Core State Standards are a set of statements regarding what students should know and be able to do as they progress through K-12 education.

The Race to the Top grant program includes provisions for data collection. The Common Core State Standards and the Race to the Top grant program should not be confused.

What is “rigor”? How is “rigor” defined in educational standards?

“Rigor” is generally defined by the complexity of student interaction with increasingly difficult content. Lower levels of “rigor” would include skills like simple memorization and copying, using materials that have more common vocabulary and shorter sentences and paragraphs (English Language Arts) or materials which have straightforward calculation-based questions (Mathematics). Higher levels of “rigor” would include skills like independent analysis and evaluation of an argument or point of view, analysis of a mathematical proof or real-world engineering problem. At higher levels of rigor, materials would be expected to include less common vocabulary specific to the subject matter (like math, science or social studies terms), texts with complex sentences and paragraph structure, and mathematics problems which require multiple steps within a real-world scenario.

What is the level of “rigor” in the Common Core State Standards? How is the Common Core level of “rigor” different from prior standards?

One of the best methods to establish the level of “rigor” comparatively is to look at established benchmarks for reading ability. Reading benchmarks are informative because they tend to be more common across states due to their use in textbooks and other published curriculum. They are also informative because they can be quantified.

The Lexile Framework® for reading is used extensively by publishers and educators to measure both the complexity of a text and the ability of a child to read the text. Indeed, the Lexile® framework is one of the few psychometrically designed scales which allow you to measure both text complexity and reader ability using the same scale, grades P – 20.

The following chart (see Lexile.com) shows the shift in expectations for the “rigor” or “complexity” of texts as specified by the Common Core State Standards, compared to traditional historical levels of text complexity by grade. The Common Core State Standards adopted the Lexile® levels for College & Career Readiness.

CCSS Lexile® Text Measures

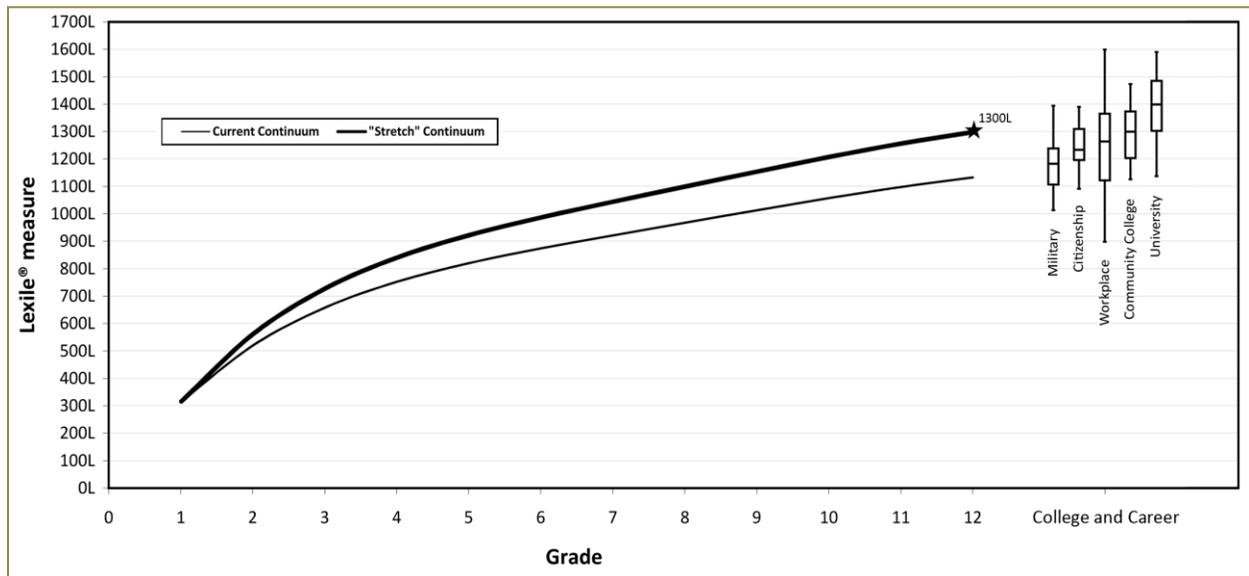
Grade	Historical Text Measures	2012 CCSS Text Measures*
1	230L to 420L	190L to 530L
2	450L to 570L	420L to 650L
3	600L to 730L	520L to 820L
4	640L to 780L	740L to 940L
5	730L to 850L	830L to 1010L
6	860L to 920L	920L to 1070L
7	880L to 960L	970L to 1120L
8	900L to 1010L	1010L to 1190L
9	960L to 1110L	1050L to 1260L
10	920L to 1120L	1080L to 1340L
11 and 12	1070L to 1220L	1180L to 1390L

