

# 2020-2021

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## PRIORITY INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT IN ELA/LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS

STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT  
PARTNERS



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# Table of Contents

I. <u>Introduction</u>	4
II. <u>Mathematics Grades K through 8 Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year</u>	8
A. <u>Introduction</u>	8
B. <u>Grade-Level Considerations</u>	13
C. <u>Appendix</u>	57
III. <u>ELA/Literacy Grade-Band Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year</u>	61
A. <u>Introduction</u>	61
B. <u>Grade-Band Considerations</u>	67
C. <u>Appendix</u>	109

# Introduction

## What is this guidance?

Based on research and the progression of the disciplines, the 2020–21 Priority Instructional Content names the priorities in mathematics (K–8) and ELA/literacy (K–12) that should be the focus of instruction for educators in the 2020–21 academic year. This document provides guidance for the field about content priorities by leveraging the structure and emphases of college- and career-ready mathematics and ELA/literacy standards. It is intended to help publishers, other designers of instructional materials, and instructional leaders find new efficiencies in the curriculum that are critical for the unique challenges that have resulted from school closures and anticipated disruptions in the year ahead, keeping at the forefront principles of equitable instruction that support all students.

## Why create this guidance?

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with what the “return to school” will look like. Educators know that every school year there are students who require support in addressing unfinished learning from prior grades, a challenge that will be felt more prominently in the 2020–21 school year. Most critically, the pandemic has further illuminated inequities that have always existed. Rich, engaging instruction at grade level has typically not been offered to students of color, students experiencing poverty, and emerging bilingual students. Our position is that it is entirely possible to hold high expectations for all students, address unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work, and dial into the assets students bring with them in order to unlock the creativity and energy they bring to the joyful work of learning something new. Since time is a scarce commodity in classrooms—made more limited by anticipated closures and distance or hybrid learning models in the fall of 2020—strategic instructional choices about which content to prioritize, and what and how to assess, must be made.

This guidance names the content that should be of focus for all students, recognizing that intentional instructional choices will be essential for supporting all students to mastery, and that this is especially true for students with specialized learning needs. This document does not address the many considerations of instruction, but recognizes that it is critical for those using the guidance and supporting English learners to ensure that students have the instructional supports and scaffolds that supplement, and do not supplant, core instruction and thereby ensure students’ access to grade-level content. As emphasized by the Council of the Great City Schools in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures*, “Teachers should therefore resist the inclination to ‘water down’ instruction and assignments for ELL students—and other students with specialized learning needs. These students require the same challenging work and cognitive demands as their peers in order to develop academic skills and grow as scholars.”<sup>1</sup> Note that for English learners, language and content

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the Great City Schools, 2020

development are simultaneous and should be considered in context of math and literacy instruction. For more specific guidance about adjusting curricular content to meet the needs of English learners, please see the resources created by the English Learner Success Forum including activities and scaffolds that can be strategically built into lessons and units to deepen and accelerate English learners' content area learning in mathematics and ELA/literacy.<sup>2</sup> Please also see the frameworks from the Council of the Great City Schools for Re-envisioning Mathematics Instruction and Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for detailed curricular and instructional guidance for English learners.<sup>3</sup>

### **How should assessment be considered in light of this instructional guidance?**

Uncovering and addressing unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work will require teachers to know what students know and can do throughout the school year. This document is not intended to serve as a guide for development of assessment products. However, the instructional guidance has implications for assessment in service of equitable grade-level instruction. Assessment should:

1. Be used to determine *how* to bring students into grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it.
2. Center *formative* practices.<sup>4</sup> Leverage such sources of information as exit tickets, student work, and student discussions. Use these sources of information to inform instructional choices in connection with high-quality instructional materials.
3. Employ *targeted* checks for very specific subject and grade-level instructional purposes (specifically, phonics or math fluency inventories, checks for reading fluency).

This approach is being proposed as a deliberate alternative to assessment choices that have the potential to serve as a gatekeeper to grade-level content. It also deliberately recognizes the very real social-emotional needs of students—particularly students who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. After such major disruptions, it is essential that students engage, immediately and consistently, in the affirmative act of learning new ideas, not be deemed deficient because of events outside of their control. Regarding administering tests too soon, the Council of the Great City Schools notes in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures* that “testing appears to put the onus of learning losses on the students themselves—the resulting label of ‘deficient’ or academically behind may very well further alienate and isolate the students who most need our support.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/resources>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cgcs.org/Page/664>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Revising%20the%20Definition%20of%20Formative%20Assessment.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Council of the Great City Schools, 2020

## What is the purpose of this guidance?

The intention of this guidance is to inform and influence the decisions of the following:

- *Publishers of instructional materials*: to design modifications to mathematics and ELA/literacy instructional materials for the 2020–21 school year.
- *District mathematics and ELA/literacy leaders*: to design modifications to scope and sequence documents, to design professional learning scope and sequence for teachers, to design modifications to district-created instructional materials where used, and to support administrators in implementing equitable instruction and equitable structures.
- *State education agencies*: to support districts in planning and decision-making for instruction.
- *Providers of professional learning for teachers*: to design modifications to professional learning curricula for the summer of 2020 and the 2020–21 school year.

This guidance has been developed in response to current conditions. These documents are not criteria, and they do not revise college- and career-ready state standards. This guidance does not stand alone but is to be used in conjunction with those standards. This guidance does not attempt to repeat what standards already say, nor does it mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another. Further, leveraging the focus and coherence of high-quality instructional materials aligned to college- and career-ready state standards is more important than ever.

This guidance was developed with additional principles specific to current needs:

- *Generalizability and usability*. The recommendations should allow a variety of decision makers to implement valuable changes to instructional materials and instructional planning.
- *Flexibility*. The 2020–21 school year is uncertain in terms of what schooling looks like; therefore, guidance should not specify pedagogy or make assumptions that learning is happening in physical classrooms with a designated content teacher.
- *Social, emotional, academic considerations*. While this guidance does not address the many considerations of instruction in full, the grade-band and grade-level considerations include practical ideas for attending to students' social-emotional development in the context of teaching the academic content described. Emotional health and well-being of students is a

central concern of educators, particularly given the pandemic, and these suggestions demonstrate ways in which social, emotional, and academic development can be fostered in the context of grade-level college- and career-ready content. These suggestions have been informed by *Supporting Social, Emotional, & Academic Development: Research Implications for Educators* from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.<sup>6</sup>

This guide is intended to complement resources being released by various other organizations, including the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) and the Council of Chief State School Officers, that also address the challenges of prioritizing instruction and addressing unfinished learning and the social-emotional and mental health needs of students. The common messages found across these materials illustrate a consensus in the field around the importance of safeguarding equity and access in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/supporting-social-emotional-academic-development-research-implications-educators>

## Mathematics Grades K through 8 Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year<sup>7</sup>

As the 2020–2021 school year approaches, mathematics educators are more interested than ever in knowing which topics or standards are most important. This document provides guidance for the field about content priorities by leveraging the structure and emphases of college- and career-ready mathematics standards. As in previous years, students will need to engage deeply with grade-level mathematics by justifying claims, sharing their thinking and responding to the thinking of others, and solving well-chosen problems that connect to their world and advance them mathematically. As noted in *Catalyzing Change in Middle School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations* (NCTM, 2020b), “[T]here still remains a considerable need for a more consistent, systematic, and widespread implementation of college and career readiness standards in the ways in which they were intended.”

That observation isn’t specific to the current moment. What is new, given the recent and ongoing interruptions to schooling, and given widespread moves to remote or hybrid learning, is a set of conditions that threaten to make good math instruction seem a luxury we can’t afford. Because of these factors, and because of greater than usual variability in the recent mathematics experiences of returning students, educators will be looking for ways to accelerate learning and “catch up.” But students are unlikely to benefit from simply increasing the pace. Indeed, in guidance from the Council of the Great City Schools, *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures* (CGCS, 2020), a key recommendation is to

Focus on the depth of instruction, not on the pace. ... [A]void the temptation to rush to cover all of the ‘gaps’ in learning from the last school year. The pace required to cover all of this content will mean rushing ahead of many students, leaving them abandoned and discouraged. It will also feed students a steady diet of curricular junk food: shallow engagement with the content, low standards for understanding, and low cognitive demand—all bad learning habits to acquire. Moreover, at a time when social emotional wellbeing, agency, and engagement are more important than ever, instructional haste may eclipse the patient work of building academic character and motivation.

But where will the time for in-depth teaching come from? The specific grade-level guidance in this document is intended to help publishers, other designers of instructional materials, and mathematics instructional leaders find new efficiencies in the curriculum that are critical for the unique challenges that have resulted from school closures and anticipated disruptions in the year ahead. In the grade-level sections that follow, the most important priorities in each grade are clearly signaled. Opportunities are highlighted for combining lessons about topics. If

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<sup>7</sup> The structure of this document could be emulated for high school mathematics courses. In addition, resources about developing pathways in high school mathematics are provided in the Appendix (see Charles A. Dana Center, 2019; Daro & Asturias, 2019; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2018).

some material from the grade must be omitted entirely or almost entirely, then the possibilities indicated here can help to minimize negative effects on student progress. Recommendations are also made for integrating previous-grade topics within relevant grade-level work. These and other considerations in the grade-level documents can help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics this year and in subsequent years.

The guidance at each grade level is tied to individual content clusters, or in some cases to individual standards, and this degree of specificity is necessary to support those who work directly with the design of curricula. However, the specifics of clusters or standards mustn't become trees that obscure the mathematical forest. Two forest-level views are essential. One opens out to a vista of mathematical practices: mathematical content is only learned according to college- and career-ready standards when it is connected to mathematical practices. A second forest-level view opens out to reveal the shape of the mathematical content itself: a focused, coherent arc that traces a student's journey from arithmetic to algebra. This design is supported by evidence from diverse sources including education research, international comparisons, and national reports.<sup>8</sup> By preserving both of these forest-level views, educators can maintain the continuity of their mathematical vision during a time of great interruption.

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As noted in the above quotation from *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures* (CGCS, 2020), “social emotional well being, agency, identity, and belonging are more important than ever.” Indeed as focus narrows and there is recommitment to what matters most academically, research tells us that four learning mindsets are particularly important in supporting students' academic development, specifically students' sense of 1) belonging and safety, 2) efficacy, 3) value for effort and growth, and 4) engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive (Aspen Institute, 2019; The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, 2018). Within classrooms, within schools, attention must be given to restoring relationships and a sense of community, so students feel safe, engage fully, and work hard. Students need help knowing that caring adults believe in them and that their ability and competence will grow with their effort. And more than ever, students need to see value and relevance in what they are learning to their lives and their very beings. Investing in students' social-emotional development is done by the entire system of adults in schools.

This investment is key to promoting engagement in—not a substitute for—teaching academic content. Therefore at each grade level, this document provides recommendations for facilitating students' social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades and different learning environments. Note that in mathematics, there is a close connection between social, emotional, and academic development and the Standards of Mathematical Practice; the recommendations reflect

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<sup>8</sup> Selected research appears in the Appendix.

this connection. When these practices are done well, they not only improve the teaching and learning of mathematics, they can address social-emotional learning as well.

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Confidence about the coming school year will come not only from recognizing the power and dedication of educators across the country, but also from trusting in the resources of our nation’s students. Our beliefs about our students will matter greatly to our success. In *Catalyzing Change in Early Childhood and Elementary School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations* (NCTM, 2020a), there is a valuable list of productive and unproductive beliefs about children’s mathematical ability. Three of the productive beliefs are especially relevant today, not only during early childhood and elementary school but also in middle grades (Table M-1).

Table M-1. Selected productive beliefs about children’s mathematical ability from *Catalyzing Change in Early Childhood and Elementary School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations* (NCTM, 2020a).

<b>Selected Productive Beliefs About Children’s Mathematical Ability from <i>Catalyzing Change in Early Childhood and Elementary School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations</i> (NCTM, 2020a)</b>
Mathematics curriculum and instruction should account for and leverage human difference to promote rich and connected mathematics learning experiences. A common shared mathematics learning experience benefits all children.
All children should have access to grade-level mathematics content centered on learning mathematics with understanding, actively building new knowledge from their informal experiences and prior knowledge.
Interventions must focus on content that is connected with and promotes the grade-level curriculum through problem solving and reasoning and not be a review of low-level basic facts or procedural skills.

Remember that “Children prefer mathematical learning experiences that challenge their thinking and allow them to be creative in solving problems, responding positively to statements, such as, ‘I like complex problems more than easy problems’ and ‘I like activities that challenge my thinking abilities.’ ... [C]hildren who have regular opportunities to collaborate on challenging tasks, use varied solution approaches, and focus on sense making have higher mathematics achievement” (NCTM, 2020a). Interventions must provide students with

more opportunities, not fewer, to engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in all its dimensions. A virtue of concentrating on grade-level work is that each topic in the grade-level curriculum will reveal the prior understandings and assets of the students in its own way, so that teachers can build on those understandings and assets efficiently to access the topic at hand. This is remediating “just in time,” not “just in case.”

