

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 Nine

RL9 Anchor Standard: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Pre-Kindergarten: With modeling and support, compare adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

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 the similarities between the characters' experiences/adventures in a familiar text.

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 compare characters' experiences/adventures related to familiar text in a variety of ways—oral response, drawing, Venn diagram etc.

Kindergarten: With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

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 and finding similarities and differences in the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories such as Franklin, Froggy, and Arthur.

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 finds similarities and differences in the adventures and experiences of the characters in the texts. The students will ask questions and answer questions posed by the teacher and other students about these similarities and differences. Age appropriate means of proposing and recording ideas should be used.

Grade One: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

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. 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 in order to compare and contrast character.

The more independent first grader possesses the ability to identify characters within a story and to compare and contrast these characters. Students distinguish individual actions and events for each character so that a judgment may be made about their similarities and differences. An age appropriate teacher-guided close reading enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the interactions, similarities, and differences between characters and events. First graders move from a directed model to a more independent one as understanding allows.

Grade Two: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

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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. To meet this standard, a second grader identifies ways in which two or more versions of the same story are alike or different. The differences could be the setting, the social station of the characters, a difference in minor characters, etc. Likenesses could include the basic plot structure, the same ending, etc. This comparison could be based on the same story written by two different authors such as *The Three Little Pigs* by Paul Galdone and *Three Little Pigs* by Heather Amery and Stephen Cartwright. A common example of the same story from other cultures is the Cinderella story: *Yeh-Shen*, a Chinese version, *The Rough Face Girl*, a Native American version, *Tattercoats: An English Tale*, and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, an African version.

Grade Three: Compare and contrast themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).

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. Students build upon their ability from second grade to identify the similarities and differences in the literary elements between or among stories by the same author. Examples of series books from which texts might be chosen are the Magic Tree House series, the Poppy group by Avi, the Julian stories by Ann Cameron, and the Amber Brown books by Cynthia Rylant

For example, in the Magic Tree House books, the two main characters remain the same but in each book in the series other main characters join them but only for that single story. The beginning of each book begins with the same setting but as the plot unfolds, the settings change but differently in each book. Third graders will read each text and then focus on selected literary elements to compare and contrast to determine how texts written through a common method share certain basic elements.

Grade Four: Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

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. Building upon learning from earlier grades a fourth grader recognizes that in stories, myths, and literature from different cultures, there is a basic likeness to ideas and themes around which these literary pieces are organized. Specifically mentioned is the theme of good versus evil with the forces of good prevailing. Fairy tales such as "Rapunzel" and Rumpelstiltskin" are examples of age appropriate stories where the clash of good and evil comprise a theme. Good versus evil is a theme in the *Cinderella* stories, which is retold in a variety of cultures. More modern texts that have the good

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versus evil theme are Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* and Avi's *True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. Additionally, the plot that concerns the quest, or pursuit or search for an item or ideal is traditional in many types of literature. The Harry Potter series is one that enfolds the theme of good versus evil but also is a quest. Lowry's *The Giver* where the main character has the quest of saving the twin and faces the obstacle of the rules of a society and L'Engle's *Wrinkle in Time* where a trio of children attempt to save an adult placed in a zombie-like trance are both examples of the plot pattern of a quest.

To meet the demands of this standard, fourth graders will read two or more literary texts where similar themes, good versus evil, or other similar themes or plots where the quest or another conventional plot pattern is featured. After reading students will identify like themes or plot patterns and explain their similarities and differences.

Grade Five: Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

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. Continuing the pattern of comparing and contrasting different literary texts, a fifth grader will note similarities and differences regarding theme and topic between and among stories of a same genre.

For example, to meet the demands of this standard a fifth grader reads at least two or more mystery stories. Perhaps a common topic among these texts is a valuable missing object or a missing person. Through discussion and writing, which is source-based, a fifth grader determines the missing person or item is the pivotal element around which the entire story is centered. Additionally, the theme of each story, if a theme is present, is basically the same with slight nuances of difference that fit the individual story. Again, discussion or writing clarifies the theme/s. A fifth grader comes to realize that stories in a particular genre generally follow a like pattern with a common idea, which gives rise to a similar theme.