Source: www.lexile.com. MetaMetrics

Looking at the chart, a few things are notable:

- The range of text that is recommended by the Common Core Standards in Grades 1, 2 and 3 is broader than the range of texts traditionally used today. This broad range of text aligns with the demographic realities of schools today – we have many students coming into our schools at lower levels of reading-readiness and therefore, schools are faced with a broader range of student learning needs.
- The upper level of each range is higher than current traditional ranges for complex text. This increase in “stretch” texts reflects the goal within the standards to increase the level of challenge for each student, increasing the student’s reading ability over time.
- The cumulative increase in “reading stretch” as recommended by the Common Core State Standards is designed to drive student performance levels so that, by the time students reach the end of the 10th grade, students are reading at a “1340 Lexile” – significantly above the current high school graduation reading level of 1220 Lexile. In essence, the Common Core Standards recommend that, by the end of the 12th grade, students have accelerated their ability to read by approximately two years. Note that remedial college courses are designed to increase student reading levels for preparation in the first and second year of college.

The “shift” in “rigor” or text “complexity” from the current levels to new levels within the Common Core can be represented in the following graph:



The top line represents the level of text complexity and student reading performance established by the Common Core State Standards as part of the “stretch” in reading challenge. The lower line represents historical current average levels of text complexity. The average high school graduate today reads at a 900 Lexile® Level. The bars to the right represent the range of text complexity students must master to gain entrance into the US military, pass the US Citizenship exam, complete workplace training programs, and the levels of text complexity required for success in Community College and University coursework.

Source: Metametrics

In mathematics, perhaps the best indicator of “rigor” as specified by the Common Core State Standards are the “math fluency standards” which set forth expectations for student skill mastery in math. The Common Core math fluency standards are:

FLUENCY	
Required Fluency	
K	Add/subtract within 5
1	Add/subtract within 10
2	Add/subtract within 20
	Add/subtract within 100 (pencil and paper)
3	Multiply/divide within 100
	Add/subtract within 1,000
4	Add/subtract within 1,000,000
5	Multidigit multiplication
6	Multidigit division
	Multidigit decimal operations
7	Solve $px + q = r$, $p(x + q) = r$

The Common Core State Standards in mathematics are designed to drive students to gain proficiency in algebra by the end of the 8th grade.

Understanding content alignment of standards is a complex job. Staff from the Center for College & Career Readiness participate in the Survey of Enacted Curriculum (www.seconline.org), a project originally funded by the National Science Foundation and supported by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Dr. Andrew Porter, Dean at the University Of Pennsylvania Graduate School Of Education, and an original coauthor of the Survey of Enacted Curriculum research, has published a scholarly article regarding alignment of state and Common Core Standards. His findings, in summary, are that the Common Core Standards are significantly different from current state standards, and represent significant increases in expectations for critical thinking and cognitive demand. However, as it relates to content specified within the standards and a deeper focus upon specific content areas, Dr. Porter finds that the Common Core State Standards are not necessarily “better” in terms of content covered or focus within content.

What level of data reporting is required by the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards do not ask for, require, or otherwise include any type of data collection or reporting of student information.

Some may confuse the requirements of Race to the Top, which is a program by the US Department of Education and which requires data reporting. Race to the Top also requires the adoption of common standards in order to be a Race to the Top awardee.

However, the Common Core State Standards are not a program of the US Department of Education and do not require reporting of student data of any kind.

What do the standards say about literature, the Classics, and other traditional books commonly found in the American curriculum?

The Common Core State Standards support continued education in the “classics”, and in literature. The Common Core State Standards recommend that roughly one third (30%) of a student’s reading be spent on literature in the High School grades. In today’s traditional curriculum, for a high school day with seven (7) periods, that would represent at least two periods where literary text was part of instruction. For many high schools, the Common Core State Standards recommendations would represent an increase in literary text.

