

COMMON CORE CURRICULUM MAPS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Grades 6–8



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Common Core Curriculum Maps in English Language Arts, Grades K–5

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FOREWORD

Good Schools: The Salt of Society

Carol Jago

Three hundred years ago Cotton Mather preached, “A Good School deserves to be call’d the very Salt of the Town that hath it.” Without a school “wherein the Youth may by able Masters be Taught the Things that are necessary to qualify them for future Serviceableness,” a community will founder.¹ Mather’s advice to townspeople in Puritan New England reflects one of the philosophical underpinnings of the Common Core Curriculum Maps in English Language Arts: Schools matter. Curriculum matters. Teachers matter.

In order to determine which things should be taught, we must of course first define what it means to be serviceable in a twenty-first-century democratic society. To ensure a capable workforce and build a strong economy, high levels of literacy and numeracy are obviously essential. But what about the need for students to develop empathy and thoughtfulness? It is short-sighted to equate the value of education with economic growth. Like salt, good schools with rich curricula enhance the community by adding depth—and piquancy. Like salt, they are a preservative, ensuring that a society’s values endure.

Many of the benefits we’ve come to demand as our rights in a modern society depend upon high levels of employment, but if we shift the discussion of the purpose of school from job training to preparing America’s children to lead a worthwhile life, the calculus changes. Is simply working nine-to-five for forty years what you most aspire to for your children? Or do you want them to have an education that invites exploration of essential questions, inspires challenges to the status quo, and somehow prepares them for what we cannot yet know? Most parents want both.

The conundrum for curriculum developers is to avoid becoming so caught up in preparing students to make a living—which starts with paying attention in kindergarten; earning good grades through elementary school, middle school, and high school; achieving competitive SAT and ACT scores; and winning a place in college or in the workplace—that we lose sight of educating students to enrich their lives.

In *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, philosopher Martha Nussbaum warns that, “With the rush to profitability in the global market, values precious for the future of democracy, especially in an era of religious and economic anxiety, are in danger of getting lost.”² I share her concern. The movement to reform education primarily in order to make the United States more globally competitive seems wrong-headed and even counterproductive. Maybe I lack a competitive spirit, but I have always

1. Cotton Mather, “The Education of Children,” <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/mather/edkids.htm>.

2. Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 6.

wanted more for my students than just coming in first. I want them to learn about and to think about the world—today’s world and yesterday’s. Nussbaum explains, “World history and economic understanding must be humanistic and critical if they are to be at all useful in forming intelligent global citizens, and they must be taught alongside the study of religion and of philosophical theories of justice. Only then will they supply a useful foundation for the public debates that we must have if we are to cooperate in solving major human problems.”³ One means of learning about the problems that have beset and continue to bedevil humanity is through the study of the humanities—literature and art, history and philosophy. This is the kind of education the Common Core Curriculum Maps offer. I believe it is the education that every generation of citizens needs.

Unit Three of the Grade One curriculum map, *Life Lessons*, offers young children opportunities to explore the kind of education Martha Nussbaum recommends. As they work through the unit, “Students read and listen to fables with morals. They learn about rules for life in a book of manners. Reading the life story of George Washington Carver, students learn about a man who had to overcome obstacles in life to make important contributions to science and agriculture. Students learn about Thomas Edison’s work with electricity and the rules for its safe use. Descriptive words are the focus of a lesson centered on the artwork of Georgia O’Keeffe. Finally, the children write narratives focused on life lessons and create informative posters focused on electrical safety.” This interdisciplinary approach integrates the study of science and builds students’ background knowledge. In so doing, it strengthens their reading comprehension and develops their facility with reading informational texts—a key expectation of the Common Core State Standards. It also invites children to investigate Georgia O’Keeffe’s paintings and build their cultural literacy.

Some readers of the Common Core Curriculum Maps may argue that their students won’t read nineteenth-century novels, that twenty-first-century students raised on Twitter need a faster pace and different kinds of text. I say language arts classrooms may be the last place where young people can unplug themselves from the solipsism of Facebook postings and enter a milieu different from their own. “But my students won’t do the homework reading I assign,” teachers wail. It isn’t as though students don’t have the time. A 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation reports that children aged eight to eighteen spend an average of seven and a half hours daily “consuming entertainment media.”⁴ And this does not include the hour and a half a day they spend texting friends. Today’s students have the time to read; many of them simply choose not to.

