

Introduction to  
Tennessee's State Standards for  
English Language Arts  
&  
Literacy in History/Social Studies,  
Science, and Technical Subjects



## Key Design Considerations

### CCR and grade-specific standards

The CCR standards anchor the document and define general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met for students to be prepared to enter college and workforce training programs ready to succeed. The K-12 grade-specific standards define end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression designed to enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school. The CCR and high school (grades 9-12) standards work in tandem to define the college and career readiness line—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity. Hence, both should be considered when developing college and career readiness assessments.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards, retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades, and work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the CCR standards.

### Grade levels for K-8; grade bands for 9-10 and 11-12

The Standards use individual grade levels in kindergarten through grade 8 to provide useful specificity; the Standards use two-year bands in grades 9-12 to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design.

### A focus on results rather than means

By emphasizing required achievements, the Standards leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed. Thus, the Standards do not mandate such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning. Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards.

### An integrated model of literacy

Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout this document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.

### Research and media skills blended into the Standards as a whole

To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today's curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understandings are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section.

### Shared responsibility for students' literacy development

The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school. The K-5 standards include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects, including but not limited to ELA. The grades 6-12 standards are divided into two sections, one for ELA and the other for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. This division reflects the unique, time-honored place of ELA teachers in developing students' literacy skills while at the same time recognizing that teachers in other areas must have a role in this development as well.

Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K-12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding.

The Standards are not alone in calling for a special emphasis on informational text. The 2009 reading framework of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) requires a high and increasing proportion of informational text on its assessment as students advance through the grades.

**Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages by Grade in the 2009 NAEP Reading Framework**

Grade	Literary	Informational
4	50%	50%
8	45%	55%
12	30%	70%

Source: National Assessment Governing Board. (2008). *Reading framework for the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

The Standards aim to align instruction with this framework so that many more students than at present can meet the requirements of college and career readiness. In K-5, the Standards follow NAEP's lead in balancing the reading of literature with the reading of informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. In accord with NAEP's growing emphasis on informational texts in the higher grades, the Standards demand that a significant amount of reading of informational texts take place in and outside the ELA classroom. Fulfilling the Standards for 6-12 ELA requires much greater attention to a specific category of informational text—literary nonfiction—than has been traditional. Because the ELA classroom must focus on literature (stories, drama, and poetry) as well as literary nonfiction, a great deal of informational reading in grades 6-12 must take place in other classes if the NAEP assessment framework is to be matched instructionally.<sup>1</sup> To measure students' growth toward college and career readiness, assessments aligned with the Standards should adhere to the distribution of texts across grades cited in the NAEP framework.

NAEP likewise outlines a distribution across the grades of the core purposes and types of student writing. The 2011 NAEP framework, like the Standards, cultivates the development of three mutually reinforcing writing capacities: writing to persuade, to explain, and to convey real or imagined experience. Evidence concerning the demands of college and career readiness gathered during development of the Standards concurs with NAEP's shifting emphases: standards for grades 9-12 describe writing in all three forms, but, consistent with NAEP, the overwhelming focus of writing throughout high school should be on arguments and informative/explanatory texts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The percentages on the table reflect the sum of student reading, not just reading in ELA settings. Teachers of senior English classes, for example, are not required to devote 70 percent of reading to informational texts. Rather, 70 percent of student reading across the grade should be informational.

<sup>2</sup>As with reading, the percentages in the table reflect the sum of student writing, not just writing in ELA settings.

**Distribution of Communicative Purposes by Grade in the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework**

Grade	To Persuade	To Explain	To Convey Experience
4	30%	35%	35%
8	35%	35%	30%
12	40%	40%	20%

Source: National Assessment Governing Board. (2007). *Writing framework for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress, pre-publication edition*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc.

It follows that writing assessments aligned with the Standards should adhere to the distribution of writing purposes across grades outlined by NAEP.