The Common Core State Standards recommend that literary and informational texts are more complex for most grades and especially secondary (middle and high school) grades. Therefore, when implementing the standards, one might expect that classical literature often taught in the first year of college would be part of a High School curriculum.

The Common Core State Standards do not prescribe nor require any specific piece of literature.

What do the standards say about math, how to teach it, and what students should be able to do mathematically?

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the need for students to master the foundational “math fluency” skills to ensure that students have the background knowledge and basic skills for other advanced math topics. The Common Core State Standards also emphasize Geometry as a topic of study beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through the Secondary grades.

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the need for students to not only “know math” but the need for students to be skilled in “using math to solve real-world problems”. Therefore, when implementing the Common Core State Standards, one might expect to see more real-world type problems, more word problems and more complex math problems which approximate real-world simulations. As well, one might expect to find classrooms with problem solving approaches which include discussion and dialogue, and even debate.

The design of the Common Core State Standards is intended to address the challenges faced by American students in mathematics. The current, traditional curriculum – primarily controlled by a small number of curriculum publishers – has yielded less than favorable results:

State	Number of Graduates Tested	All 4	English	Math	Reading	Science
National	1666017	25	67	46	52	31

ACT 2012 Results: Percentage of students proficient in each College Readiness Benchmark.
www.ACT.org

The 2012 TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) placed the United States as 11th in fourth-grade math, 9th in eighth-grade math, 7th in fourth-grade science, and 10th in eighth-grade science. However, more statistically significant, only 7 percent of US students reached the advanced level in eighth-grade math, while 48 percent of eighth graders in Singapore and 47 percent of eighth graders in South Korea reached the advanced level.

The Common Core State Standards recommend a shift in the types of problem solving presented to students, moving students from basic knowledge of mathematics concepts and skills to more advanced application. Examples of “Common Core” type mathematics problems can be found by searching out math examples from the TIMSS and PISA assessments.

Are there other educational standards which are “more rigorous” than the Common Core State Standards?

The 2012 Brown Center (Brookings Institution) Report on American Education is perhaps one of the most important scholarly reports to reference when answering this question, although the answer may be surprising to many. In short, the Brown Center Report notes that “standards rarely matter”. It is not the “standard”, in and of itself, which creates “rigor” or results in stronger student outcomes.

Teacher preparation, teacher quality, the quality of curriculum, and the consistency of instruction are all elements which create “rigor” in the classroom.

Hence, any set of standards may, in fact, be as “rigorous” as another set of standards, depending upon the actual instruction in the classroom.

What are the “new Common Core Assessments”?

The “new Common Core Assessments” are tests which are being developed by two state-led groups: The “Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia” or SBAC and the “Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers” or PARCC.

The Assessment Consortia are funded by the states, and also receive funding from the Federal Government and from private foundations. States choose to participate in these organizations, which are creating the new assessments. Participation in multi-state assessment consortia was a requirement for Race to the Top, as well.

Member states (believed to be current as of June 30, 2013) are represented below. (See www.SmarterBalanced.org and also see www.parcconline.org)