### **How should mathematics assessment be considered in light of this instructional guidance?**

Uncovering and addressing unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work will require teachers to know what students know and can do at the beginning and throughout the school year. This document is not intended to serve as a guide for assessment products. However, the instructional guidance has implications for assessment in service of equitable grade-level instruction. Assessment should:

1. Be used to determine *how* to bring students into a unit of grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it.
2. Center *formative* practices (FAST SCASS, 2018). Leverage such sources of information as exit tickets, student work, and student discussions. Use these sources of information to inform instructional choices in connection with high-quality instructional materials.
3. Employ *targeted* checks for very specific subject and grade-level instructional purposes (specifically, math fluency inventories).

In mathematics in particular, assessment will be more useful, efficient, and supportive of social, emotional, and academic development when it takes place at the instructional triangle of teacher, student, and (grade-level) subject. For example, unit-level assessments that publishers provide to accompany high-quality instructional materials are preferable to district-administered interim assessments. In mathematics, we can better understand students’ thinking even on assessments by engaging them in discussions of the problems they worked on.

Assessment should be used to determine how to bring students into a unit of grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it. The point isn’t to generate data about what students get right and wrong; it’s to understand how to support students as they work. A single multiple choice item will not provide that, nor will a single numerical score. In mathematics, sometimes a couple of well-selected problems do the job of providing the right information to understand how to support students. In a distance learning scenario, one-on-one check-ins with students are likely the best way to understand how they are thinking about some of the important particulars and to help them understand how those particulars connect to the current grade-level content they are about to engage with.

Pre-assessment is not needed for every unit in a curriculum. In some cases the prerequisites to a unit are few. Indeed some topics are well thought of as making their first appearance in a given grade, and diagnosing about such topics is inappropriate. In many cases, the

prerequisites for a unit are naturally and efficiently prompted by the content of the unit itself (remediating just-in-time, not just-in-case). And in some cases, students' entry is based on a longer trajectory over multiple years.

This approach is being proposed as a deliberate alternative to assessment choices that have the potential to serve as a gatekeeper to grade-level content. It also deliberately recognizes the very real social-emotional needs of students—particularly students who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. After such major disruptions, it is essential that students engage immediately and consistently in the affirmative act of learning new ideas, not be deemed deficient because of events outside of their control. Regarding administering tests too soon, the Council of the Great City Schools notes in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures* that “testing appears to put the onus of learning losses on the students themselves—the resulting label of ‘deficient’ or academically behind may very well further alienate and isolate the students who most need our support” (CGCS, 2020).

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Mathematics has seldom been as prominent in the public square as it is now. Fewer citizens are saying, “I’m not a math person.” Instead they are reading the news about COVID-19 and contemplating rates, percentages, denominators, and time lags in order to know better how they can safely conduct their lives. Today, mathematics offers students both the empowerment that comes from using mathematical tools to understand and confront an epidemic, as well as the emotional escape that can come from permitting oneself to entertain abstract but beautiful questions at such a time. “Each and every child must be afforded opportunities to not only feel confident as doers of mathematics but also to experience *joy* and see the *beauty* in their mathematical discoveries” (NCTM, 2020b). Our students’ resilience is being tested but they have minds eager to learn. Supporting students’ social and emotional needs during these uncertain times cannot be done by rushing through all of the current grade-level mathematics while simultaneously re-teaching prior grade-level content that students might have missed. Rather, now is the time to deliver even more thoughtfully on the promise of deep learning of mathematics, especially that which allows our students to connect the content to their world in meaningful ways.

## **Kindergarten Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as K.CC.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Kindergarten Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS KINDERGARTEN MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that they take to master, and/or their importance to future mathematics in the domains of college and career readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can be safely disregarded or neglected. Neglecting material will leave gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade (M) and, where appropriate, additional work (A) to engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR KINDERGARTEN**

Emphasize the general idea of the cluster and refer to the Cluster Overview Booklet for Mathematics for the specific standards that fall under each cluster.

Key: **M** Major Cluster, **S** Supporting Cluster, **A** Additional Cluster

Cluster	Standards
K.CC.A	Know number names and the count sequence.
K.CC.B	Count to tell the number of objects.
K.CC.C	Compare numbers.
K.OA.A	Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.
K.NBT.A	Work with numbers 11–19 to gain foundations for place value.
K.MD.A	Describe and compare measurable attributes.
K.MD.B	Classify objects and count the number of objects in categories.
K.G.A	Identify and describe shapes.
K.G.B	Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES K–5**

Grade	Major Work
K–2	Addition and subtraction: concepts, skills, and problem solving; place value.
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions: concepts, skills, and problem solving.
6	Ratios and proportional relationships; early exponents and equations.
7	Ratios and proportional relationships; introduction of rational numbers.
8	Linear algebra and linear functions.

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR KINDERGARTEN**

Standard	Fluency
K.OA.5	Add and subtract within 5.

College- and career-ready mathematics standards have important emphases at each grade level, which for kindergarten are highlighted in this [Focus Document](#). The considerations for the 2020–21 school year that follow are intended to be a companion to the Focus Document. Users should have both documents in hand, as well as a copy of grade-level standards, when considering these recommendations.

For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <u>PRIORITY</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for kindergarten. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
K.CC.A K.CC.B K.CC.C	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to knowing number names, counting, and comparing numbers, as detailed in these clusters. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
K.OA.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to understanding addition and subtraction, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.

Considerations for Addressing <u>REMAINING</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of kindergarten grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
K.NBT.A*	<i>Combine</i> lessons on numbers 11–19 to address key concepts in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
K.MD.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons on describing and comparing measurable attributes to address key concepts across this cluster in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice. (Note that standards in K.MD.A do not require use of measuring devices or measurement units.)

K.MD.B	<i>Integrate</i> classifying and counting objects (K.MD.B) with other counting and comparison work in the grade (K.CC.A, B, and C) in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster.
K.G.A K.G.B	<i>Combine</i> lessons on identifying, describing, analyzing, comparing, and composing shapes to address key concepts across the clusters in this domain in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster.

*\*While this cluster is Major Work of the Grade, during the 2020–21 school year, it is recommended that it receive lighter treatment in favor of other priority instructional content.*

### Facilitate Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD)<sup>9</sup> Through Grade-Level Content

The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.

Sample Actions	Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)
Design structured and unstructured time for students to actively collaborate with their classmates to grow their skills in problem solving, cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy (for example, when students are in math centers or when they share tasks such as counting out supplies).	MP1: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Promote a sense of belonging by including math routines, such as number talks, choral counting, counting collections, and other counting routines, so that students see themselves as a part of a community.	MP7: Look for and make use of structure.
Promote skills in cooperation and communication by providing opportunities in daily lessons for students to work in pairs counting objects and practicing fluency within 5.	MP6: Attend to precision.

<sup>9</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 1 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 1.OA.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 1 Mathematics?

### CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 1 MATHEMATICS

**MATH** **1** **F**

Mathematics Grade 1 Focus

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that they take to master, and/or opportunities to future mathematics or the demands of college and career-readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected or subtracted. Neglecting material will leave gaps in student skills and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority<sup>1</sup> of their time on the major work of the grade (■). Supporting work (■) can engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 1**  
Emphasis are given to the content level. Refer to the clusters below. These Standards for Mathematics for the specific standards that fall within each cluster.

Key: ■ Major Cluster ■ Supporting Cluster ■ Additional Cluster

1.OA.A	■ Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.
1.OA.B	■ Understand and apply properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction.
1.OA.C	■ Add and subtract within 20.
1.OA.D	■ Work with addition and subtraction equations.
1.NBT.A	■ Extending the counting sequence.
1.NBT.B	■ Understand place value.
1.NBT.C	■ Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract.
1.MD.A	■ Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units.
1.MD.B	■ Tell and write time.
1.MD.C	■ Represent and interpret data.
1.G.A	■ Reason with shapes and their attributes.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES K–8**

K–2	Addition and subtraction – concepts, skills, and problem solving, place value
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions – concepts, skills, and problem solving
6	Ratios and proportional relationships, early equations and equations
7	Ratios and proportional relationships, arithmetic of rational numbers
8	Using algebra and linear functions

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR GRADE 1**

1.OA.C.6	Add/subtract within 10
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College- and career-ready mathematics standards have important emphases at each grade level, which for grade 1 are highlighted in this [Focus Document](#). The considerations for the 2020–21 school year that follow are intended to be a companion to the Focus Document. Users should have both documents in hand, as well as a copy of grade-level standards, when considering these recommendations.

For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 1. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
1.OA.A.1	<i>Emphasize</i> problems that involve sums less than or equal to 10 and/or the related differences to keep the focus on making sense of different problem types; do not limit the range of addition and subtraction situations, but assign fewer problems with sums greater than 10 or related differences.
1.OA.B	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to understanding and applying properties of operations to addition and subtraction, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
1.OA.C.6	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to adding and subtracting within 20, as detailed in this standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
1.OA.D	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to work with addition and subtraction equations, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
1.NBT.B	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on understanding that numbers 11–19 are built from ten ones and some further ones (K.NBT.A) to support grade 1 understanding of place value.
1.NBT.C	<i>Emphasize</i> the understanding that in adding two two-digit numbers, one adds tens and tens, ones and ones, and sometimes it is necessary to compose a ten, in order to strengthen the progression toward fluency with multi-digit addition and subtraction.
1.MD.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to measuring lengths indirectly by iterating length units, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.

Considerations for Addressing <u>REMAINING</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 1 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
1.OA.A.2*	<i>Reduce</i> the amount of time spent on lessons and problems that call for addition of three whole numbers. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
1.OA.C.5*	<i>Integrate</i> counting into the work of the domain (OA), instead of separate lessons, in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this standard.
1.NBT.A*	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons that are solely about extending the count sequence in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster. <i>Incorporate</i> extending the count sequence into other lessons in the grade.
1.MD.B	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons devoted to telling and writing time to the hour and half-hour (1.MD.B.3).
1.MD.C	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons devoted to representing and interpreting data. (Do not eliminate problems about using addition and subtraction to solve problems about the data.)
1.G.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons to address key concepts of defining attributes of shapes and composing shapes in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster.

*\*While these standards or clusters are Major Work of the Grade, during the 2020–21 school year, it is recommended that they receive lighter treatment in favor of other priority instructional content.*

<b>Facilitate Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD)<sup>10</sup> Through Grade-Level Content</b>	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
<b>Sample Actions</b>	<b>Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)</b>
Position students as competent young mathematicians by highlighting their successes with grade-level content (for example, creating their own word problems and becoming fluent with adding and subtracting within 10), as well as by strategically creating just-in-time supports and enrichment that provide every student opportunity to actively engage with grade-level work.	MP1: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Communicate collective learning goals for the class as a whole to reinforce that students belong to a learning community where they can succeed and where they will be supported to grow.	Creating a learning community is essential for mathematical practices such as MP3 that are interpersonal by nature.
Establish norms for participation within routines, such as number talks for addition and subtraction within 20 and choral counting within 120, to position every student as a competent mathematical thinker.	MP7: Look for and make use of structure.

<sup>10</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 2 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 2.OA.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 2 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 2 MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some content requires greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that long-term or regular practice must invest in to future mathematics or the demands of college and career readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected in instruction. Neglecting material will leave gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave student unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade (M), Supporting work (S), and, where appropriate, additional work (A) to engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 2**  
Emphasize the green as the cluster level. Refer to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics for the specific standards that follow each cluster.

Key: ■ Major Cluster ■ Supporting Cluster ■ Additional Cluster

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES K–8**

K–2	Addition and subtraction – concepts, skills, and problem solving, place value
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions – concepts, skills, and problem solving
6	Ratios and proportional relationships, early exponentiation and equations
7	Ratios and proportional relationships, arithmetic of rational numbers
8	Linear algebra and linear functions

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR GRADE 2**

2.OA.B.2	Single-digit sums and differences (sums less than or equal to 20)
2.NBT.B.5	Addition facts within 100

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PARTNERS** Helping all students achieve

College- and career-ready mathematics standards have important emphases at each grade level, which for grade 2 are highlighted in this [Focus Document](#). The considerations for the 2020–21 school year that follow are intended to be a companion to the Focus Document. Users should have both documents in hand, as well as a copy of grade-level standards, when considering these recommendations.

For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 2. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
2.OA.A	<i>Emphasize</i> problems that involve sums less than or equal to 20 and/or the related differences to keep the focus on making sense of different problem types; assign fewer problems with sums greater than 20 or related differences.
2.OA.B	<i>Incorporate</i> additional practice on the grade 1 fluency of adding and subtracting within 10 (1.OA.C.6) early in the school year to support the addition and subtraction work of grade 2 (2.OA).
2.NBT.B	<i>Prioritize</i> strategies based on place value in written work to strengthen the progression toward fluency with multi-digit addition and subtraction. (Note that grade 2 students are not expected to be fluent with three-digit sums and differences; repetitive fluency exercises are not required.)  <i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on addition and subtraction within 100 from grade 1 (1.NBT.C) to support the addition and subtraction work of grade 2.
2.MD.B.5	Ensure word problems represent all grade 2 problem types, and refer to guidance for 2.OA.A.
2.MD.B.6	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to representing lengths on number line diagrams, as detailed in this standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.

