Common Core Knowledge and Practice Survey Report Companion

ELA/Literacy Grades 3-5

About

The Common Core Knowledge and Practice Survey (Survey) is a tool for educators to use to reflect on their instructional practice and understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Designed for use in a professional learning community (PLC) setting within a school, the Survey is meant to spark conversation, identify areas for growth, and offer concrete ways for teams of teachers to continue to align their practice to the Shifts. Following the administration of the Survey in a PLC, this resource can be used by coaches and teachers to better understand the Survey questions and their relationship to the Shifts.

The Survey was intentionally designed to take no more than 30 minutes. As a result, there are a limited number of questions pertaining to each aspect of the Shifts. When considering the performance of an individual or group on a Shift, it is important to look closely at the questions to tease out which aspect(s) of the Shift may be creating confusion. This resource is broken into two parts.

PART 1 : SURVEY

The Survey uses a variety of question types and formats to highlight specific features of the Standards and Shifts. It is intended to capture information from educators about their understanding of different elements of the Standards and how the Shifts manifest in planning and classroom instruction. Each Survey question will be followed by commentary. The "Purpose" section will offer information about why the question was included in the Survey. The "Rationale" section will explain the different response options.

Some of the Survey questions have correct answers because they ask about items that can be objectively verified. Other questions ask participants to apply their knowledge of the Shifts and Standards to a specific example or classroom scenario. For these questions, there may be circumstances in the course of instruction where any number of answer choices could be correctly applied; however, for the purpose of this Survey the correct answers are those actions that most closely tie instructional practice to the expectations of the Standards and Shifts. Finally, a subset of the questions about practice are designed to help illuminate what's currently happening in classrooms and schools, in order to facilitate conversation about what training or structures might support future work.

Each question will have a label to indicate which category the question relates to—one of the Shifts (Complexity, Evidence, Knowledge) or "Lesson Alignment." Questions that have one or more correct answers will have the correct response(s) indicated.

Shift of Complexity
Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

Shift of Knowledge
Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction

Shift of Evidence
Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational

LA Lesson Alignment
Knowledge and practice of strategies that align Common Core content to instruction

PART 2 : SHIFTS SUMMARY

Part two shows which questions relate to each category. Part two also includes discussion questions and resource recommendations intended to drive conversation and provide a starting point for next steps and long-term professional learning.

Part 1 : Survey

Q. 1–4
Shifts of Complexity and Knowledge

Questions 1–4 are reflection questions about a recent text read in the classroom. The exercise of considering how a text was chosen, how many students used the text and for what purpose, and what types of texts students are engaging with over the year is important for ensuring that students will be able to meet the expectations of the CCSS ELA/Literacy Standards. For more information refer to page 33 of the Standards.

Q. 5
Shift of Complexity

Question

Give the title of a text you recently taught to your class: _____

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

Common Core-aligned materials and instruction have a text at the center of a lesson. The text that is chosen is critically important to the purpose of the lesson. The next several questions are in relation to the text named by the teacher. When facilitating conversation about the Survey, it will be important to know which texts different teachers named in their responses.

Q. 6
Shift of Complexity

Question
Approximately how many students read/interacted with the text you identified in Question 5? (Select one.)

- ○ All
- ○ Most
- ○ Some
- ○ Few

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

In order for students to develop the skills necessary to read fluently and independently, they must read throughout the year. For all students, this reading should include multiple experiences with grade-level complex texts, as well as many other opportunities to build knowledge through a wide range and volume of texts of varying complexity. This question asks teachers to consider when and how students are being exposed to different types of text.

RATIONALE

Depending upon how the participants answered Question 5 (a text recently used), different answers might be appropriate for this question.

Q. 7
Shift of Complexity

Question

Select the category that <u>best</u> describes your text:

- ○ Poetry
- ○ Science fiction/Fantasy
- ○ Biography
- ○ Newspaper/Magazine
- ○ Other Fiction
- ○ Other Nonfiction

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

Students should have opportunities to read many different types of text throughout the year. In the higher grades, the Common Core emphasizes that students spend more time with nonfiction, informational texts. (Grades K–5 focus on 50% Literary and 50% Informational, while Grades 6–12 focus on 30% Literary and 70% Informational.) This expectation is not specific to the ELA/Literacy classroom; students should have exposure to nonfiction, informational texts through course work in all of their classes. The Standards are not alone in calling for a special emphasis on informational text. The 2009 reading framework of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) requires a high and increasing proportion of informational text on its assessment as students advance through the grades. This question asks teachers to consider what steps have been taken to ensure that students are reading a range and volume of literary and informational texts as recommended by the CCSS.

Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages by Grade in the 2009 NAEP Reading Framework

Grade	Literary	Informational
4	50%	50%
8	45%	55%
12	30%	70%

Source: National Assessment Governing Board. (2008). *Reading framework for the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

RATIONALE

Depending upon how the participants answered Question 5 (a text recently used), different answers might be appropriate for this question.

Q. 8
Shifts of Complexity and Knowledge

Question

Please select the category that <u>best</u> describes the text you identified in Question 5:

- ○ I chose (or helped choose) this text.
- ○ It is part of the district curriculum.
- ○ It is part of the school curriculum.
- ○ It is part of the state adopted curriculum.
- ○ It has been traditionally taught for this class.

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

Some texts may be required by a school, district, or state, while others may be at the discretion of the teacher or teacher team. In all cases, it is important that the purpose of that text is clear, and that it is part of a cohesive and intentional progression of instruction and learning that allows students to build proficiency in reading while building their knowledge and vocabulary. This question asks teachers to consider why specific texts have been chosen.

RATIONALE

Depending upon how the participants answered Question 5 (a text recently used), different answers might be appropriate for this question. If teachers indicate that they have recently used the same text, there should be agreement about why it is part of the curriculum, the purpose of using the text, and the relationship between the text and other materials students will be reading.

Q. 9
Shift of Complexity

Question

To what extent do you agree with the following statements as they apply to the text you identified in Question 5:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
(a) The text really engages my students.				
(b) The reading level is at the grade level that I am teaching.				
(c) The reading level is appropriate for the abilities of my students.				
(d) This text has worked well for me in the past.				
(e) The content of the text fits well within what we are studying.				

