

Standards for English Language Arts Grades 6 through 12

ANCHOR STANDARDS

Reading

Writing

Speaking and Listening

Language

STANDARDS BY GRADE LEVEL

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grades 9–10

Grades 11–12

RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING GRADES 6–12 STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading



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.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what a text states explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from a text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of a text relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.¹³
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts.¹⁴

Note on range and content of student reading

To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students' own thinking and writing. Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal historical documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images. Through reading texts whose intent is to persuade or change the reader, students gain experience in understanding the elements of rhetoric, the ability to evaluate intricate arguments, and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts.

¹³ Please see "Research to Build Knowledge" in Writing and "Comprehension and Collaboration" in Speaking and Listening for additional standards relevant to gathering, assessing, and applying information from print and digital sources.

¹⁴ Measuring text complexity involves (1) a qualitative evaluation of the text, (2) a quantitative evaluation of the text, and (3) matching reader to text and task. See the Grades 6–12 resource section in this Framework for more information regarding range, quality, and complexity of student reading for grades 6–12. [Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards](#) also discusses text complexity in depth, and the [Massachusetts Model Curriculum Unit Project](#) provides examples of complex texts and tasks.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing



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.

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Note on range and content of student writing

For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college and career ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to know how to combine elements of different kinds of writing—for example, to use narrative strategies within argument and explanation within narrative—to produce complex and nuanced writing. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality first-draft text under a tight deadline as well as the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening



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.

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that:
 - Listeners can follow the line of reasoning.
 - The organization, development, vocabulary, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Note on range and content of student speaking and listening

To become college and career ready, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner—built around important content in various domains. They must be able to contribute appropriately to these conversations, to make comparisons and contrasts, and to analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in accordance with the standards of evidence appropriate to a particular discipline. Whatever their intended major or profession, high school graduates will depend heavily on their ability to listen attentively to others so that they are able to build on others' meritorious ideas while expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. The Internet has accelerated the speed at which connections between speaking, listening, reading, and writing can be made, requiring that students be ready to use these modalities nearly simultaneously. Technology itself is changing quickly, creating a new urgency for students to be adaptable in response to change.

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.

Note on range and content of student language use

To be college and career ready, students must have firm control over the conventions of standard English. At the same time, they must come to appreciate that language is as much a matter of craft as one 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.

Grade 6 Reading Standards

Grade 6 Reading Standards for Literature [RL]

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year and help ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks. Rigor is also infused through the requirement that students read increasingly complex texts through the grades. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grade 6 Writing Standard 8 for more on quoting and paraphrasing.)
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of a text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
3. Describe how the plot of a particular story, poem, or drama unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

For example, students read *Black Ships Before Troy*, *Rosemary Sutcliff's retelling of Homer's Iliad*. As they read, they keep journals in which they keep track of the plot and relationships among characters and their motivations, and they make illustrations of scenes in the epic. They discuss the characteristics of a hero in classical Greek literature and write essays about a character of their choice, arguing whether or not the character is a hero. (RL.6.1, RL.6.3, W.6.1)

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices, including those that create repeated sounds and rhythms in poetry, on meaning, tone (i.e., author's attitude toward subject or audience), or mood (i.e., emotional atmosphere). (See grade 6 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
6. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to that of listening to or viewing the same text.
8. (Not applicable. For expectations regarding themes in literary texts, see RL.2.)
9. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems, historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 6. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

Grade 6 Reading Standards for Informational Text [RI]

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grade 6 Writing Standard 8 for more on quoting and paraphrasing.)

2. Determine a text's central idea(s) and how particular details help convey the idea(s); provide a summary of a text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
3. Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; explain how word choice affects meaning and tone. (See grade 6 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, section, or text feature (e.g., heading) fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.
6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, maps) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
9. Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 6. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

Grade 6 Writing Standards [W]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collection of annotated student writing samples in [Appendix C of the Common Core State Standards](#) and the [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action Project](#).