**Focus and coherence in instruction and assessment**

While the Standards delineate specific expectations in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, each standard need not be a separate focus for instruction and assessment. Often, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task. For example, when editing writing, students address Writing standard 5 (“Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach”) as well as Language standards 1-3 (which deal with conventions of standard English and knowledge of language). When drawing evidence from literary and informational texts per Writing standard 9, students are also demonstrating their comprehension skill in relation to specific standards in Reading. When discussing something they have read or written, students are also demonstrating their speaking and listening skills. The CCR anchor standards themselves provide another source of focus and coherence.

The same ten CCR anchor standards for Reading apply to both literary and informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. The ten CCR anchor standards for Writing cover numerous text types and subject areas. This means that students can develop mutually reinforcing skills and exhibit mastery of standards for reading and writing across a range of texts and classrooms.

## What is Not Covered by the Standards

The Standards should be recognized for what they are not as well as what they are. The most important intentional design limitations are as follows:

1. The Standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. For instance, the use of play with young children is not specified by the Standards, but it is welcome as a valuable activity in its own right and as a way to help students meet the expectations in this document. Furthermore, while the Standards make references to some particular forms of content, including mythology, foundational U.S. documents, and Shakespeare, they do not—indeed, cannot—enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn. The Standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum consistent with the expectations laid out in this document.
2. While the Standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers. The aim of the Standards is to articulate the fundamentals, not to set out an exhaustive list or a set of restrictions that limits what can be taught beyond what is specified herein.
3. The Standards do not define the nature of advanced work for students who meet the Standards prior to the end of high school. For those students, advanced work in such areas as literature, composition, language, and journalism should be available. This work should provide the next logical step up from the college and career readiness baseline established here.
4. The Standards set grade-specific standards but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations. No set of grade-specific standards can fully reflect the great variety in abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in any given classroom. However, the Standards do provide clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students.

5. It is also beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English language learners and for students with special needs. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-high school lives.

Each grade will include students who are still acquiring English. For those students, it is possible to meet the standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening without displaying native-like control of conventions and vocabulary.

The Standards should also be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset and as permitting appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students with special education needs. For example, for students with disabilities *reading* should allow for the use of Braille, screen-reader technology, or other assistive devices, while *writing* should include the use of a scribe, computer, or speech-to-text technology. In a similar vein, *speaking* and *listening* should be interpreted broadly to include sign language.

6. While the ELA and content area literacy components described herein are critical to college and career readiness, they do not define the whole of such readiness. Students require a wide-ranging, rigorous academic preparation and, particularly in the early grades, attention to such matters as social, emotional, and physical development and approaches to learning. Similarly, the Standards define literacy expectations in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, but literacy standards in other areas, such as mathematics and health education, modeled on those in this document are strongly encouraged to facilitate a comprehensive, schoolwide literacy program.

## **Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language**

The descriptions that follow are not standards themselves but instead offer a portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual.

### **They demonstrate independence.**

Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker's key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. They build on others' ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood. Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.

### **They build strong content knowledge.**

Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.

### **They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.**

Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. They set and adjust purpose for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use as warranted by the task. They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition of an audience should affect tone when speaking and how the connotations of words affect meaning. They also know that different disciplines call for different types of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence in history, experimental evidence in science).

### **They comprehend as well as critique.**

Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author's or speaker's assumptions and premises and assess the veracity of claims and the soundness of reasoning.

### **They value evidence.**

Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others' use of evidence.

### **They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.**

Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.