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

Students need regular practice reading in order to develop their comprehension skills, increase fluency, and build knowledge. This should include opportunities to persevere with appropriately complex, grade-level text as well as opportunities for reading at their independent reading level to build knowledge, comprehension, and stamina. This question asks teachers to consider why specific texts have been chosen.

RATIONALE

Depending upon how the participants answered Question 5 (a text recently used), different answers might be appropriate for these prompts. While there are benefits to choosing texts that engage students and have worked well in the past, it's critical to always know whether the text is on grade level or not – and why as well as whether the text provides information that fits well in the context of other planned instruction. If the choices for b) and c) above are always "strongly agree," consider carefully how the curriculum is balancing building student reading skills while also developing their content knowledge and vocabulary.

a) Student engagement is important, but will not on its own help students to develop their reading proficiency. It should be a consideration after the purpose of the reading and progression of the intended learning is identified.
b) Students need opportunities to experience appropriately complex grade-level text throughout the year; this needs to be balanced with opportunities for reading high volumes of other text to support knowledge building and fluency.
c) Allowing students to read at their own level can help them to build confidence while building knowledge, but it will not help them to further develop their reading skills. Students need opportunities to both read at their skill level and to tackle more difficult texts.
d) Similar to student engagement, teacher comfort and familiarity with a text is important, but will not on its own help students to develop reading proficiency. It should be a consideration after the purpose of the reading and progression of the intended learning is identified.
e) Cohesive content is a critical consideration when planning for the year, and should facilitate students' opportunities to engage with texts of varying complexity and knowledge building activities.

Question

The next set of questions asks about your last English Language Arts/Literacy unit. Please indicate the level of emphasis during that unit for each of the following activities:

	Not an emphasis	Minor emphasis	Major emphasis
(a) Reading a text			
(b) Discussing language author uses in text or themes or ideas found in the text			
(c) Relating a text to other texts			
(d) Making connections to student experiences			
(e) Discussing vocabulary words			
(f) Narrative/creative writing			
(g) Informational/persuasive writing			
(h) Foundational reading skills (K- 5)			
(i) Speaking and listening skills			
(j) Attending to grammar and writing conventions			
(k) Other *(please specify)*			

Correct Answers - N/A

PURPOSE

There are many pedagogical choices a teacher can make in supporting students with reading and understanding a text within a unit. This question details an array of instructional practices and asks teachers to identify which behaviors they exhibit in the classroom. Given the variety of decisions that can be made in different educational contexts, many of the answers above are valid. However, some instructional practices support the Standards more than others and should be at least a minor – and in some cases – a major emphasis in every unit. Others may appear at times throughout the year, but should be attended to more sparingly to ensure time and focus is spent on other critical skill and knowledge building. To learn more about Shifts-aligned instructional practice in the classroom, go to **www.achievethecore.org/instructional-practice**.

RATIONALE

The practices associated with the italicized sections below are those that a teacher fully implementing the Standards is likely to emphasize.

a) *The Standards encourage that text be central to instruction the vast majority of the time. Reading should be included in every unit, and it should be a major emphasis most of the time; other activities, such as writing, speaking, and listening should almost always be connected to text.*
b) *Discussing the characteristics of the text and ideas in the text is helpful for developing student understanding and should be included in some capacity whenever there is reading in a unit.*
c) The Standards name the ways in which students should be able to compare texts; this should be done regularly, but does not necessarily need to appear in every unit.
d) Connecting to student experience can increase engagement and understanding, and is a valid pedagogical tool. That said, it takes students outside of the text they are reading, and so it should be used in a more limited way and always with a clear purpose.
e) *Building vocabulary – academic and domain-specific – is critical to giving students access to more texts.*

Vocabulary should always be a component of reading instruction. To learn more about vocabulary and the Common Core, visit: http://achievethecore.org/page/974/vocabulary-and-the-common-core.

f) As with text-to-student connections, narrative and creative writing can be a useful way to engage students. This practice is emphasized less than other writing types in the Standards, and should be included less frequently and always with a clear purpose.

g) *Informational/persuasive writing requires students to use evidence and build arguments drawn from the text or other sources they are using. These practices are critical to the Common Core ELA/Literacy Standards because they are necessary skills for college and careers. This type of writing should be regularly practiced and emphasized throughout the year. To learn more about writing and the Common Core, visit:* www.achievethecore.org/in-common.

h) *Foundational reading skills are fundamental for K–5 learners; these skills need to be reinforced and practiced frequently, and they should appear in every unit throughout the year.*

i) The Standards are specific in their expectations about speaking and listening. Students need thoughtful opportunities to practice these, but they can be accomplished while primarily focusing on reading and understanding text. They do not need to be emphasized in isolation.

j) Similar to speaking and listening, grammar and writing conventions are important to the development of strong writing, but this instruction can be built into lessons that center on text. Writing skills do not need to be taught in isolation.

Q. 11
Shift of Complexity

Question

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your English Language Arts/Literacy teaching this school year.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
(a) I figure out additional structures and scaffolds for all of my students.					
(b) I deemphasize sections of the text if I think they are too difficult for my students.					
(c) I take challenging sections of the text and reword them so that my students can understand.					
(d) I provide more advanced texts for students who are reading above grade level.					
(e) In addition to the text, I provide easier texts for students who are reading below grade level.					
(f) The majority of texts I assign to my students are fiction.					
(g) All of my students read the same text.					

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

All students need regular practice with complex text and its academic language in order to build their reading skills. Generally, Standards-aligned practice encourages developing scaffolds and supports for all students, offering opportunities for on- and off-grade-level reading, and giving all students– even those who read below grade level – access to the same complex texts to read. While giving students simpler texts to replace complex texts or decreasing the complexity of a text by revising or redacting are commonly used instructional strategies which may be appropriate in specific contexts, those options keep students from fully accessing the appropriately complex grade-level text and developing their reading skills through that authentic exposure.