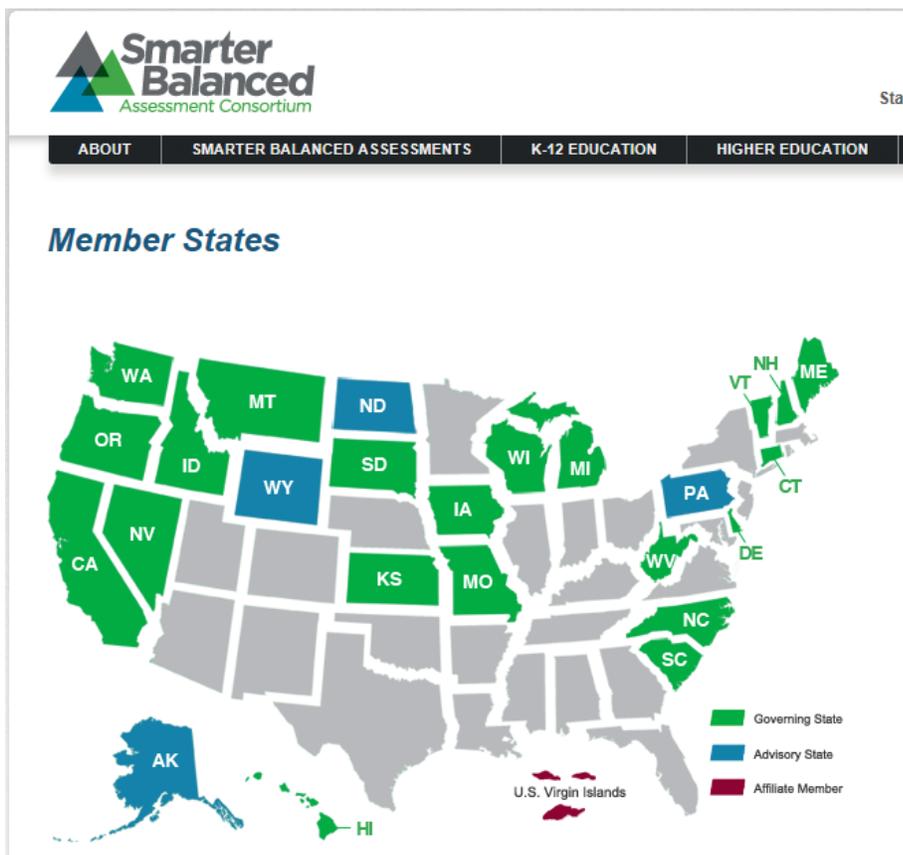
The new assessments are not required by the Federal Government and states are still working through specific policy related questions of how to administer the new assessments alongside, or as a replacement for, their current state tests.

The new assessments are designed to be given on the computer. The SBAC assessment is especially designed to be computer adaptive. Both assessments are being designed to better measure whether or not a student is on track to be ready to succeed in college or in workplace training without the need for remediation.

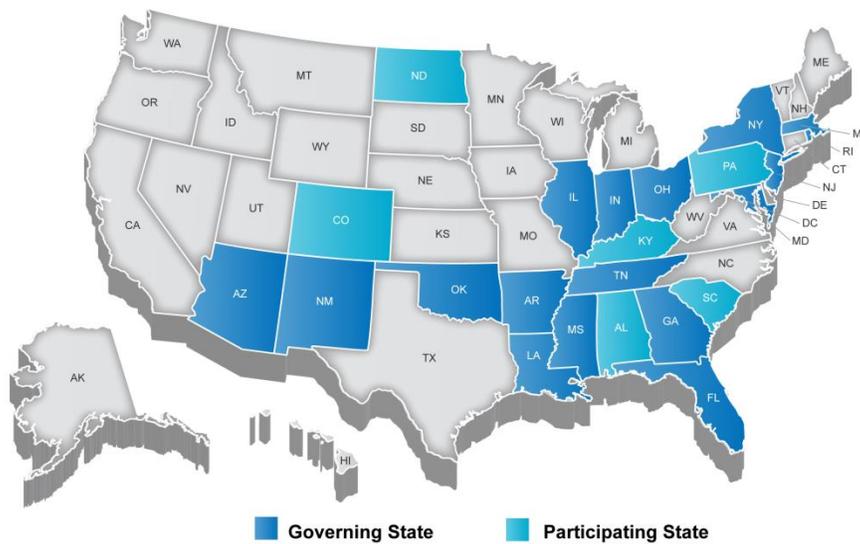
The new assessments are not yet completed. The assessment items are currently being “field tested” in school districts across the United States. Early results from those field tests, as well as other previous data, indicates that students are not as proficient when measured against College & Career Readiness Standards, as compared to existing state tests. As a result, communities and families should be prepared to see lower scores overall once the new tests are administered. The scores do not reflect lessened performance by students, but instead reflect a more rigorous measurement tool.

It is noteworthy that many state tests have been changing to become more “rigorous” in alignment with College & Career Readiness benchmarks. The new Texas STAAR exams (Texas is not a Common Core adopting state) and the Florida FCAT in writing are two examples. On both the STAAR and FCAT exams, student scores have decreased in writing, as they also have decreased on the SAT.

The SBAC and PARCC assessments are scheduled to be ready for implementation in the 2014-2015 school year. The Assessment Consortia are clear that their mission is not to “grade” schools or students, but instead to provide more timely, deeper information back to teachers about each student, so that teachers may help each individual student more quickly and appropriately.