### **They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.**

Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

## 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.								

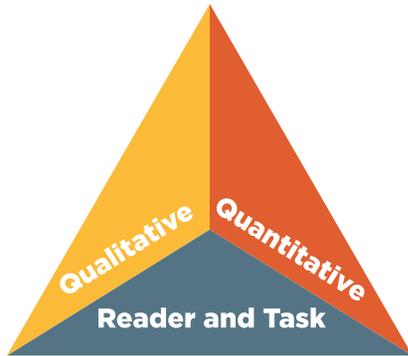
\*Subsumed by L.7.3a

†Subsumed by L.9-10.1a

‡Subsumed by L.11-12.3a

## Standard 10: Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading K-5

### Measuring Text Complexity: Three Factors



**Qualitative evaluation of the text:** Levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands

**Quantitative evaluation of the text:** Readability measures and other scores of text complexity

**Matching reader to text and task:** Reader variables (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and task variables (such as purpose and the complexity generated by the task assigned and the questions posed)

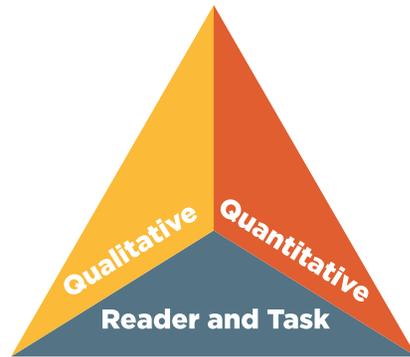
### Range of Text Types for K-5

Students in K-5 apply the Reading standards to the following range of text types, with texts selected from a broad range of cultures and periods.

Literature			Informational Text
<b>Stories</b>	<b>Dramas</b>	<b>Poetry</b>	<b>Literary Nonfiction and Historical, Scientific, and Technical Texts</b>
Includes children's adventure stories, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth	Includes staged dialogue and brief familiar scenes	Includes nursery rhymes and the subgenres of the narrative poem, limerick, and free verse poem	Includes biographies and autobiographies; books about history, social studies, science, and the arts; technical texts, including directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps; and digital sources on a range of topics

## Standard 10: Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading 6-12

### Measuring Text Complexity: Three Factors



**Qualitative evaluation of the text:** Levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands

**Quantitative evaluation of the text:** Readability measures and other scores of text complexity

**Matching reader to text and task:** Reader variables (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and task variables (such as purpose and the complexity generated by the task assigned and the questions posed)

**Note:** More detailed information on text complexity and how it is measured is contained in Appendix A.

### Range of Text Types for 6-12

Students in grades 6-12 apply the Reading standards to the following range of text types, with texts selected from a broad range of cultures and periods.

Literature		Informational Text	
<b>Stories</b>	<b>Drama</b>	<b>Poetry</b>	<b>Literary Nonfiction</b>
Includes the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels	Includes one-act and multi-act plays, both in written form and on film	Includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics	Includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience

\* Read-aloud  
 \*\* Read-along

## Texts Illustrating the Complexity, Quality, and Range of Student Reading K-5

	Literature: Stories, Drama, Poetry	Informational Texts: Literary Nonfiction and Historical, Scientific, and Technical Texts
<b>K*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Over in the Meadow</i> by John Langstaff (traditional) (c1800)*</li> <li>▪ <i>A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog</i> by Mercer Mayer (1967)</li> <li>▪ <i>Pancakes for Breakfast</i> by Tomie DePaola (1978)</li> <li>▪ <i>A Story, A Story</i> by Gail E. Haley (1970)*</li> <li>▪ <i>Kitten's First Full Moon</i> by Kevin Henkes (2004)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>My Five Senses</i> by Ailiki (1962)**</li> <li>▪ <i>Truck</i> by Donald Crews (1980)</li> <li>▪ <i>I Read Signs</i> by Tana Hoban (1987)</li> <li>▪ <i>What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?</i> by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page (2003)*</li> <li>▪ <i>Amazing Whales!</i> by Sarah L. Thomson (2005)*</li> </ul>
<b>1*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Mix a Pancake" by Christina G. Rossetti (1893)**</li> <li>▪ <i>Mr. Popper's Penguins</i> by Richard Atwater (1938)*</li> <li>▪ <i>Little Bear</i> by Else Holmelund Minarik, illustrated by Maurice Sendak (1957)**</li> <li>▪ <i>Frog and Toad Together</i> by Arnold Lobel (1971)**</li> <li>▪ <i>Hi! Fly Guy</i> by Tedd Arnold (2006)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>A Tree Is a Plant</i> by Clyde Robert Bulla, illustrated by Stacey Schuett (1960)**</li> <li>▪ <i>Starfish</i> by Edith Thacher Hurd (1962)</li> <li>▪ <i>Follow the Water from Brook to Ocean</i> by Arthur Dorros (1991)**</li> <li>▪ <i>From Seed to Pumpkin</i> by Wendy Pfeffer, illustrated by James Graham Hale (2004)*</li> <li>▪ <i>How People Learned to Fly</i> by Fran Hodgkins and True Kelley (2007)*</li> </ul>
<b>2-3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Who Has Seen the Wind?" by Christina G. Rossetti (1893)</li> <li>▪ <i>Charlotte's Web</i> by E. B. White (1952)*</li> <li>▪ <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> by Patricia MacLachlan (1985)</li> <li>▪ <i>Tops and Bottoms</i> by Janet Stevens (1995)</li> <li>▪ <i>Poppleton in Winter</i> by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Mark Teague (2001)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>A Medieval Feast</i> by Ailiki (1983)</li> <li>▪ <i>From Seed to Plant</i> by Gail Gibbons (1991)</li> <li>▪ <i>The Story of Ruby Bridges</i> by Robert Coles (1995)*</li> <li>▪ <i>A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder</i> by Walter Wick (1997)</li> <li>▪ <i>Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11</i> by Brian Floca (2009)</li> </ul>
<b>4-5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll (1865)</li> <li>▪ "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer (1888)</li> <li>▪ <i>The Black Stallion</i> by Walter Farley (1941)</li> <li>▪ "Zlateh the Goat" by Isaac Bashevis Singer (1984)</li> <li>▪ <i>Where the Mountain Meets the Moon</i> by Grace Lin (2009)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet</i> by Melvin Berger (1992)</li> <li>▪ <i>Hurricanes: Earth's Mightiest Storms</i> by Patricia Lauber (1996)</li> <li>▪ <i>A History of US</i> by Joy Hakim (2005)</li> <li>▪ <i>Horses</i> by Seymour Simon (2006)</li> <li>▪ <i>Quest for the Tree Kangaroo: An Expedition to the Cloud Forest of New Guinea</i> by Sy Montgomery (2006)</li> </ul>

\*Children at the kindergarten and grade 1 levels should be expected to read texts independently that have been specifically written to correlate to their reading level and their word knowledge. Many of the titles listed above are meant to supplement carefully structured independent reading with books to read along with a teacher or that are read aloud to students to build knowledge and cultivate a joy in reading.

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

**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.

## Staying on Topic Within a Grade and Across Grades: How to Build Knowledge Systematically in English Language Arts K-5

Building knowledge systematically in English language arts is like giving children various pieces of a puzzle in each grade that, over time, will form one big picture. At a curricular or instructional level, texts—within and across grade levels—need to be selected around topics or themes that systematically develop the knowledge base of students. Within a grade level, there should be an adequate number of titles on a single topic that would allow children to study that topic for a sustained period. The knowledge children have learned about particular topics in early grade levels should then be expanded and developed in subsequent grade levels to ensure an increasingly deeper understanding of these topics. Children in the upper elementary grades will generally be expected to read these texts independently and reflect on them in writing. However, children in the early grades (particularly K-2) should participate in rich, structured conversations with an adult in response to the written texts that are read aloud, orally comparing and contrasting as well as analyzing and synthesizing, in the manner called for by the *Standards*.

Preparation for reading complex informational texts should begin at the very earliest elementary school grades. What follows is one example that uses domain-specific nonfiction titles across grade levels to illustrate how curriculum designers and classroom teachers can infuse the English language arts block with rich, age-appropriate content knowledge and vocabulary in history/social studies, science, and the arts. Having students listen to informational read-alouds in the early grades helps lay the necessary foundation for students' reading and understanding of increasingly complex texts on their own in subsequent grades.