There are many ways to support struggling readers and offer them the scaffolds they require to be able to persevere through challenging text, and it's critical when offering such supports not to diminish student access to the actual text or the process of working through it. Students' reading of complex texts cannot improve if they are never given the opportunity to read complex texts. This question details an array of instructional practices and asks teachers to identify which behaviors they exhibit in the classroom. For more information on classroom discussion strategies, visit: http://www.edutopia.org/blog/rethinking-whole-class-discussion-todd-finley.

RATIONALE

The practices associated with the italicized sections below are those that a teacher fully implementing the Standards is likely to emphasize.

a) *When engaging in challenging texts, many students need scaffolds. CCSS-aligned practice does not prefer one approach over the other, as long as all students are being given authentic opportunities to unpack and make sense of the text for themselves. For additional information, visit: http://achievethecore.org/aligned/using-complex-texts-with-all-readers/.*

b) Deemphasizing challenging sections to make reading easier for students both limits their ability to develop their skills and has the potential to reduce engagement. Productive struggle is one strategy for drawing students into the content and showing them how their hard work can pay off.

c) Rewriting challenging texts has similar limitations to those described above. In addition, simplifying the vocabulary results in a missed opportunity for vocabulary development in context. Learning difficult words in the context of a piece of text gives students a foundation to build upon when they encounter the same word in other materials.

d) *All students should have authentic opportunities with challenging texts; for students reading above grade level, supplementing the on-grade-level texts with more advanced texts can encourage growth.*

e) *Text sets are collections of texts (and/or other media) focused on the same topic; they offer students the ability to develop critical content knowledge and build vocabulary as they move through a carefully sequenced set of progressively complex texts. Offering a less complex text to help a student build context knowledge and understanding while tackling a more complex text on the same topic is a good way to provide scaffolds while allowing students access to the same grade-level content their peers are reading. To find text sets for your classroom, visit: http://achievethecore.org/textsets.*

f) The Common Core expects students to experience a balance of fiction and informational text (see Question 7 for additional detail). If students receive a majority of fiction in one class, it's important that there is a focus on informational text in other classes.

g) *As stated above, it's important that all students have access to the same appropriately complex, grade-level text. This should be balanced with other texts students read during independent reading and while building knowledge. It is not necessary to have all students read all the same texts all the time.*

Question

In the bolded type area of the excerpt below, please circle the SIX different examples of academic vocabulary:

Basic Archaeology: What's a Midden?

It might sound a little silly, but archaeologists can find out a lot about people by looking through their trash.

People throw away things because those things aren't important or because the people have too much of those things already. By sifting through the garbage pile of a civilization, archaeologists can find out what was important to those people (or what they had too much of).

Why is this important? Sometimes, garbage is all that's left of a people. Especially if that people has been conquered by others, the buildings, tools, and food were probably consumed or destroyed long ago. A people's trash, especially if it was also trash to the invaders, might be left alone, enabling archaeologists to discover more about a people who left few clues to what they liked and didn't like.

Did they wear certain clothes? What kinds of food did they eat? What kind of tools did they use or throw away? Answers to all these questions can be found by sifting through a midden.

It could also be possible to find out more about a conquered people by searching the midden of their conquerors. Some invaders, not really knowing what's valuable to the people they're conquering, might very well throw away things that are extremely valuable. It is left to archaeologists to find these things and piece together the life stories of people long since conquered.

One person's trash could be another person's treasure.

Correct Answer - conquered, consumed, destroyed, invaders, enabling, certain

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PURPOSE

Academic vocabulary (also known as tier 2 vocabulary) words appear in many different contexts and are subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things, for example "relative" or "accumulate." They are often vital to comprehension, and frequently are part of a word family or semantic network. Tier 2 words can carry disproportionate weight in conveying the meaning of a text. For these reasons, the CCSS demand significant instructional attention to these words. This question asks teachers to identify the academic vocabulary in this passage. To generate a list of the academic vocabulary in any text, visit: www.achievethecore.org/academic-word-finder.

RATIONALE

When choosing which academic vocabulary to teach for any given text, the highest value words will be those most critical to understanding the main idea of the material. Other words that could have been added to the list for these reasons included "important" and "sifting."

Question

In the bolded type area of the excerpt below, please circle the <u>FOUR</u> different examples of domain-specific vocabulary:

Basic Archaeology: What's a Midden?

It might sound a little silly, but archaeologists can find out a lot about people by looking through their trash.

People throw away things because those things aren't important or because the people have too much of those things already. **By sifting through the garbage pile of a civilization, archaeologists can find out what was important to those people (or what they had too much of).**

Why is this important? Sometimes, garbage is all that's left of a people. Especially if that people has been conquered by others, the buildings, tools, and food were probably consumed or destroyed long ago. A people's trash, especially if it was also trash to the invaders, might be left alone, enabling archaeologists to discover more about a people who left few clues to what they liked and didn't like.

Did they wear certain clothes? What kinds of food did they eat? What kind of tools did they use or throw away? Answers to all these questions can be found by sifting through a midden.

It could also be possible to find out more about a conquered people by searching the midden of their conquerors. Some invaders, not really knowing what's valuable to the people they're conquering, might very well throw away things that are extremely valuable. It is left to archaeologists to find these things and piece together the life stories of people long since conquered.

One person's trash could be another person's treasure.

Correct Answer - civilization, people, archaeologists, midden

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PURPOSE

Domain-specific vocabulary words are particular to a certain subject or field of study. Students learn these words by reading a variety of texts around a topic which supports their knowledge building. This question asks teachers to identify domain-specific vocabulary in this passage.

RATIONALE

The domain-specific words selected are the words that name the content and knowledge described in this passage.

In choosing which words to emphasize during instruction, consider the connection between the most important academic language and the most important domain-specific language. If you take all the words you've chosen to emphasize and try to put them into a sentence or two, the result should be an articulation of the central idea of the passage.

Q. 14-17
Shift of Complexity

There are three steps to determine the complexity of a text. The first is to place it in a grade band using one of several known quantitative measures (Flesch-Kincaid, Lexile, etc.). Next, the text should be reviewed for grade-level appropriateness using several qualitative measures. Finally, the text must be assessed for its value given the reader and task.