Grade Six: Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures. Expanding upon the comparing and contrasting of literary texts, a sixth grader will not only make judgments about literary texts within like genres but also literary texts in different formats regarding their similar theme and topics. A sixth grader will continue with comparison and contrast as he/she did in fifth grade with literary texts in the same genre; however, a sixth grader will work with more complex text befitting the skills of that grade. The additional study involves looking at approaches to theme and topic in literary text in different forms. For example, a sixth grader might compare and contrast a story and a poem each with the topic of

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courage from which each theme is developed. A sixth grader will determine how the theme in each literary text is relayed to the reader and how that relay may have likenesses and differences. For example, in the story the theme may be presented through the actions of a character while in the poem the theme may be presented through the words of the speaker of the poem.

Grade Seven: Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads a wide variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures. Another vestige of comparing and contrasting literary texts is introduced to seventh graders when they compare a fictional literary text to a literary nonfiction text both developed through a same historical time period. For example, a seventh grader might read John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "Barbara Freitchie" that details her supposed confrontation with a Confederate general following the Battle of Antietam and then read a first person account of that same meeting through the eyes of her niece who was there with her. The account of events in the poem does not match the eyewitness account. This opposition of texts should engender discussion about why the poet wrote as he did, which will lead to an examination of his sources. In turn, this should lead to an acknowledgement of changing history for dramatic ends and why, though false, it proves an effective technique.

Grade Eight: Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious words such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Eighth graders have experience with comparing and contrasting texts in different forms and different genres focused upon their approaches to similar themes, topics, and character development. They have also compared and contrasted fictional accounts of historical events to first person accounts of the same event. Now with more complex texts eighth graders examine literary texts for their underpinnings in classic pieces of literature both secular and religious.

There are multiple texts appropriate to young adult readers where eighth graders may analyze a more modern literary text in view of its foundation in traditional literature. C.S. Lewis's *Narnia chronicles*, the *King Arthur Tales*, and Katherine Paterson's *Jacob Have I Loved* have their basis in Biblical events. The *Percy Jackson* series delves into the Greek gods tales. Traditional stories like *Robin Hood* are reworked in works by Robin McKinley and through the story of *Rumpelstilkin* and the tales of *Sharazad*.

For example, *Jacob Have I Loved* follows the events of the Bible story of Jacob and Esau. In the more modern version, the twins are girls but the flow of events where one twin feels favored over the other follows the pattern of the religious story, and the development of character in the modern text matches the Biblical characters. To

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analyze, an eighth grader knows the basic tenets of the traditional story and is focused on reading the modern text with a constant focus on the text that preceded it.

Grades Nine and Ten: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads age appropriate, sufficiently complex literary texts across multiple genres. Building upon knowledge established in grade eight, ninth and tenth graders understand that certain modern literary works have underpinnings in traditional, Biblical, and mythological texts. To continue in this vein, these students will work with the relationships that exist among works of literature to determine which specific literary elements are brought to life in new ways in these modern texts.

To begin, an allusion to another literary work is a basic way that this process works, but here the analysis goes beyond an allusion and progresses to a basic plot outline or a development of theme where there is a match between an established work and a more modern text. For example, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the theme of loyalty and its effect both negative and positive is the basis for an ongoing theme as is the notion that love is characterized as an illness with attendant symptoms. In Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*, these themes are treated in the same manner and in the more modern film *She's the Man*, which is a modern retelling of *As You Like It*, these themes receive the same treatment. The same progression applies again with a theme of spiritual transformation, which has its basis in Ovid, comes about again in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, which has another turn in the film *10 Things I Hate About You*. Additionally, a student reading poems William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" understands that both works deal with the theme of the inevitability of death each with its own perspective. An end result of this standard is that ninth and tenth graders understand that theme is universal and though its presentation may alter over time that theme remains relevant

Grades Eleven and Twelve: Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, a student reads age appropriate, sufficiently complex literary texts across multiple genres. Already knowing that theme transcends time periods, eleventh and twelfth graders will analyze similar themes and topics for literary texts in 18th, 19th, and early 20th century works of American literature. Students will evaluate how these historical time periods influence the theme and topic of that time period and will examine similarities and differences of two or more authors' choices in exploring these themes.

For example, Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" develops the theme of innocence as does Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*. Farther on Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

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address innocence as does Amy Lowell in her poem “Patterns” composed in the early 19th century. An eleventh or twelfth grader might read both Hawthorne and Melville who are contemporaries and examine how both authors develop and treat the theme of innocence. This might be extended to look at later works of American literature listed here to determine how the theme of innocence is universal and relevant but alters its presentation with the passage of time. As a last look at the theme of innocence, eleventh and twelfth graders might analyze the lyrics of Bruce Springsteen’s “Glory Days.”