To those who look at the suggested works for the high school Common Core Curriculum Maps and think, “Our students could never read those books,” I urge perusal of the primary grade curriculum maps. If children were immersed in rich literature and nonfiction from the first days of kindergarten and engaged in classroom conversations that encouraged them to think deeply about what they read, then negotiating Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* in eleventh grade and Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* in twelfth is certainly possible. Though such books pose textual challenges for young readers, as part of a continuum and under the tutelage of an “able Master,” the work is achievable. In our effort to provide students with readings that they can relate to, we sometimes end up teaching works that students can read on their own at the expense of teaching more worthwhile texts that they most certainly need assistance negotiating.

We need to remind ourselves that curriculum should be aimed at what Lev Vygotsky calls students’ zone of proximal development. Writing in 1962, Vygotsky said, “the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it.”⁵ Classroom texts should pose intellectual challenges for readers and invite them to stretch and grow. Students also need books that feed their personal interests and allow them to explore “the road not taken.” Reading a broad range of books makes students stronger readers and, over time, stronger people. Rigor versus relevance doesn’t need to be an

3. Ibid., 94.

4. Ulla G. Foehr, Victoria J. Rideout, and Donald F. Roberts, “Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds,” (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2010), <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/8010.cfm>.

5. Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, trans. Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962), 104.

either-or proposition. With artful instruction by able masters, students can acquire the literacy skills they need—not only to meet the Common Core State Standards, but also to meet the challenges this brave new world is sure to deal them.

Reading literature also helps students explore hypothetical scenarios and consider the ramifications of what might *prima facie* seem to be a good or profitable idea. Consider the Common Core Curriculum Maps' final Grade Seven unit, *Literature Reflects Life: Making Sense of Our World*. Addressing Common Core Reading Standard RL.7.6, "Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text," the map recommends students read Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. This nineteenth-century novella invites young readers to reflect upon their own conflicting natures and offers a cautionary tale regarding experimentation. When we consider how best to prepare tomorrow's doctors, scientists, programmers, and engineers for the twenty-first century, it seems to me that reading stories about investigations that go very wrong is quite a good idea.

Later in his sermon, Cotton Mather states that "the Devil cannot give a greater Blow to the Reformation among us, than by causing Schools to Languish under Discouragements." The Common Core Curriculum Maps offer hope to discouraged teachers. They offer a plan for developing young minds, a plan that is both rigorous and has never been more relevant. It may seem odd to be taking guidance from a seventeenth-century Puritan, but I know I couldn't say it better. "Where schools are not vigorously and Honourably Encouraged, whole Colonies will sink apace into a Degenerate and Contemptible Condition, and at last become horribly Barbarous. If you would not betray your Posterity into the very Circumstances of Savages, let Schools have more Encouragement." Amen.

WRITTEN BY TEACHERS, FOR TEACHERS

To My Fellow Teachers:

Participating in the development of these Maps has been an eye-opening and incredibly rewarding professional development experience for me. I was especially drawn to the project because I knew that the Maps would be offered *for free* to teachers around the country. Since my first years as a classroom teacher, I've witnessed the powerful results that come from a marriage between rich content and literacy instruction; I wanted the Maps to exhibit this component. As an administrator, I approached this project from the perspective of creating resources that provide enough support for you without taking away your creative freedom. As a mother, I've thought about what an impact these Maps could and will—I hope—have on the education my children receive.

The new Common Core State Standards Initiative presented my colleagues and me—now close friends—with an ideal opportunity for twenty-first-century collaboration: we live in three different states, yet developed these Maps together. After much trial and error regarding our approach, we decided to pair the best literary and informational texts we know into meaningful thematic units, allowing students to develop literacy in a humanities-rich environment. We hope that the closely related components of these Maps will give you confidence to use them in various permutations in your classroom. We also hope you will collaborate with your colleagues to refine and create new activities that will not only ensure the standards are taught and learned, but will also yield deeper levels of student work and satisfaction.

In the middle school Maps of this volume, we have worked to provide the perfect juxtaposition of substantive and challenging content with engaging and interesting instructional approaches for middle school students. We have made every effort to engage students in a variety of age-appropriate and social ways, encouraging them to take complex ideas and apply them to their daily experiences inside *and outside* of class.

Our own collaboration on these Maps has been intellectually gratifying and joyful, and we hope they provide you with a similarly rewarding experience. These Maps are our gift to you, and we sincerely hope you enjoy the journey of making them your own.