The text included for questions 14-17 has a Lexile score of 980. Teachers were not asked to identify the quantitative measure of this text; instead, questions 14-17 refer to the qualitative measures and scale found in the SCASS rubrics here: http://achievethecore.org/text-complexity. Teachers were asked to demonstrate awareness and understanding of the key qualitative features of the passage.

There is an additional step a teacher would take before deciding to use a text for instruction, which involves considering the readers of the text and the tasks that accompany the text. To be clear, the ability of the reader does not have any bearing on whether the text is complex; the reader and task are considerations for determining when in the year it might make sense to introduce the text and how to support and engage students with a particular text.

A full analysis of the text included in the Survey can be accessed on achievethecore.org here: http://achievethecore.org/page/827/basic-archaeology-what-s-a-dig-and-what-s-a-midden-by-david-white-mini-assessment. On achievethecore.org and on this Survey, the text was analyzed for its qualitative features of complexity using the SCASS rubric. However, on achievethecore.org, additional reader and task considerations were used to determine recommended grade and time of year for the text to be utilized for instruction or assessment.
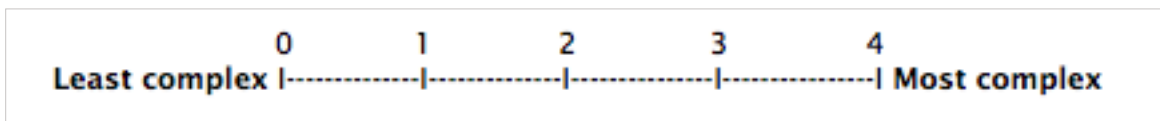
Q. 14
Shift of Complexity

Question
Based on the academic vocabulary and/or figurative language in the excerpted text, please determine the level of complexity of its CONVENTIONALITY and VOCABULARY. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

Definition of Conventionality and Vocabulary: Texts that include language that is explicit, literal, straightforward, and generally familiar tend to be easier to read than texts that include figurative, nuanced, archaic or otherwise unfamiliar language or an abundance of domain-specific vocabulary.

Correct Answer - Anywhere from 1-2 on the scale

PURPOSE

"Conventionality and vocabulary" is one of the criteria on the SCASS rubric for identifying the complexity of a text. The definition included in the Survey item explains the impact of language choice and what a teacher might look for when determining complexity.

RATIONALE

A range of 1-2 on the SCASS rubric is within the acceptable correct range. The language used in this excerpt is mostly literal, conversational, and conventional, which helps make the text accessible for students. The sentences are straightforward and vary between simple and complex. The vocabulary should mostly be familiar to students, and words that are unfamiliar are explained either directly or through use of context.
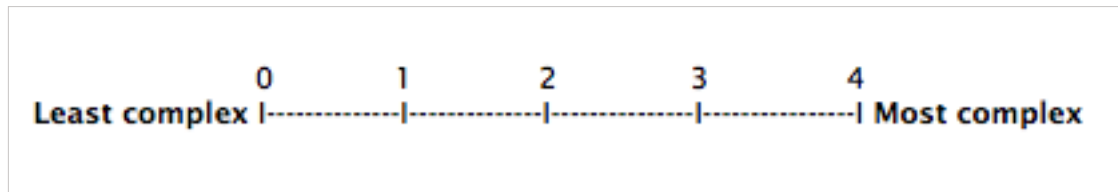
Q. 15
Shift of Complexity

Question

Please determine the complexity of the excerpt's ORGANIZATION and STRUCTURE. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

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              0         1         2         3         4
Least complex |---------|---------|---------|---------| Most complex
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Definition of Organization and Structure:

Less Complex – Organization of text and connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear. Structure is chronological or easy to predict. Graphics, if used, directly support and assist in interpreting the written text. Text features, if used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential to understanding.

More Complex – Organization of text is intricate with possible changes in narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, and storylines or can be specialized for a particular discipline. Connections between an extensive range of ideas or events may be implicit or subtle. Graphics are varied and may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text. Text features, if used, are essential in understanding content.

Correct Answer - Anywhere from 1-2 on the scale

PURPOSE

"Organization and structure" is one of the criteria on the SCASS rubric for identifying the complexity of a text. The definition included in the Survey item explains the ways in which these aspects of a text might make it more or less complex.

A range of 1-2 on the SCASS rubric is within the acceptable correct range. The main structure of this text is question/answer, but the author also uses cause and effect throughout. In answering the question presented in the title, the text explains what is found in a midden and why it is important.

Q. 16
Shift of Complexity

Question

Please determine the complexity of the excerpt's PURPOSE. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

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              0         1         2         3         4
Least complex |---------|---------|---------|---------| Most complex
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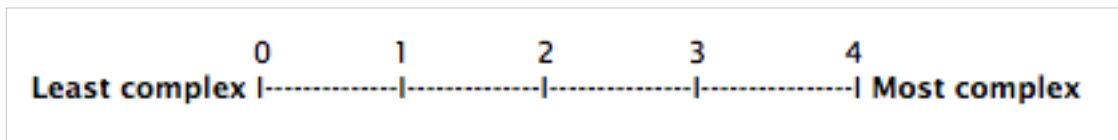
Definition of Purpose: Literary texts with a single level of meaning tend to be easier to comprehend than literary texts with multiple levels of meaning. Similarly, informational texts with an explicitly stated purpose are generally easier to comprehend than informational texts with an implicit, hidden, or obscure purpose.

Correct Answer - Anywhere from 2-3 on the scale

PURPOSE

"Purpose" is one of the criteria on the SCASS rubric for identifying the complexity of a text. The definition included in the Survey item explains how purpose can impact text complexity.

RATIONALE

A range of 2-3 on the SCASS rubric is within the acceptable correct range. Although the title implies that the main purpose is simply to explain what a midden is, the additional knowledge gained is an understanding of how archaeologists use the contents of a midden to learn about cultures that lived in the past.

