

Language: (L)

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language

The grades 6–12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Note on range and content of student language use

To be college and career ready in language, students must have firm control over the conventions of standard English. At the same time, they must come to appreciate that language is as at least as much a matter of craft as of rules and be able to choose words, syntax, and punctuation to express themselves and achieve particular functions and rhetorical effects. They must also have extensive vocabularies, built through reading and study, enabling them to comprehend complex texts and engage in purposeful writing about and conversations around content. They need to become skilled in determining or clarifying the meaning of words and phrases they encounter, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies to aid them. They must learn to see an individual word as part of a network of other words—words, for example, that have similar denotations but different connotations. The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from such contexts.

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Grade 8 students:

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
 - a. Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
 - b. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
 - c. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
 - d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.*

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - a. Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
 - b. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
 - c. Spell correctly.

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
 - a. Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).

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Grade 8 students:

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
 - a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *precede*, *recede*, *secede*).
 - c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
 - d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
 - a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.
 - b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
 - c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *bullheaded*, *willful*, *firm*, *persistent*, *resolute*).

6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

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Texts Illustrating the Complexity, Quality, and Range of Student Reading 6–12

	Literature: Stories, Dramas, Poetry	Informational Texts: Literary Nonfiction
6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Little Women</i> by Louisa May Alcott (1869) ▪ <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> by Mark Twain (1876) ▪ “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost (1915) ▪ <i>The Dark Is Rising</i> by Susan Cooper (1973) ▪ <i>Dragonwings</i> by Laurence Yep (1975) ▪ <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> by Mildred Taylor (1976) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Letter on Thomas Jefferson” by John Adams (1776) ▪ <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i> by Frederick Douglass (1845) ▪ “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Address to Parliament on May 13th, 1940” by Winston Churchill (1940) ▪ <i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i> by Ann Petry (1955) ▪ <i>Travels with Charley: In Search of America</i> by John Steinbeck (1962)
9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Tragedy of Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare (1592) ▪ “Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1817) ▪ “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe (1845) ▪ “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry (1906) ▪ <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> by John Steinbeck (1939) ▪ <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> by Ray Bradbury (1953) ▪ <i>The Killer Angels</i> by Michael Shaara (1975) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Speech to the Second Virginia Convention” by Patrick Henry (1775) ▪ “Farewell Address” by George Washington (1796) ▪ “Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln (1863) ▪ “State of the Union Address” by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1941) ▪ “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1964) ▪ “Hope, Despair and Memory” by Elie Wiesel (1997)
11–CCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Ode on a Grecian Urn” by John Keats (1820) ▪ <i>Jane Eyre</i> by Charlotte Brontë (1848) ▪ “Because I Could Not Stop for Death” by Emily Dickinson (1890) ▪ <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925) ▪ <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Zora Neale Hurston (1937) ▪ <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry (1959) ▪ <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Common Sense</i> by Thomas Paine (1776) ▪ <i>Walden</i> by Henry David Thoreau (1854) ▪ “Society and Solitude” by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1857) ▪ “The Fallacy of Success” by G. K. Chesterton (1909) ▪ <i>Black Boy</i> by Richard Wright (1945) ▪ “Politics and the English Language” by George Orwell (1946) ▪ “Take the Tortillas Out of Your Poetry” by Rudolfo Anaya (1995)

Note: Given space limitations, the illustrative texts listed above are meant only to show individual titles that are representative of a range of topics and genres. (See Appendix B for excerpts of these and other texts illustrative of grades 6–12 text complexity, quality, and range.) At a curricular or instructional level, within and across grade levels, texts need to be selected around topics or themes that generate knowledge and allow students to study those topics or themes in depth.