

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 Six

RI6 Anchor Standard: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Pre-Kindergarten: With modeling and support, define the role of the author and illustrator/photographer in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

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 display age-appropriate attention while being read to. As the teacher stops at various intervals during reading and after reading is complete, students identify the role of author and illustrator/photographer. The identification may occur as oral response or drawing such as painting as Eric Carle does. In doing so, a pre-kindergartener begins to build a domain specific vocabulary that continues through high school.

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text
Clarifications

Kindergarten: Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

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To meet the demands of this standard, with assistance, the kindergartener identifies the role of the author and illustrator while talking about the text. A kindergartener identifies the author as the writer, the person who creates the text in words and identifies the illustrator as the artist, the person who draws or sketches the pictures that accompany the text. This practice continues to reinforce domain specific vocabulary

Grade One: Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words 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 uses his/her background knowledge of informational text to recognize that illustrations enrich ideas within the text. To meet the demands of this standard, given a “chunk” of text and an identified illustration and being asked a question about the source of an answer, a student identifies either the text or the illustration as the source. First graders realize that an understanding comes from a combination of text and illustrations although a struggling student may rely more upon illustrations.

Grade Two: Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.

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.

A second grader who now knows the difference between an author and an illustrator and is able to locate the source of information within a text is able to state orally or in writing why a particular informational text is written. In identifying this purpose, a student phrases the question an author intends to answer through the text, identifies the topic, idea, or person for which the author intends to provide an explanation, or gives details about the idea or person the author intends to describe. Once a student knows the purpose of a text, he/she is better equipped to judge the information or details the author provides and whether the author met his/her goal of answering, explaining, or describing.

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text
Clarifications

Grade Three: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of 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.

Third graders build on the skills they learned in second grade to acknowledge and explain the purpose of an informational text. Through the author's answering, explaining, or describing, a third grader understands the point of view of the author including what he/she thinks about the idea, person, or event. Using what they know about the point of view of the author, third graders define their own point of view about elements of an informational text. At this level, a point of view is the lens through which an author or reader sees the world of the text. The reader's point of view explores areas of feelings, perspectives, and reactions to text. A third grader explains the point of view of an author and compares or contrasts it to his/her own, while citing text that supports both his/her view and that of the author. A third grader may cite text to self connections, which are based upon personal experience; text to world connections, which are based upon what a student has seen or heard; or text to text connections, which are related to another text read by the student.

Grade Four: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

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.

A fourth grader who already knows how to define his/her viewpoint from that of the author in an informational text continues this practice with more difficult text. A fourth grader also acknowledges two types of accounts of an event or a person. A firsthand account of a person or event is an account from the point of view of an individual directly involved in an event or with a person and uses first person pronouns. A firsthand account will share feelings toward and opinions about people and events. A secondhand account is an account created by indirect means, can be the result of research, and uses third person pronouns. The secondhand account has no particular insight into the thoughts or opinions of any other individual or event although a second hand account may offer an opinion based upon research.

Given a particular person or event to learn about, a fourth grader may use both first and secondhand accounts. Using both types of accounts can provide a fuller picture of a person or event. In comparison, a firsthand account may provide more specific detail but

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text Clarifications

a singular view while a secondhand account may not be as specific but will have a broader more inclusive view of a person or event. Using both type of accounts jointly as a means of gathering information provides the best option for learning.

Grade Five: Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

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.

Relying upon experiences with Standard Six in grade four, fifth graders delve into the implications of examining the same event or topic through the lens of different points of view. To begin this process, a student considers the following questions: Is the account written in first or third person? Are the accounts primary or secondary sources? What is the background of the speaker? What information is specifically being included or excluded? What do the word choices reveal about point of view? Consider that the way information is presented affects the understanding that a student takes away. Finally, synthesize information from each account to draw conclusions about the event or topic.

Grade Six: Determine the author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her 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 difference between a first person and a third person account and how multiple considerations must be given to an account to determine exactly what understanding a student develops as a text is examined. Directly related to point of view is the author’s purpose for the text. With a biography, it might mean a positive or negative view of an individual. With a speech, it might mean a more enthusiastic “spin” for a particular idea or it might intend to warn readers/listeners away from a course of action. Once a sixth grader has determined the point of view and the purpose of a text, then a close examination of the text looking at its organization, word choice, text features, etc...allows a student to “map” the text or a portion of a text to show how the author wanted a topic presented.

Grade Seven: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her 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.

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text Clarifications

Building upon a sixth grader's ability to explain how an author develops a point of view and a purpose for a text, the seventh grader understands that each text is relayed by someone and that individual gives the text its perspective, vantage point, or point of view. The point of view influences how information is chosen and relayed to a reader or listener. As an author builds a text to explain an individual, an event, or an idea, he/she builds into the fabric of the text an acknowledgement that others may feel differently about the subject. To accomplish this, an author may refer generally to opposing thoughts or may directly cite opposing thoughts from an alternate text. A seventh grader becomes a critical reader to discern how this occurs within a text. To begin, the student establishes the author's point of view or purpose for the text, and then through critical reading determines any opposing ideas and their sources if provided that set apart one way of thinking from another.

Grade Eight: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her 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 learning from previous years, the eighth grader already knows how to determine an author's point of view or purpose for a text and how the author distinguishes his position or view of an individual, event, or idea from those who may feel differently. Now an eighth grader discerns how an author responds to those holding opposing beliefs. The seventh grader had simply to determine what the author's belief is and that the author shows that there are different ways of thinking about the same subject.

The eighth grader critically reads a text to determine specifically what those opposing beliefs are and directly addresses them within a text. How the author does this can either strengthen or weaken his/her position. A logical defense of one's own position to the point of addressing each point of an opposing belief helps build one's own argument, but a refusal to acknowledge any opposing thoughts or an emotional counter to an opposing belief can lessen an argument or idea. In a more simplistic way, the eighth grader delves into an examination of who believes what and how each states his or her case.

Grades Nine and Ten: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance the point of view.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her 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.

Already understanding how to determine an author's point of view or purpose from previous years' instruction, the ninth and tenth grader apply the process to more

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text Clarifications

complex literary nonfiction text. A student reads a text critically focused on rhetoric and how the skilled use of rhetoric allows an author to have others share his/her point of view. So a student reads with attention to logos or the logical building of an argument or point of view by either inductive or deductive reasoning, ethos or the credibility of the author or the credibility of those other person who might be referenced by the author, and pathos or the emotional attachments that an author might place within his appeal. A ninth and tenth grader reads a piece of literary nonfiction, discerns the presence or absence of each of these elements, and explains how each of these parts contributes to the whole of an argument.

Grades Eleven and Twelve: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her 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.

Eleventh and twelfth graders know how to determine an author’s point of view or purpose and how to analyze the rhetorical devices the author uses. These processes are applied to more complex literary nonfiction in these last two years of high school. At this level, a student evaluates the type of rhetoric, style, and content within a piece of literary nonfiction in light of their effect upon a reader. For example, given a particular speech delivered during a particular historical period, a student might view that speech through a particular lens. Did that speech prove a powerful political or social tool? Were individuals moved to change a movement or a political or social structure? Was the use of language so exquisite that it has become a model to which writers aspire? A student might look at one or all of these elements and the way they were formed through structural organization, order, diction, etc...to determine the effectiveness of the entire text.

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text
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