

# COURSE SYLLABUS

**Course:** Common Core in ELA: Instructional Shifts for Effective Implementation, Grades 6-8

**Presenters:** KDS

45 Hours

## Course Overview

The Common Core State Standards originated in 2010 and have been adopted by the majority of states across the country. The standards aim to increase the rigor of instruction for all students in order to adequately prepare them for success in college and careers. In this course, participants will explore the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS-ELA) in grades 6-8 to understand the purpose for the standards, the foundations of the standards, what students are expected to know, and how this will impact teachers' approach to instruction. The course will address the six major shifts in instruction, how these shifts will impact classroom practice, as well as how to address the needs of diverse student populations. Through readings, classroom instructional videos, and other materials, participants will gain a strong understanding of the standards and their application. Participants will become more informed participants who can implement the standards with fidelity in their school or district.

## Course Objectives

After completing this course, participants will understand that:

- The College and Career Ready (CCR) Anchor Standards are the foundation for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (CCSS-ELA).
- The CCSS-ELA address four domains of literacy instruction: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language, each with grade-specific standards.
- The CCSS-ELA requires 6 major shifts in instructional approach.
- Content-area subject (History/Social Studies, Science, and technical subjects) learning is supported by the CCSS-ELA
- The learning needs of a diverse range of students (English Language Learners, students with special needs, and gifted and talented learners) should be embedded in instruction.
- Informal assessments should continuously inform instruction.
- Families need to be informed about the CCSS-ELA and how it will impact their children's learning.



## Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Communicate in family-friendly language what students are expected to know in a Standards-aligned curriculum and explain why this is important
- Build a classroom library with a Standards-aligned balance of informational and literary texts.
- Build a Standards-aligned “text set”
- Plan standards-aligned lessons for grades 6-8 students using the six instructional shifts to guide best practices in teaching and learning

### Unit 1: Introduction to the CCSS-ELA

In this introductory unit, participants will explore the Common Core State Standards for ELA in grades 6-8 (CCSS-ELA) to understand the purpose for the Standards, the foundations of the Standards, what students are expected to know, and how this will impact teachers’ approach to instruction. Participants will also set goals for the course to guide their personal learning experience.

#### Objectives

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- Why the CCSS-ELA Standards were developed.
- The four major domains of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards as the structure for understanding the CCSS-ELA.
- The structure of the CCR anchor standards.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Set two to three personal learning goals for the course.
- Identify an instructional practice presented in one of the classroom scenarios presented that they are interested in applying in their classroom.
- Understand the organization of the CCSS-ELA, specifically how to read the standards horizontally to see the development of skills over time, and vertically to appreciate the full range of skills that students need to learn in a specific grade.
- Understand how the standards move from broad categories to more discrete grade-level standards.
- Explore how the integration of multiple standards within a lesson provides greater rigor for students’ learning.

### Unit 2: Organization of the CCSS-ELA

In this unit, participants explore the standards to gain an understanding of grade level expectations and content within the ELA classroom. This unit provides an intense look at the standards documents, including the anchor standards for ELA, History/Social Studies, Science, and the Technical Disciplines and grade-level standards.



In this unit, participants explore what the College and Career Anchor Standards for ELA are, what the grade-specific standards are, and how the standards are organized. Participants explore the standards to gain an understanding of grade level expectations and content within the ELA classroom. This unit provides an in-depth look at the standards documents, including the anchor standards and grade-level standards.

### **Unit Objectives**

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- The structure and major components of the standards.
- How the CCR Anchor Standards support rigor in students' learning.
- CCSS-ELA aligned lessons incorporate multiple standards.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Identify the four domains of literacy addressed by the CCR anchor standards.
- Match the broad reading standards for reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language to the literacy strands addressed in the CCR anchor standards.
- Analyze the teaching and learning in a literary text lesson.
- Reflect on how the integration of multiple standards in a lesson will apply to their own work.

## **Unit 3: Balancing Informational and Literary Text**

In this unit, participants explore the instructional shifts teachers have to make in order to help students read a true balance of informational and literary text. In this unit, participants explore the differences between these genres, why it is important to achieve this balance, and how teachers can move toward this balance for purposes of all students being career and college ready. This unit focuses on the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading on Range of Reading, and Level of Text Complexity, and the Reading Standards for Literature 6-12 and the Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-12. Standards.

