

Growing readers!

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How Parents Can Support the Common Core Reading Standards

The Common Core State Standards are national standards that say what K-12 students are expected to learn in math and the English language arts. For older students, the standards expand to include literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

Despite the complexities of the standards, there are several basic ways parents can support their child's learning. The recommendations below line up with the four broad areas of the Common Core reading standards: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, and Range and Level of Complexity.

Key Ideas and Details

What it means: Your child will be encouraged to carefully read many books and texts. Within these texts, your child will be working to understand what is happening, summarize key events or points and recall details important to the story or topic.

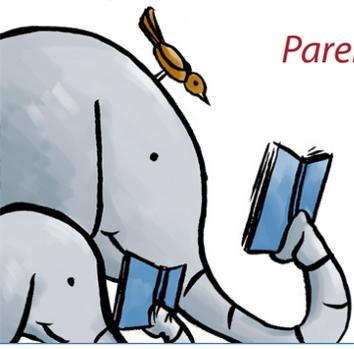
How parents can help: After you share a story, talk about important story elements such as beginning, middle and end. Encourage your child to retell or summarize the reading. After reading nonfiction, ask questions about the information, "Is the spider an insect? How is a spider different than an insect?"

Craft and Structure

What it means: The standards within this area (or "strand") focus on specifics within a book, for example, an author's specific word choices or phrases. A second emphasis relates to understanding the underlying structure of common types of texts, including storybooks, poems and more.

How parents can help: During and after reading, call attention to interesting words and phrases. This may include repeated phrases, metaphors or idioms ("sick as a dog," "a dime a dozen.") Talk about any new vocabulary and other ways the author used language or words to make the text interesting, informative, funny or sad.

(Continued on page 2)



Parent tips for raising strong readers and writers

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Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

What it means: Within this strand, students will be working to compare and contrast details from stories, describe key ideas using details in informational text, and tell how two texts on the same topic differ.

How parents can help: For younger students, encourage your child to describe how the illustrations within a book support the story. For older students, have fun reading different versions of the same fairy or folk tale. Talk about the similarities and differences between the two books. Then switch to nonfiction and read two books on the same topic. Compare the information in each, again focusing on similarities and differences. “Let’s look at each book and think about the words used to describe weather. How are the descriptions alike? How are they different?”

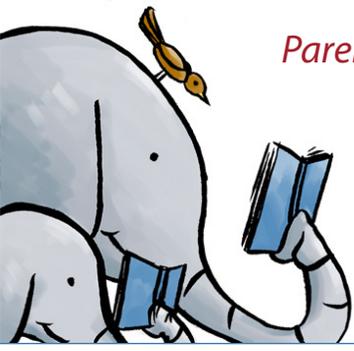
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

What it means: Teachers will be using a variety of techniques to introduce a range of books and other written material that both support and challenge a child’s reading level. This may include nonfiction and fiction, infographics, poetry and more. This will be done with the ultimate goal of making sure students understand what they’re reading.

How parents can help: Parents can help promote their child’s skill while developing their reading stamina (ability to “stick with it”). This means helping them avoid frustration or anxiety about tackling a harder book. Support your reader by talking through some of the things that make a text complex, including multiple levels of meaning, inferred information (implied rather than clearly stated) or more sophisticated graphics.

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Preparing 21st Century Learners

Today's young learner will grow up in world much different from the one her parents grew up in. Our interconnected and digital world demands a lot of our learners. Reading skill remains as important as ever, but other critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are equally as important.

