

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text Clarifications

Maryland State Department of Education
English Language Arts/Literacy
Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards Clarifications



The English Language Arts Department at MSDE facilitated the formation teams of educators from all across the state to participate in writing Clarifications for the Common Core Standards at grades Pre-K through twelve. These serve as resources to educators across this state and others as we implement the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

Educators from the local systems worked together to create clarification statements that make up a coherent document that reflects the instructional shifts necessary to achieve the Common Core State Standards. The Clarification statements detail for educators the skills necessary for students to demonstrate proficiency in each grade level standard in Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. These Clarifications are an integral part of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards Curriculum toolkit.

Standard Five

RI5 Anchor Standard: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Pre-Kindergarten: With modeling and support, identify the front cover and back cover of a book.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student has read to him/her a wide variety of informational texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

It is essential that students learn at an early stage through teacher modeling that locating the front and back covers of an informational text are the beginning stages of learning the organization of a text, which assists in understanding.

Kindergarten: Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

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Continuing with locating and identifying the front and back covers of an informational text, the kindergartener goes to the interior of the text and finds the title page. The student learns that the title on the front cover is duplicated on the title page along with other information. This is another stage of learning the organization of a text, which assists in understanding.

Grade One: Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her a wide variety of informational texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

The more independent first grader understands the difference between literary and informational texts. A way to begin is with text features. For example, it is more likely that informational texts rather than literary texts have photographs with captions and subheadings or headings as well as hand drawn illustrations. First graders work with a wide variety of text features, which purposefully aid comprehension. On a text by text basis first graders should familiarize themselves with all available text features and know, in general, where it is most likely that certain types of information will be available. Additionally, a student knows how to maneuver text features in traditional as well as in digital text. Identification of text features is only a first step; using text features is the goal for first graders.

Grade Two: Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of informational texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

Building upon familiarity with different types of text features learned in grade one, a second grader follows those practices to locate and use information contained in text features in a beneficial way. The basic differences between the demands upon the first grader and the demands upon the second grader is that the second grader works with more complex informational text, the possibility of a wider variety of text features, and the quick, organized, and competent maneuverability in traditional and digital text.

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Grade Three: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of informational texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

Using skills learned about text features and their use in grades one and two, the third grader builds upon his/her ability to locate and use text features. The difference in demand upon the third grader is that he/she works with more complex informational text with an efficiency that shows a student understands immediately the purpose of a feature and how it can be used. For example, a third grader knows when to consult an index rather than a table of contents. Relevant information indicates that a third grader has the ability to make judgments about how much value pieces of information might prove to a task.

Grade Four: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text of part of a text.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of informational texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

A fourth grader identifies the structure of a text as chronological, describing events, idea, concepts, or information in order or in specific texts as steps to follow; comparison, showing how two or more events, ideas, concepts or information are alike or different; cause/effect, identifying why something happens as well as what happens; or problem/solution, describing a problem and how it might be settled. A student knows certain transition words that aid determination of a text's structure. For example, a student reads a given informational text. Next a student rereads the text this time with a focus on content and transitions. Then a student is able to identify the text structure as cause/effect detailing the introduction of an idea, how that idea produced a change, and then the effects of those changes thereby describing how that content fits into the organizational structure.

Grade Five: Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of informational texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited

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to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

Building upon the skills learned in grade four, the fifth grader begins this process with more complex informational text. A fifth grader identifies the structure of a text as chronological, describing events, idea, concepts, or information in order or in specific texts as steps to follow; comparison, showing how two or more events, ideas, concepts or information are alike or different; cause/effect, identifying why something happens as well as what happens; or problem/solution, describing a problem and how it might be settled. A student knows certain transition words that aid determination of a text's structure. For example, a student reads a given informational text. Next a student rereads the text this time with a focus on content and transitions. Then a student is able to identify the text structure as cause/effect detailing the introduction of an idea, how that idea produced a change, and then the effects of those changes thereby describing how that content fits into the organizational structure.