Cyndi Wells

Lead coach and fine arts facilitator, Charlottesville, Virginia
Lead writer, fourth through eighth grade,
Common Core Curriculum Maps in ELA

To My Fellow Teachers:

For years we have been deluged with reform initiatives from on high that claimed they would improve student achievement. Few have actually brought progress. I joined the Common Core team of teachers out of conviction that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) would make a difference and have a positive impact on our work in the classroom. The standards provide a framework for composing a rich, well-planned curriculum that guides our instruction.

Classroom teachers know that imaginative planning is at the heart of any successful lesson. The seventy-six Sample Lesson Plans (SLP), one for each of the units, are instructional road maps. The purpose of each SLP is to demonstrate how to create the necessary link between the literary and informational texts and the CCSS. The SLPs vary in focus and content—from a novel or selection of poems to a play or informational text. Each has a clear topic, a set of objectives, and suggested activities, as well as helpful guides for differentiated instruction. Consider these plans as a place to start. Use them directly or as a model for developing your own lessons.

Writing the maps and the SLPs has been both intellectually rewarding and joyful to us as classroom teachers. I hope you find that working with these volumes becomes equally joyful and useful in your own classrooms.

Dr. Ruthie Stern
High school teacher, New York City
Lead writer, Sample Lesson Plans, Common Core Curriculum Maps in ELA

INTRODUCTION

Few educators or policymakers would have guessed, even a year or so ago, that nearly all states would jettison their standards and embrace new, largely uniform standards for the teaching of ELA and math. Fewer still would have expected all of this to happen as quickly as it has.

The rapid rise of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is an unprecedented event at the national level—and more importantly, at the school level, where its implications are profound. For educators in most states, the CCSS raise the bar for what students should know and be able to do.¹ If you are reading this, you are probably responsible for implementing the CCSS in your school, district, or state. You will find that the CCSS contain explicit guidance about the reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills students are expected to master. Almost any single standard in the CCSS illustrates this. Here's one of the reading standards from seventh grade:

Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. (RI.7.2)

The CCSS call for the new standards to be taught within the context of a “content-rich curriculum.” But the CCSS do not specify what content students need to master, as this fell outside the scope of the standards-setting project. Here is how this is explained in the introduction to the CCSS:

[W]hile the Standards make references to some particular forms of content, including mythology, foundational U.S. documents, and Shakespeare, they do not—indeed, cannot—enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn. The Standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum consistent with the expectations laid out in this document.²

Responsibility for developing such a curriculum falls to schools, districts, and states. Common Core's Curriculum Maps in ELA are designed to meet the needs of the teacher, principal, curriculum director, superintendent, or state official who is striving to develop, or to help teachers to develop, new ELA curricula aligned with the CCSS. The Maps can also serve as a resource for those endeavoring to conduct professional development related to the standards.

1. Sheila Byrd Carmichael, Gabrielle Martino, Kathleen Porter-Magee, and W. Stephen Wilson, “The State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010” (Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, July 2010), 13.

2. *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (Washington, DC: Common Core State Standards Initiative), 6.

The Maps provide a coherent sequence of thematic curriculum units, roughly six per grade level, K–12. The units connect the skills outlined in the CCSS in ELA with suggested works of literature and informational texts and provide activities teachers could use in their classrooms. You will also find suggested student objectives in each unit, along with lists of relevant terminology and links to high quality additional resources. *Every standard in the CCSS is covered in the Maps*, most more than once. Standards citations are included after each sample activity/assessment to indicate alignment. Each grade includes a “standards checklist” showing which standards are covered in which unit. And most of the works the CCSS lists as “exemplar texts” are included in the Maps.

Moreover, each unit in this print edition of the Maps features a Sample Lesson Plan, a road map showing how to use one or more of the suggested texts in that unit to meet specific standards. Each Sample Lesson Plan includes step-by-step guidance for classroom activities tied to the lesson, questions that engage students in a deeper analysis and appreciation of the texts, and even suggestions for differentiated instruction. Many of the Sample Lesson Plans, particularly in the earlier grades, also include detailed guidance for connecting ELA lessons to other subjects, including math, science, history, geography, music, and art.

An important feature of Common Core’s curriculum Maps is their attention to building students’ background knowledge of a diverse array of events, people, places, and ideas. Cognitive science has demonstrated that students read better if they know something about the subject they are studying.³ With this in mind, Common Core incorporated into its Maps themes, texts, and activities that teach students about “The Great Big World,” as one of the kindergarten Maps is called. The content cloud shown in Figure I.1 includes much of the key content knowledge in the Maps. The larger an event, name, or idea appears in the cloud, the more emphasis it receives in the Maps. As you examine this cloud, do keep in mind that the Maps contain much that is not included here.