Considerations for Addressing <u>REMAINING</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 2 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
2.OA.C	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on foundations for multiplication.
2.NBT.A*	<i>Emphasize</i> the conceptual understanding of three-digit numbers (as detailed in 2.NBT.A.1). <i>Integrate</i> lessons and practice on counting, reading/writing, and comparing numbers (2.NBT.A.2, 3, and 4) into the work of place value. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice on counting by ones, reading/writing, and comparing numbers.
2.MD.A*	<i>Integrate</i> lessons and practice on comparing and estimating lengths (2.MD.A.2, 3, and 4) into the work of measuring length with tools (2.MD.A.1) in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
2.MD.C	<i>Combine</i> lessons in order to reduce the amount of time spent on time and money. <i>Emphasize</i> denominations that support place value understanding such as penny-dime-dollar. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
2.MD.D	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on generating measurement data (2.MD.D.9) and creating picture/bar graphs (2.MD.D.10). <i>Integrate</i> data displays only as settings for addition/subtraction word problems (2.OA.A).
2.G.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons to address key concepts on reasoning with shapes and their attributes in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this cluster. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.

*\*While these clusters are Major Work of the Grade, during the 2020–21 school year, it is recommended that they receive lighter treatment in favor of other priority instructional content.*

<b>Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development</u> (SEAD)<sup>11</sup> Through Grade-Level Content</b>	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
<b>Sample Actions</b>	<b>Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)</b>
Use discussion protocols to provide a safe environment for students to share their developing thinking and to allow for interactions where peers value multiple contributions.	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Design question threads that prompt students to recognize frustration with a problem, manage the frustration without turning their back on the task, re-evaluate, and look for an alternate pathway to a solution.	MP1: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Empower students to self-monitor their individual progress as they use properties and patterns along the way toward knowing sums of two one-digit numbers from memory. This monitoring includes reflection and individual recording, supporting their ability to try and try again to show off their improvement.	MP8: Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

<sup>11</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

### **Grade 3 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 3.OA.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 3 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 3 MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that they take to master, and/or their importance to future mathematics in the demands of college and career-readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected or untouched. Neglecting material will leave gaps in students' skills and understanding that may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority<sup>1</sup> of their time on the major work of the grade. <sup>2</sup> Supporting work <sup>3</sup> and, where appropriate, additional work <sup>4</sup> can engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 3**

Emphasis is given to the clusters below. Refer to the clusters below. **Standards for Mathematical Practice** for the entire document.

Key: **Major Cluster** **Supporting Cluster** **Additional Cluster**

Cluster	Content
3.OA.A	Represent and solve problems involving multiplication and division.
3.OA.B	Understand properties of multiplication and the relationship between multiplication and division.
3.OA.C	Multiply and divide within 100.
3.OA.D	Solve problems involving the four operations, and identify and explain patterns in arithmetic.
3.NF.A	Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic.
3.NF.A	Develop understanding of fractions as numbers.
3.MD.A	Solve problems involving measurement and estimation of intervals of time, liquid volumes, and masses of objects.
3.MD.B	Represent and interpret data.
3.MD.C	Geometric measurement: understand concepts of area and relate area to multiplication and to addition.
3.MD.D	Geometric measurement: recognize perimeter as an attribute of plane figures and distinguish between linear and area measures.
3.G.A	Reason with shapes and their attributes.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES K–2**

Grade	Content
K–2	Addition and subtraction: concepts, skills, and problem solving (place value).
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions: concepts, skills, and problem solving.
6	Ratio and proportional relationships, early exponents and operations.
7	Ratio and proportional relationships, arithmetic, rational numbers.
8	Linear algebra and linear functions.

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR GRADE 3**

Standard	Content
3.OA.C.7	Single-digit products and quotients (fluently); multiplying by one of Grade 3.
3.NF.A.2	Addition and subtraction (100).

1. The majority of time should be spent on the major work of the grade. 2. Supporting work is essential to the major work. 3. Additional work is not required. 4. Additional work is not required.

College- and career-ready mathematics standards have important emphases at each grade level, which for grade 3 are highlighted in this [Focus Document](#). The considerations for the 2020–21 school year that follow are intended to be a companion to the Focus Document. Users should have both documents in hand, as well as a copy of grade-level standards, when considering these recommendations.

For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <u>PRIORITY</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 3. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
3.OA.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to multiplication and division concepts and problem solving, as detailed in this cluster. Students may need extra support to see row and column structure in arrays of objects. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
3.OA.B 3.OA.C	<i>Incorporate</i> additional practice with double-digit sums (2.NBT.B.5) to support the grade 3 multiplication work with the properties of operations, especially the distributive property.
3.OA.D.8	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to two-step word problems using the four operations, as detailed in this standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
3.NF.A	<i>Emphasize</i> the concept of unit fraction as the basis for building fractions. <i>Prioritize</i> the number line as a representation to develop students' understanding of fractions as numbers by foregrounding the magnitude, location, and order of fractions among whole numbers (3.NF.A.2)

Considerations for Addressing <u>REMAINING</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 3 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
3.OA.D.9*	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons or problems on arithmetic patterns.

2020–21 Priority Instructional Content in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics

3.NBT.A.1	<i>Combine</i> lessons on rounding in order to reduce the amount of time spent on rounding numbers. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
3.NBT.A.2	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to addition and subtraction within 1000, as detailed in this standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should not exceed what would be spent in a typical year.
3.NBT.A.3	<i>Combine</i> lessons in order to reduce time spent multiplying by multiples of 10. <i>Emphasize</i> the connection to single-digit products and tens units.
3.MD.A*	<i>Combine</i> lessons in order to reduce the amount of time spent on time, volume, and mass. <i>Reduce</i> the amount of required student practice.
3.MD.B.3	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on creating scaled graphs. <i>Integrate</i> a few problems with scaled graphs only as settings for multiplication word problems (3.OA.A.3) and two-step word problems (3.OA.8).
3.MD.B.4	<i>Eliminate</i> any lessons or problems that do not strongly reinforce the fraction work of this grade (3.NF.A). <i>Incorporate</i> foundational work measuring with rulers (2.MD.A) to support entry into generating fractional measurement data in grade 3.
3.MD.C*	<i>Emphasize</i> enduring concepts of geometric measurement (iterating a unit with no gaps or overlaps) (3.MD.C.5) and students using area models to support their mathematical explanations involving the distributive property for products (3.MD.C.7c). <i>Combine</i> lessons in order to reduce the amount of time spent on measuring area and <i>limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
3.MD.D	<i>Integrate</i> a few problems on perimeter into work on area (3.MD.C).
3.G.A.1	<i>Combine</i> lessons on shapes and their attributes in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this standard.
3.G.A.2	<i>Eliminate</i> separate geometry lessons on partitioning shapes.

*\*While these clusters are Major Work of the Grade, during the 2020–21 school year, it is recommended that they receive lighter treatment in favor of other priority instructional content.*

<b>Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD)</u><sup>12</sup> Through Grade-Level Content</b>	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
<b>Sample Actions</b>	<b>Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)</b>
Establish discussion protocols to facilitate students' engagement in peer-to-peer mathematical discourse (for example, about the meaning of multiplication and division, reasoning about fractions) that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, sets team roles, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.	MP6: Attend to precision.
Attend to the ways in which students position one another as capable or not capable of doing mathematics and provide opportunities to elevate the voices of marginalized students, such as strategically sharing student work, student thinking, and solutions.	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Draw on knowledge and experiences that students bring to mathematics (culture, contexts, language, and experiences) by using multiple representations and contexts (for example, when working with multiplication and division situations).	MP2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

<sup>12</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 4 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 4.NBT.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 4 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 4 MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that they take to master, and/or their importance to future mathematics as the demands of college and career readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected or introduced. Neglecting material will leave gaps in students' skills and understanding that may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade. Supporting work is important, where appropriate, additional work can engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 4**

Problems are given to the lowest level of rigor. To the greatest extent, these Standards for Mathematics for this grade should be used to guide the selection of problems.

Key: Major Cluster (blue square), Supporting Cluster (green square), Additional Cluster (yellow square).

Cluster	Description
4.OA.A	Use the four operations with whole numbers to solve problems.
4.OA.B	Gain familiarity with factors and multiples.
4.OA.C	Generate and analyze patterns.
4.NF.A	Generalize place value understanding for multi-digit whole numbers.
4.NF.B	Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic.
4.NF.C	Extend understanding of fraction equivalence and ordering.
4.NF.D	Build fractions from unit fractions by applying and extending previous understandings of operations on whole numbers.
4.NF.E	Understand decimal notation for fractions, and compare decimal fractions.
4.MD.A	Solve problems involving measurement and conversion of measurements from a larger unit to a smaller unit.
4.MD.B	Represent and interpret data.
4.MD.C	Geometric measurement: understand concepts of angle and measure angles.
4.G.A	Draw and identify lines and angles, and classify shapes by properties of their lines and angles.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES K–5**

Grade	Major Work
K–2	Addition and subtraction (concepts, skills, and problem solving) (blue square)
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions (concepts, skills, and problem solving) (green square)
6	Ratios and proportional relationships, early operations and exponents (yellow square)
7	Ratios and proportional relationships, exponents, and rational numbers (yellow square)
8	Linear equations and linear functions (yellow square)

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR GRADE 4**

Standard	Description
4.NBT.B.4	Add, subtract, multiply, and divide within 1,000 (blue square)

College- and career-ready mathematics standards have important emphases at each grade level, which for grade 4 are highlighted in this [Focus Document](#). The considerations for the 2020–21 school year that follow are intended to be a companion to the Focus Document. Users should have both documents in hand, as well as a copy of grade-level standards, when considering these recommendations.

For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 4. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
4.OA.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to analyzing and solving multi-step word problems with the four operations (4.OA.3), and extending multiplicative thinking beyond grade 3 to solve problems involving comparison and the idea of times-as-many/times-as-much (4.OA.2).
4.NBT.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to generalizing place value understanding, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
4.NF.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to fraction equivalence and ordering, as detailed in this cluster. <i>Incorporate</i> some foundational work on simple equivalent fractions (3.NF.A.3). Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
4.NF.C	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to concepts of decimal fractions, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.

Considerations for Addressing <b>REMAINING</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 4 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
4.OA.B	<i>Incorporate</i> opportunities to solidify the fluency expectations of 3.OA.C.7 by giving additional practice sets related to products of single-digit factors and related quotients (with unknowns in all positions) into the grade 4 work of gaining familiarity with factors and multiples.

2020–21 Priority Instructional Content in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics

4.OA.C	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on generating and analyzing patterns.
4.NBT.B*	In relation to fluency expectations for subtracting multi-digit numbers, <i>emphasize</i> problems with only one regrouping step (4.NBT.B.4), in order to reduce algorithmic complexity.  <i>Incorporate</i> fluency expectations of 3.OA.C.7 by giving additional practice sets related to products of single-digit factors and related quotients (with unknowns in all positions) into the grade 4 work on multi-digit multiplication and division (4.NBT.5 & 6). (Note that there are no fluency expectations for multi-digit multiplication or division in grade 4; repetitive fluency exercises are not required.)
4.NF.B*	<i>Emphasize</i> reasoning with unit fractions to determine sums and products, not committing calculation rules to memory or engaging in repetitive fluency exercises.  <i>Incorporate</i> some foundational work on the meaning of the unit fraction (3.NF.A.1 & 2), especially through partitioning the whole on a number line diagram.
4.MD.A.1	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to measurement conversion, as detailed in this standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should not exceed what would be spent in a typical year.
4.MD.A.2 4.MD.A.3	<i>Combine</i> lessons on problems involving measurement, except for those on measurement conversion (see 4.MD.A.1). <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
4.MD.B	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems that do not strongly reinforce the fraction work of this grade (4.NF).
4.MD.C.5 4.MD.C.6	<i>Emphasize</i> the foundational understanding of a one-degree angle as a unit of measure (4.MD.C.5a) and use that as the basis for measuring and drawing angles with protractors (4.MD.C.6).
4.MD.C.7	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on recognizing angle measure as additive.
4.G.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons on drawing and identifying lines and angles and classifying shapes by properties. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.

*\*While these clusters are Major Work of the Grade, during the 2020–21 school year, it is recommended that they receive lighter treatment in favor of other priority instructional content.*

<b>Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD)</u><sup>13</sup> Through Grade-Level Content</b>	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
<b>Sample Actions</b>	<b>Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)</b>
Bring in students' funds of knowledge and past mathematical experiences by providing access to a wide variety of math tools when working on grade-level math (for example, providing number lines when studying equivalent fractions).	MP5: Use appropriate tools strategically.
Position students as mathematically competent by creating a safe space for students to share their developing reasoning (for example, when they make conjectures and arguments about whole numbers to determine whether they apply to fractions and decimals).	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Establish clear learning goals that promote mathematical learning as just, equitable, and inclusive. For example, in work with subtraction of multi-digit numbers, begin with one regrouping step using evidence of student learning to determine next steps (exit tickets, assigned problem).	MP7: Look for and make use of structure.

<sup>13</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 5 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from Kindergarten through Grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 5.NBT.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 5 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 5 MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the needs of the data, the time that they take to master, and/or their importance to future mathematics or the demands of college and career readiness. More time to these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected or postponed. Recognizing material that has been in Standard skills and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade (Major Clusters) and, where appropriate, additional work (Additional Clusters) to engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 5**  
Emphasize no more than the cluster level. Refer to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics for the specific standards that fall within each cluster.

