

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Literature 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

RL5 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: Gain exposure to common types of literary texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student has read to him/her a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. In a teacher-directed venue, a student engages in active learning with these texts by listening to and discussing common types of literary genres.

It is essential that students learn at an early stage through teacher modeling that thinking about what one already knows about the subject matter of the text, previewing the text's title and illustrations or photographs, and making predictions about the text's content assist in understanding.

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Equally essential is 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 should be able to discuss different literary genres in a variety of ways—oral response, drawing, dramatizing, etc. It is incumbent upon the teacher to organize a wide variety of literary texts to share with students.

Kindergarten: Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student has read to him/her a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. In a teacher-directed venue, a student engages in active learning with these texts by listening to and discussing common types of literary genres.

With encouragement and support from the teacher, students engage in previously-learned pre-reading strategies and continue applying previously-learned during and post reading strategies as the teacher continues to read. To meet the demands of this standard, with assistance, the kindergartener identifies and compares common types of literary genres. As more and more exposure to these texts occurs, students are able to verbalize how one text is like another, which can be supported by the teacher formalizing the response by naming the genre. In its basic form, this is a precursor for analyzing a literary text.

Grade One: Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads or has read to him/her a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. To meet the demands of the standard, whether a student is reading or being read to, the texts must be age appropriate and sufficiently complex to serve as a source of comparison between literary and information. Classroom libraries should contain a balance of texts so that many opportunities for comparison exist.

The more independent first grader understands the difference between literary and informational texts. A way to begin is with text features. While both literary and informational texts have main titles, it is more likely that a literary text will feature illustrations and have chapter titles while informational texts are more likely to have photographs with captions and subheadings or headings. A literary text primarily has a story with a beginning, middle, and end. An informational text primarily explains a situation, a process, etc. with facts. Both types of text can have events that really could happen, but, sometimes, literary text may feature fantasy elements not grounded in reality. Repeated exposure to both types of texts and classroom talk establishes the differences for first graders.

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Grade Two: Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems.

A second grader explains how a story plot is developed over the course of the literary text. In the beginning setting and characters are introduced as an integral part of the action. As the story progresses, a problem is introduced and is generally solved by the story's conclusion. A second grader retells a story getting the basic elements correct while properly placing opening events at the start and concluding events at the finish.

Grade Three: Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or thinking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems.

A third grader knows the difference among stories, plays, and poems. They look different and are structured differently.

When speaking about a story, a third grader knows the title, author, illustrator, and chapter.

When discussing a play, a third grader knows the title, playwright, cast or players, act, scene, stage directions, and props.

When talking about a poem, a third grader knows the title, poet, rhyme, stanza, and verse.

As the second grader does when speaking or writing about the structure of a story, the third grader discuss how what happens in the first part of a story causes an event at the end of a story, or how what occurs in the first scene of a play causes a character reaction in the third scene, or how a description in the first stanza of a poem is revisited in the third stanza and the description is expanded. In doing so, a third grader addresses the structure of a literary text.

Grade Four: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

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To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems.

A fourth grader continues the practices established in third grade of utilizing structural features of specific literary texts such as drama, poems, and stories. A fourth grader like the third grader knows the difference among stories, poems, and plays. But the more independent fourth grader cites the differences among the three.

A fourth grader knows that a story is prose, and that means a story is written in sentences and paragraphs. Paragraphs are formed into related groups and form chapters or sections within a story.

A fourth grader knows that poems are written in verse and that related verses are formed into stanzas. Poems can rhyme, but they don't have to. Poems can tell a story or describe. Poems have a rhythm or a regular beat.

A fourth grader knows that plays tell stories by stage directions and dialogue or characters' speeches. As plays move from one event to the other, their structures are scenes or acts.

As the third grader does when discussing how events within any of these structures relate to each other, a fourth grader shows how different structures display details through a different means. For example, in a story, a setting may be described throughout the first several pages by the narrator or a character or series of characters. But in a play, the setting may be described in a section labeled setting, or in the stage directions, or through the dialogue of characters. And in a poem, a setting may be described in rhyme by the speaker of the poem. A fourth grader requires continued exposure to each of the different types of literary text so he/she can become conversant with each structure and speak or write knowledgably when comparing them.

Grade Five: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama or poem.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. For incremental growth in independent reading, a fifth grader continues to use reading strategies as well as pinpoint and cite specific details from the text to demonstrate their understanding of the standard.