PARCC participating states:



Who decides how my child will be assessed?

Each State Department of Education determines which tests will be given and what those tests cover. In some states, testing is governed by specific legislation. The Federal Government does not require a specific test, and under the No Child Left Behind Act, the Federal Government has allowed a broad range of testing practices and a broad range of testing rigor across states.

What is the impact on my child from the Common Core State Standards?

Like any “educational standard”, like any teacher, or like any text, the impact on each student is likely to be individual to that student’s needs and skills and the impact is likely to be dependent upon the teacher(s) working with each student.

That said, the goal of the Common Core State Standards is to provide students with a broader range of text which is more real-world and more difficult so that students are challenged to read more complex text. The goal of the standards is to develop deeper writing and thinking skills within students, and greater critical analysis and examination skills. Lastly, the goal of the standards is to provide more time in early grades for development of mathematics mastery and fluency, so that students can solve more complex, “real world” problems in math and science, especially using Algebra. If the standards achieve their goals, the impact on all students should align with these outcomes.

The Common Core State Standards mirror an intervention model in many ways. Intervention models are designed to target individual student learning needs, provide more time to develop fluency in critical foundational skills, and provide students with opportunities to “stretch” their skills in order to accelerate their learning.

It is important to note the multiple research studies which suggest that standards alone do not impact learning. Standards are a statement of “intended curriculum”. It is up to the teacher to “enact” curriculum. Teacher variation can be quite large, and has been identified as a key factor for different student outcomes.

The outcomes envisioned by the Common Core State Standards, whether through more rigorous curriculum or more effective teaching practices, include significant and important financial implications for families.

Today, between 40% and 60% of all students entering college or workforce development programs require some type of remediation, at an annual cost of more than \$3 Billion and growing. Most students require loans in order to afford higher education, and more than 40 million students are current borrowers within student loan programs. Student loan debt is now greater than \$1 Trillion dollars in the United States, and default rates are more than 15%.

If the Common Core State Standards achieve their goal of reduced remediation for students entering college, the impact on students would be a reduction in total college costs.

How can I ensure that my school has appropriate, locally controlled, rigorous educational goals?

We recommend that you read our whitepaper on “Localizing the Common Core State Standards”. Generally, there is no reason that local school boards cannot adopt their own standards, reflecting their own local needs and concerns, as long as those standards meet the minimum requirements of the state standards.

Concerned parents, citizen groups, and activists who believe that the Common Core State Standards are not adequate to develop College & Career Readiness for their students may wish to consider localizing their district’s standards to go above and beyond Common Core State Standards requirements.

How can I ensure that “liberal bias” or “conservative bias” is not present in my schools?

Bias can be present in materials and in the delivery of materials. While eradication of bias is unlikely, the method of reducing bias in materials is to ensure that a broad range of people review, challenge, and ultimately select materials for use in schools. Moreover, the method of reducing bias in teacher practice is to inform teachers of likely sources of unintentional or unconscious bias, and via policy to ensure that local district expectations explicitly state that bias is absent from instruction.

However, bias is a fact of life and learning to identify bias, analyze arguments, and determine for oneself whether or not to agree with the biased argument is a critical skill for productive adults. Therefore, a significant and important method for ensuring that students are able to identify, analyze, debunk, agree or disagree with a biased statement is to ensure that students move beyond simple “fact” gathering and memorization of someone else’s argument, and instead progress to develop strong critical thinking skills and a precise analytical approach to content of all types.

The following section of this document is taken directly from materials provided by the authors of the Common Core State Standards. This information can be found at:

<http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>



Frequently Asked Questions



Overview

What are educational standards?

Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.

What is the Common Core State Standards Initiative?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that established a single set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics that states voluntarily adopt. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit bearing entry courses in two or four year college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school.

Who leads the Common Core State Standards Initiative?

The nation's governors and education commissioners, through their representative organizations the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) led the development of the Common Core State Standards and continue to lead the initiative. Teachers, parents, school administrators and experts from across the country together with state leaders provided input into the development of the standards.

Why is the Common Core State Standards Initiative important?