Key: Major Clusters, Supporting Clusters, Additional Clusters

**MAJOR CLUSTERS**

- 5.OA.A Write and interpret numerical expressions.
- 5.OA.B Analyze patterns and relationships.
- 5.NF.A Understand the place value system.
- 5.NF.B Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths.
- 5.NF.C Use equivalent fractions as a strategy to add and subtract fractions.
- 5.NF.D Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to multiply and divide fractions.
- 5.MD.A Convert like measurement units within a given measurement system.
- 5.MD.B Represent and interpret data.
- 5.MD.C Geometric measurement: understand concepts of volume and relate volume to multiplication and to addition.
- 5.G.A Graph points on the coordinate plane to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
- 5.G.B Classify two-dimensional figures into categories based on their properties.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES K–5**

- K–2 Addition and subtraction: concepts, skills, and problem solving, place value
- 3–5 Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions: concepts, skills, and problem solving
- 6 Ratios and proportional relationships, early equations and equations
- 7 Ratios and proportional relationships, arithmetic of rational numbers
- 8 Linear algebra and linear functions

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR GRADE 5**

- 5.NBT.B.5 Multi-digit multiplication

College- and career-ready mathematics standards have important emphases at each grade level, which for grade 5 are highlighted in this [Focus Document](#). The considerations for the 2020–21 school year that follow are intended to be a companion to the Focus Document. Users should have both documents in hand, as well as a copy of grade-level standards, when considering these recommendations.

For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 5. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
5.NBT.A	Allow for time to develop students’ understanding of the foundational work of decimal fractions (4.NF.C) to support entry into understanding the place value system with decimals (5.NBT.A.1, 3, and 4).
5.NBT.B	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on multiplying and dividing multi-digit whole numbers (4.NBT.B.5 & 6) to support students’ work operating with multi-digit whole numbers and decimals (5.NBT.B). In relation to fluency expectations for multiplying multi-digit numbers, <i>eliminate</i> problems in which either factor has more than three digits.
5.NBT.B.7	<i>Incorporate</i> students’ understanding of decimal fractions (4.NF.C) to support entry into the grade 5 work of operations with decimals.
5.NF.A	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on equivalent fractions (4.NF.A.1) and on the conceptual understanding underlying fraction addition (4.NF.B.3) to support students’ work on adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators (5.NF.A).
5.NF.B	<i>Incorporate</i> foundations for multiplying fractions by whole numbers (4.NF.B.4) to support students’ work in multiplying fractions and whole numbers by fractions (5.NF.4).
5.MD.C	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to the work of volume in grade 5, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
5.G.A	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational understandings of number lines (such as found in the work of 4.NF) into the work of extending number lines to the coordinate plane, as detailed in this cluster. <i>Emphasize</i> interpreting coordinate values of points in the context of a situation.

### Considerations for Addressing REMAINING Grade-Level Content

The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 5 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.

Clusters/Standards	Considerations
5.OA.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons on writing and interpreting numerical expressions in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this topic.
5.OA.B	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems on analyzing relationships between numerical patterns.
5.MD.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons on converting measurement units in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this topic.
5.MD.B	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems on representing and interpreting data using line plots that do not strongly reinforce the fraction work of this grade (5.NF).
5.G.B	<i>Combine</i> lessons on classifying two-dimensional figures into categories based on properties in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this topic.

Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD)</u> <sup>14</sup> Through Grade-Level Content	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
Sample Actions	Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)
Build community by providing group tasks to develop sense making and problem solving while deepening students' active engagement.	MP1: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Gather student perspectives through written or verbal reflection (for example, anticipation guides, exit slips, error analysis, interviews) so that students consider their learning, performance, and growth as learners.	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Position students as mathematically competent by encouraging various entry points and elevating different ways students see and use structure in problems. For example, students might see a $3 \times 4 \times 5$ rectangular prism as three layers of a $4 \times 5$ array of cubes, as four layers of a $3 \times 5$ array of cubes, or as five layers of a $3 \times 4$ array of cubes.	MP7: Look for and make use of structure.

<sup>14</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 6 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 6.RP.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 6 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 6 MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that may take to master, and/or their importance to future mathematics or the demands of college and career readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater emphasis is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected in instruction. Neglecting material will leave gaps in student skills and understanding and may leave students unprepared for their knowledge in a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade (M) and, where appropriate, additional work (A) can engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 6**

Emphasis is given to the clusters listed below. In the column show how Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP) support the clusters.

Key: Major Cluster (M), Supporting Cluster (S), Additional Cluster (A)

Cluster	Major Cluster (M)	Supporting Cluster (S)	Additional Cluster (A)
6.NS.A	Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems.		
6.NS.A	Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions.		
6.NS.B	Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.		
6.NS.C	Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.		
6.EE.A	Apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions.		
6.EE.B	Reason about and solve one-variable equations and inequalities.		
6.EE.C	Represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables.		
6.G.A	Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.		
6.SP.A	Develop understanding of statistical variability.		
6.SP.B	Summarize and describe distributions.		

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES 6–8**

Grade	Major Work
6–7	Addition and subtraction: concepts, skills, and problem solving (place value).
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions: concepts, skills, and problem solving.
6	Ratios and proportional relationships, early equations and expressions.
7	Ratios and proportional relationships, arithmetic of rational numbers.
8	Linear algebra and linear functions.

**REQUIRED FLUENCIES FOR GRADE 6**

Standard	Fluency
6.NS.B.2	Multi-digit division.
6.NS.B.3	Multi-digit division operations.

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PARTNERS**

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For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 6. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
6.RP.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to understanding ratio concepts and using ratio reasoning to solve problems, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
6.NS.A	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on division with unit fractions and whole numbers (5.NF.B.7) in the early part of students' work on fraction division (6.NS.A).
6.NS.C	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on the coordinate plane (5.G.A.1) to support students' entry into this cluster.
6.EE.A	<i>Emphasize</i> equivalent expressions (6.EE.A.3 and 4), particularly the idea that applying properties of operations to an expression always results in an expression that is equivalent to the original one.
6.EE.B	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to reasoning about and solving one-variable equations and inequalities, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
6.EE.C	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to this representing and analyzing quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables, as detailed in this cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.

### Considerations for Addressing REMAINING Grade-Level Content

The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 6 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.

Clusters/Standards	Considerations
6.NS.B.2 6.NS.B.3	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on computing fluently (6.NS.B.2 and 3) by <i>integrating</i> these problems into spiraled practice throughout the year. To keep students on track to algebra and avoid inequitable remediation structures, time in grade 6 should not be spent remediating multi-digit calculation algorithms.
6.NS.B.4	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to common factors and multiples, including using distributive property for expressions, as detailed in this standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should not exceed what would be spent in a typical year.
6.G.A.1	<i>Emphasize</i> understanding of the reasoning leading to the triangle area formula; instead of teaching additional area formulas as separate topics, <i>emphasize</i> problems that focus on finding areas in real-world problems by decomposing figures into triangles and rectangles.
6.G.A.2	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on volume (5.MD.C) while working on volumes of right rectangular prisms with fractional edge lengths (6.G.A.2). <i>Emphasize</i> contextual problems, as detailed in the second sentence of the standard; <i>eliminate</i> lessons focused on the first sentence of the standard (finding the volume of a rectangular prism with fractional edge lengths by packing it with unit cubes).
6.G.A.3	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems involving polygons on the coordinate plane.
6.G.A.4	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems on constructing three-dimensional figures from nets and determining if nets can be constructed into three-dimensional figures during the study of nets and surface area.
6.SP.A	<i>Combine</i> lessons about introductory statistical concepts so as to proceed more quickly to applying and reinforcing these concepts in context. (Note that there are no procedural expectations in the cluster; no procedural practice is required to meet the expectations of the cluster.)
6.SP.B	<i>Reduce</i> the amount of required student practice in calculating measures of center and measures of variation by hand, to make room to emphasize the concept of a distribution and the usefulness of summary measures. <i>Reduce</i> the amount of time spent creating data displays by hand.

<b>Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development</u> (SEAD)<sup>15</sup> Through Grade-Level Content</b>	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
<b>Sample Actions</b>	<b>Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)</b>
Build a safe community where mathematical discourse supports active listening, promotes diverse perspectives and insights, and allows students to consider others' reasoning to advance their own mathematical understanding. For example, utilize a "which one doesn't belong?" activity for groups of students to discuss and analyze correspondences between graphs, tables, and equations that represent a relationship between dependent and independent variables.	MP2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
Bring in students' existing funds of knowledge (culture, contexts, language, and experiences), such as during the study of ratios and rates, when students need to make sense of quantities and relationships in problem situations; they may bring in their understanding of measurement units to do measurement conversions and their real-life interactions with percents to solve percent problems.	MP2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
Position students as mathematically competent by encouraging students to construct mathematical arguments and engage in the reasoning of others, such as when they are using the properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions or working collaboratively to develop the formula for the area of a triangle through analyzing a variety of parallelograms and making an argument to generalize the relationship.	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

<sup>15</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 7 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

The Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year (Mathematics Instructional Priorities) is designed to support decisions about how to elevate some of the most important mathematics at each grade level in the coming school year while reducing time and intensity for topics that are less integral to the overall coherence of college- and career-ready standards.

At each grade level from kindergarten through grade 8, the Mathematics Instructional Priorities name the grade-level mathematics that is of highest priority at each grade; provide a framework for strategically drawing in prior grade-level content that has been identified as essential for supporting students' engagement with the most important grade-level work; and suggest ways to reduce or sometimes eliminate topics in a way that minimizes the impact to overall coherence. In using this guidance, decision makers should thoughtfully consider in their unique context the likely implications of the spring 2020 disruption as decisions are made to select supports to ensure that students are able to successfully engage with the grade-level content. Decision makers should also bear in mind that while this document articulates content priorities, elevating the Standards for Mathematical Practice in connection with grade-level content is always a priority.

At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty associated with the 2020–2021 school year. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities are provided in response to these conditions. They are not criteria, and they do not revise the standards. Rather, they are potential ways, and not the only ways possible, to help students engage deeply with grade-level mathematics in the 2020–21 school year.

The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not stand alone but are to be used in conjunction with college- and career-ready standards. One reason for this is that codes such as 7.RP.A must be traced back to the standards in order to see the language to which they refer. The Mathematics Instructional Priorities do not reiterate what the standards already say—even in cases where the specific language of a standard is fundamentally important to a high-quality aligned curriculum. Nor do the Mathematics Instructional Priorities mention every opportunity the standards afford to make coherent connections within a grade or between one grade and another—again, even when those connections are fundamentally important and are the basis for the guidance given. Therefore the Mathematics Instructional Priorities will be used most powerfully in cross-grade collaboration among educators who know the standards well and can use existing resources such as the *Progressions* documents and other resources listed in the Appendix.

While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 7 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 7 MATHEMATICS**

This document shows where students and teachers should spend the large majority of their time in order to meet the expectations of the Standards.

Not all content in a given grade is emphasized equally in the Standards. Some clusters require greater emphasis than others based on the depth of the ideas, the time that they take to master, and/or their importance to future mathematics for the demands of college and career readiness. More time in these areas is also necessary for students to meet the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

To say that some things have greater importance is not to say that anything in the Standards can safely be neglected in instruction. Neglecting material will leave gaps in students' skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade. Supporting work is also, where appropriate, additional work that can engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 7**

Key: Major Cluster (green), Supporting Cluster (blue), Additional Cluster (yellow)

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES 6–8**

- 6–7: Addition and subtraction (concepts, skills, and problem solving; place value)
- 3–5: Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions (concepts, skills, and problem solving)
- 6: Ratios and proportional relationships; early equations and expressions
- 7: Ratios and proportional relationships; arithmetic; rational numbers
- 8: Linear algebra and linear functions

**Grade 7 Clusters:**

- 7.NF.A: Analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
- 7.NF.B: Apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers.
- 7.EE.A: Use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions.
- 7.EE.B: Solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical and algebraic expressions and equations.
- 7.G.A: Draw, construct and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them.
- 7.G.B: Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.
- 7.SP.A: Use random sampling to draw inferences about a population.
- 7.SP.B: Draw informal comparative inferences about two populations.
- 7.SP.C: Investigate chance processes and develop, use, and evaluate probability models.

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For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 7. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
7.RP.A	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to analyzing proportional relationships, as detailed by the cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
7.NS.A	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on understandings of rational numbers (6.NS.C.5, 6, and 7) to build towards operations with rational numbers (7.NS.A), as detailed by the cluster.
7.EE.A	<i>Incorporate</i> foundational work on writing and transforming linear expressions from grade 6 (6.EE.A) into the work of using properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions, as detailed by the cluster (7.EE.A).
7.EE.B.3	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to solving multi-step real-life and mathematical problems, as detailed by the standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
7.EE.B.4	<i>Emphasize</i> equations relative to inequalities. <i>Incorporate</i> foundational work of reasoning about and solving one-variable equations (6.EE.B) to support students' work on constructing equations to solve problems, as detailed by the standard (7.EE.B.4). Time spent on instruction and practice relating to equations should NOT be reduced.

