



Assessing Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: Shifts for Students AND Families

In 2013-2014, all students in California will field test the **NEW Smarter Balanced Assessment**. This assessment will measure student learning of the new **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. These new standards were put in place to better prepare students for college and career. Important changes in teaching and learning are required because students are asked to do more challenging work.



Outlined below are **the six major shifts to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts** and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Use the information and tips below to support your child's success with the new standards and assessments. (Information on CCSS for Mathematics is available in a separate handout.)

What are standards?

Standards list expectations for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. The Common Core State Standards are replacing the California Content Standards.

Elementary:

Balance non-fiction & fiction

Students read a balance of informational and literary texts

Students Must:

- **Read more non-fiction**
- **Enjoy and discuss** the details of non-fiction

Families Can:

- **Supply more non-fiction books** and magazines and **read them aloud or with** your child

Middle and High School:

Grades 6-12: Learn about the world through reading

Students build literacy in various subject areas, including history/Social Studies, Science, etc.

Students Must:

- **Build knowledge** in Science and Social Studies **through reading**

Families Can:

- Supply texts on **topics of interest that explain the world around us** and discuss them with your child

All Grades:

Read and analyze more challenging material

Students read texts that increase in complexity over time, to prepare for college and career

Students Must:

- Read and re-read material at comfort level **AND** work with more challenging material

Families Can:

- **Provide texts** children want to read and can read comfortably, **AND**
- **Read challenging material *with them*** to show how it is **worth** reading

Discuss reading using evidence

Students use text to enhance rich and thoughtful conversations

Students Must:

- **Find evidence** to support their arguments about the text and what the author is trying to say.

Families Can:

- Ask students about what they are reading and **ask them to explain** why the text supports their thinking

Write from non-fiction sources using evidence

Students use evidence to inform or make arguments

Students Must:

- **Make arguments in writing** using evidence from one or more sources

Families Can:

- **Encourage writing** at home using evidence and details from text

Increase academic vocabulary

Students build a strong vocabulary to access complex grade level texts

Students Must:

- **Learn** how to use **professional and academic words** in precise and varied ways

Families Can:

- **Use a wide range of vocabulary** to talk about ideas, play word games, make up silly rhymes

Have questions?

Talk to your child's teacher to learn about CCSS for ELA at your child's grade level, or go to the SFUSD website to learn more at www.sfusd.edu.