Exemplar Texts on a Topic Across Grades	K	1	2-3	4-5
<p><b>The Human Body</b></p> <p>Students can begin learning about the human body starting in kindergarten and then review and extend their learning during each subsequent grade.</p>	<p><b>The five senses and associated body parts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My Five Senses</i> by Ailiki (1989)</li> <li>• <i>Hearing</i> by Maria Rius (1985)</li> <li>• <i>Sight</i> by Maria Rius (1985)</li> <li>• <i>Smell</i> by Maria Rius (1985)</li> <li>• <i>Taste</i> by Maria Rius (1985)</li> <li>• <i>Touch</i> by Maria Rius (1985)</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking care of your body: Overview (hygiene, diet, exercise, rest)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My Amazing Body: A First Look at Health &amp; Fitness</i> by Pat Thomas (2001)</li> <li>• <i>Get Up and Go!</i> by Nancy Carlson (2008)</li> <li>• <i>Go Wash Up</i> by Doering Tourville (2008)</li> <li>• <i>Sleep</i> by Paul Showers (1997)</li> <li>• <i>Fuel the Body</i> by Doering Tourville (2008)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Introduction to the systems of the human body and associated body parts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Under Your Skin: Your Amazing Body</i> by Mick Manning (2007)</li> <li>• <i>Me and My Amazing Body</i> by Joan Sweeney (1999)</li> <li>• <i>The Human Body</i> by Gallimard Jeunesse (2007)</li> <li>• <i>The Busy Body Book</i> by Lizzy Rockwell (2008)</li> <li>• <i>First Encyclopedia of the Human Body</i> by Fiona Chandler (2004)</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking care of your body: Germs, diseases, and preventing illness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Germs Make Me Sick</i> by Marilyn Berger (1995)</li> <li>• <i>Tiny Life on Your Body</i> by Christine Taylor-Butler (2005)</li> <li>• <i>Germ Stories</i> by Arthur Kornberg (2007)</li> <li>• <i>All About Scabs</i> by GenichiroYagu (1998)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Digestive and excretory systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What Happens to a Hamburger</i> by Paul Showers (1985)</li> <li>• <i>The Digestive System</i> by Christine Taylor-Butler (2008)</li> <li>• <i>The Digestive System</i> by Rebecca L. Johnson (2006)</li> <li>• <i>The Digestive System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007)</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking care of your body: Healthy eating and nutrition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Good Enough to Eat</i> by Lizzy Rockwell (1999)</li> <li>• <i>Showdown at the Food Pyramid</i> by Rex Barron (2004)</li> </ul> <p><b>Muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Mighty Muscular and Skeletal Systems</i> Crabtree Publishing (2009)</li> <li>• <i>Muscles</i> by Seymour Simon (1998)</li> <li>• <i>Bones</i> by Seymour Simon (1998)</li> <li>• <i>The Astounding Nervous System</i> Crabtree Publishing (2009)</li> <li>• <i>The Nervous System</i> by Joelle Riley (2004)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Circulatory system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Heart</i> by Seymour Simon (2006)</li> <li>• <i>The Heart and Circulation</i> by Carol Ballard (2005)</li> <li>• <i>The Circulatory System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007)</li> <li>• <i>The Amazing Circulatory System</i> by John Burstein (2009)</li> </ul> <p><b>Respiratory system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Lungs</i> by Seymour Simon (2007)</li> <li>• <i>The Respiratory System</i> by Susan Glass (2004)</li> <li>• <i>The Respiratory System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007)</li> <li>• <i>The Remarkable Respiratory System</i> by John Burstein (2009)</li> </ul> <p><b>Endocrine system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Endocrine System</i> by Rebecca Olien (2006)</li> <li>• <i>The Exciting Endocrine System</i> by John Burstein (2009)</li> </ul>