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Florida Common Core English Language Arts Standards Raise the Bar

Florida adopted the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Math in 2010. Aimed at ensuring that graduates of Florida high schools are fully prepared for college and a career, these standards are more rigorous for students than most states' past standards. Common Core State Standards are targeted at the most important skills and knowledge that students need to know, so they are streamlined and clearer. Because there are fewer standards teachers can get to the heart of what matters for students to be successful.

Whether in college or at work, you have to be able to communicate effectively. In addition to reading great works of literature, the Common Core English Language Arts standards emphasize reading informational text (a biology textbook) and literary non-fiction (e.g. *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* by Ann Petry). It is critical for both college and the workplace that students be able to deeply understand what they've read and write and speak about it clearly. But these standards also ensure that students read stories and great works of literature. A key difference between the old state standards and Common Core is that students are expected to read high quality and more challenging books in earlier grades than before.

Just as important, the literacy standards aren't just for ELA classes—they are designed to make reading comprehension and effective writing a part of history, social studies, science, career-technical education and other content areas.

The ultimate goal is for students to apply these skills to increasingly challenging texts as they progress through K-12 and into colleges, universities and the workplace. Below are a few examples of how the Florida Common Core ELA standards raise the bar for Florida students.

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Comparison of Current Florida Standards to Common Core ELA/Literacy Standards		
THEN - The current Florida standards require students to:	NOW - The Common Core Standards require students to:	Communication for the General Public
Identify the letter-sound correspondences for MOST letters.	Identify the letter-sound correspondences for ALL letters of the alphabet, including both long and short vowel sounds for a, e, i, o, and u.	The current standards require students to identify the letter sounds for MOST letters of the alphabet. The Common Core will require kindergarten students to identify the letter sounds for ALL letters of the alphabet, including both long and short vowel sounds for a, e, i, o, and u.

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Read simple words (e.g. cat, sit, man, pit, etc.) in isolation and in text.	Read text consisting of short sentences comprised of simple words (e.g. cat, sit, man, pit, etc.) and high frequency words (e.g. the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does) with purpose and understanding.	The current standards require students to read simple words in a list and in text. The Common Core will require kindergarten students to read text consisting of short sentences made up of simple words (e.g. cat, sit, man, pit, etc.) and frequently used words (e.g. the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does) with purpose and understanding.
Retell the main events (e.g., beginning, middle, end) of a story, and describe the characters and the setting.	In addition to the previous standards' expectations, the Common Core goes a step further requiring students to compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.	The current standards require students to be able to retell a story, and describe the characters and the setting of the story. The Common Core goes a step further requiring students to compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
Identify the purpose of informational text and retell important facts from a text heard or read.	In addition to the previous standards' expectations, the Common Core goes a step further requiring students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text, and Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures). 	The current standards require students to be able to identify the purpose of informational text and retell important facts from the text heard or read. The Common Core goes a step further requiring students to: Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text. Common Core also require students to be able to identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).

Grade 8 Comparison of Current Florida Standards to Common Core Standards		
THEN - The current Florida standards require students to:	NOW - The Common Core Standards require students to:	Communication for the General Public
The student will analyze and evaluate similar themes or topics by different authors across a variety of fiction and nonfiction selections.	Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.	In the current standards, students are required to read similar topics by different authors, but are not required to look for anything in particular. In Common Core, students are required to identify where the authors' information differs from one another, and determine whether the differences are facts or author interpretation.
The student will edit for correct use of the eight parts of speech (noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, interjection), regular and irregular verbs, and pronoun agreement.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, 	In the current standards, students are required to use verbs correctly in a sentence, but are not told specifically what to look for and change; the standard is vague. In Common Core, students are given specific tasks relating to different types of verbs, ways of using verbs, and how to use other words that relate to verbs.

- interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
- d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

Grade 9-10
Comparison of Current Florida Standards to Common Core Standards

THEN - The current Florida standards require students to:	NOW - The Common Core Standards require students to:	Communication for the General Public
<p>The student will write essays that state a position or claim, present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning to support effective arguments and emotional appeals, and acknowledge and refute opposing arguments.</p>	<p>Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns. c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. 	<p>The current standards require students to write a persuasive essay and use evidence to support the claim, but are vague regarding how to support the claim and how to tie the entire paper together. The Common Core will require students to organize their paper in a specific format, explain how to develop evidence for and against their argument, and how to give an objective perspective to the paper. Lastly, the Common Core will require students to use an appropriate style for the audience and require students to tie everything together in a logical, smooth way.</p>

The Common Core standards have increased expectations of students through the type of texts that are expected to be read at particular grade levels. The table below presents an example of the increased expectations on the types of texts that students should be able to read at each grade level.

More Difficult Text Reading
***Sarah, Plain and Tall* is a story that was typically read at the fourth grade level; the Common Core expect second and third grade students to be able to read this story with deep understanding.**

***Casey at the Bat*, a popular children’s poem, is typically read in middle school, but will now be read in upper elementary levels.**

The “*Letter on Thomas Jefferson*”, typically read at the high school level, will now be read at the middle school level.

***A Doll’s House* is a play that was typically read in eleventh or twelfth grade, will be read in ninth or tenth.**