Figure I.1

Common Core's Maps were written by teachers for teachers. More than three dozen public school teachers had a hand in drafting, writing, reviewing, or revising the Maps. Collectively, these teachers brought dozens of years of experience to the mapping project. Each of the lead writers is deeply knowledgeable about the CCSS; some even served as feedback providers to the standards' writers. These

3. Daniel T. Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School? A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009).

teachers looked to model curricula, including the International Baccalaureate, and at excellent, content-specific standards, such as the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks, for suggestions of what topics and titles to include at each grade. Most importantly, the teachers drew on their own considerable experience of what students enjoy learning about, and infused the Maps with that knowledge.

The Maps also reflect the contributions and perspective of the many teachers who reviewed them. Twice, the American Federation of Teachers convened the same panel of teachers that reviewed the CCSS to review Common Core's Maps. The Milken Family Foundation connected us with a dozen winners of the Milken Educator Award. These teachers, nationally recognized for excellence in the classroom, provided invaluable input and insight. And the National Alliance of Black School Educators identified superintendents, teachers, and content area specialists from across the country who reviewed the Maps in draft form. A public review of our draft Maps, conducted in the fall of 2010, elicited numerous helpful comments.

And the Maps will continue to evolve and improve. The second online edition of the Maps is open to public comment twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone is able to critique any aspect of the Maps—any essential question, any student objective, any text suggestion. Viewers can rate each unit Map as a whole, and many other Map elements, such as suggested works and sample activities. Comments on the Maps are open for public view. Also, teachers can submit sample lesson plans that will be reviewed by a committee of teachers who will decide which ones to add to the official Maps website. In these ways and more, Common Core's Curriculum Maps in ELA are living documents, expanding and improving over time as they absorb and reflect the experience and perspective of educators across the nation.

We are thrilled that, as of this writing, the website featuring the maps (www.commoncore.org) has attracted more than three million visitors and that six state departments of education have recommended the Maps for use by districts statewide. The publication of the Maps is a momentous step for the mapping project. If you find this volume of interest we hope you will follow our project as we develop more inspiring and instrumental Maps-related resources for America's educators.

September 2011

Lynne Munson
President and Executive Director, Common Core

HOW TO USE THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM MAPS

Common Core's Curriculum Maps in ELA are brand-new curriculum materials, built around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts. The CCSS dictated both the goals and contours of our Maps. The "exemplar texts" listed in the CCSS figure significantly in our unit Maps, which break down each grade, K–12, into a series of themed units. Each unit pairs standards with suggested student objectives, texts, activities, and more.

The Maps are intended to serve as "road maps" for the school year, as aids for jump-starting the lesson planning process. As common planning tools, these Maps can facilitate school and district-wide collaboration. They also can become the backbone of rich, content-based professional development as teachers work together to create and then refine curricula for their particular schools and classrooms.

The units are designed to be taught in sequence (particularly in elementary school), but teachers could certainly modify the units if they need to be taught in a different order. We do not expect teachers to use every text, nor to do every sample activity or assessment. The suggested texts simply offer a range of rich and relevant materials from which teachers may choose. The suggested activities or assessments are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. Teachers can select from among them, modify them to meet their students' needs, and/or use them as inspiration for creating their own activities.

Each unit Map contains the following elements:

Overview. This is a brief description of the unit. It explains the unit's theme and provides a summary of what students will learn. It explains the structure, progression, and various components of the unit. It may offer some guidance regarding the selection of texts. The unit descriptions illuminate the connections between the skills identified in the standards and the content of the suggested works.

Essential question. The "essential question" highlights the usefulness, the relevance, and the greater benefit of a unit. It is often the "so what?" question about material covered. It should be answerable, at least to some degree, by the end of the unit, but it should also have more than one possible answer. It should prompt intellectual exploration by generating other questions. Here's an example from eighth grade: "How does learning history through literature differ from learning through informational text?"

Focus standards. These standards are taken directly from the CCSS and have been identified as especially important for the unit. Other standards are

covered in each unit as well, but the focus standards are the ones that the unit has been designed to address specifically.