High standards that are consistent across states provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations that are aligned to the expectations in college and careers. The standards promote equity by ensuring all students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad. Unlike previous state standards, which were unique to every state in the country, the Common Core State Standards enable collaboration between states on a range of tools and policies, including:

- the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials aligned to the standards;
- and the development and implementation of common comprehensive assessment systems to measure student performance annually that will replace existing state testing systems; and
- changes needed to help support educators and schools in teaching to the new standards.

Who was involved in the Common Core State Standards Initiative?

States across the country collaborated with teachers, researchers, and leading experts to design and develop the Common Core State Standards. Each state independently made the decision to adopt the Common Core State Standards, beginning in 2010. The federal government was NOT involved in the development of the standards. Local teachers, principals, and superintendents lead the implementation of the Common Core.

What guidance do the Common Core State Standards provide to teachers?

The Common Core State Standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills students need in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level to ultimately be prepared to graduate college and career ready. The standards establish what students need to learn, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

How do the Common Core State Standards compare to previous state standards?

The Common Core State Standards were written by building on the best and highest state standards in existence in the U.S., examining the expectations of other high performing countries around the world, and careful study of the research and literature available on what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college and careers. No state in the country was asked to lower their expectations for their students in adopting the Common Core. The standards are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries. They were developed in consultation with teachers and parents from across the country so they are also realistic and practical for the classroom.

Will there be tests based on the Common Core State Standards?

Yes. States that adopted the Common Core State Standards are currently collaborating to develop common assessments that will be aligned to the standards and replace existing end of year state assessments. These assessments will be available in the 2014-2015 school year.

What is the appropriate way to cite the Common Core State Standards?

Authors: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers
Title: Common Core State Standards (insert specific content area if you are using only one)
Publisher: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington D.C.
Copyright Date: 2010



Process

What makes this process different from other efforts to create common standards?

This process is state-led, and has support from across the country, including CCSSO, the NGA Center, Achieve, Inc, ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Alliance for Excellent Education, the Hunt Institute, the National Parent Teacher Association, the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the American Association of School Administrators, and the Business Roundtable.

By what criteria were the standards developed?

The Standards made careful use of a large and growing body of evidence, including:

- Scholarly research;
- Surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs;
- Assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance;
- Comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations;
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks in reading and writing for English language arts; and
- Findings from Trends in International Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) and other studies concluding that the traditional US mathematics curriculum must become substantially more coherent and focused in order to improve student achievement.

In particular, the following criteria guided the development of the standards:

- Alignment with expectations for college and career success;
- Clarity;
- Consistency across all states;
- Inclusion of content and the application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Improvement upon current state standards and standards of top-performing nations;
- Reality-based, for effective use in the classroom; and
- Evidence and research-based

Are the standards internationally benchmarked?

Yes. International benchmarking played a significant role in both sets of standards. In fact, the college and career ready standards include an appendix listing the evidence that was consulted in drafting the standards and the international data used in the benchmarking process is included in this appendix.

Were teachers involved in the creation of the standards?

Yes. Teachers have been a critical voice in the development of the standards. The Common Core State Standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), among other organizations were instrumental in bringing together teachers to provide specific, constructive feedback on the standards.

What grade levels are included in the Common Core State Standards?

The English language arts and math standards are for grades K-12. Research from the early childhood and higher education communities also informed the development of the standards.

What does this work mean for students with disabilities and English language learners?

The Common Core State Standards give states the opportunity to share experiences and best practices, which can lead to an improved ability to serve young people with disabilities and English language learners. Additionally, the standards include information on application of the standards for these groups of students.

Why are the Common Core State Standards for just English language arts and math?

English language arts and math were the subjects chosen for the Common Core State Standards because they are areas upon which students build skill sets which are used in other subjects. They are also the subjects most frequently assessed for accountability purposes.

Are there plans to develop common standards in other areas in the future?

CCSSO and NGA are not leading the development of standards in other academic content areas. Below is information on efforts of other organizations to develop standards in other academic subjects.

- Science: In a process managed by Achieve, with the help of the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, states are developing the Next Generation Science Standards. More information about this effort can be found [here](#).
- World Languages: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages published an alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the ELA Common Core State Standards. More information about this effort can be found [here](#).
- Arts: The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards is leading the revision of the National Standards for Arts Education. More information about this effort can be found [here](#).



