

New York City Department of Education

Guidance for Implementation of Grade Level Common Core Instructional Shifts in ELA

Grade 6

Background

As schools transition towards curriculum that is fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for English Language Arts, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) will identify and develop resources for support. This summer, the New York State Education Department (SED) will begin to provide a Common Core-aligned scope and sequence and accompanying curriculum materials for grades PK-12 in ELA and math. As the [new state curriculum is completed](#), the DOE will assess the need for additional curriculum resources and determine how to use the DOE’s Core Curriculum to best support schools.

The DOE has created and posted Common Core-aligned tasks and instructional supports on the [Common Core Library](#) and will continue to do so this summer and throughout the 2012-13 school year in addition to creating text and task sets.* At the same time, publishers have not created full curricular programs and texts aligned to the grade level expectations of the Common Core. During this period of transition, this document was created to provide guidance around how educators can continue the work of integrating the CCLS for literacy *without* entirely replacing or re-writing existing curriculums or acquiring new texts.

A coherent curriculum that teachers know well is critical to student success in English Language Arts. The DOE encourages schools to maintain that stability as they transition.

OVERVIEW

This document outlines the six shifts created by the writers of the Common Core that summarize the “big picture” of instructional change that needs to happen in every K-12 classroom and provides:

- A summary of how the six instructional shifts specifically relate to 6th grade.
- Examples of how expectations have changed from the NY State 2005 ELA Standards when compared to the CCLS.
- A sample concrete pedagogical strategy (crafting open-ended text-dependent questions) that, if implemented consistently across a school-year will help to support the instructional shifts demanded by the Common Core.

What do the CCLS instructional shifts mean for Grade 6?

The six instructional shifts described in the left-hand column were created by the writers of the Common Core Learning Standards. They are intended to summarize the “big picture” of instructional change that needs to happen in every K-12 school and classroom.

6 Shifts EngageNY www.engageny.org	3 Shifts Student Achievement Partners www.achievethecore.org	What do the instructional shifts mean for grade 6? New York City Department of Education http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary
1: PK-5, Balancing Informational & Literary Texts	1: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New literacy expectations for science, social studies and technical subjects are introduced in 6th grade, to support students with deepening their knowledge through more technical reading and formal writing. ● The ELA classroom shifts to focus more on literary nonfiction.
2: 6-12, Knowledge in the Disciplines		
4: Text-based Answers	2: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In K-5, students read and quote informational text in order to identify opinions and relationships, now they are expected to cite claims and evidence to support analysis. ● Devote significant attention to precise details relating to tone, style, ambiguity, structure, and standard vs. non-standard conventions. ● Shift to a balance of 70% analytical writing (35% argument, 35% explain/inform). ● Change from writing opinions to writing formal academic argument.
5: Writing from Sources		
3: Staircase of Complexity	3: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze both the content and structure of increasingly complex, grade-level text. ● Understand and adapt language to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English and deepening precision with academic vocabulary, both general and domain-specific.
6: Academic Vocabulary		

*For an explanation of “Text and Tasks Sets” please refer to p. 17 of the [Implementation Guidance](#) for the 2012-13 Citywide Instructional Expectations.

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What are examples of how expectations have changed for Grade 6 when compared to the previous NY State 2005 ELA standards?

To support educators in thinking about how to use instructional time to support the CCLS, the following examples outline specific expectations that are no longer part of the standards and examples of what is expected in the CCLS.

Examples of what is NO LONGER expected	Examples of what is NOW expected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make, confirm, or revise predictions, with assistance. ➤ Present reports of five to seven minutes on topics related to any school subject. ➤ Persuade, using appropriate language, tone, volume, and gestures. ➤ Discuss the content of friendly notes, cards, and letters to get to know the writer and each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cite textual evidence to support analysis of text. ➤ Provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. ➤ Trace and evaluate arguments and claims supported by reasons from those that are not. ➤ Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant information using credible sources. ➤ Draw evidence from literary and informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. ➤ Paraphrase data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources. ➤ Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources.

What is a concrete example of how questioning strategies could change for Grade 6?

To support students with citing evidence to support analysis and reflection, distinct from personal opinion and judgments, consider the following example of how questioning strategies could shift to better support the expectations of the Common Core. The examples are based on the 6th grade text exemplar, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* by Ann Petry.

Sample questions that are based in text but do not require students to clearly demonstrate comprehension of grade level text	Sample open-ended text-dependent questions that require students to demonstrate comprehension of grade level text
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a dialogue between you and Harriet Tubman. How would you personally react to being in her situation growing up as a slave? 2. Imagine you are Harriet Tubman and write a letter to your current self. What friendly advice would Harriet give you about pursuing your dreams? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After reading, what did we learn about what life was like for Harriet Tubman in her early years? 2. What events led to Harriet becoming a conductor on the Underground Railroad? 3. Choose one key anecdote and analyze how it illustrates the shift in Harriet’s thinking that led to her becoming an activist.