Suggested student objectives. These are the specific student outcomes for the unit. They describe the transferable ELA content and skills that students should possess when the unit is completed. The objectives are often components of more broadly worded standards and sometimes address content and skills necessarily related to the standards. The lists are not exhaustive, and the objectives should not supplant the standards themselves. Rather, they are designed to help teachers “drill down” from the standards and augment as necessary, providing added focus and clarity for lesson planning purposes.

Suggested works. These are substantial lists of suggested literary and informational texts. In most cases (particularly in the middle and high school grades), this list contains more texts than a unit could cover; it is meant to offer a range of options to teachers. Several permutations of the list could meet the goals of the unit. The suggested texts draw heavily from the “exemplar texts” listed in the CCSS. Exemplars are works the CCSS identified as meeting the levels of complexity and rigor described in the standards. These texts are identified with an (E) after the title of an exemplar text. An (EA) indicates a work by an author who has another work cited as an exemplar text.

Art, music, and media. These sections list works of visual art, music, film, and other media that reflect the theme of the unit and that a teacher can use to extend students’ knowledge in these areas. Each unit includes at least one sample activity involving the works listed under this heading. ELA teachers who choose to use this material may do so on their own, by team teaching with an art or music teacher, or perhaps by sharing the material with the art or music teacher, who could reinforce what students are learning during the ELA block in their classroom. The inclusion of these works in our ELA Maps is *not* intended to substitute for or infringe in any way upon instruction that students should receive in separate art and music classes.

Sample activities and assessments. These items have been written particularly for the unit, with specific standards and often with specific texts in mind. Each activity addresses at least one standard in the CCSS; the applicable standard(s) are cited in parentheses following the description of each activity. The suggested activities or assessments are not intended to be prescriptive, exhaustive, or sequential; they simply demonstrate how specific content can be used to help students learn the skills described in the standards. They are designed to generate evidence of student understanding and give teachers ideas for developing their own activities and assessments. Teachers should use, refine, and/or augment these activities as desired, in order to ensure that they will have addressed all the standards intended for the unit and, in the aggregate, for the year.

Reading foundations. Our kindergarten through second-grade Maps include a section titled Reading Foundations that provides a pacing guide of instructional goals for the teaching of the CCSS reading Foundational Skills. This guide complements our Maps and was prepared by reading expert Louisa Moats, who also helped develop the reading standards for the CCSS.

Additional resources. These are links to lesson plans, activities, related background information, author interviews, and other instructional materials for teachers from a variety of resources, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and ReadWriteThink. The standards that could be addressed by each additional resource are cited at the end of each description.

Terminology. These are concepts and terms that students will encounter—often for the first time—over the course of the unit. The list is not comprehensive; it is meant to highlight terms that either are particular to the unit, are introduced there, or that play a large role in the work or content of the unit. These terms and concepts are usually implied by the standards, but not always made explicit in them.

Making interdisciplinary connections. This is a section included only in our Maps for the elementary grades. Here we very broadly list the content areas the unit covers and then suggest opportunities for making interdisciplinary connections from the Common Core ELA Maps to other

subjects, including history, civics, geography, and the arts. We hope this section will be particularly helpful for K–5 teachers, who typically teach all subjects.

Sample lesson plans. Each unit includes a supplementary document that outlines a possible sequence of lessons, using one or more suggested unit texts to meet focus standards. Many of the texts used in the sample lesson plans are also CCSS exemplar texts. These sample lessons include guidance for differentiated instruction.

Standards checklist. Each grade includes a standards checklist that indicates which standards are covered in which unit—providing teachers an overview of standards coverage for the entire school year.

Addressing all of the CCSS. The curriculum writers worked carefully to ensure that the content and skills in each unit would build on one another so that in the aggregate, all standards would be addressed in a coherent, logical way. They grouped standards that they could envision fitting together in one unit. For example, if a unit were focused on asking and answering questions in informational text, then standards for shared research and expository writing were included in that unit as well. *All standards are addressed at least once*, if not a number of times, in the activities and assessments sections.

Interpreting CCSS citations. Our citations for the standards follow the format established by the CCSS (found in the upper right-hand corners of the pages in the CCSS ELA document):

strand.grade.number

For example, the first Reading Literature (RL) standard in grade four would be cited as RL.4.1. You will find our citations in the front of each focus standard and at the end of each sample activity/assessment. Where standards clearly corresponded to lessons listed under Additional Resources, standards also have been cited.

