

## USER'S GUIDE: *WHY THE COMMON CORE?* *HOW THESE STANDARDS ARE DIFFERENT*

### Common Core Shifts for ELA/Literacy

1. Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**
2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in **evidence from text**, both literary and informational
3. **Building knowledge** through **content-rich nonfiction**

### Common Core Shifts for Math

1. **Focus** strongly where the Standards focus
2. **Coherence: Think** across grades, and **link** to major topics within grades
3. **Rigor**: In major topics, pursue **conceptual understanding**, procedural skill and **fluency**, and **application** with equal intensity

***Why the Common Core?: How These Standards Are Different*** is a **1 – 1.5 hour module** designed to provide participants with the background information necessary to understanding how the Common Core State Standards play a role in improving education. This module answers the question: how are these standards different than the latest versions of any individual state's standards? During this module, participants will look at the rationale for these standards and then an overview of the major math and ELA/literacy shifts required by the Common Core.

This module is a brief introduction to the Common Core State Standards and should be followed by additional PD Modules available on [achievethecore.org](http://achievethecore.org).

### ***What's In This Module?***

1. User's Guide
2. PowerPoint Presentation (20 slides, with user's notes).
3. PowerPoint Presentation for share-out (20 slides, does not include user's notes).
4. 2 Hands-on Activities
  - *Reflecting on the Common Core Shifts (for ELA/Literacy and for Math)*
  - *Reflecting on Actions to Implement the Common Core State Standards*
5. Related Readings/Research (6 documents)
  - [\*K-8 Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics\*](#)
  - [\*Progression Documents for the Common Core Math Standards\*](#)

- [Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades K - 2.](#)
  - [Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3 - 12.](#)
  - [Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix A](#)
  - [Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: New Research on Text Complexity](#)
6. Video Resources
  7. Web Resources

## Using This Module

You are encouraged to customize any or all portions of this module to meet the needs of your audience. These modules are intended to fit into a variety of different professional development settings; below are suggestions for implementation depending on the time available. All times are suggested and can be expanded to incorporate more discussion as needed. Any portions of this module may be modified, reproduced, and disseminated without prior permission.

If you have 1 hour...	If you have 1.5 hours or more...
1. Share the PowerPoint presentation and lead participants through one of the reflection activities.	1. Share the PowerPoint presentation and lead participants through both reflection activities.

## Suggested Module Delivery

1. **Share the PowerPoint Presentation and lead participants through the two guided reflection activities (1 ½ hours)**

*The PowerPoint presentation supports participants in understanding how the Common Core State Standards are different than typical state standards that preceded them. The module also includes an overview of the shifts. It is designed as either a first step in a series of professional development opportunities for educators or a strong foundation for outside stakeholders who may be wondering what the Common Core State Standards are all about. The module includes two frameworks to guide reflective processing of the shifts and potential action planning.*

- **Reflecting on the Common Core Shifts:** This is a very simple note-taking/reflection guide to support understanding of the shifts required by the Common Core State Standards. It can be modified to allow participants to fill in the language of the shifts, or you can provide that language as a user. This frame may also be offered as a note-taking guide to be completed during the

presentation or as a discussion guide integrated into the presentation to support a more interactive experience.

- **Reflecting on Actions to Implement the Common Core State Standards:** This framework guides participants toward reflection that leads to action steps following their processing and understanding of the shifts.

## 2. Share articles for post-reading

*The articles included in Related Readings/Research can be used in professional learning communities (PLCs) or as post-reading for this professional development session. These readings intend to support teachers' understandings of the intellectual and academic implications of the standards:*

- *Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for grades K-8 Mathematics.* This document is meant to guide purchasing and reviewing decisions, and establish quality criteria for materials used in the classroom. (Consider focusing on the Appendix, "The Structure in the Standards.")  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Math\\_Publishers\\_Criteria\\_K-8\\_Spring%202013\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Spring%202013_FINAL.pdf)
- *Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for High School Mathematics.* This document is meant to guide purchasing and reviewing decisions, and establish quality criteria for materials used in the classroom. (Consider focusing on the Appendix, "The Structure in the Standards.")  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Math\\_Publishers\\_Criteria\\_HS\\_Spring%2013\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Math_Publishers_Criteria_HS_Spring%2013_FINAL.pdf)
- *Progression Documents for the Common Core Math Standards*  
<http://ime.math.arizona.edu/progressions/>
- *Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades K - 2.* This document is meant to guide purchasing and reviewing decisions, and establish quality criteria for materials used in the classroom.  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers\\_Criteria\\_for\\_K-2.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers_Criteria_for_K-2.pdf)
- *Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3 - 12.* This document is meant to guide purchasing and reviewing decisions, and establish quality criteria for materials used in the classroom.  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers\\_Criteria\\_for\\_3-12.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers_Criteria_for_3-12.pdf)
- *Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix A*  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_A.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf)

- *Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: New Research on Text Complexity*  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813\\_Appendix\\_A\\_New\\_Research\\_on\\_Text\\_Complexity.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf)

### 3. Share Video Resources

- <http://vimeo.com/51933492>

*This three minute video, produced by the Council of Great City Schools, is a great introduction to the Common Core State Standards. It explains how the Standards will help students achieve at high levels and prepare them for college and careers.*

### 4. Share Web Resources

- [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org)

*This site is assembled by Student Achievement Partners to provide free, high-quality resources to educators now doing the hard work of implementing these higher standards.*

- <http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583&RDtoken=51120&userID>

*The PTA's Parents' Guide to Student Success (in English and Spanish) was developed in response to the Common Core State Standards. The Guide includes key items that children should be learning and activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.*

- [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

*The website that hosts the complete CCSS documents as well as a collection of related resources*

#### **Background on the Modules and the Common Core State Standards**

These modules have been designed for educators to use to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards were designed explicitly as a staircase in K-12 to college and career readiness. Many U.S. students—even those who pass their high school courses and their high school exit exams—still face remediation when they get to college because they are not prepared for entry-level coursework. A 2008 study by ACT showed that only 1 in 10 8th graders are on target to be ready for college-level work by the time they graduate from high school, and only 35 percent of U.S. 12th graders scored at or above the “proficient” level on the NAEP reading test in 2005. Furthermore, research shows that remediation is a trap from which many students don’t escape; the overwhelming majority of students who take remedial courses never complete college. The Common Core State Standards form a staircase to prepare students to be successful in college and their chosen career. If students successfully climb the staircase from kindergarten to 12th grade, they will then be truly ready for the demands that follow.

*Please submit any feedback on this module to [pdmodulefeedback@achievethecore.org](mailto:pdmodulefeedback@achievethecore.org)*



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