Q. 17
Shift of Complexity

Question

Please determine the complexity of the excerpt's INTERTEXTUALITY/CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

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              0         1         2         3         4
Least complex |---------|---------|---------|---------| Most complex
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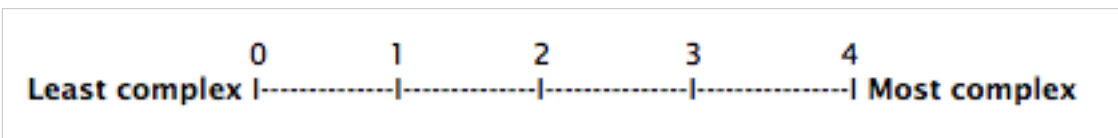
Definition of Intertextuality/Cultural knowledge: Texts that make few assumptions about the extent of prior knowledge and the depth of their cultural/literary and content/discipline knowledge are generally less complex than are texts that make many assumptions in one or more of those areas.

Correct Answer - Anywhere from 1-2 on the scale

PURPOSE
"Intertextuality/cultural knowledge" is one of the criteria on the SCASS rubric for identifying the complexity of a text. The definition included in the Survey item explains the ways in which prior knowledge demands impact complexity.

RATIONALE
A range of 1-2 on the SCASS rubric is within the acceptable correct range. No prior knowledge is needed to understand this text, as the author develops each point through sufficient use of evidence.

Q. 18
Shift of Complexity

Question
In the space provided, please write a few sentences explaining your rationale for your answers above.

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE
It is critical that teachers understand that these qualitative measures of text complexity refer to the demands of the text and not the ability of the reader. For instance, the intertextuality/cultural knowledge criterion is about identifying whether the text/author assumes that the reader has certain knowledge necessary to comprehending the text, which would make the text more complex. Alternatively, does the text/author provide explanations that give all of the necessary knowledge needed for understanding, which would make the text less complex? Basing judgement on the knowledge of the student or reader, rather than the demands of the text, could lead to an inaccurate assessment of complexity. For example, a teacher might say, "My students live on farms, so they won't understand a story about the graffiti art culture in Paris subways." Based on this, the teacher would mistakenly consider any text about graffiti art as "very complex" for her students because they lacked the background knowledge. However, if the author offered a lot of explanation about graffiti and included numerous of photos, the knowledge demands and, therefore, complexity of the text, would be significantly lower.

This question is not scored. It allows teachers to attach a rationale to their responses. We recommend teachers share their ideas and reflections on the qualitative aspects of text complexity with their PLCs as a collaborative learning opportunity.

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Q. 19
Shift of Evidence

Question

Suppose the questions below are used by teachers in a lesson about the excerpt. Please indicate if each one is text-dependent, or not.

	Text-dependent	Not text-dependent	I don't know
(a) Which sentence best states the main idea of "What is Midden?"			
(b) Which details from the article best support the idea that archaeologists can learn from people's trash?			
(c) Why is the study of archaeology important to our lives today?			
(d) What might future archaeologists find in the midden of your life?			

Correct Answers – a) text-dependent, b) text-dependent, c) not text-dependent, d) not text-dependent

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PURPOSE

Text-dependent questions are questions that can only be answered by referring to evidence provided in the text. Text-dependent questions help students analyze and delve into a text. This question asks teachers to identify questions that are text-dependent. To learn more about creating and evaluating text-dependent questions, visit: http://achievethecore.org/text-dependent-questions.

RATIONALE

a) A student would need to go back to the text and understand the main idea in order to answer this question.
b) This question requires that students find specific pieces of evidence ("details from the article") from the text in order to respond.
c) Although the topic of this question is related to the text, the question does not require the use of information from the text in order to answer.
d) This question would help a teacher to determine if students understood the word "midden," but it is a hypothetical question that does not require the student to know anything from the text.

Q. 20
Shift of Evidence

Question

Please indicate which of the following text-dependent questions is text-specific, or not.

	Text-specific	Not text-specific	I don't know
(a) Which sentence best states the main idea of "What is Midden?"			
(b) Which details from the article best support the idea that archaeologists can learn from people's trash?			
(c) Read the paragraph 3. Which point is the author supporting by including these sentences in the article?			

Correct Answers - a) text-specific, b) text-specific, c) not text-specific, d) not text-specific

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PURPOSE

Text-dependent questions help students analyze and delve into a text. Text-specific questions are also text-dependent, but address the unique text and no other by attending to its particular structure, language, concepts, ideas, and details. This question asks teachers to identify text-specific questions and to distinguish them from those that are text-dependent.

RATIONALE

A good analogy for the relationship between text-dependent and text-specific questions is that of rectangles and squares: while all squares are rectangles, not all rectangles are squares. All text-specific questions are text-dependent, but not all text-dependent questions are text-specific. Sometimes the content of a question may appear to be text-specific because it references a particular paragraph or the text as a whole, but if that exact question could be asked of another text, it is likely text-dependent but not text-specific.

a) This question asks the reader about the main idea of this specific text (the text itself is named in the question).
b) This question references specific points from this article and requires the reader to find "details from this article" to respond.
c) This question looks text-specific, but it is not. While the reference to paragraph 3 makes the answer text-dependent, this question could be asked of any text with three or more paragraphs.
d) Again, the reference to "this article" makes it seem as though the question is text-specific, but this same question, as currently phrased, could be applied to any article, making it text-dependent but not text-specific.

Q. 21
Shift of Evidence

Question

Based on the excerpt, please indicate the sequence of the following questions in the order that you would use to guide students to the central idea and development of the text.

a) What is a midden?
b) What are some things archaeologists may find in the garbage piles of past civilizations?
c) Going through the article, what are words that you would need to define to understand the author better?
d) Reading the article, what are some conclusions that archaeologists can draw from midden?
e) What would be other things you would want to ask the author about midden?

Correct Answer - c > a > b > d > e

PURPOSE

Text-dependent and text-specific questions are critical in guiding students through difficult parts of text and ensuring that they are both comprehending and building their understanding of critical concepts. In order to do this work effectively, there needs to be a series of questions structured to bring the reader to an understanding of the text, which requires that students be able to respond with examples of evidence from what they've read. The questions should be sequenced so as to guide students to the central idea and development of the text. This question asks teachers to consider the sequence of questions required to guide students to deeper understanding.