Considerations for Addressing <u>REMAINING</u> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 7 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
7.G.A.1	<i>Reduce</i> time spent creating scale drawings by hand. Time spent on instruction and practice should not exceed what would be spent in a typical year.
7.G.A.2 7.G.A.3	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons on drawing and constructing triangles, as detailed in the standard (7.G.A.2). <i>Eliminate</i> lessons on analyzing figures that result from slicing three-dimensional figures, as detailed in the standard (7.G.A.3).
7.G.B.4	<i>Combine</i> lessons on knowing and using the formulas for the area and circumference of a circle in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this topic. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.
7.G.B.5 7.G.B.6	<i>Combine</i> lessons to address key concepts and skills of unknown angles, area, volume, and surface area (7.G.B.5, 7.G.B.6). <i>Reduce</i> the amount of required student practice.  <i>Incorporate</i> conceptual understanding of finding the area of polygons and the volume of right rectangular prisms (6.G.A.1, 6.G.A.2) in teaching real-life and mathematical problems involving area, volume, and surface area of two- and three-dimensional objects (7.G.B.6). Do not require students to use or draw nets to determine surface area.
7.SP.A 7.SP.B	<i>Combine</i> lessons on using random sampling to draw inferences about a population and using measures of center and variability to draw comparative inferences about two populations in order to reduce the amount of time spent on this topic. <i>Incorporate</i> students' grade 6 understanding of statistical variability (6.SP.A). <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.  <i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems on assessing the degree of overlap on data distributions, as detailed in the standard (7.SP.B.3).

7.SP.C	<p><i>Combine</i> lessons on developing, using, and evaluating probability models in order to emphasize foundational concepts and reduce the amount of time spent on this topic (7.SP.C). <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.</p> <p><i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems on finding probabilities of compound events, as detailed in the standard (7.SP.C.8).</p>
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Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development</u> (SEAD) <sup>16</sup> Through Grade-Level Content	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
Sample Actions	Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)
Bring in students' funds of knowledge by ensuring materials and problems have a connection with learners while also providing opportunities to learn about the broader world, such as when solving rich tasks involving geometric measurement that have a significant modeling component.	MP4: Model with mathematics
Communicate that students' thinking is valued to build trust and rapport by asking questions that elicit students' thinking, such as when students are analyzing proportional relationships.	MP1: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Position students as competent and elevate the status of students by valuing different contributions students make when they share representations and make connections between these representations (for example, tables, graphs, equations, and verbal descriptions of proportional relationships).	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

<sup>16</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## **Grade 8 Mathematics Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year**

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At each grade level, recommendations are provided for facilitating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in mathematics. These recommendations stress themes of discourse, belonging, agency and identity and can either be applied across grades (even if only listed in one) or they can be modified to fit different grades. These themes of discourse, belonging, agency, and identity are integral to the Standards of Mathematical Practice and the language in the recommendations reflects this connection.

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While the grade-level guidance isn't specific to any math program or set of programs, an examination of a selection of curriculum scope and sequence documents informed the recommendations, especially recommendations about when and how to integrate prior-grade concepts into the current grade. The guidance does not list all possible prior-grade content relevant to the current grade, but instead concentrates the recommendations on the most critical prior-grade connections, with greater emphasis on that content which was likely taught during the last third of the 2019–20 school year based on the scope and sequence analysis.

## Where to focus Grade 8 Mathematics?

**CCSS WHERE TO FOCUS GRADE 8 MATHEMATICS**

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Students should spend the large majority of their time on the major work of the grade (M) and, where appropriate, additional work (A) can engage students in the major work of the grade.

**MAJOR, SUPPORTING, AND ADDITIONAL CLUSTERS FOR GRADE 8**

Problems are given in the clusters listed below. In the *Content Cluster: Mathematics for the 21st Century*, students are expected to:

Key: **M** Major Cluster; **S** Supporting Cluster; **A** Additional Cluster

8.NS.A	Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers.
8.EE.B	Work with radicals and integer exponents.
8.EE.B	Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.
8.EE.C	Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.
8.EA	Define, evaluate, and compare functions.
8.F.B	Use functions to model relationships between quantities.
8.G.A	Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software.
8.G.B	Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem.
8.G.C	Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones and spheres.
8.FA	Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORK IN GRADES 8–10**

6–7	Addition and subtraction: concepts, skills, and problem solving (place value).
3–5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions: concepts, skills, and problem solving.
6	Ratios and proportional relationships; early equations and exponents.
7	Ratios and proportional relationships; arithmetic of rational numbers.
8	Linear algebra and linear functions.

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**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PARTNERS** Helping all students achieve

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For the 2020–21 school year, prioritization of grade-level mathematical concepts combined with some incorporation of prior-grade knowledge and skills will be essential to support all students in meeting grade-level expectations. For these unique times, Student Achievement Partners has developed additional guidance above and beyond what is communicated through the major work designations. As described at greater length on the previous page, the following tables:

- Name priority instructional content at each grade;
- Provide considerations for addressing grade-level content in a coherent way;
- Articulate selected content from the prior grade that may be needed to support students in fully engaging with grade-level mathematics;
- Suggest where adaptations can be made to allow for additional time on the most important topics; and
- Provide suggestions for ways to promote social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in grade-level mathematics learning, often through the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The considerations repeatedly use several verbs, such as *combine*, *integrate*, etc. The verbs most commonly used in the considerations are italicized below and defined in a glossary in the Appendix. Note that content is designated at the cluster level when the guidance refers to the cluster and its standards, and at the standard level in cases where guidance varies within a cluster.

Considerations for Addressing <b>PRIORITY</b> Grade-Level Content	
The clusters and standards listed in this table name the priority instructional content for grade 8. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.	
Clusters/Standards	Considerations
8.EE.A.1	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to the work of integer exponents, as detailed by the standard. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
8.EE.A.2	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems about cube roots.
8.EE.B	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to the work of understanding the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations, as detailed by the cluster. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.
8.EE.C.7	<i>Incorporate</i> students' work on rewriting expressions (7.EE.A) and solving algebraic equations (7.EE.B.4) to support students in analyzing and solving one-variable linear equations.
8.EE.C.8	<i>Emphasize</i> the correspondences among: (1) a solution to a pair of simultaneous two-variable equations, (2) a point of intersection of the corresponding lines, and (3) the real-world context for which the equations were created. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice in solving systems algebraically.
8.F.A 8.F.B	No special considerations for curricula well aligned to the domain of Functions, as detailed in the clusters and standards within the domain. Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.

8.G.B	<p>No special considerations for curricula well aligned to applying the Pythagorean Theorem to solve real-world and mathematical problems (as detailed by standard 8.G.B.7). Time spent on instruction and practice should NOT be reduced.</p> <p><i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems dedicated to applying the Pythagorean Theorem to find the distance between two points in a coordinate system. <i>Eliminate</i> lessons and problems that require students to develop and/or explain a proof of the Pythagorean Theorem (8.G.B.6). Lessons should present a proof of the theorem to students. <i>Eliminate</i> lessons about the converse of the Pythagorean Theorem.</p>
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### Considerations for Addressing REMAINING Grade-Level Content

The clusters and standards listed in this table represent the remainder of grade 8 grade-level content. The right-hand column contains approaches to shifting how time is dedicated to the clusters and standards in the left-hand column.

Clusters/Standards	Considerations
8.NS.A	<i>Integrate</i> irrational numbers with students' work on square roots (8.EE.A.2) and the Pythagorean Theorem (8.G.B.7).
8.EE.A.3* 8.EE.A.4*	<i>Eliminate</i> lessons and practice dedicated to calculating with scientific notation, but include examples of numbers expressed in scientific notation in lessons about integer exponents, as examples of how integer exponents are applicable outside of mathematics classes (8.EE.A.1).
8.G.A*	<i>Combine</i> lessons to address key concepts in congruence and <i>combine</i> lessons to address key concepts in similarity of two-dimensional figures in order to reduce the amount of time on this topic.
8.G.C	<i>Combine</i> lessons to address key concepts with volume, with an emphasis on cylinders, in order to reduce the amount of time on this topic.
8.SP.A	<i>Emphasize</i> using linear functions to model association in bivariate measurement data that suggest a linear association, using the functions to answer questions about the data (8.SP.A.3). <i>Combine</i> lessons for 8.SP.A.1, 2, and 4 to address key statistical concepts in order to reduce the amount of time on this topic. <i>Limit</i> the amount of required student practice.

*\*While these standards or clusters are Major Work of the Grade, during the 2020–21 school year, it is recommended that they receive lighter treatment in favor of other priority instructional content.*

<b>Facilitate <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD)</u><sup>17</sup> Through Grade-Level Content</b>	
The left-hand column contains sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated into grade-level mathematics instruction, in connection with Standards for Mathematical Practice named in the right-hand column. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.	
<b>Sample Actions</b>	<b>Connection to Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP)</b>
Promote student engagement and identity by embedding systems and routines such as “stronger and clearer each time” or other routines that allow students to engage in productive struggle and take ownership in their progress and growth toward intended learning outcomes.	MP3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Enhance students’ mathematical agency by including regular collaborative opportunities for students to work together with others as a team on modeling tasks that provide multiple pathways for success and that require reasoning and problem solving.	MP4: Model with mathematics.
Provide opportunities for students to consider tools they may use to solve a problem and justify their appropriateness. For example, they may choose to graph a function defined by expressions to picture the way one quantity depends on the other or use graphing technology to approximate solutions to system of equations	MP5: Use appropriate tools strategically.

<sup>17</sup> Sample SEAD actions contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. The actions can be modified to fit any grade, K–8, by considering the content of that grade level. See other grade-level Mathematics Instructional Priorities documents for additional samples.

## Appendix

### Glossary of the Most Commonly Used Verbs in the Grade-Level Mathematics Recommendations for the 2020–21 School Year

**Combine.** Give less time and attention to individual lessons by merging a group of lessons in the same domain.

**Limit.** Cut back on the number of brief, repetitious practice problems that would normally be assigned to students for these topic(s).

**Eliminate.** Save time by removing the content for this year; the threat to coherence is minimal.

**Incorporate.** Draw in prior grade-level skills and understandings to support students in engaging successfully with grade-level content. Base decisions related to this additional support on analyses of prior-grade-level scope and sequence and/or factors related to the district-, school-, or classroom-level context.

**Integrate.** Merge content from the same grade level with other content that has been explicitly specified.

**Emphasize/Prioritize.** Elevate the importance of one or more standards, concepts, strategies, or problem types above others. Emphasizing is a matter of giving stronger weight to specified things in the cluster or standard, not a matter of limiting entirely to the specified things.

**Reduce.** Lessen the normal emphasis on specific standards, concepts, strategies, or problem types.

### Additional Resources

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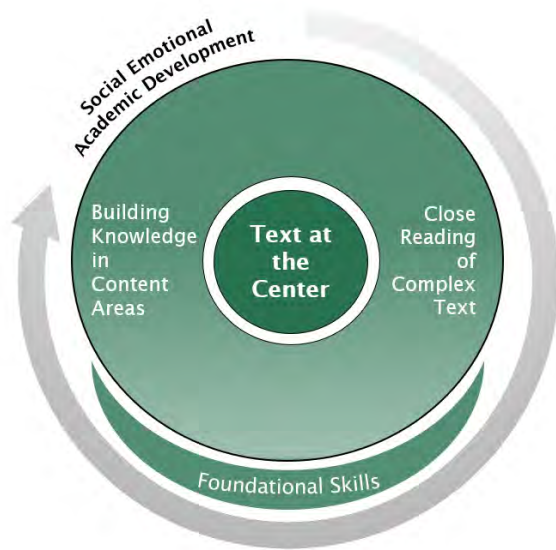
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## English Language Arts/Literacy Grade-Band Priority Instructional Content for the 2020–21 School Year<sup>18</sup>

There is no one reality students have experienced as they were out of school. Nor was anybody static. Everyone had experiences that will influence them and that they can draw from. Flexibility, creativity, and empathy—and above all else, knowing what students and their families have faced—are all key to serving our students well. This has always been true, but today’s circumstances have allowed us to shine a spotlight on this truth in new ways. Yes, there will be plentiful stories of unresolved, unrelenting anxiety and heartache, but connected to those will be countless examples of students’ valor, resilience, accountability to family, and chances to have absorbed vital life lessons. All students will come to school having learned, whether learning entrenched in academics or focused more squarely on pragmatic life lessons. All learning and experiences have value. All deserve respect and attention as we consider the approach to K–12 literacy instruction in 2020–21.

Time is a scarce commodity in educating students—now made more compressed by months of school closures. With greater variability in returning students’ experiences, how can we best accelerate all students’ learning, amplify what matters most, and foster students’ social-emotional development? What should be the nucleus of daily instruction when the school year starts, regardless of varying school conditions? Whether school starts back with students learning in buildings, remotely, or through hybrid offerings, each of our students in every learning community needs to be engaged in college- and career-ready study. What’s always been important is especially important now.



All students become proficient through deliberate practice. Practice means doing lots and lots of reading (on- and off-grade-level), combined with well-thought out instruction, to assist in understanding grade-level complex texts, while learning to express their meaning and import through speaking and writing along the way. A text-centered approach builds to students learning a lot about a lot and becoming confident, joyful readers.

The research base underpinning college- and career-ready standards in ELA/literacy provides a structure to approach instruction equitably and excellently in current conditions.

<sup>18</sup> This document provides recommendations in English Language Arts/literacy, in these grade bands: K–1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12. Where applicable, content implications across the disciplines (history/social studies, science, and technical subjects) are addressed.

What bundle of college- and career-ready (CCR) standards best reflects the fundamentals of literacy research and will best accelerate learning for *all* students?