Understanding unit themes. The unit themes grew organically out of the process of selecting which standards would be the focus of each unit and consulting the list of exemplar texts. The teachers who wrote the Maps intentionally chose themes that would resonate with students, as well as lend coherence to the skills and content addressed. Some of the themes introduced in the early elementary grades, such as courage, re-emerge in later years. We have done so in a deliberate attempt to invite students to wrestle with some of the “great ideas,” a hallmark of a liberal education. We hope that as students progress through school, they will consider the themes at greater levels of depth.

Teaching reading. Under the Reading Foundations sections for the kindergarten through second-grade Maps (and embedded into the third- through fifth-grade Maps) is a pacing guide for reading instruction. This guide is aligned with the CCSS reading Foundational Skills. The guide paces instruction in reading foundations logically across the grades. Concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, and text reading fluency are all addressed and woven into a developmental progression that leads to word recognition and text reading. Accomplishment of these milestones can be achieved with daily practice and brief activities that would require thirty to forty minutes of instructional time per day. A sample of those activities is also provided. Explicit, sequential, and cumulative teaching of these skills in no way should detract from, substitute for, or prevent the teaching of the oral language, comprehension, and literature-focused instruction, also described in the units.

The curriculum Maps are not tailored for any specific reading instruction method or management technique. *It is up to local school districts and teachers to determine how reading will be taught.* The sample activities and assessments reflect a mix of teacher- and student-centered instruction, but emphasize eliciting evidence of student understanding through authentic assessments.

Selecting materials. Many of the texts listed as exemplars in the CCSS Appendix B are included in our Maps. These texts take priority in our units and indeed shape unit themes. Like the exemplar texts themselves, the additional texts suggested in our Maps include literary works and informational texts that have stood the test of time, as well as excellent contemporary titles. The suggested texts include

novels, short stories, poetry, essays, speeches, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, fables, folktales, and mythology. Teachers will find texts written by authors of wide-ranging diversity: young and old, living and dead, male and female, American and foreign.

In the early grades, the Maps prioritize students' exposure to traditional stories and poetry, Mother Goose rhymes, and award-winning fiction and nonfiction chosen for quality of writing and relevance to themes. They also emphasize concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, and text reading fluency. In upper elementary and middle school grades, students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction on science and history topics, as well as diverse selections of classic and contemporary literature. High school begins by establishing in ninth grade a common understanding of literary and informational genres, subgenres, and their characteristics. Grades ten through twelve each focus on a different literary tradition, both American and international. Along the way, the Maps highlight numerous points of connection with history, science, and the arts.

Much consideration has been given to readability. Whenever possible, we have used Lexile level ranges, as described in the CCSS Appendix A, as a guide. We realize that there still will be a range of texts within each grade span. We also recognize that simple texts may be read at upper grades with more nuanced analysis. For this reason, some texts appear in more than one grade. Texts that fall outside the CCSS-recommended grade span are noted.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the text availability and readability levels also were cross-checked with the Scholastic Reading Wizard Reading Levels section, Amazon.com, and the Lexile levels (as available) on the Barnes & Noble website.

Evaluating student work. Aside from the inclusion of a scoring rubric for high school seminars, the Maps do not provide sample student work or scoring rubrics. We do hope that the interactivity feature of the online edition of the Maps may allow teachers to submit these kinds of materials, if they so desire. We expect to develop such additional tools as teachers and curriculum developers use and customize the Maps, and as we conduct ongoing professional development.

Differentiating instruction. The sample lesson plans provide specific guidance for differentiated instruction for advanced and struggling students. As with student work and scoring rubrics, we expect to develop further guidance on differentiation as the Maps are implemented and customized.

Incorporating art, music, and media. While literature is of course a vital component of the standards, some standards in the CCSS address the arts as well. Because Common Core promotes the importance of all students studying the arts, we have highlighted places where ELA instruction could be enhanced by connecting a work of literature or an objective of the unit to art, music, or film. For example, students might compare a novel, story, or play to its film or musical rendition. Where a particular period of literature or the literature of a particular region or country is addressed, works of art from that period or country may also be examined. We suggest, for example, that students study self-portraiture when they are encountering memoirs. In each case, connections are made to the standards themselves.

Promoting student understanding through recitation and memorization. Recitation requires close reading and therefore nurtures deeper levels of students' understanding. Students also benefit from the satisfaction of making a poem or piece of prose one's own for life. In addition, many teachers observe that memorization and recitation help develop a student's experience and confidence in public speaking, which could help students marshal evidence and make effective arguments in other contexts. Keep in mind that our suggestions for memorization activities are not meant to be mandatory in every unit.