

1 Your students will read many genres.

Fifty percent will be “literary texts” like stories, myths, poems, plays, and fables. Fifty percent will be “informational texts,” such as literary nonfiction, history, science, and biography.

(All of these genres are in *Storyworks*.)



2 Your students will be challenged in their reading.

The emphasis on texts of all kinds that will stretch your students’ abilities is one of the most challenging aspects of Common Core. It’s all about “text complexity” and teaching students to navigate many different types of content.

(High-interest topics in *Storyworks* will help students make that stretch by engaging them from the outset.)

3 All answers need to be backed up with “text evidence.”

When responding to questions about a text, students will need to use examples or details from what they’ve read to back up their answers. Older students will have to quote directly from the text.

(All *Storyworks* writing prompts and quizzes require text evidence.)



4 You will get to know Norm Webb.

He’s a University of Wisconsin education professor. He created a “depth of knowledge” (DOK) framework for developing assessment questions that require increasing levels of reasoning. The bottom line: Students must be “close readers,” achieving a deep understanding of texts. To do well on Common Core tests, students will have



Norm



Bucky, the UW mascot

to become experts on making inferences, analyzing information, and drawing conclusions. (Don’t blame Norm for all this fuss—my son Leo goes to UW and says he is a very smart and nice man.) (*Storyworks* article structures help students develop close-reading skills; our activities and quizzes require higher-level reasoning skills.)

5 Not all skills are created equal.

Most likely you’re already covering all of the Common Core skills in some way. But Common Core turns some skills into superstars, including:

Theme (identifying, comparing, always while showing which details support the theme)

Comparing and Contrasting (within a text, across texts and genres)

Main Idea and Supporting Details (Older students need to find at least two main ideas in nonfiction texts.)

Summarizing (not only entire texts, but paragraphs, events, and procedures described within them)

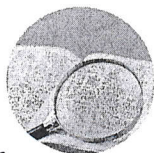
Text structures (cause/effect, problem/solution, chronological, compare/contrast; students must identify these structures and evaluate their effectiveness in organizing information)

Text features (interpreting photos, captions, headings, graphs, timelines, maps)

(These skills are already front and center in *Storyworks*.)

6 Get ready for more vocabulary.

The Standards demand that students be able to navigate texts with challenging vocabulary. There’s also an emphasis on “domain specific” vocabulary—words relating to content in specific fields such as science, social studies, and the arts.



7 Opinion writing takes center stage.

Common Core places special emphasis on developing logical arguments in writing. You’ll be asking students to defend their interpretations of a poem, take stands on a current issue, or support their claims about a scientific development, all by drawing on text evidence.

(*Storyworks* debates and writing prompts offer ample practice in opinion writing. Our persuasive-writing essay kit guides them step by step.)

8 You will be connecting ELA to science and social studies.

Common Core emphasizes content knowledge in science and social studies, so you will be looking

for reading material in these areas.

(*Storyworks* nonfiction articles are almost always drawn from social studies and science.)



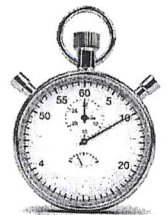
9 Grammar and usage are spelled out.

The Standards specify grade by grade the conventional language skills that students need to master, from verb tenses to quotation marks.

(Our *Wordworks* and *Grammar Cop* features reinforce language skills, and our activity sheets provide even more practice.)

10 You can get started.

There are some simple ways to start preparing yourself and your students. The most important, in my opinion, is getting kids used to finding text evidence. When you ask a question about a story or article, follow up with “how do you know?” Always have them point to examples and details from the text.



We’re continuing to explore the Standards and will be sharing our insights. If you’d like to talk to me directly about the Standards, I’d love to connect any time.