Text Types and Purposes

Note: The intent of Writing Standards 1–3 is to ensure flexibility, not rigidity, in student writing. Many effective pieces of writing blend elements of more than one text type in service of a single purpose: for example, an argument may rely on anecdotal evidence, a short story may function to explain some phenomenon, or a literary analysis may use explication to develop an argument. In addition, each of the three types of writing is itself a broad category encompassing a variety of texts: for example, narrative poems, short stories, and memoirs represent three distinct forms of narrative writing. Finally, although the bulk of writing assigned in school should address the purposes described below, other forms of writing—for example, personal reflections in prose or poem form, scripts of dramas or interviews—should have a place in the classroom as well. To develop flexibility and nuance in their own writing, students need to engage with a wide range of complex model texts (see Reading Literature Standard 10 and Reading Informational Text Standard 10) and study authors who have written successfully across genres (see [Appendix B: A Literary Heritage](#)).

1. Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly in paragraphs and sections.
 - b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
 - d. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

Persuasive letters offer two sixth grade writers the opportunity to express their opinions in thoughtful arguments posted on [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#). “Dear Mr. Sandler” makes a plea to the producer to stop showing actors enjoying smoking in films for teenagers because doing so sets a bad example (W.6.1, W.6.4, W.6.9, L.6.1, L.6.3, RI.6.1, RI.6.7, and SL.6.2). In “Dear Mr. Spinelli,” another student writes to author Jerry Spinelli about the theme of triumphing over racism and homelessness in the book Maniac Magee (W.6.1, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.9, RI.6.1, RI.6.2, L.6.2, L.6.3, L.6.5). This letter was written as part of the “Letters about Literature” project of the Massachusetts Center for the Book and the Library of Congress.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information in paragraphs and sections, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

After reading both historical fiction and nonfiction sources about the Salem witch trials, a student blends informational and narrative writing to present an individual character’s actions and to explain the larger meaning of beliefs about guilt and innocence in seventeenth-century Salem. See the [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#) example, “The Salem Witch Trials.” (W.6.2, W.6.3, W.6.4, W.6.8, W.6.9, RI.6.1, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3, L.6.5, L.6.6)

3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, figurative and sensory language, and techniques such as personification (e.g., “the fog crept in”) to convey experiences or events.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Two compositions on [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#) show the versatility of narrative. In the poem, “Sailing,” a student describes the exhilaration and peace of being at sea on a sailboat, using

sensory images to convey the magic of this personal experience. (W.6.3, W.6.4, W.6.10, L.6.3, L.6.5). “Feelings of Fall” is a prose narrative organized around a conflict that takes place between a girl and her grandfather over raking leaves in chilly November. It shows how a science lesson on the seasons gives the girl not only an awareness of nature, but also an awareness of her own feelings. (W.6.3, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3)

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Standards 1–3 above.)
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
 - a. Demonstrate command of standard English conventions (as described in Language Standards 1–3 up to and including grade 6).
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to select accurate vocabulary (as described in Language Standards 4–6 up to and including grade 6).
6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 6 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Grade 6 Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction in each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (See grade 6 Reading Literature Standard 1 and Reading Informational Text Standard 1 for specific expectations regarding the use of textual evidence.)
 - b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

- c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
 - d. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
 3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate vocabulary, eye contact, volume, and pronunciation. (See grade 6 Language Standards 4–6 for specific expectations regarding vocabulary.)
5. Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 6 Language Standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

Grade 6 Language Standards [L]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades. For example, though conventions of pronoun usage may receive the most attention in grade 7, more nuanced discussions of pronouns should develop throughout the upper grades as students continue to analyze speakers' and authors' choices of words, work toward precision in speaking and writing, and more.

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades. (See grade 6 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 6 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of conventions.)
Sentence Structure, Variety, and Meaning
 - a. Use simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to communicate ideas clearly and to add variety to writing.
 - b. Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general, how phrases and clauses differ, and how their use conveys a particular meaning in a specific written or spoken sentence.
 - c. Place or rearrange phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.¹⁵
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.¹⁵
 - b. Spell correctly, recognizing that some words have commonly accepted variations (e.g., donut/doughnut).