**Focus on Standards That Represent the Major Work of ELA/Literacy Instruction: Learning to Read, Close Reading of Complex Texts, and Volume of Reading to Build Knowledge**

Not all content in a given grade should be emphasized equally. Some standards require greater emphasis than others based on the literacy research about what matters most and the time and practice that they take to develop. These two literacy components of a text-centered, rich ELA/literacy classroom experience lead the way to identifying the Major Work of ELA/literacy instruction across the grades:

- Students should spend lots of time actively reading content-rich, complex text. Close reading of complex text is concentrated, demanding work that helps students discover how to learn from reading (and grow their knowledge, vocabulary, and understanding of syntax).
- Students should have a volume of reading to build knowledge and be exposed to academic language in the content areas. That volume of reading needs to be at a range of complexity levels so every student can read with minimal or no teacher support. Much of this volume should be with information-rich text, either full-length books or conceptually connected shorter texts (groups of texts that cohere together to create a picture of a topic).

In the early grades, these priorities are even more vital. The more young students read or listen to a range of content-rich texts, the more they will learn. That learning will yield accelerating returns from then on, which is one of many reasons teaching students how to read by grade 2 is so crucial and should frequently be enveloped in plenty of conversation and be as active as possible. As students learn more within and across grades, they will have greater access to more and richer texts. They will learn about the world around them and about themselves and their role in that world, and they will also learn more and more words, many of them wrapped in complex sentences. The more words students recognize, the more comfortable they will get with varied syntax and the more learning they will be able to access.

- *In grades K–12*, these instructional practices are best exemplified by 14 CCR standards (and the research that supports them) – CCSS RF.4, L.4, L.5, L.6, RI.1, RI.4, RI.9, RI.10, RL.1, RL.4, RL.10, SL.1, W.8, and W.9.<sup>19</sup> They cross the domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.

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<sup>19</sup> Requirements for W.9 begin in grade 4.

- *In grades K–3*, learning to read—the foundational standards, and the sequence of skills they point to—reign supreme (RF.1, RF.2, RF.3, and RF.4). In parallel, students should have a volume of reading that is topically connected to the anchor texts or topics under study to build knowledge and be exposed to academic language in the content areas. That volume of reading needs to be at a range of complexity levels so every student can read with minimal or no teacher support. Much of this volume should be with information-rich text, either full-length books or conceptually connected shorter texts (groups of texts that cohere together to create a picture of a topic).

By emphasizing these 14 standards, students can legitimately focus on the Major Work of ELA/literacy instruction for the grade. The standards get progressively more challenging and nuanced annually, but they all echo each other as students move through the grades.

### **Use Remaining Standards to Support the Major Work of ELA/Literacy Instruction**

When confident that students are progressing in their ability to read with understanding, teachers can plan instruction that intentionally includes supporting standards—represented by the more than *two dozen remaining standards* in each grade level—to engage students more fully in the Major Work of the Grade. The supporting standards can be incorporated into instruction in service of the major 14 standards. For instance, in close reading lessons, supporting reading standards can help generate an effective sequence of text-specific questions that target central ideas, text structure, author’s purpose, and the like, to guide students in exploring and extracting the key ideas of texts. Likewise, when devising writing assignments, the supporting standards can help guide the qualities of explanations or arguments that students should be reaching for in one grade or another.

Given the months students have been out of school coupled with the complicated realities many students are facing, it can be tempting to double-down on traditional leveled text programs that limit student reading exclusively to their designated independent reading level, reading that is neither organized by topic of study nor focused on building students’ knowledge. For a sizable number of students, that translates into reading a restricted range of lower-than-grade-level complex text (one day on one topic and another day on another topic) that will hinder, rather than accelerate, students’ literacy development. For students to develop the integrated, holistic, and flexible literacy skills necessary to participate in the world around them, they need and deserve regular access to grade-level complex texts. They also need lots of time to independently explore particular topics, suited to students’ varied interests, through reading multiple texts that are at a range of complexity levels. Focusing solely on simple, below-level texts won’t teach readers how to deal with complicated concepts, syntax, or subtle cohesive links in texts. Simple texts lack the critical rich vocabulary knowledge only available to students reading complex on-grade-level texts. In the words of Professor Alfred Tatum, Dean of the College of Education of the University of Illinois, “Leveled texts lead to leveled lives” (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

### **Attend to Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development**

As we narrow the focus and recommit to what matters most academically, research also tells us that four learning mindsets are particularly important in supporting students' academic development. They focus on students' sense of 1) belonging and safety, 2) efficacy, 3) value for effort and growth, and 4) engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive (Aspen Institute, 2019). Within classrooms, within schools, attention must be given to restoring relationships and a sense of community, so students feel safe, fully engage and work hard. We need to help students know that we believe they can succeed and that their ability and competence will grow with their effort. And more than ever, students need to see value and relevance in what they are learning to their lives and their very beings. Investing in students' social-emotional development is done by the entire system of adults in schools. This investment is key to promoting engagement in—not a substitute for—teaching academic content; it represents a change in how academic content is taught. There is a stunning opportunity to curate high-quality instructional materials aligned to healing and resilience for next year. Efforts should be made to facilitate SEAD even in remote learning environments, using synchronous and asynchronous approaches and the capabilities afforded by remote learning technologies.

### **Adapt Curriculum Materials in the 2020–21 School Year**

The specific grade-band guidance that follows reflects a “map” of sorts to college- and career-ready standards by answering the question: How can we do more with less? Decision makers, whether they are guiding policy that affects students and their teachers or thinking about how to modify the instructional materials they've developed, need to strip away what isn't central. The most important priorities in each grade-band are clearly signaled. Opportunities are highlighted for maximizing instructional time—and student impacts—by designing learning around anchor texts, related topical reading to build knowledge, and in the primary grades, developing foundational reading skills. Recommendations are also made for integrating fluency instruction within relevant grade-level work. The really good news is that the high-quality curricula in use in districts around the country already share these priorities.

With varying school conditions and compressed instructional time, publishers, and instructional designers and leaders will need to find new efficiencies. Some standards and instructional practices will need to be omitted entirely or almost entirely during the 2020–21 school year. Instruction that distracts from the focus on students reading and sharing new knowledge through discussions and in writing is unproductive. The number of lessons, the number of texts encountered, and the number of units—even in the best curricula in use—will need to be reduced. In fact, several publishers of high-quality materials are developing specific guidance about how to adjust pacing of each grade level's units in a way that aligns with these priorities. Teachers, students, and families need to be reassured that the omission of some units and lessons from the curriculum in the upcoming school year will not compromise the acquisition of key literacy knowledge and skills at grade level. Students can still thrive. Now is the time to deliver even more thoughtfully on the promise of deep learning in literacy, especially that which enables students to connect learning to their worlds in meaningful ways.

### How should literacy assessment be considered in light of this instructional guidance?

Grasping where students are vis a vis accessing grade-level texts and content is of great importance both as students return to school and move through the school year. Understanding where students are will allow teachers to provide students with targeted, meaningful supports. As noted in the introduction, this document is not intended to serve as a guide for development of assessment products. However, the instructional guidance has implications for an assessment system designed in service of equitable grade-level instruction. Assessment will:

1. Be used to determine how to bring students into grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it.
2. Center formative practices (FAST SCASS, 2018). Leverage such sources of information as exit tickets, student work, and student discussions. Use these sources of information to inform instructional choices in connection with high-quality instructional materials.
3. Employ targeted checks for very specific subject and grade-level instructional purposes.

In literacy, assessment will be most useful, efficient, equitable, and supportive of social, emotional, and academic development when it takes place within the instructional triangle of teacher, student, and grade-level content. This means that assessment must occur as close to instruction as possible, and in the mode in which it will provide the most meaningful guidance. Listening to students read out loud, analyzing students' writing, and engaging with students in conversations about what they have read are the most efficient ways to understand what students know and can do, and where they need extra practice or other supports to access grade-level work. The point of assessment in this use case isn't to generate data about what students get right and wrong, it's to understand how to support students as they work. A single multiple choice item will not provide that, nor will a single generalized "reading comprehension" test or "reading skills" test. Targeted periodic checks used strategically throughout the year can. Three specific areas of literacy development, supported by the research, warrant strategic assessment in the upcoming year:

- **In grades K–2: ongoing measurement of foundational skills to support students' decoding and fluency development.** A settled body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is critical to early childhood instruction because most students depend on it to learn to read and write in English. This translates into teaching students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002). For example, in grades K–1, at the end of each week, teachers can administer a 10 word dictation activity which asks students to encode seven words that use the weeks taught sound/spelling patterns and three words that focus on previously taught sound and spelling patterns (using a mix of pseudo and real words) to identify students who need additional support in mastering taught sound/spelling patterns.

- **In grades 2–12: periodic measurement of fluency with grade-level text to monitor progress and provide additional supports.** Research shows that reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995). Administering fluency checks at the beginning of the year with grade level text, (and readministering checks as needed throughout the year), allows teachers to identify students who need specific, targeted support to fluently read grade-level text. Such checks should attend to students’ use of appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression using nationally verified norms. Teachers can administer additional regular fluency checks in lots of low-stress ways (e.g., choral reading, buddy reading).
- **In grades K–12: pre-assessing knowledge of the topics of the complex texts under study to determine how to bring students into the unit of study, not whether to bring them into it.** Research is clear that students’ knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988). The very purpose of such targeted checks is to identify students who may need additional opportunities to build their knowledge about topics under study. For example, at the beginning of each unit, teachers can ask students to share what they know about the topic of each unit. This should be informal and brief (e.g., “tell me what you know about sea mammals”). Such pre-checks should not take more than 20 minutes of instructional time or be graded.

Though these three areas do not represent the entirety of students’ literacy development, time is a precious resource and is especially so in the upcoming year. Periodically monitoring and tracking student progress in these three areas will give teachers concrete information that can inform vital instructional decisions.

This approach is being proposed as a deliberate alternative to assessment choices that have the potential to serve as a gatekeeper to grade-level content. It also deliberately recognizes the very real social-emotional needs of students—particularly students who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. After such major disruptions, it is essential that students engage immediately and consistently in the affirmative act of learning new content, not be deemed deficient because of events outside of their control. Regarding administering tests too soon, the Council of the Great City Schools notes in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures* that “testing appears to put the onus of learning losses on the students themselves—the resulting label of ‘deficient’ or academically behind may very well further alienate and isolate the students who most need our support” (CGCS, 2020).

The tables that follow include a description of what to do, why to do it, and specific suggestions within each grade band for how to integrate social-emotional academic development into ELA/literacy instruction.

## Grades K–1 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

Learning new language skills, particularly how to read, is a hallmark of kindergarten and grade 1. Students learn about the alphabet and its role in reading. They learn how to listen carefully to the sounds inside words: to play with those sounds, to rhyme. They learn to match words with beginning sounds, blend sounds into words, and use a whole range of word analysis skills. Lots of practice with all these foundational skills are potent steps toward their becoming joyful and competent readers. Through regular opportunities to think, talk, and write about rich stories and other read-aloud books, students' vocabulary and knowledge about how the world works grow exponentially. They learn to confer with their peers about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others, asking questions to clear up confusions, and following rules for discussions. Students also begin to experiment with writing and are encouraged to use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas, and feelings.

### Teach Students to Read (K–1)

#### Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice

*See RF.1, RF.2, RF.3 and RF.4 for grades K–1 guidance.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Utilize a systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills lessons that follows a carefully designed progression, ideally 45 minutes to 60 minutes daily.<sup>20</sup>
  - Focus time and attention on phonological and phonemic awareness starting in early kindergarten with an increasing emphasis on phonics in early/mid-K through grade 3.
- Instructional time to include:
  - explicit teacher modeling of new content.
  - opportunities for student practice of targeted skill(s) through speaking, reading, writing, and/or listening.
  - reading of decodable text (sentences or text containing previously taught sound/spelling patterns and high-frequency words) that students read and reread for automaticity/accuracy.\*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect traditional school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

<sup>21</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

### Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts

*See RF.4 for grades K–1 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Model and support fluent reading by reading with students (echo reading and choral reading) and listening to students as appropriate throughout daily reading instruction.
- Focus on decoding grade-appropriate texts with accuracy and automaticity before moving to a focus on fluency.
- Incorporate regular, repeated reading practice (e.g., 10–20 minutes daily) with decodable texts to support accuracy and automaticity with taught sound and spelling patterns.\*
- Even when improving fluency is the focus, ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed.\*

### Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress

*See RF.1, RF.2, RF.3, and RF.4 for grades K–1 guidance.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Administer brief diagnostic screener at the beginning of the year and at periodic checkpoints throughout the school year:
  - Prioritize letter inventory, phonological awareness, and grade-level-appropriate sound and spelling patterns for each student
- Collect formative data during daily lessons (e.g., checklists, sampling dictation responses, monitoring of student work); respond to data and adjust instruction accordingly. Ensure frequent opportunities to formatively assess:
  - students’ phonological awareness, connecting to phonics as appropriate.
  - students’ ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level-appropriate phonics instruction.
- Support students’ decoding and fluency development through additional small group or individual support; opportunities to amplify or embed practice with needed skills within existing instruction or practice opportunities; modified student practice or scaffolds.\*

### Facilitate SEAD (Social, Emotional, and Academic Development) Through Building of Foundational Reading Skills

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Promote a sense of belonging by including language routines, such as choral reading and word games, so students see themselves as a part of a learning community.

