

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.

Language Standards 6-12

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The CCR anchor standards and high school grade-specific standards work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity.

| Grades 9–10 students: | Grades 11–12 students: |
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| Conventions of Standard English | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.<ol style="list-style-type: none">Use parallel structure.*Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.<ol style="list-style-type: none">Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.Spell correctly. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.<ol style="list-style-type: none">Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., <i>Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage</i>, <i>Garner's Modern American Usage</i>) as needed.Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.<ol style="list-style-type: none">Observe hyphenation conventions.Spell correctly. |
| Knowledge of Language | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">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.<ol style="list-style-type: none">Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (e.g., <i>MLA Handbook</i>, <i>Turabian's Manual for Writers</i>) appropriate for the discipline and writing type. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">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.<ol style="list-style-type: none">Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's <i>Artful Sentences</i>) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading. |

Language Standards 6-12

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Grades 9-10 students:

Grades 11-12 students:

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

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| <p>4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9-10 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy</i>).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, its part of speech, or its etymology.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). | <p>4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11-12 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>conceive, conception, conceivable</i>).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, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.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). |
| <p>5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations. | <p>5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations. |
| <p>6. Acquire and use accurately 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.</p> | <p>6. Acquire and use accurately 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.</p> |

Language Progressive Skills, by Grade

The following skills, marked with an asterisk (*) in Language standards 1–3, are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking.

| Standard | Grade(s) | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|---|------|-------|
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9–10 | 11–12 |
| L.3.1f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement. | | | | | | | | |
| L.3.3a. Choose words and phrases for effect. | | | | | | | | |
| L.4.1f. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons. | | | | | | | | |
| L.4.1g. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to/too/two</i> ; <i>there/their</i>). | | | | | | | | |
| L.4.3a. Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.* | | | | | | | | |
| L.4.3b. Choose punctuation for effect. | | | | | | | | |
| L.5.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense. | | | | | | | | |
| L.5.2a. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.† | | | | | | | | |
| L.6.1c. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. | | | | | | | | |
| L.6.1d. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents). | | | | | | | | |
| L.6.1e. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language. | | | | | | | | |
| L.6.2a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. | | | | | | | | |
| L.6.3a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.‡ | | | | | | | | |
| L.6.3b. Maintain consistency in style and tone. | | | | | | | | |
| L.7.1c. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers. | | | | | | | | |
| L.7.3a. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy. | | | | | | | | |
| L.8.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood. | | | | | | | | |
| L.9–10.1a. Use parallel structure. | | | | | | | | |

* Subsumed by L.7.3a

† Subsumed by L.9–10.1a

‡ Subsumed by L.11–12.3a