Knowledge of Language

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

¹⁵ These skills are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking. See the table in the Grades 6–12 resource section in this Framework.

- a. Maintain appropriate consistency in style and tone while varying sentence patterns for meaning and audience interest.¹⁶
- b. Recognize variations from standard or formal English in writing and speaking, determine their appropriateness for the intended purpose and audience, and make changes as necessary.¹⁶

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- 4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 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.

For example, students consider the number of meanings the word “light” can have and write sentences to demonstrate how context and placement determines what words mean. Some of their sentences:

Her dress was light purple.

I’m going to light the candles.

The play was a light comedy.

The children can stay outside as long as it’s light; when it gets dark, they have to come into the house.

The blanket was light as a feather.

- b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *audience, auditory, audible*).
 - c. Consult 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., personification) in context.
 - b. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.
 - c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty*).
- 6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge. (See grade 6 Reading Literature Standard 4 and Reading Informational Text Standard 4 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading; see grade 6 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 4 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of vocabulary.)

¹⁶ These skills are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking. See the table in the Grades 6–12 resource section in this Framework.

Grade 7 Reading Standards

Grade 7 Reading Standards for Literature [RL]

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year and help ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks. Rigor is also infused through the requirement that students read increasingly complex texts through the grades. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grade 7 Writing Standard 8 for more on quoting and paraphrasing.)
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of a text.
3. Analyze how particular elements of a story, poem, or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, or mood, including the impact of repeated use of particular images. (See grade 7 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Analyze how aspects of a literary work's structure contribute to its meaning or style (e.g., the effect of repetition in an epic, flashback in a novel, soliloquy in a drama).
6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version.

For example, students analyze how an author uses words and phrases to create a mood of fear in a print text and compare that to the way a film director creates a similar mood with settings and images, sounds, lighting, and camera angles.

8. (Not applicable. For expectations regarding themes in literary texts, see RL.2.)
9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

For example, students read Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and selections from Twain's autobiography. They explore the conflicts and tensions in the novel, including the honesty, lies, and oaths by various characters and their consequences, and historical conflicts, such as the prejudices of mid-nineteenth-century America. Students write an essay on one of the conflicts and deliver an oral report, using evidence to support their arguments and conclusions. (RL.7.1, RL.7.9, RI.7.1, W.7.1, SL.7.4)

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 7. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

Grade 7 Reading Standards for Informational Text [RI]

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grade 7 Writing Standard 8 for more on quoting and paraphrasing.)
2. Determine a text's central idea(s) and analyze its/their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of a text.
3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone. (See grade 7 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
For example, students read David Macaulay's Cathedral: The Story of its Construction and analyze how he uses words and images to depict the complex process of architectural design and the sequence of construction in the medieval period. In order to develop a thesis about the characteristics of Macaulay's style as a writer/illustrator, they examine a collection of his books and write an essay about his style as a writer of literary nonfiction. (RI.7.1, RI.7.4, W.7.2, W.7.9)
5. Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections and text features (e.g., headings) contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Compare and contrast a written text to an audio, video, or multimedia version, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).
8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
9. Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 7. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

Grade 7 Writing Standards [W]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collection of annotated student writing samples in [Appendix C of the Common Core State Standards](#) and the [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action Project](#).

Text Types and Purposes

Note: The intent of Writing Standards 1–3 is to ensure flexibility, not rigidity, in student writing. Many effective pieces of writing blend elements of more than one text type in service of a single purpose: for example, an argument may rely on anecdotal evidence, a short story may function to explain some phenomenon, or a literary analysis may use explication to develop an argument. In addition, each of the three types of writing is itself a broad category encompassing a variety of texts: for example, narrative poems, short stories, and memoirs represent three distinct forms of narrative writing. Finally, although the bulk of writing assigned in school should address the purposes described below, other forms of writing—for example, personal reflections in prose or poem form, scripts of dramas or interviews—should have a place in the classroom as well. To develop flexibility and nuance in their own writing, students need to engage with a wide range of complex model texts (see Reading Literature Standard 10 and Reading Informational Text Standard 10) and study authors who have written successfully across genres (see [Appendix B: A Literary Heritage](#)).

1. Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections.
 - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
 - d. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

In “Animal Rights: Give them a Voice,” on [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#), a seventh grade student makes the claim for the rights of animals, giving vivid examples of the conditions under which they are raised for food and experimentation. Acknowledgment and rebuttal of the opposing claim as well as discussion of a practical compromise alternative demonstrate the writer’s understanding of the complexity of the issue. (W.7.1, W.7.4, W.7.9, RI.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.5)

2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information in paragraphs and sections, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

*The theme, “Fear can turn human beings into monsters” is explored in a literary analysis essay on [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#) that examines Rod Serling’s teleplay, “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street,” from the early television series, *The Twilight Zone*. (RL.7.1, RL.7.2, W.7.2, W.7.4, L.7.3, SL.7.2)*

3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and figurative and sensory language to establish a mood that evokes an emotion, to capture action, and to convey experiences or events.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

The narrative mode is used with imagination and skill in two seventh grade examples on [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#). In the first example, “The Great Escape: from the Amazing Adventures of Bunny Foo Foo,” the point of view is that of a pet rabbit, just on the edge of finding freedom from its cage, and the story is told with a playful tone as a first person narrative. “The Tale of a Leaf,” the second example, is a poem that uses vivid sensory and figurative language and symbolism to impart a sense of joy and wonder to the autumn flight of a falling leaf. Both examples are aligned to Standards W.7.3, W.7.10, W.7.4, L.7.1, L.7.2, and L.7.5.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

For example, students studying the genre of mystery stories write narratives in which they introduce a variety of characters with distinctive traits, create plausible yet mysterious events, use vivid descriptions to create mood, use foreshadowing clues that point to the solution of the mystery, and resolve the mystery with an explanation by one of the characters. (RL.7.10, W.7.3, W.7.4)

- 5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
 - a. Demonstrate command of standard English conventions (as described in Language Standards 1–3 up to and including grade 7).
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to select accurate vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose (as described in Language Standards 4–6 up to and including grade 7).
- 6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
- 8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 7 Standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

Range of Writing

- 10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Grade 7 Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction in each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 7 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and clearly expressing their own.
 - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (See grade 7 Reading Literature Standard 1 and Reading Informational Text Standard 1 for specific expectations regarding the use of textual evidence.)
 - b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
 - c. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
 - d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.
2. Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
3. Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate vocabulary, eye contact, volume, and pronunciation. (See grade 7 Language Standards 4–6 for specific expectations regarding vocabulary.)
5. Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 7 Language Standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

Grade 7 Language Standards [L]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades. *For example, though conventions of pronoun usage may receive the most attention in grade 7, more nuanced discussions of pronouns should develop throughout the upper grades as students continue to analyze speakers’ and authors’ choices of words, work toward precision in speaking and writing, and more.*

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades. (See grade 7 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 6 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of conventions.)
Sentence Structure, Variety, and Meaning

- a. Use phrases and clauses to communicate ideas precisely, with attention to skillful use of verb tenses to add clarity.
 - b. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (those that have unclear or ambiguous antecedents).¹⁷
 - c. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person in sentences with multiple clauses and phrases.
 - d. Recognize that changing the placement of a phrase or clause can add variety, emphasize particular relationships among ideas, or alter the meaning of a sentence or paragraph.¹⁷
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- a. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *a fascinating, enjoyable movie*).
 - b. Spell correctly, recognizing that some words have commonly accepted variations (e.g., donut/doughnut).

