

Instructional Shifts

Introduction This guide explores the instructional shifts that are reflected in the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. It also shows how the instructional shifts are featured in ReadyGEN™—the all-new K–5 literacy curriculum for next-generation learning.

Six Instructional Shifts for ELA

The six instructional shifts in English language arts (ELA) are

1. balancing informational and literary text;
2. knowledge in the disciplines;
3. staircase of complexity;
4. text-based answers;
5. writing from sources; and
6. academic vocabulary.

Shift 1: Balancing Informational and Literary Text

The first instructional shift is balancing literary and informational text. To meet the goals of the Common Core Standards, students must read a true balance of 50% literary and 50% informational texts in the elementary grades. In ReadyGEN™, text sets are organized to reflect this balance.



Shift 2: Knowledge in the Disciplines

The second shift is knowledge in the disciplines, which requires that students build content knowledge about the world through text. The standards address reading and writing across the curriculum that complements the content standards in social studies and science.

The standards for Grades K–5 recommend that students build coherent knowledge both within the year and across the years. At Grades 6–12 there are specific literacy standards for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. The emphasis throughout the grades is on students building knowledge from reading.

In ReadyGEN™, unit topics are centered on Big Ideas linked to science and social studies standards and grow in sophistication across the grade levels.

**Shift 3:
Staircase of
Complexity**

The third instructional shift highlights the growing complexity of the texts students must read to be ready for the demands of college and careers in the 21st century.

The standards build a staircase of text complexity so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. Students read the central, grade-appropriate texts around which instruction is centered.

More time, space, and support in the curriculum exists for close reading of complex texts. ReadyGEN™ texts are aligned to the complexity requirements outlined in the standards.

Text Complexity Rubrics

Text Complexity Measure
Use the rubric to familiarize yourself with the text complexity of *Let's Visit the Moon*.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURES	
LEXILE	476L
AVERAGE SENTENCE LENGTH	7.68
WORD FREQUENCY	0.45
WORD COUNT	1187

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	
LEVELS OF MEANING	accessible concept, wide variety of facts about the moon
STRUCTURE	descriptive text structure; information about the moon organized around main ideas and supporting details
LANGUAGE CONVENTIONALITY AND CLARITY	content-specific vocabulary often defined in text; additional historical, geographic, and scientific terms may require additional support
THEME AND KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	understanding about space exploration to the moon, its history and importance

READER AND TASK SUGGESTIONS	
PREPARING TO READ THE TEXT	LEVELLED TASKS
Invite partners to talk about the moon and their last best piece of information they know or believe about the moon.	Work with children to create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the moon with Earth.

Instructional routines during the Close Reading Workshop provide opportunities for students to read like a detective to ensure that all students engage in close reading. Teachers will have a variety of scaffolding strategies so that all students can access complex text.

**Shift 4:
Text-Based
Answers**

The fourth instructional shift focuses on text-based answers. The reading standards emphasize students' ability to read closely and grasp information, arguments, ideas, and details based on text evidence.

Students should be able to answer a range of text-dependent questions in which the answers require inferences based on careful attention to the text itself. Students have rich and rigorous conversations that are dependent on a common text.

ReadyGEN™ uses focused, text-based questioning that provides opportunities for all students to deconstruct the text in order to more closely examine vocabulary, sentence structure, and the development of ideas.

Shift 5: Writing from Sources

The fifth instructional shift is writing from sources. The Common Core Standards place a premium on writing that emphasizes the use of evidence from sources to inform or make an argument. The standards require students to not only show that they can analyze and synthesize sources but also present careful analysis, well-defended claims, and clear information through their writing.

The screenshot shows a lesson page titled "Focused Reading Instruction" for Unit 5, Module 8. It includes several instructional sections: "Benchmark Vocabulary" with an introduction and teach steps; "Text-Based Conversation" with a collaborate step; "Team Talk" with a cite and support an opinion step; "Reading Analysis" with a read and answer questions step; "Independent Reading Practice" with a reading analysis step; and "Reading Wrap-Up" with a share written responses step. The page also features a sidebar with "Reading Objectives" and "Monitor Progress" instructions.

In ReadyGEN™, students write every day in response to multiple sources and make connections among ideas within and across texts. Students are taught to carefully analyze and synthesize sources and defend their claims through textual evidence.

Shift 6: Academic Vocabulary

The sixth instructional shift focuses on academic vocabulary. Students constantly build the transferable vocabulary they need to access grade-level complex texts.

A focus on academic vocabulary is found throughout the daily instruction in ReadyGEN™ with connected text sets and topics that link across grade levels.

The screenshot shows a lesson page titled "Benchmark Vocabulary" and "Close Reading". The "Benchmark Vocabulary" section includes an introduction, a teach step using a routine for informational text, and a monitor progress step. The "Close Reading" section includes a cite text evidence step with two bullet points: one about a diagram of the solar system and another about by-the-way words.