Implementation and Future Work

What do the Common Core State Standards mean for students?

The standards provide clarity and consistency in what is expected of student learning across the country. This initiative helps provide all students with an equal opportunity for an education, regardless of where they live. The Common Core State Standards will not prevent different levels of achievement among students, but they will ensure more consistent exposure to materials and learning experiences through curriculum, instruction, and teacher preparation among other supports for student learning.

How does the Common Core State Standards impact teachers?

The Common CSS impacts teachers by:

- Providing goals and benchmarks to ensure students are achieving certain skills and knowledge by the end of each year;
- Helping colleges and professional development programs better prepare teachers;
- Providing the opportunity for teachers to be involved in the development of assessments linked to these top-quality standards;
- Allowing states to develop and provide better assessments that more accurately measure whether or not students have learned what was taught; and
- Guiding educators toward curricula and teaching strategies that will give students a deep understanding of the subject and the skills they need to apply their knowledge.

Who will manage the Common Core State Standards Initiative in the future?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative was and will remain a state-led effort. In addition to supporting effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards, NGA and CCSSO are committed to developing a long-term sustainability structure with leadership from governors, chief state school officers, and other state policymakers. There will be an ongoing state-led development process that can support continuous improvement of the standards.

Will common assessments be developed?

Two consortia of states are developing common assessments – the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). These state-led consortia on assessment are grounded in the following principles:

- Allow for comparison across students, schools, districts, states and nations;
- Create economies of scale;
- Provide information and support more effective teaching and learning; and
- Prepare students for college and careers.

Will CCSSO and NGA be creating common instructional materials and curricula?

States that have adopted the standards may choose to work together to develop instructional materials and curricula. As states join together to adopt the same Common Core State Standards, publishers of instructional materials and experienced educators will develop new resources around these shared standards.

Does the federal government play a role in standards implementation?

The federal government had no role in the development of the Common Core State Standards and will not have a role in their implementation. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that is not part of No Child Left Behind and adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory.

Are there data collection requirements associated with the Common Core State Standards?

There are no data collection requirements of states adopting the CCSS. Standards define expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. Implementing the CCSS does not require data collection. The means of assessing students and the data that results from those assessments are up to the discretion of each state and are separate and unique from the CCSS.



Content and Quality of the Standards

Do these standards incorporate both content and skills?

Yes.

In English language arts, the Common Core State Standards require certain critical content for all students, including:

- Classic myths and stories from around the world;
- America's Founding Documents;
- Foundational American literature: and
- Shakespeare.

The remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to state and local determination. In addition to content coverage, the Common Core State Standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In Mathematics, the Common Core State Standards lay a solid foundation in:

- whole numbers;
- addition;
- subtraction;
- multiplication;
- division:

- fractions; and
- decimals.

Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.

How complex are the texts suggested by the English language arts standards?

The Common Core State Standards create a staircase of increasing text complexity, so that students are expected to both develop their skills and apply them to more and more complex texts. For example, the English language arts standards suggest "Grapes of Wrath" as a text that would be appropriate for 9th or 10th grade readers. For more information, please see Appendix A and the Supplement to Appendix A.

Do the English language arts standards include a reading list or any other reference to content?

The Common Core State Standards include sample texts that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for the grade level and compatible with the learning demands set out in the standards. The exemplars of high quality texts at each grade level provide a rich set of possibilities and have been very well received. This ensures teachers have the flexibility to make their own decisions about what texts to use, while providing an excellent reference point when selecting their texts.

What type of texts are recommended for the English language arts standards?

The Common Core State Standards require certain critical content for all students. In addition to content coverage, the standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. English teachers will still teach their students literature as well as literary non-fiction. However, because college and career readiness overwhelming focuses on complex texts outside of literature, these standards also ensure students are being prepared to read, write, and research across the curriculum, including in history and science.

Do the math standards cover all the key math topics in the proper sequence?

The mathematical progressions presented in the Common Core State Standards are coherent and based on evidence. Part of the problem with having 50 different sets of state standards is that different states cover different topics at different grade levels. Coming to consensus guarantees that from the viewpoint of any given state, topics will move up or down in the grade level sequence. This is unavoidable. What is important to keep in mind is that the progression in the Common Core State Standards is mathematically coherent and leads to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.