### **Unit Objectives**

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- The differences between narrative and informational text.
- The instructional implications of a 30-70% balance of literary and informational text.
- How to explain the shift in balance in types of texts through the grade bands.
- Specific examples of the literary and informational text genres.
- Practical ways in which he/she can start to gather appropriately balanced classroom resources to meet this instructional shift.
- The ways in which informative/explanatory text becomes increasingly complex from grades

### **Student Learning Outcomes**



After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Explain the differences between literary and informational text.
- Explain how to approach creating a standards-aligned ratio of information to literary text in the 6-8 classroom.
- Explain the shift in balance in types of texts through the grade bands and explain further why this is important for career and college readiness.
- View examples of the genres of narrative and informational text.
- Explain the practical ways in which he/she can start to gather appropriately balanced classroom resources for this instructional shift.
- Explain the ways in which informative/explanatory text becomes increasingly complex throughout grades 6-12.

#### **Unit 4: Using Texts to Inform Disciplinary Knowledge**

In this unit, participants build an understanding of the second shift in CCSS-ELA instructional practices. This shift focuses on the use of texts, content-rich informational text and literacy texts, as central to learning. This shift impacts all teachers, as the focus of instruction centers on students and their use of text to learn versus the traditional teacher role as the “distributor of knowledge.” This shift highlights the importance of students at the center of the learning process, text as a critical source of knowledge about the world, and the use of text as central to critical thinking, learning, discussion, and writing.

This unit addresses the College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading that focus on Key Ideas and Details and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, and the Reading Standards for Literature 6-12 and Reading Standards for informational Text 6-12.

#### **Unit Objectives**

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- The importance of using texts to increase students’ disciplinary knowledge.
- A range of strategies used to make text central to learning in a CCSS-aligned classroom.
- Understand the importance of using texts to increase students’ disciplinary knowledge.
- Text selection impacts students’ ability to learn from text.
- Instructional supports necessary to help diverse learners access challenging complex texts.
- The importance of reading texts multiple times through close reading to facilitate learning from texts.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Apply their understanding of this shift to their classroom work to ensure their students are career



and college ready.

- Outline the key implications for selecting texts to build knowledge.
- Describe the need to use texts to inform learning in a CCSS-focused classroom.
- Describe the importance of using texts to inform in the classroom.
- Articulate the role that activating background knowledge plays when students are learning from texts.
- Identify two selections of nonfiction or informational texts to use in the classroom.
- Reflect on best practices demonstrates in the classroom video footage.

## Unit 5: Staircase of Text Complexity

In this unit, participants explore how the CCSS call for shifts in instruction and materials to support a “staircase of complexity”—a range of quality complex texts for instruction as the main source of students’ knowledge acquisition and for students’ independent reading. Common Core Anchor Standard 10 is at the heart of this instructional shift. Understanding text complexity of the CCSS-ELA as it relates to selecting and teaching using complex texts will help you to consider the texts in order to provide rich, meaningful instruction.

This unit encompasses all of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading – Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, but it is primarily focused on Anchor Standard 10, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity. The Reading Standards for Literature 6-12, the Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-12, and the Language Standards 6-12 all come in to play when reading complex texts.

### Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- The meaning of a “staircase of complexity” and why it is vital to students being college and career ready.
- The three measures of text complexity.
- How to analyze how their current teaching practices compares with those required by this instructional shift.
- New instructional practices that can be employed to support this instructional shift.
- How to analyze the key ideas associated with the instructional shift of text complexity.
- The qualitative rubrics for informational and literary rubrics as well as the *Reader and Task Considerations* as tools to help identify the complexity of texts.

### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Describe what is meant by “staircase of complexity” and explain why complex text is vital to students being college and career ready.



- Analyze the key ideas associated with the instructional shift of text complexity.
- Explain the qualitative rubrics for informational and literary rubrics as well as the *Reader and Task Considerations* as tools to help identify the complexity of texts.

## Unit 6: Text-Based Answers

In this unit, participants explore the shift to text-based answers and how to support student learning from the text. The CCSS call for text to be at the center of teachers' instruction and student learning. Participants consider what the research says about creating text-dependent questions to enhance their instruction and engage students in the type of close reading that is necessary to gain knowledge through the text.

This unit encompasses all of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading – Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, and Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, but it is primarily focused on Anchor Standard 1 Key Ideas and Details.

### Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- How asking text-dependent questions and requiring students to give text-based answers while reading, writing and speaking prepares students to be college and career ready.
- How to analyze how teachers used text dependent questions to lead to deeper understanding of grade-level complex text.
- Why an emphasis on text-based questions with text-dependent answers is an important instructional shift.
- Strategies associated with close reading of text using text-based questions.

### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Create text-dependent questions that help students better understand a text.
- Analyze how students responded to text dependent questions.
- Select appropriate strategies to assist students when close reading a grade-level appropriate complex text.



## Unit 7: Academic Vocabulary

In this unit, participants consider the instructional shifts teachers have to make in order to help students' master academic vocabulary, an additional variable that adds to text complexity. Academic vocabulary applies across all content areas and includes high-utility words that help students become career and college ready. This unit addresses the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language, specifically Vocabulary Acquisition and Use.

### Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- The instructional shift towards building students' academic vocabulary within grade appropriate complex text.
- The explicit strategies and less-explicit best teaching practices for teaching of academic vocabulary.
- Examples of the three tiers of vocabulary words and an understanding of the CCSS focus upon teaching Tier 2 (academic vocabulary words) and Tier 3 (content specific words).

### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Describe the need for explicit and less-explicit teaching of academic vocabulary, referencing the CCSS vocabulary acquisition anchor standards.
- Identify the three tiers of vocabulary words and illustrate the focus in CCSS to teach Tier 2 (academic vocabulary words) and Tier 3 (content specific words).
- Identify best practices for introducing academic vocabulary in the classroom.

## Unit 8: Writing from Sources

In this unit, participants build on their growing knowledge to consider writing. They explore the instructional shifts teachers have to make in order to help students write using evidence from sources to inform or make an argument. Although narrative writing is one of the three genres of writing emphasized in the CCSS, this unit focuses upon writing to inform or to make an argument and how to help students garner evidence from text to do these types of writing well.

This unit addresses the College and Career Readiness anchor standards for writing. These standards address three text types of writing in grades 6-8: narrative, informative/explanatory, and argument. Since most teachers are well-versed in teaching students how to write narratives, this unit will focus on the less familiar forms of writing, specifically informative/explanatory and argument.

### Unit Objectives



After completing this unit, participants will know:

- What is meant by using evidence from sources to write an informative/explanatory piece or construct a written argument/opinion, and will be able to explain why doing these tasks is important for career and college readiness
- How to identify the characteristics of informative/explanatory and argument writing in the 6-8 grade band
- Understand the difference between argument and persuasive writing
- Analyze student informative/explanatory and argument writing pieces to identify the Standards represented in each written piece
- Participants will reflect on the strategies they can use for writing information text from sources to classroom practice

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Describe the need for the teaching of writing from sources, referencing the CCSS writing anchor standards and ELA standards.
- Identify the characteristics of informative/explanatory and argumentative writing in the 6-8 grade band.
- Recognize best practices for using evidence from the text to inform informational and argumentative-based writing in the classroom.

## **Unit 9: Working with Diverse Learners & CCSS**

In this unit, participants explore ways to meet the needs of ALL students in the classroom not just those at grade level. This unit will begin to prepare participants to implement the Common Core State Standards with students including English Learners, students with special needs, and gifted and talented students.

### **Unit Objectives**

After completing this unit, participants will know:

- The shared responsibility involved in the instruction English Language Learners among teachers in all grades and disciplines.
- Strategies to connect to the CCSS that will support English Language Learners' language development in their classes.
- The impact the CCSS will have on students receiving special education services and strategies they can use to help students achieve the Standards
- How the CCSS relates to the academic needs of gifted and talented students and they will gain strategies to help gifted and talented students achieve the standards and beyond.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this unit, participants will apply the following skills:

- Begin to support all learners in achieving the standards through the application of strategies to



support CCSS instruction of all students, particularly English Learners, students with special needs, and gifted and talented students

## **Unit 10: Epilogue**

In this unit, the presenter revisits the promise of the Common Core State Standards, and participants reflect on next steps for incorporating what they've learned into their classroom practice.

### **Methods of Instruction**

- Videos (consisting of lecture, interviews, and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the video presentations where participants are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)

### **Plagiarism Policy**

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org).



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### **Percentage of Course Credit**

- Reflection questions      60%
- Quizzes                      40%

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, quizzes), including watching all videos. We do not award partial credit.

### **Grading Policy**

A: 3.4 – 4.0  
B: 2.7 – 3.3  
C: 2.0 – 2.6  
F: >2.0



### Reflection/Quiz Rubric

Activity	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
<b>Quizzes</b>	90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	69% or below
<b>Reflection Question</b>	<p>Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content.</p> <p>Participant has made responses to prompts personally meaningful and relevant to his or her teaching practice.</p>	<p>Participant has included appropriate content from the course content.</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.</p>	<p>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</p>	<p>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has not addressed the specific questions posed.</p> <p>Participant has not responded to all reflection questions.</p> <p>Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</p>