A fifth grader begins with the knowledge of literary genres, domain-specific vocabulary, and structural elements of prose, poetry, and drama gained from their previous years work. Students draw conclusions about the relationships between and among a text's structural elements. Chapters in a story, stanzas in a poem, and scenes in a drama are signals in those texts that indicate changes in events, settings, characters, and important ideas.

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Authors use certain techniques across structural elements to help a reader build an understanding of plot or possibly theme of a text. These techniques include foreshadowing, clues that assist a reader in determining what might happen next in a literary piece; flashback, interruption in the sequence of a narrative that allows a reader to gain background details; and motif, a repeated object, concept, idea of theme.

Structural and literary elements are the casing that binds a literary work; fifth graders understand through the venue of age appropriate literary texts how this works. A fifth grader has been working toward this capability since grade three. For example, given an age appropriate poem, a fifth grader analyzes the relationship among each verse, among each stanza, and delineates how these elements form the whole.

Grade Six: Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. For incremental growth in independent reading, a sixth grader continues to pinpoint and cite specific details from the text to demonstrate their understanding of the standard.

A sixth grader understands the plot of a literary text as a series of episodes that include exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling actions and resolution. Building upon the knowledge, a sixth grader analyzes how literary texts are constructed by examining how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall format of a text and how these elements contribute to the development of a theme, setting, or plot. For example, a student carefully considers a sentence in a literary text to determine if the author uses that sentence to develop a theme, describe a setting, or detail an event in the sequence of a plot. A sixth grade student may also observe that a single sentence may develop a theme at the same time it describes a setting. 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.

Grade Seven: Analyze how a drama’s or poem’s form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. For incremental growth in independent reading, a seventh grader continues to pinpoint and cite specific details from the text to demonstrate their understanding of the standard.

To fully understand drama, a seventh grader has an understanding of the organization of plays into scenes and acts and connects these structural features to the advancement of the plot in the play. While reading a play, a critical reader notes important events in each scene and characters involved in those events. After completion of reading a play, a

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critical reader reviews each scene to determine the connection between each scene and how each scene contributes to the whole drama. Further, a critical reader explains why the divisions between the acts and scenes are placed where they are.

In order to identify poetry as a literary form and distinguish different types of poems from others (ballads, sonnets, etc.) a reader knows the structural features of each type. Knowledge of a poem's structure helps a reader determine a purpose for the poem and comprehend it in literal as well as abstract ways.

Grade Eight: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, which may include but are not limited to fiction, nonfiction, fables, folktales, realistic fiction, historical fiction, plays, and poems. For incremental growth in independent reading, an eighth grader continues to pinpoint and cite specific details from the text to demonstrate their understanding of the standard.

Having already learned the structural and stylistic features of drama, poetry, short stories, and novels, an eighth grader draws comparisons between the structures of two or more texts, particularly texts with similar themes or based upon similar historical eras, etc. Furthermore, students assess a structure as a means of communicating a particular idea or reflecting a particular style and may during the process determine which type of structure proves a better vehicle for a particular theme or idea. For example, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which exists in play form as well as the original diary, offers an opportunity to compare and contrast particular sections in the diary, which are brought to life in certain scenes in the drama.

Grades Nine and Ten: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots) and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads age-appropriate, sufficiently complex literary texts across multiple genres. In previous years, students have determined structures or texts and compared them. Now ninth and tenth graders focus on the hand of the author in these structures. To arrive at a deeper meaning of more complex text, students will determine the presence of parallel plots, those that unfold at the same time and often touch upon and affect each other, the speed at which a narrative unfolds and how it might project into the past in a purposeful way that will affect the ongoing plot. These effects may include but are not limited to a mood of mystery, tension, or create a surprise that may shift the trajectory of the plot. Not only must students take note of these manipulations of plot, they must also determine the role of these manipulations in the course of the narrative and how they contribute to the meaning of the entire text.

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Grades Eleven and Twelve: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end of story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads age-appropriate, sufficiently complex literary texts across multiple genres. Building upon study in previous years, eleventh and twelfth graders now examine how a narrative progresses from beginning to end. Based upon the assumption that an author begins a narrative knowing how he/she wishes to conclude the same, these students express insights into the start of a narrative. Did the author begin at the ending and backtrack to the beginning? Did the author drop the reader into the middle of the narrative and through the venue of multiple narrators detailing the same story give the reader a full perspective into the unfolding of plot? Or did the author choose a traditional sequence of events from beginning to end? Given that there is an alignment among how the narrative proceeds and ultimately concludes, an eleventh or twelfth grader can track the progression of a series of events 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 a narrative as a means for understanding the craft of the author and an appreciation for the beauty of the language and how it enhances the delivery of a narrative.