RATIONALE

In developing and sequencing questions to help students make meaning of text, start by determining the words that will be most difficult for students – particularly those that are critical to understanding the meaning of the text. Next, have students use those words to make an inference from or connect to the meaning of the text. Finally, have students use those words to infer beyond what's directly in the text.

c) Using this as the initial question requires students to go back to the text and identify places/words where they do not understand the meaning.
a) Midden is central to understanding this text. It's important that all students understand the meaning of this word, as it will be necessary for deriving deeper meaning from the article.
b) This question could be used to reinforce the meaning of the critical word, tie the word back to the text, and help a teacher ensure student understanding.
d) This question asks students to return to the text and demonstrate their understanding.
e) Finally, this question asks students to think beyond this specific text and make connections to related topics.

Q. 22
Shift of Evidence

Question

Mr. Jones, with the intent to focus the students on the main idea of the excerpt, asks his students, "What details support the idea that looking at old trash gives archaeologists useful knowledge?"

Tim answers, "When I throw away my lunch, that would let archaeologists know that I didn't like it."

What question would you ask <u>next</u> to help refocus Tim's response to the text? (Select one.)

- ○ (a) "Where in the text is there support for your idea?"
- ○ (b) "What other information could your lunch tell archaeologists?"
- ○ (c) "Why is it important for archaeologists to know if people disliked or liked things?"
- ○ (d) "What information could a midden from our school tell archaeologists?"
- ○ (e) "What is the author's tone of this article?"
- ○ (f) "Based on the article, do archaeologists learn about individuals or a people when studying a midden?"

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

Some of the options presented do a better job of turning students back to the text, which is essential in Common Core instruction.

RATIONALE

While there may be reasons for a teacher to use a question to transition students away from this text to something else, for this question in the Survey, answer choices a) and f) were best suited for keeping the students focused on the text and looking for the main idea. Answer choices c) and e), while still tied to the discussion, are not essential for getting students to understand the main idea. Finally, answer choices b) and d) both allow students to continue the discussion without relying on the text at all, and, therefore, are not going to help students draw out the main idea.

a) This question requires students to back up their ideas with evidence from the text by asking, "where in the text is the support...?"
b) A student can answer this question without having read the text.
c) This question is thematically related to the content of the text and may help to clarify a statement from the text, but is not directly tied to the main idea.
d) A student can answer this question without having read the text.
e) A student would need to have read the text to answer this, but understanding the tone of the article will not help him or her get to the main idea.
f) This question requires that students pull evidence from the text that directly ties to the main idea of the article.

Q. 23
Shift of Evidence

Question
Please provide a rationale for your answer below.

This question is not scored. It allows teachers to attach a rationale to their responses. We recommend teachers share their ideas and reflections on developing a coherent sequence of questions to facilitate discussion and deeper understanding with their PLCs as a collaborative learning opportunity.

Q. 24
Lesson Alignment

Mr. Jones is developing a lesson plan to go with the excerpt from "What's a Midden?". His objective is: "Students will closely read a nonfiction text and use evidence to support understanding the central idea of the text."

The following questions focus on some aspects of his plan development.

Question
How could Mr. Jones best meet the needs of students who read well above the grade-level text band? (Select one.)

○ (a) Provide an additional text, *Digging Into the Past: Excavations in Ancient Lands*, by John Hackwell (reading level: middle school).
○ (b) Have students examine the text for content-specific vocabulary words.
○ (c) Have students write a short story about archaeologists.
○ (d) Group students for discussion by aptitude.
○ (e) I don't know.

Correct Answer - a

PURPOSE
While there are many ways to support students who are reading above grade level, the practices most aligned to the CCSS will give students opportunities to engage deeply with texts, build their knowledge, and grow their vocabulary. This question asks teachers to consider which practice for supporting all students is most aligned to the Shifts.

RATIONALE
a) For students reading above grade level, the practice that is most aligned with the Shifts and CCSS instruction is to provide additional complex texts to continue to help those students build knowledge around a topic. The use of text sets, or other ways in which a student is given multiple opportunities to learn about the same content, helps students to build both vocabulary and familiarity with content that can then be applied to other future learning.
b) Content-specific vocabulary is important for understanding text. However, if additional time is going to be spent specifically on vocabulary, the CCSS emphasize a focus on academic vocabulary, which will help student reading beyond the ELA/Literacy classroom.
c) The CCSS emphasize the importance of giving students many opportunities to engage in different types

of writing. While a writing assignment could be a valuable extension activity for students, an assignment that forced them back into the text in deeper way by asking them to use evidence from the text to build an argument would help extend the learning they had been doing with the complex text more directly than a creative writing assignment on a related topic.

d) Careful student grouping can contribute to student learning and facilitate the development of a healthy classroom culture; the effectiveness of these groups will depend on there being a clear, meaningful task and well-developed classroom norms. Student grouping alone – even grouping all the students who read above grade-level – is not the best way to meet the needs of these students.

Q. 25
Lesson Alignment

Question

How could Mr. Jones <u>best</u> provide the appropriate scaffolds so that all students have the opportunity to engage in the work of the lesson? (Select one.)

- (a) He could rewrite the text and substitute more complex text and difficult vocabulary with easier words and phrases.
- (b) He could create a podcast or audio recording of the passage for students to listen to while reading along.
- (c) He could build background knowledge by providing a summary of the text.
- (d) He could group students homogeneously and give the English Language Learners a simpler text on the same subject.
- (e) I don't know.

Correct Answer - b

PURPOSE

While there are many ways to support students, the practices most aligned to the CCSS will give all students opportunities to engage deeply with texts, build their knowledge, and grow their vocabulary. There are a variety of valid pedagogical choices which may be applied strategically by the teacher, but the most Common Core-aligned choices allow students to make meaning from grade-appropriate text. This question asks teachers to consider which practice for supporting all students is most aligned to the Shifts.