Knowledge of Language

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- a. Maintain appropriate consistency in style and tone while varying sentence patterns for meaning and audience interest.
 - b. Recognize variations from standard or formal English in writing and speaking, determine their appropriateness for the intended purpose and audience, and make changes as necessary.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 7 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., *belligerent*, *bellicose*, *rebel*).
 - 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., literary, biblical, mythological allusions) in context.
 - b. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
 - c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *refined*, *respectful*, *polite*, *diplomatic*, *condescending*).
6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge. (See grade 7 Reading Literature Standard 4 and Reading Informational Text Standard 4 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading; see grade 7 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 4 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of vocabulary.)

¹⁷ These skills are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking. See the table in the Grades 6–12 resource section in this Framework.

Grade 8 Reading Standards

Grade 8 Reading Standards for Literature [RL]

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year and help ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks. Rigor is also infused through the requirement that students read increasingly complex texts through the grades. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grade 8 Writing Standard 8 for more on quoting and paraphrasing.)
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of a text.
3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story, poem, or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, or mood, including the impact of allusion and irony. (See grade 8 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Compare and contrast the structures of two or more texts, analyzing how structure contributes to meaning and style in each text.
6. Analyze how differences in point of view between characters and audience (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Analyze the extent to which an audio, filmed, or staged production of a story, drama, or poem stays faithful to or departs from the original text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or performer(s).
8. (Not applicable. For expectations regarding themes in literary texts, see RL.2.)
9. Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 8. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

Grade 8 Reading Standards for Informational Text [RI]

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grade 8 Writing Standard 8 for more on quoting and paraphrasing.)
2. Determine a text's central idea(s) and analyze its/their development over the course of the text, including relationships to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of a text.

3. Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. (See grade 8 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Analyze in detail the structural elements of a text, including the role of specific sentences, paragraphs, and text features in developing and refining a key concept.
6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
9. 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.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 8. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

Grade 8 Writing Standards [W]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collection of annotated student writing samples in [Appendix C of the Common Core State Standards](#) and the [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action Project](#).

Text Types and Purposes

Note: The intent of Writing Standards 1–3 is to ensure flexibility, not rigidity, in student writing. Many effective pieces of writing blend elements of more than one text type in service of a single purpose: for example, an argument may rely on anecdotal evidence, a short story may function to explain some phenomenon, or a literary analysis may use explication to develop an argument. In addition, each of the three types of writing is itself a broad category encompassing a variety of texts: for example, narrative poems, short stories, and memoirs represent three distinct forms of narrative writing. Finally, although the bulk of writing assigned in school should address the purposes described below, other forms of writing—for example, personal reflections in prose or poem form, scripts of dramas or interviews—should have a place in the classroom as well. To develop flexibility and nuance in their own writing, students need to engage with a wide range of complex model texts (see Reading Literature Standard 10 and Reading Informational Text Standard 10) and study authors who have written successfully across genres (see [Appendix B: A Literary Heritage](#)).

1. Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections.
 - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - d. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

A literary analysis of Jim Hall's poem, "Maybe Dats Youwr Pwobleem Too," begins not with a usual thesis statement but with a personal anecdote of a situation that amused others but embarrassed the author. This lead engages the reader to continue reading an analysis of Hall's humorous/serious poem about the dilemma of being Spiderman, a man who can't escape his identity. [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#) (W.8.1, W.8.3, W.8.9, RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.4, L.8.5)

2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; use paragraphs and sections to organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

A student shows deep personal engagement with Cynthia Lord's book *Rules* in a letter to the author describing how reading the book deepened her understanding of her autistic brother. The letter maintains a tone of friendliness and appreciation. [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#) (W.8.2, W.8.4, W.8.9, RL.8.1, L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, L.8.5)

3. Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an appropriate narrative sequence.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases and relevant descriptive details to convey a tone (the writer's attitude toward the subject: e.g., humorous, serious, or ironic) and to convey experiences or events.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

