



# Arizona's Common Core Standards

## General Overview of Arizona's Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

Unlike past generations, teachers today must prepare students for a world of possibilities that may not currently exist. The workforce of tomorrow must be flexible, motivated, and be able to draw from a deep and vast skill set. The ability to effectively communicate, collaborate, and adapt to situations will be critical to ensuring competition in a global market. By setting high expectations with a commitment to succeed with all students, we are positioning our future workforce to be internationally competitive.

## Arizona's Common Core Standards - English Language Arts (ELA)

**Arizona's Common Core Standards** are the result of a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to meet the needs of our future workforce. Governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia were committed to developing a common core of state standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. In 2010, Arizona adopted Arizona's Common Core Standards to ensure a more seamless education especially for those students who move around Arizona and move across the 46 states.

Arizona's Common Core Standards in English Language Arts are

- research and evidence based,
- aligned with college and work expectations,
- rigorous, and
- Internationally benchmarked.

These standards are written to show a K-12 progression of skills for reading, writing, listening, speaking and the use of language effectively in a variety of content areas. The standards are not only for English language arts but also for literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

## Common Core Shifts for English Language Arts/Literacy

In order for students to be successful, educators must effectively implement the new changes to the standards. There are six (6) shifts associated with Arizona's Common Core Standards in English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

1. **Balancing Informational and Literary Text**— Emphasis on informational text; historically, particularly in English/Language Arts, students have spent a majority of time reading literature. Students should read 50/50 informational and literature. Students should build knowledge through the reading of text.
2. **Building Knowledge in the Disciplines**— Students need to be reading in ALL content areas, and building a body of knowledge in each subject area. Students should be exposed to grade level text and be expected to learn from what they read.

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3. **Staircase of Complexity**— Students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered. Teachers take time for close, careful reading of text focusing on the particular over the general. Students should read more complex text over time.
4. **Text-based Answers**— Instruction and conversation centered around a common text. Teachers insist that conversations stay connected to the text. Students develop habits for making arguments based in the text.
5. **Writing from Sources**— Writing emphasizes the use of evidence to inform or make an argument. Students respond to the ideas, events and facts presented in the texts they read.
6. **Academic Vocabulary**— Students build needed vocabulary to access grade level complex texts. Teachers focus strategically on the comprehension of academic words such as discourse, generation and theory, and spend less time on literary terms such as onomatopoeia. Teachers insist students use academic words in speaking and writing.

These shifts can be combined in a variety of ways to help address instruction in Arizona's Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy. For example, shifts 1 and 2 can be combined to address building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction. Shifts 4 and 5 can be combined to address reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational. Finally, shifts 3 and 6 can be combined to address regular practice with complex text and its academic language.