RATIONALE

Students cannot learn to read independently with increasingly complex text if they are never given the chance to read those texts. As such, when providing complex text that is on grade-level to students who are not yet on grade-level, scaffolds may include additional opportunities to hear and read the text and supports that help those students build knowledge of the topic and better understand the vocabulary.

a) Rewriting texts and limiting the vocabulary will give students a chance to read and more easily understand the content of the text, but it will not give students the opportunity to persevere with grade-level complex text or develop the skills necessary for reading complex texts independently.

b) A podcast or audio recording would allow the student to use the same text as his/her classmates, but would allow him/her additional experiences with it and additional opportunities for building understanding. Listening to

texts can also help students build fluency.

c) Building background knowledge through the introduction of related texts is a good scaffolding strategy for all students. However, a summary of the same text given in place of (or prior to) the original text diminishes the student's ability to build the skill necessary to understand the text for himself.

d) Similar to the issues inherent in rewriting text or replacing vocabulary, giving ELL students a simpler text denies those students access to the complex texts all students need to learn to read. Rather than replacing the text, Common Core-aligned practice would give ELL students access to the text with additional supports and scaffolds to help build comprehension.

Q. 26
Shift of Knowledge

Question

Mr. Jones is developing a series of lesson plans to go with the excerpt from "What's a Midden?". His objective is: "*Students will explore the field of archaeology*."

How could Mr. Jones best prepare students to build knowledge about the concepts (e.g., archaeology, midden, civilization) in the text? (Select one.)

- (a) He could provide a series of additional texts and videos on the topic.
- (b) He could have students write definitions for content-specific vocabulary words.
- (c) He could have students write a short story.
- (d) He could group students by aptitude for a discussion.
- (e) I don't know.

Correct Answer - a

PURPOSE

The more context and prior knowledge students have available, the better able they are to access new information and content. New content introduces new vocabulary and concepts, which can then be applied to learning about other things. This question asks teachers to consider which practice is most aligned to the Shifts.

RATIONALE

a) Many students struggle to read on-grade-level text. Research suggests three major factors that contribute to this problem: 1) failure to grow sufficient vocabulary, 2) failure to develop wide background knowledge, and 3) failure to become a fluent reader. Providing additional texts and videos on a topic supports all learners, especially those with background knowledge or vocabulary deficits, by building up these domains through a volume of reading on Science, Social Studies, and other high interest topics. To learn more about text sets and to access a collection of free text sets, visit: www.achievethecore.org/textsets.

b) Content-specific vocabulary is frequently defined or explained within the text. Asking a student to define content-specific vocabulary is best used to assess understanding of a particular concept or central idea (for

example, after reading about the process of photosynthesis, asking a student to define the word and explain the phenomenon). Defining the vocabulary from the existing text or learning additional words out of the context of the content the students are learning will not further develop their knowledge. Learning vocabulary this way is slower and harder to retain than learning it in the context of a text.

c) Writing a short story would allow students to draw on the knowledge they gained from the initial passage, but it would not build their knowledge of the topic. A writing assignment that asked students to compare this text to another or draw evidence from multiple sources would be more effective for building knowledge.

d) Careful student grouping can contribute to student learning and facilitate the development of a healthy classroom culture; the effectiveness of these groups will depend on there being a clear, meaningful task and well-developed classroom norms. Student grouping alone will not build student knowledge; rather, knowledge building comes from access to content from additional texts and other sources.

Q. 27
LA Lesson Alignment

Question

T o improve his lesson, Mr. Jones decided to pair the excerpt from "What's a Midden?" with an additional text about archaeology and developed the following two-part ELA assignment for his students: Mr. Jones wants to know which instructional practices apply to his assignment.

Mr. Jones wants to know which instructional practices apply to his assignment. Please indicate whether each of the following instructional practices applies or does not apply to Mr. Jones' assignment.

	Applies	Does not apply	Cannot tell from assignment	I don't know
(a) Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.				
(b) Asks students to draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays).				
(c) Provides for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection.				

(d) Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context.				
(e) Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use.				
(f) Provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.				
(g) Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).				

Correct Answers - a) applies, b) applies, c) applies, d) does not apply or cannot tell from assignment, e) applies, f) does not apply or cannot tell from assignment, g) applies

PURPOSE

Aligned instructional practice requires careful, intentional planning. Different lessons will require different types of activities, questions, and scaffolds so that students can experience the full intent of the standards. This question asks teachers to identify which instructional practices are planned, based on what's been included in the lesson plan.

RATIONALE

a) This lesson targets multiple Common Core standards, including (but not limited to): RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text; W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; and RI.4.9: Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

b) This assignment asks students to write an essay "using only the information in the articles." This writing assignment will show whether the students understand the texts by requiring them to pull evidence from it.

c) The assignment provides for authentic learning through the careful analysis of two complex texts.

d) Academic vocabulary isn't explicitly referenced in the lesson material that's been provided.

e) Overall the assignment is clear and easy to understand; it directly addresses the instructional expectations in the standards to which it is aligned.

f) Since this is a task and not a complete lesson plan, it's difficult to determine whether students are given multiple opportunities to access the text. Part 1 of the task provides a structure for helping students to understand some big ideas from the texts and asks them to find evidence of those ideas; pointing to the big ideas rather than asking students to come up with them could be considered a scaffold. Similarly, part 2 of the task requires students to go back to the texts and find very specific details.

g) Through the clearly defined student assignment of writing an article based on the information presented in both articles, the teacher will be able to directly observe if students have independently demonstrated the Common Core standards addressed in the lesson.

Q. 28
Shift of Knowledge

Question

Over the past school year, how frequently have you done the following?

	Almost never/Never	Less than once a month	Several times a month	About weekly	Several times a week
(a) Read nonfiction text in the classroom					
(b) Connected literacy instruction to other content (e.g., science, social studies)					
(c) Sought texts from other content area teachers					

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

There is no one correct response to these questions, but if materials and instruction are aligned, students should have access to nonfiction text on a regular basis. Opportunities to read nonfiction should come from the ELA/Literacy classroom as well as the other content areas, and in the higher grades students are expected to have more opportunities to read nonfiction texts. See Question 7 for additional detail. This question asks teachers to reflect on their use of nonfiction text and collaboration and planning with other content area teachers.