*Suspense builds in “Lab Rat,” an eighth grade science fiction story on [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#). Developed in a manner appropriate to a chapter of a longer work, the conclusion focuses on the plight of the narrator and invites the reader to continue reading further to find out what happens next (W.8.3, W.8.4, L.8.1, L.8.3, L.8.6). A different sort of narrative unfolds in the poem, “Before on Stone.” In this work, the writer adapts the form of Stephen Chbosky’s poem, “Once on Yellow Paper with Green Lines,” from his coming-of-age novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, to create a new poem that traces the evolution of writing through time (W.8.3, W.8.10, RL.8.4, L.8.3, L.8.5, L.9–10.1).*

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
 - a. Demonstrate command of standard English conventions (as described in Language Standards 1–3 up to and including grade 8).
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to select accurate vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose (as described in Language Standards 4–6 up to and including grade 8).
6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grade 8 standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Grade 8 Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction in each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 8 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on

- ideas under discussion. (See grade 8 Reading Literature Standard 1 and Reading Informational Text Standard 1 for specific expectations regarding the use of textual evidence.)
- b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
 - c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
 - d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
- 2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
 - 3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- 4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate vocabulary, eye contact, volume, and pronunciation. (See grade 8 Language Standards 4–6 for specific expectations regarding vocabulary.)
- 5. Integrate multimedia components and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
- 6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 8 Language Standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

Grade 8 Language Standards [L]

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades. *For example, though conventions of pronoun usage may receive the most attention in grade 7, more nuanced discussions of pronouns should develop throughout the upper grades as students continue to analyze speakers' and authors' choices of words, work toward precision in speaking and writing, and more.*

Conventions of Standard English

- 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades. (See grade 8 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 6 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of conventions.)
Sentence Structure, Variety, and Meaning
 - a. Coordinate phrases and clauses in simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, with emphasis on agreement of pronouns and their antecedents.
 - b. Form and use verbs in the active and passive voices and the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive moods to communicate a particular meaning.¹⁸
- 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.

¹⁸ These skills are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking. See the table in the Grades 6–12 resource section in this Framework.

- b. Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
- c. Spell correctly, recognizing that some words have commonly accepted variations (e.g., donut/doughnut).

Knowledge of Language

- 3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
 - a. Maintain appropriate consistency in style and tone while varying sentence patterns for meaning and audience interest.
 - b. Recognize variations from standard or formal English in writing and speaking, determine their appropriateness for the intended purpose and audience, and make changes as necessary.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- 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; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge. (See grade 8 Reading Literature Standard 4 and Reading Informational Text Standard 4 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading; see grade 8 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 4 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of vocabulary.)

For example, after finding out that emoji was designated the 2015 “word of the year” by the Oxford Online Dictionary, students decide that for a class project they will compile their own online etymological dictionary of words and phrases that are commonly used in English. Their diverse list of words and phrases to research includes blue jeans, jazz, hip-hop, numero uno, pizza, Algebra, lacrosse, Olympics, movie star, time flies, and bon appetit. (W.8.7, L.8.6)

Grades 9–10 Reading Standards

Grades 9–10 Reading Standards for Literature [RL]

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.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of a text.
3. Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the figurative or connotative meaning(s) of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the impact of words with multiple meanings, as well as symbols or metaphors that extend throughout a text and shape its meaning. (See grades 9–10 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
6. Analyze a case in which a character’s point of view and actions signal acceptance or rejection of cultural norms or intellectual ideas of a period or place, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Analyze a critical response to a work or body of literature (e.g., author documentary, book review); provide a summary of the argument presented and evaluate the strength of the evidence supporting it.
8. (Not applicable. For expectations regarding themes in literary texts, see RL.2.)
9. Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course. (See [more on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity](#).)

For example, Students respond to, analyze, and compare a variety of poems that exemplify the range of poetry’s dramatic power, such as Robert Browning’s “My Last Duchess,” Elizabeth Bishop’s “Fish,” Robert Frost’s “Out, Out...” (along with Macbeth’s soliloquy in Act V of Macbeth), and Amy Lowell’s “Patterns.” They then use these poems as models as they write poems of their own that reflect a dramatic moment or event. (RL.9–10.10, W.9–10.3)

Grades 9–10 Reading Standards for Informational Text [RI]

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of a text.