To compare and contrast the overall structure of two or more texts, the fifth grader completes this process with all designated texts. Next, the student compares and contrasts each text structure with the other. If the content of each text is basically the same, a student might make judgments about which organizational structure best relays the content.

Grade Six: Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary nonfiction texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

A sixth grader understands the various organizational structures of a literary nonfiction text. Building upon that knowledge, a sixth grader analyzes how literary nonfiction texts are constructed by examining how a particular sentence, chapter, paragraph, or section fits into the overall format of a text and how these elements contribute to the development of an idea. For example, a student carefully considers a sentence in a literary nonfiction text to determine if the author uses that sentence to support or refute an idea within the organizational structure. A sixth grade student may also observe that a single sentence may develop an idea at the same time it counters that same idea. Single sentences within literary nonfiction text may introduce an idea, support an idea, refute an idea, provide background information about an idea or summarize an idea, etc. For example, an idea may be developed not only by explaining what it is but also what it is not. A sixth grader considers the impact of this sentence on the entire work and may speculate on the changes that would occur were that sentence removed.

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Grade Seven: Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary nonfiction texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

A seventh grader knows how to determine the organizational structure of a literary nonfiction text and how to determine the impact of a single sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section upon the overall text. Students understand that each major section of a text works in conjunction with each other major section of text to construct the whole. For example, a seventh grader, using previous knowledge, may look at a literary nonfiction text that uses problem/solution as its organizational structure. The student identifies the introduction to the piece, knows when a problem is brought into the structure, realizes that alternate solutions to the problem are proposed, sees the results of applying multiple solutions to a problem, and finally understands which solution is most beneficial and why it is the preferred solution.

Grade Eight: Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary nonfiction texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

For an eighth grader, as the complexity of a text increases, a student advances from identifying organizational structures to analyzing how that organizational structure helps create meaning within the text. Now an eighth grader focuses on the structure of a single paragraph and its individual sentences and how its organizational pattern and sentence structure relate to the text's overall idea. Each sentence is judged for its individual role in developing or refining a key concept within the paragraph. For example, an eighth grader reading a biography of young adult literature author might discern that a given paragraph is developed by examples. Each of those examples might relay details about why that author chose his/her particular profession based upon incidents in which he/she was involved. The key concept in such a paragraph relates to the idea that individuals often come to professions because of their previous experiences.

Grades Nine and Ten: Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary nonfiction texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not

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limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

Building upon skills learned in middle school, a ninth or tenth grader analyzes the structure of a text to perceive how an author's ideas or claims are developed by elements of a text. For example, a student might read a well known speech that features an argument for a societal change. A student analyzes the text to determine its claims and the evidence put forth to support its claims. In addition a student describes the structure of the speech while indicating how these claims and supporting evidence occupy the structure. Ninth and tenth graders are also able to analyze how an author manipulates language to construct the speech so that details within it are refined and made clearer. Finally, after judging structure, argument and word choice, a student explains how each of these elements work together to create overall meaning.

Grades Eleven and Twelve: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary nonfiction texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to expository and narrative structures and types such as trade books, magazines, multimedia resources, and functional texts.

Building upon study in previous years, eleventh and twelfth graders now examine how a piece of literary nonfiction progresses from beginning to end and judges the effectiveness of its structure in relaying and clarifying its main points. Based upon the assumption that an author begins an exposition or argument knowing how he/she wishes to conclude the same, these students express insights into the start of an exposition or argument. Did the author choose a traditional structure or pursue a variety of ways an individual might think about a topic and promote one? Did the author drop the reader into the middle of the exposition or argument and through the venue of multiple perspectives detailing the same idea give the reader a full perspective into the unfolding of an idea? Given that there is an alignment between how the exposition or argument proceeds and ultimately concludes, an eleventh or twelfth grader can track the progression of this development and finally detail how each component represents part of a whole and how each component has a purpose. In essence, these students uncover a "master plan" for the development of an exposition or argument as a means for understanding the craft of the author and an appreciation for the use and power of language and how it enhances the delivery of an exposition or argument.

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