- Empower students to monitor their own decoding skills and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Engage students in reading and rereading to build habits as increasingly independent readers.

## Rationale and Research

### **Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice**

- A body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is a critical part of early childhood instruction, and it is crucial for students as they are learning to read and write in English (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
- This means supporting students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002).

### **Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts**

- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Fluent reading depends on a reader's understanding of the orthographic relationships that form the basis of decoding.

### **Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress**

- Overall reading fluency in elementary school readers is a good predictor of reading comprehension in the secondary school years (Stanley et al., 2017). To ensure fluency develops, it is critical that frequent, ongoing, informal assessment of taught foundational skills takes place and immediate re-teaching and support be provided if needed.

## Keep Text at the Center of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction

### Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts through Read-Aloud

*See Appendix A for guidance<sup>22</sup> for text read aloud in grades K–1.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Focus all students on the same rich, read-aloud anchor texts (as defined by the chart below) multiple times a week, as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.
- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with the anchor texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc. <sup>\*23</sup>

Grade Band	Lexile Range
K–1	Texts for read-aloud should be in the 2–3 band (or higher)
2–3	420–820 Texts for read-aloud only should be in the 4–5 band (or higher)
For all grade bands also consider qualitative features (such as levels of meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands) as well as readers and tasks.	

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix A from the CCSS.

<sup>23</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts."

## Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

*See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Text Evidence.*

### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the anchor text read aloud to build understanding.
- Create text-based tasks that take varied forms (e.g., drawing, discussion, writing, dramatic play, speaking).\*

## Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

*See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.*

### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Use text-based questions/tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

## Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts

*See SL.1 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.*

### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions about anchor texts—daily if possible—for students to process and extend their learning:
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.\*
  - Ask students to reflect on each other’s thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others’ perspectives.\*
- Step in (and out) of discussions to keep students focused and encourage them to construct longer and deeper responses.\*

## Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts

*See W.8 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Recall Information From Provided Sources.*

### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading (or listening to) to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.\*
- Include writing tasks connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.\*
- Reserve non-text-based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).\*
- Support students to make use of knowledge gained from the anchor text in their writing without requiring direct text evidence.
- Within these writing opportunities, address and support students' ability to demonstrate command of writing and conventions, including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

## Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure that the richness and complexity of texts read aloud are regularly available to every student, and that community is built by reading and listening to texts as a learning community.
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

## Rationale and Research

### Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts through Read-Aloud

- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).
- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. As a result, leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

### Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction.

### Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print (Adams, 2011).

### Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts

- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

### Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts

- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

## Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Across Content Areas

### Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics

*See W.8 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts to build students’ knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.

Grade	Literary	Informational
K–1	50%	50%

- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support. This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across ELA, science, history, and the arts.\*<sup>24</sup>
- Eliminate skills-paced calendars and generalized theme-based units in favor of organizing units around topics that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading.

### Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics

*See W.8 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See also SL.1 for specific guidance for grades K–1 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from grades K–1 – Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

<sup>24</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts.”

- Regularly ask students to participate in shared research tasks where they explore multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)\*
- Promote independent reading by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts.\*
- Ask students to integrate what they have just read or listened to with what they have read or listened to previously to build a more coherent understanding of a topic.
- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.\*

### **Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts**

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others.

### **Rationale and Research**

#### **Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics**

- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

#### **Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics**

- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications. (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

## Grades 2–3 ELA/Literacy Consideration for the 2020–21 School Year

Students in grades 2 and 3 become more independent readers and writers. These are pivotal years for students; automating the patterns they learned in K and 1 so they read with fluency and confidence will serve as a foundation for the reading demands in later grades. Students continue to learn and practice rules for matching sounds to letters that make up words, and they learn new concepts—such as words that share the same root (e.g., add and additional)—that help them figure out the meanings of new words. They also come to appreciate that some words and phrases have meanings that are not literal (e.g., a piece of cake, hang in there). Recognizing and understanding words help students read increasingly challenging stories and books and continue to build knowledge about the world. In addition to reading stories, students spend time with books or articles on subjects such as science, history, and the arts. Writing becomes an exciting way for students to use newly learned words and phrases to express ideas. They are writing clear sentences and paragraphs on a range of topics, drawing on an expanding vocabulary. They also become more confident speakers and listeners as they learn to paraphrase, clarify, explain, and report on information they hear.

### Teach Students to Read (2–3)

#### Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice

*See RF.3 and RF.4 for specific guidance for grades 2–3.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Utilize a systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills lessons that follows a carefully designed progression, ideally 45 minutes to 60 minutes daily for grade 2 and as students’ decoding and fluency development demands in grade 3.<sup>25</sup>
  - Focus time and attention on phonemic awareness starting in early kindergarten with an increasing emphasis on phonics in early-/mid-K through grade 3.
  - Emphasize fluency in grades 2 and 3.
- Instructional time to include:
  - explicit teacher modeling of new content.
  - opportunities for student practice of targeted skill(s) through speaking, writing, and/or listening.

<sup>25</sup> Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect traditional school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

- in grade 2, some reading of decodable text (sentences or text containing previously taught sound/spelling patterns and high-frequency words) that students read and reread for fluency.
- in grade 3, reading mostly grade-level complex text. Support students phonics development through use of decodable text only as needed.\*

### Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts

*See RF.4 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Model and support fluent reading by reading with students (echo reading and choral reading) and listening to students as appropriate throughout daily reading instruction.
- Select an excerpt from grade-level anchor text at the center of instruction for fluency practice. Allow for regular repeated reading to build accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
- Incorporate engaging, focused fluency activities.
- In grade 2, allow for reading fluency practice work (e.g., 10–20 minutes daily if possible) with decodable texts that match the taught sound and spelling patterns (see foundational skills for details).\*
- Even when improving fluency is the focus, ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed.\*<sup>26</sup>

### Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress

*See RF.3 and RF.4 for specific guidance for grades 2–3.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Administer brief diagnostic screener at the beginning of the year and at periodic checkpoints throughout the school year.
  - Prioritize assessing grade-level-appropriate sound and spelling patterns and reading fluency with grade-level text.
- Collect formative data during daily lessons (e.g., checklists, sampling dictation responses, monitoring of student work); respond to data and adjust instruction accordingly. Ensure frequent opportunities to formatively assess:
  - students’ ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level-appropriate phonics instruction in grade 2.
  - fluency with grade-level text (including decodable texts in grade 2).

<sup>26</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts.”

- Support students’ decoding and fluency development through additional small group or individual support; opportunities to amplify or embed practice with needed skills within existing instruction or practice opportunities; modified student practice or scaffolds.\*

### **Facilitate SEAD (Social, Emotional, and Academic Development) Through Building of Foundational Reading Skills**

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Promote a sense of belonging by including language routines, such as choral reading and word games, so students see themselves as a part of a learning community.
- Empower students to monitor their own decoding skills and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Engage students in reading and rereading to build habits as increasingly independent readers.

### **Rationale and Research**

#### **Systematic, Explicit Foundational Skills with Ample Time for Practice**

- A body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is a critical part of early childhood instruction, and it is crucial for students as they are learning to read and write in English (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
- This means supporting students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002).

#### **Fluency Practice With Grade-Appropriate Texts**

- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Fluent reading depends on a reader’s understanding of the orthographic relationships that form the basis of decoding.

#### **Formative Assessments to Modify Instruction Based on Student Progress**

- Overall reading fluency in elementary school readers is a good predictor of reading comprehension in the secondary school years (Stanley et al., 2017). To ensure fluency develops, it is critical that frequent, ongoing, informal assessment of taught foundational skills takes place and immediate re-teaching and support be provided if needed.

**Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of  
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction**

**Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts**

*See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance for grades 2–3.*

**Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices**

- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts multiple times a week, as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.
- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with the anchor texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc.\*<sup>27</sup>

Grade Band	Lexile Range
2–3	420–820
	Texts for read-aloud only should be in the 4–5 band (or higher)
4–5	740–1010
When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).	

<sup>27</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts.”

### Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

*See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 2–3 – Text Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text (read or listened to) and build understanding.
- Create text-based tasks that take varied forms (e.g., drawing, discussion, writing, dramatic play, speaking).\*
- Allow time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions of what is read.

### Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

*See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Use text-based questions/tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

### Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts

*See SL.1 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions about anchor texts—daily if possible—for students to process and extend their learning.\*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.\*
  - Ask students to reflect on each other’s thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others’ perspectives.\*
- Step in (and out) of discussions to keep students focused and encourage them to construct longer and deeper responses.\*

### Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts

*See W.8 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Recall Information From Provided Sources.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading (or listening to) to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.\*
- Include writing tasks connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.\*
- Reserve non-text based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in -(reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).\*
- Support students to ground their writing in knowledge gained and evidence from the anchor text.
- Within these writing opportunities, address and support students' ability to demonstrate command of writing and conventions, including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

### Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure that the richness and complexity of grade-level text is regularly available to every student, and no student is denied such access through the exclusive practice of assigning leveled or alternative texts.
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

## Rationale and Research

### Regular Close Reading of Complex, Anchor Texts

- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).
- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. As a result, leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

### Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction.

### Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print. (Adams, 2011).

### Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Anchor Texts

- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

### Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Anchor Texts

- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

### Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Across Content Areas

#### Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics

*See W.8 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*

##### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts to build students’ knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support. This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across ELA, science, history, and the arts.

Grade	Literary	Informational
2–3	50%	50%

#### Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics

*See W.8 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See also SL.1 for specific guidance for grades 2–3 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 for specific guidance for grades 2–3– Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.*

##### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Regularly ask students to participate in shared research tasks where they explore multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)\*<sup>28</sup>
- Promote independent reading by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts.\*

<sup>28</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Across Content Areas.”

- Ask students to integrate what they have just read or listened to with what they have read or listened to previously to build a more coherent understanding of a topic.
- Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.\*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and chosen by students.

### **Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts**

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students’ existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others.

### **Rationale and Research**

#### **Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics**

- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students’ knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Nonfiction texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students’ cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

#### **Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics**

- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).
- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

## Grades 4–5 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

Building the stamina and skills to read widely and deeply from a range of challenging fiction, informational texts, and other materials is fundamental to grades 4 and 5. Building knowledge about subjects through informal research projects and responding analytically to literary and informational sources in history, science, and the arts are key to students' continuing success. Through wide reading on a topic and attention to vocabulary, students learn variations in word meanings: synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and words with more than one meaning. Students solidify fundamental language skills as they use roots, prefixes, or suffixes to analyze the meanings of complex words. Students also make essential strides in their ability to explain plainly and in detail what books say—both explicitly and what is implied from its details. By devoting significant time and effort to producing numerous written pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year, students are writing effective summaries, book reports, essays, and descriptions of characters or events.

### Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction

#### Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts

*See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts, multiple times a week,<sup>29</sup> as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.

<sup>29</sup> Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect in school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with grade-level texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc.\*<sup>30</sup>

Grade Band	Lexile Range
4–5	740–1010
When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).	

### Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

*See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Text Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text and build understanding.
- Design instruction to cultivate every student’s ability to read carefully and grasp information—both what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.
- Encourage students to cite specific text evidence (quotes and examples) when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener and constructively evaluating others’ use of evidence.\*
- Provide time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions.

### Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

*See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

<sup>30</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled, *Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts*.

- Use text-based questions and tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

### Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design daily opportunities for students to process and extend their learning through collaborative, small-group, or partner text-based discussions.\*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.\*
  - Have students reflect on each other's thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others' perspectives.\*

### Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*See W.9 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Writing to Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they're writing.\*
- Include writing assignments connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.\*
- Reserve non-text-based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).\*
- Vary writing assignments (short on-demand pieces or longer multi-day pieces) throughout the week, if possible.

### Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*Extend RF.4 through grades 4–5 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Engage in fluency exercises—daily if possible—through regular and repeated readings of texts.
- Attend to prosody (pitch, stress, and timing) as students read aloud.
- Fulfill public speaking demands by having students select grade-level seminal texts and speeches to practice and perform with peers.\*
- Ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed, even when improving fluency is the focus.

### Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express their comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Include collaborative conversations that require students to integrate the perspective of their peers into their own critical thinking.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

### Rationale and Research

#### Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts

- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).

- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. Leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

#### **Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading**

- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

#### **Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax**

- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print (Adams, 2011).

#### **Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

#### **Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

#### **Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Reading prosody and word identification accuracy predicts more than half of the variance in a standardized test of reading comprehension administered to struggling ninth-grade readers. Many students can experience reading improvement in minutes (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

**Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Under Study in ELA, History, Science, and Technical Subjects**

**Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics**

*See W.8 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts or topic under study to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.\*<sup>31</sup> This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across content areas of ELA, science, history, the arts, and technical subjects.

Grade	Literary	Informational
4–5	50%	50%

**Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics**

*See W.8 for specific guidance from each grade level – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 4–5 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from each of grades 4–5 – Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.*

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Ask students regularly to research, then express—orally and in writing—information gained from multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic.\*
- Promote independent reading, by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)\*

<sup>31</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' belonging and safety, sense of efficacy, and growth mindset as well as a sense that what they are learning has value and relevance. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts."

- Integrate what students have just read (and learned) with what they have previously read (and learned) to build a more coherent understanding of a topic. Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.\*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and texts chosen by students.

### Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others or after recognizing independently that another approach is indicated in light of audience and purpose.

### Rationale and Research

#### Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics

- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students' knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students' cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

#### Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics

- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).
- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

## Grades 6–8 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

In the middle school grades, students analyze, define, compare, and evaluate ideas with more precision when reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of a range of more challenging books and articles as they address various topics. In particular, students’ ability to cite specific evidence and make use of the academic language and knowledge they’ve encountered in their own reading when writing in response to texts matures. As they work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, students also learn to question an author’s or speaker’s assumptions and assess the accuracy of his or her claims. Students continue to expand their vocabularies and use new words in their stories, reports, and essays. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to readers or listeners or constructively evaluating others’ use of evidence. This ability helps students in every facet of their studies.

### Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction

#### Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts

*See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts multiple times a week<sup>32</sup> as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.
- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with grade-level texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc. <sup>\*33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect in school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions allow.

<sup>33</sup> Asterisk (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts.”

Grade Band	Lexile Range
6–8	925–1185
When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).	

### Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

*See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Text Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text and build understanding.
- Design instruction to cultivate every student’s ability to read carefully and grasp information—both what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.
- Encourage students to cite specific text evidence (quotes and examples) when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener and constructively evaluating others’ use of evidence.\*
- Provide time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions.

### Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

*See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Use text-based questions and tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this, rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—and daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

### Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design daily opportunities for students to process and extend their learning through collaborative, small-group, or partner text-based discussions:\*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.\*
  - Have students reflect on each other’s thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others’ perspectives.\*
  - Teach the language of argumentation to facilitate students taking positions on what they’re reading and hearing from others.\*

### Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*See W.9 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Writing to Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they’re writing.\*
- Include writing assignments connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.\*
- Reserve non-text-based writing prompts to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, write personal stories).\*
- Vary writing assignments (short on-demand pieces or longer multi-day pieces) throughout the week, if possible.

### Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*Extend RF.4 through grades 6–8 – Fluency of Grade-Level Text.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Engage in fluency exercises—daily if possible—through regular and repeated readings of texts. (This includes all students except those who demonstrate oral fluency with grade-level texts.)
- Attend to prosody (pitch, stress, and timing) as students read aloud.
- Fulfill public speaking demands by having students select grade-level seminal texts and speeches to practice and perform with peers.\*
- Ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed, even when improving fluency is the focus.

### Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express their comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Include collaborative conversations that require students to integrate the perspective of their peers into their own critical thinking.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

### Rationale and Research

#### Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts

- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).

- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. Leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

#### **Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading**

- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

#### **Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax**

- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print. (Adams, 2011).

#### **Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

#### **Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

#### **Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Reading prosody and word identification accuracy predicts more than half of the variance in a standardized test of reading comprehension administered to struggling ninth-grade readers. Many students can experience reading improvement in minutes (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

**Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Under Study in ELA, History, Science, and Technical Subjects**

**Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics**

*See W.8 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*

**Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices**

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts or topic under study to build students' knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.\*<sup>34</sup> This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across content areas of ELA, science, history, the arts, and technical subjects.

Grade	Literary	Informational
6–8	45%	55%

**Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics**

*See W.8 for specific guidance from each grade level – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 6–8 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from each of grades 6–8 – Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.*

**Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices**

<sup>34</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students' belonging and safety, sense of efficacy, and growth mindset as well as a sense that what they are learning has value and relevance. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled "Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts."

- Ask students regularly to research, then express—orally and in writing—information gained from multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic.\*
- Promote independent reading, by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)\*
- Integrate what students have just read (and learned) with what they have previously read (and learned) to build a more coherent understanding of a topic. Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.\*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and chosen by students.

### Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students’ existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others or after recognizing independently that another approach is indicated in light of audience and purpose.

### Rationale and Research

#### Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics

- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students’ knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students’ cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

#### Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics

- Building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

## Grades 9–12 ELA/Literacy Considerations for the 2020–21 School Year

At this level, students are expected to understand more from and make fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of text evidence to support their inferences. As they address different aspects of the same topic, students make more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within (and across) books, essays, articles, or other resources. Students learn to evaluate intricate arguments and surmount the challenges posed by complex written materials and other resources independently and confidently. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, they expand their literary and cultural knowledge and better understand references and images. They also work to develop the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce logical, well-reasoned writings and presentations that are supported by evidence. By writing and participating in a variety of conversations, they will practice asserting and defending claims and showing what they know about a subject using appropriate examples and evidence. These literacy practices that allow students to gain knowledge and skills through the careful study of texts and topics are not only left to ELA, but should also find their rightful place as practices required by the disciplines in science, technical subjects, history, and social studies.

### Keep Grade-Level Complex Text at the Center of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Instruction

#### Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts

*See RL.10 and RI.10 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Focus all students on the same rich, grade-level anchor texts as defined by the quantitative chart below and the qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands). Focus on these anchor texts multiple times a week<sup>35</sup>, as school disruptions allow.
- Organize units around conceptually-related topics (and content-rich themes for literary texts) that build knowledge through anchor texts and volume of reading. Set aside skills-paced calendars.

<sup>35</sup> Suggestions included throughout on the regularity with which practices should be undertaken reflect in school times and patterns. These should be moderated as school disruptions require.

- Provide and adjust instructional scaffolds so every student can engage with grade-level texts, rather than restrict students to texts at their prescribed independent reading level. Scaffolds could include building knowledge about the topic of the text under study, providing access to texts read aloud, etc. <sup>\*36</sup>

Grade Band	Lexile Range
9–10	1050–1335
11–CCR	1185–1385
When selecting anchor texts, also consider qualitative features of texts (such as meaning, structure, language, and knowledge demands).	

### Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading

*See RL.1 and RI.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Text Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Provide sequences of questions that engage students deeply with the text and build understanding.
- Design instruction to cultivate every student’s ability to read carefully and grasp information—both what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from texts.
- Encourage students to cite specific text evidence (quotes and examples) when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener and constructively evaluating others’ use of evidence.\*
- Provide time for students to engage meaningfully with the anchor text by reading or rereading portions.

### Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax

*See RL.4, RI.4, L.4, L.5 and L.6. for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Vocabulary and Syntax Important to Comprehension or Expression.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

<sup>36</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts.”

- Use text-based questions and tasks to focus on academic and domain-specific words that merit more attention (e.g., critical for understanding the text, part of large word families). Do this rather than memorizing text-agnostic word lists.
- Provide supplemental practice on text-based vocabulary through games, exercises, and focus on word parts and their morphology.
- Encourage the use of the targeted words from the anchor text throughout discussions and writing assignments.
- Regularly—daily if possible—choose one complex and compelling sentence from the anchor text to deconstruct and reconstruct with students.

### Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Design daily opportunities for students to process and extend their learning through collaborative, small-group, or partner text-based discussions.\*
  - Make strategic use of peer partnerships to promote as much productive talk as possible.\*
  - Have students reflect on each other’s thinking using evidence, as well as considering and challenging others’ perspectives.\*
  - Teach the language of argumentation to facilitate students taking positions on what they’re reading and hearing from others.

### Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*See W.9 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Writing to Evidence.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Connect writing to what students are reading to deepen comprehension, check for understanding, and ensure all students have equal access to the topic on which they’re writing.\*
- Include writing assignments connected to the literary texts students are reading that target perspective-taking and exploring the emotions and motivations of characters as an on-ramp to self-exploration and reflection.\*
- Reserve non-text-based writing tasks to advance specific goals rooted in social-emotional learning (reflect on feelings, foster artistic expression, writing personal stories).\*
- Vary writing assignments (short on-demand pieces or longer multi-day pieces) throughout the week, if possible.

### Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts

*Extend RF.4 through grades 9–12 – Fluency of Grade Level Text.*

#### Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Engage in fluency exercises—daily if possible—through regular and repeated readings of texts. (This includes all students except those who demonstrate oral fluency with grade-level texts.)
- Attend to prosody (pitch, stress, and timing) as students read aloud.
- Fulfill public speaking demands by having students select grade-level seminal texts and speeches to practice and perform with peers.\*
- Ensure students have time to discuss the meaning of the text and address text-based vocabulary as needed, even when improving fluency is the focus.

### Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives, or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express their comprehension, knowledge and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Include collaborative conversations that require students to integrate the perspective of their peers into their own critical thinking.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

### Rationale and Research

#### Regular Close Reading of Grade-Level Complex, Anchor Texts

- The complexity of the text is the element that most differentiates performance, not the skills supposedly captured in the verbs used to describe the skills (ACT, 2006).

- Providing readers not yet reading at grade level with complex texts improves their achievement. Leveled reading approaches are not based on evidence; those approaches stunt the growth of students' reading comprehension and create inequitable outcomes (Brown et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2000).
- Students cannot learn how to comprehend complex text independently unless they are given complex text to read (Shanahan et al., 2012).

### **Sequences of Text-Specific Questions and Tasks to Support Close Reading**

- Students (all people) understand and remember what they pay attention to and think about. Attending to evidence in text leads to understanding and retaining text content (Willingham, 2010).
- Text-dependent questions and tasks can also serve as a scaffold to ensure that students are fully understanding the text under study, keeping the text at the center of instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

### **Systematic Work with Text-Based Vocabulary and Syntax**

- Robust academic language gives students access to complex texts and allows them to write and communicate with precision. The things we know have to be named and described by words when encountered in print (Adams, 2011).

### **Frequent Evidence-Based Discussions About Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Evidence-based discourse with text-dependent questions is both a scaffold to and a goal of literacy development. Processing evidence found in text through oral discourse results in deeper comprehension of text than strategies-based approaches (McKeown et al., 2009).

### **Regular Evidence-Based Writing About Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Writing about what students have read, educators ensure that all students have the knowledge needed to focus on writing craft. (Hawkins et al., 2008).
- Writing about texts is one of the most effective things that students can do to improve their reading comprehension and knowledge (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010).

### **Fluency Practice With Grade-Level Anchor Texts**

- Reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).
- Reading prosody and word identification accuracy predicts more than half of the variance in a standardized test of reading comprehension administered to struggling ninth-grade readers. Many students can experience reading improvement in minutes (Paige & Magpuri-Lavell, 2014).

**Build Knowledge Through Reading, Writing, and Speaking about Topics Under Study in ELA, History, Science, and Technical Subjects**

**Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics**

*See W.8 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12 – Research and Wide Reading on Topics; CCSS-Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages.*

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

- Choose content-rich informational texts that are topically connected to the anchor texts or topic under study to build students’ knowledge about the topic and maximize their breadth of exposure to academic vocabulary.
- Offer students texts that span a range of complexity levels so they can read the texts independently, with peers, or with modest support.\*<sup>37</sup> This should include a balance of literature and informational texts across content areas of ELA, science, history, the arts, and technical subjects.

Grade	Literary	Informational
9–12	30%	70%

**Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics**

*See W.8 for specific guidance from each grade level – Research and Wide Reading on Topics. See SL.1 for specific guidance from each of grades 9–12– Conversations and Collaborations Centered on Evidence and Research. See also RI.9 from each of grades 9–12– Integrating Information and Knowledge From Texts on the Same Topic.*

Considerations for Instructional Content and Practices

<sup>37</sup> Asterisks (\*) are placed by instructional content and practice that contribute to students’ sense of belonging and safety, efficacy, value for effort and growth, as well as a sense of engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive. These reflect and bolster the samples included below in the section titled “Facilitate SEAD Through Close Reading of Complex Texts.”

- Ask students regularly to research, then express—orally and in writing—information gained from multiple texts and auxiliary resources (e.g., illustrations, video clips, maps) to build knowledge on a topic.\*
- Promote independent reading by providing options for students to choose topically connected texts. (These can be driven by student interest, topic of anchor text, and course content.)\*
- Integrate what students have just read (and learned) with what they have previously read (and learned) to build a more coherent understanding of a topic. Design collaborative, small-group, or partner discussions on topics for students to process and extend their learning.\*
- Add lightweight student accountability for regularly engaging in a volume of reading both assigned (related to the topics and themes being studied) and chosen by students.

### **Facilitate SEAD Through Research, Writing, and Speaking About a Volume of Topically Connected Texts**

Sample actions for how SEAD can be effectively integrated in ELA/literacy instruction:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students’ existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others or after recognizing independently that another approach is indicated in light of audience and purpose.

### **Rationale and Research**

#### **Regular Reading of Multiple Texts and Media on a Range of Conceptually Related Topics**

- Knowledge of a subject aids thinking, memory, and learning of new information (Willingham, 2006).
- Reading ability and knowledge about the world are tightly connected (Kintsch, 1998).
- Students’ knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).
- Informational texts are excellent sources from which students can learn about the world and how things work; they can be used to systematically build students’ cumulative knowledge over time (Hirsch, 2006).

**Regular Research, Discussion, and Writing About Topics**

- Building knowledge and domain- specific vocabulary play an essential role in the literacy development of students. To build this essential knowledge and vocabulary, students must read, analyze, discuss, and write about a range of conceptually coherent topics (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).
- It is through volume and range of writing that students gain mastery of a variety of writing skills and applications. (Burke & Gilmore, 2015; Willingham, 2010). When students do the grappling and the heavy-lifting, new skills and content stick.
- Students learn significantly more vocabulary when they read texts about conceptually coherent topics for a period of time (Cervetti et al., 2016; Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

## Appendix

### ELA/Literacy Selected Research: K–12

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