RATIONALE

a) Students should have opportunities to read a combination of fiction and nonfiction texts. As students move into the higher grades, they should read more nonfiction (see chart in Question 7).
b) Literacy is not solely the responsibility of the ELA teacher. Teachers in all content areas support the development of literacy skills. Strategically connecting literacy instruction across the content areas can create continuity and support opportunities for knowledge and vocabulary building.
c) Incorporating texts from other content areas is a way to build coherence in the curriculum and support students in building knowledge.

Question

Over the past school year, how frequently have you done the following?

	Almost never/Never	Less than once a month	Several times a month	About weekly	Several times a week
(a) Discussed Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy with teachers in other grades					
(b) Discussed Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy with teachers in your own grade					
(c) Looked at student ELA/Literacy work with other teachers for the purposes of professional development					
(d) Received suggestions for the Common Core Standards for ELA/Literacy-aligned curricular materials from colleagues					

Correct Answer - N/A

PURPOSE

Supportive environments in which teachers are able to discuss, question, and work collectively to study student expectations support a deeper understanding of the coherence of the Standards. Teacher collaboration can facilitate more consistency in both instructional materials and instruction, and allows teachers to see connections across grades more clearly and make those connections in their classrooms. This question addresses the frequency of teacher collaboration around the Standards.

RATIONALE

There is no correct amount of time required for teachers to spend working together; however, teacher collaboration can support high quality CCSS-aligned instruction.

a) Vertical planning helps ensure that students are given opportunities to develop skills and knowledge and build on those strategically.
b) It's important for teachers to have the opportunity to norm their understanding and expectations with other teachers in the same grade.
c) Reviewing student work provides teachers with a concrete way to understand how students are performing and to ensure that all students are held to appropriate expectations. In addition, student work is a good way to assess whether students are learning from the resources and instruction.
d) Teachers frequently spend a significant amount of time gathering and customizing resources to use in the classroom. By giving teachers the time and encouragement to share resources, they can spend less time looking for materials, and more time discussing, refining, and aligning content.

Part 2 : Shifts Summary

In the following section, each category will be shown along with the questions from the survey that comprise that data. These are followed by discussion questions and recommended resources.

The discussion questions are meant to provide guidance for coaches and teachers to collectively reflect on classroom practice in relation to the Shifts. We recommend that these be used in a professional learning community or professional development setting in which educators can have an open and honest dialogue about the current state of aligning instruction and practice to the Standards. These conversations will help educators continue to develop strategies and make progress towards effective implementation of the Shifts.

The recommended resources are meant to provide a starting point to support the discussion between instructional leaders/coaches and teachers, and to help educators continue to learn about the Shifts and how they can be translated into classroom practice. You can find these and many other professional development and classroom resources at www.achievethecore.org.

Category	Topic	Question Number
Complexity	Agreement with statements about complexity regarding the text they are using.	9, 11
	Familiarity with academic vocabulary	12
	Evaluation of a text for grade-level appropriateness	14, 15, 16, 17 (18 is unscored)
Evidence	Identification of text-dependent and text-specific questions.	19, 20
	Sequencing of text-dependent questions	21
	Ways to redirect students back to the text	22 (23 is unscored)
Knowledge	Identification of domain-specific vocabulary	13
	Building students' content knowledge on a subject or topic.	26
	Connecting literacy instruction to other disciplines to build content knowledge.	28
Lesson Alignment	Emphases placed by teachers on certain text-priority activities in a unit of study.	10
	Identification of activities in a lesson that meets the needs of all students.	24, 25, 27

Shift of Complexity
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What texts are our students reading over the course of the year?
2. How were these texts decided/chosen?
3. How much practice do students have with appropriately complex texts? What is our evidence?
4. How are we building students' academic vocabulary?
5. How do we support all students in working with grade-level text? How do we provide scaffolding for students below grade-level so they can read grade-level text? How do we create opportunities for students who are advanced to engage more deeply with grade or above grade-level texts?

Resources
1. The Shifts (http://achievethecore.org/shifts-ela): Webpage containing information and resources of the three Shifts
2. Webinar on Finding Texts (http://achievethecore.org/text-webinar): Webinar from Student Achievement Partner's Core Advocate Webinar Series that explains what the term "complex" actually means in relation to the reading materials you use with your students and how a Lexile score factors into the determination of complexity
3. Finding CCSS Grade-Levels for Texts (http://achievethecore.org/text-complexity): Rubrics for evaluating the qualitative and quantitative features of text complexity

Shift of Evidence
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How often do we require students to cite evidence from the text during classroom discussion?
2. After students read a passage, are we providing them with text-dependent questions, activities, and tasks? What is our evidence?
3. Do we choose writing prompts that require students to draw evidence from the text?

Resources
1. The Shifts (http://achievethecore.org/shifts-ela): Webpage containing information and resources of the three Shifts
2. Guide to creating text-dependent questions (http://achievethecore.org/text-dependent-questions): Resources for writing and evaluating text-dependent questions

Shift of Knowledge
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How often are students reading non-fiction texts?
2. Have we sequenced texts around a topic so that students are building knowledge about a particular subject? When? Give an example.
3. Are we using non-fiction texts to teach students about science, history/social studies, and the arts? (For MS/HS teachers: Are we working with teachers of other subjects to coordinate curriculums where appropriate?)

Resources

1. The Shifts (http://achievethecore.org/shifts-ela): Webpage containing information and resources of the three Shifts
2. ELA/Literacy Sample Lessons (http://achievethecore.org/lessons-ela): Common Core-aligned sample lessons with explanations and supporting resources
3. In Common - Effective Writing for All Students (http://achievethecore.org/student-writing-samples): Demonstration using K-12 samples for all three types of Common Core writing

LA — Lesson Alignment
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What tools or protocols do we currently use to evaluate alignment of instructional materials? How do we use them?
2. How can we use tools and protocols more effectively to generate evidence-based commentary and provide recommendations for improvement to developers and teachers?

Resources

1. Planning Tool (http://achievethecore.org/planning-tool): Lesson Planning Tool
2. Coaching Tool (http://achievethecore.org/coaching-tool): Tool to assist teachers, and those who support them, build understanding about CCSS-aligned instruction