

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Writing  
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 Seven

**W7 Anchor Standard: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.**

**Pre-Kindergarten: Participate in shared research and shared writing projects.**

To show proficiency of skills in this standard, the students should be able to identify details or opinions about a specific topic from teacher read alouds, field trips, illustrations and photographs, digital tools (video streaming), etc. This can be achieved through:

- shared writing experiences such as:
  - Sentence stems to be completed with student responses charted. For example: I learned that dinosaurs \_\_\_\_\_. (Repeated)
  - Have students turn and talk about what they have learned about a topic. Then partners share with the whole group and the teacher adds to class writing.
  - Students could illustrate facts learned about a specific topic and dictate detail or opinion.
- Teacher using a graphic organizer to chart what students know before research and what they learned as a result of research.
  - KWL Chart
  - Main Idea and Detail Chart

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- Venn Diagrams
- 5 Ws and an H

**Kindergarten: Participates in a shared research and writing projects (e.g. explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).**

To show proficiency of skills in this standard, the students should be able to identify details about a specific topic from teacher read alouds, field trips, illustrations and photographs, digital tools (video streaming), etc. The students should be able to write a topic sentence with a minimum of two details or opinions supporting the topic. This would be a gradual process throughout the year. This can be achieved through:

- shared writing experiences such as:
  - Sentence stems to be completed with student responses charted. For example: I learned that dinosaurs \_\_\_\_\_. (Repeated)
  - Have students turn and talk about what they have learned about a topic. Then partners share with the whole group and the teacher adds to class writing.
  - Provide students with sentences from a shared writing. These sentences are facts about the topic. Students work with a partner to sequence the sentence strips.
- graphic organizer charting what students know before research and what they learned as a result of research.
  - KWL Chart
  - Main Idea and Detail Chart
  - Venn Diagrams
  - 5 Ws and an H

**Grade One: Participate in shared research and writing projects e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions.**

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, students will (with teacher support) work with partners, in teams, or as a class to:

- Choose a topic.
- Write two or three questions about the topic to guide research.
- Gather a variety of sources (books, tapes, magazines, interviews, CDs, Internet, etc.) to research the topic.
- Read and learn about the topic.
- Share facts and details and list them on note cards, a gathering grid, the board, or chart paper.
- Plan, draft, revise, and edit the writing.

Students should write a paragraph introducing the topic in the beginning, state information that answers the driving questions in the middle, and tell what they have learned in the end.

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The writing can be produced in a variety of ways, such as: poems, stories, posters, picture dictionaries, oral reports, instructions, PowerPoints, etc.

**Grade Two: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).**

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, students will (with teacher support) work with partners, in teams, or as a class to:

- Choose a topic. Consider other content areas.
- Write two or three questions about the topic to guide research.
- Gather a variety of resources (books, tapes, magazines, interviews, CDs, Internet, etc.) to research the topic.
- Read and learn about the topic.
- Share facts and details and list them on note cards, a gathering grid, the board, or chart paper.
- Plan, draft, revise, and edit the writing.

Students should write one or more paragraphs that introduces the topic in the beginning, states information that answers the driving questions in the middle, and tells what they have learned in the end.

The writing can be produced in a variety of ways, such as: poems, stories, posters, picture dictionaries, oral reports, instructions, PowerPoints, etc.

**Grade Three: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.**

To show proficiency of the skills in this supporting standard a student needs to build their knowledge about a certain topic through resource gathering which is described in the clarification for Writing Standard 8.

**Grade Four: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.**

To show proficiency of the skills in this supporting standard a student needs to build their knowledge by posing questions about different facets of a assigned/chosen topic. Through resource gathering, which is described in the clarification for Writing Standard 8, students will attempt to find information to answer the posed questions.

**Grade Five: Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.**

To show proficiency of these skills in this standard, a student needs to: conduct short, one-page, research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation. Sources available include websites, books, magazines, newspapers, and videos. The

investigation should include different aspects of the topic, concluded through the sources researched.

**Grade Six: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.**

To show proficiency of these skills in this standard, a student needs to capably use a variety of sources, both print and digital, to conduct short research projects that answer one or more questions that may be student-generated. Guidance should be given on effective Internet search strategies, and appropriate use of the media center. Different aspects of a topic can be explored through the writing by utilizing several sources, such as websites, books, magazines, newspapers, and videos.

**Grade Seven: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.**

Students should be able to objectively analyze and reflect on their investigation in order to determine and state its limits as well as additional questions, problems, and possibilities that could lead to a deeper understanding of the original question.

**Grade Eight Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.**

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, when given a topic, students should now be able to generate their own question for research and exploration. As students continue to analyze and reflect on their investigation in order to generate additional questions about the topic, they will now be expected to examine and present multiple, specific ways of exploring the topic further, including suggested print or Web-based sources and/or offering appropriate further actions for the audience (such as contacting a particular organization, visiting physical locations of significance to the topic, etc.).

**Grades Nine and Ten: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.**

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, students will produce short (informal) and sustained (formal) research projects building upon the previous skill of answering a question (including a self-generated question) in grade eight. In addition to answering a question, research now include solving a problem; narrowing or broadening the inquiry when appropriate; synthesizing multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

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**Grades Eleven and Twelve: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.**

To show proficiency of the skills in this standard, students will  
Investigate topics using a variety of sources  
Narrow or broaden the topic as needed for an assignment  
Combine information from multiple sources  
Maintain notes, works cited, and bibliographies  
Answer a complex question or solve a problem through research