What can families do to prepare 21st century learners? While not an exhaustive list, here are six suggestions to get you started:

1. **Ask your library's media specialist for help** finding interesting and engaging information books. Include nonfiction texts in your stack each time you go to the library. Sharing information books with your young child helps foster a sense of learning from a very young age.
2. **Share interesting vocabulary** from the information books you're reading. Spend time on individual words, and also share your excitement about words specific to a particular subject of study. Discuss words that have multiple or complex meanings. Discuss those words and how they add to what the writer is saying.
3. **Support your child's reading** by encouraging him to work through books that may initially seem too difficult. Read and reread the books together, taking time to talk about the key details from the text. Ask "why" and "how" questions that encourage your child to analyze the text.
4. **Use book illustrations, pictures, and graphics** to help guide your discussions. Work together to identify what person, place, thing, or idea a picture or diagram shows. Learning to "read" graphics is a skill that will be used throughout a person's life.
5. **Ask your child, "Is there more you would like to know more about?"** Then begin to look for more resources from the library or online. Learning to integrate information on a topic from multiple sources is an important skill.
6. **Continue to write together.** Get creative about setting a purpose for writing time. This may include writing book, movie or recipe reviews. Imagine the fun your child will have writing reviews for meals! As you write, encourage your child to use as many specific terms and vocabulary as possible.

Preparing today's learners for tomorrow's world is a journey filled with reading, writing, reflection, and evaluation. These five suggestions will set you off on the right path!



A Summary of Core Components

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To achieve the goal that all students leave high school ready for college and career, Smarter Balanced is committed to ensuring that assessment and instruction embody the CCSS and that all students, regardless of disability, language or subgroup status, have the opportunity to learn this valued content and to show what they know and can do.

With strong support from participating states, institutions of higher education and industry, Smarter Balanced will develop a balanced set of measures and tools, each designed to serve specific purposes. Together, these components will provide student data throughout the academic year that will inform instruction, guide interventions, help target professional development and ensure an accurate measure of each student's progress toward career- and college-readiness.

The core components of Smarter Balanced are:

Summative assessments:

- ▶ Mandatory comprehensive accountability measures that include computer adaptive assessments and performance tasks, administered in the last 12 weeks of the school year in grades 3–8 and 11 for English language arts(ELA)/literacy and mathematics;
- ▶ Designed to provide valid, reliable and fair measures of students' progress toward and attainment of the knowledge and skills required to be college- and career-ready;
- ▶ Capitalize on the strengths of computer adaptive testing (e.g. efficient and precise measurement across the full range of achievement and quick turnaround of results); and,
- ▶ Produce composite content area scores, based on the computer adaptive items and performance tasks.

Interim assessments:

- ▶ Optional comprehensive and content-cluster measures that include computer adaptive assessments and performance tasks, administered at locally determined intervals throughout the school year;
- ▶ Results reported on the same scale as the summative assessment to provide information about how students are progressing;
- ▶ Serve as the source for interpretive guides that use publicly released items and tasks;
- ▶ Grounded in cognitive development theory about how learning progresses across grades and how college- and career-readiness emerge over time;
- ▶ Involve a large teacher role in developing and scoring constructed response items and performance tasks;
- ▶ Afford teachers and administrators the flexibility to:
 - select item sets that provide deep, focused measurement of specific content clusters embedded in the CCSS;
 - administer these assessments at strategic points in the instructional year;

- use results to better understand students' strengths and limitations in relation to the standards;
- support state-level accountability systems using end-of-course assessments.

Formative tools and processes:

- ▶ Provides resources for teachers on how to collect and use information about student success in acquisition of the CCSS;
- ▶ Will be used by teachers throughout the year to better understand a student's learning needs, check for misconceptions and/or to provide evidence of progress toward learning goals.

System Features

- ▶ Ensures coverage of the full range of ELA/literacy and mathematics standards and breadth of achievement levels by combining a variety of item types (e.g., selected-response, constructed response, and technology-enhanced) and performance tasks, which require application of knowledge and skills.
- ▶ Provides comprehensive, research-based support, technical assistance and professional development so that teachers can use assessment data to improve teaching and learning in line with the standards.
- ▶ Provides online, tailored reports that link to instructional and professional development resources.

LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Visit SmarterBalanced.org to learn more about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and sign-up to receive our monthly eNewsletter. For more information, please contact Info@SmarterBalanced.org.