CHAPTER 2

Reading Standards for Literature

Jacquelynn A. Malloy
Linda B. Gambrell

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for the reading of literature emphasize the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read it. It is expected that students will demonstrate steady growth with respect to comprehending more from text and making more inter- and intratext connections. Students deserve instruction using the very best literature because good stories challenge their intellect, inspire their imagination, help them make sense of the world, and nurture their desire to read (Fisher, Flood, & Lapp, 1999; Morrow, Freitag, & Gambrell, 2009). In this chapter, we focus on the reading of literature in grades 3 through 5. Although the reading of informational text is equally important, as discussed further in Chapter 3 (this volume), high-quality literature can be used to promote deep and thoughtful comprehension of increasingly complex texts, and we focus here on the standards for this strand.

Literature is most often thought of in terms of works of creative imagination, including poetry, drama, and fiction. Broadly speaking, however, the term *literature* encompasses a wide range of texts, from creative writing to scientific works, and a range of genres that includes poetry, drama, folktales, myths, fables, legends, fantasy, realistic fiction, historical fiction, autobiography, and biography (Norton & Norton, 2010). The central feature of literature is that it is intended to entertain; however, it can also inform, such as when works are based on history, art, culture, science, and law. The reading of literature promotes self-discovery, enhances our understanding of others, expands our understanding of issues and circumstances, models successful problem solving, and allows us to experience places, people, situations, and relationships we might not otherwise encounter.

Reading well transforms the lives of individuals and increases the likelihood of academic and economic success. If students are to succeed in academics and in life, they must

learn to read well, and the key to reading well is comprehension. Reading and comprehending literature involve both "extracting" and "constructing" meaning from written text, with text being defined as a range of material, from traditional books to digital files. Students read and comprehend text by acquiring meaning, confirming meaning, and creating meaning. Thus, reading comprehension can be defined as the process of meaning making (Gambrell, Block, & Pressley, 2002).

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects were designed to support a determined and creditable future perspective: that of preparing students from kindergarten forward with the skills they will need to participate meaningfully and successfully in a global society where critical expertise in an ever-changing communication landscape is vital. With particular regard to the reading of literature, the standards are based on the deep and critical construction of meaning that will afford them the following 21st-century skills:

- The close attentive reading that is the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature;
- The wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational texts that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens world views;
- The cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic (National Governors Association [NGA] Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010, p. 3).

These skills are essential for the types of literacy that will be required of learners when they enter the adult world, and underlie the grade-level standards from kindergarten to grade 12. These college and career readiness anchor standards are as follows:

Key Ideas and Details
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence (not applicable to literature).
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

In the following section, we present the grade-level interpretations of these overarching standards and provide inspiration for applying the instruction in the reading of literature in grades 3 through 5 with these standards in mind.

PUTTING THE STANDARDS INTO PRACTICE

In this section, we offer suggestions for applying the CCSS in third- through fifth-grade classrooms for teaching the reading of literature. Each of the applicable standards is introduced separately with an explanation of how the standard develops across the grades. A classroom vignette that highlights effective instruction and incorporates pedagogical elements that are supportive of engagement and learning, such as choice, challenge, collaboration, authentic tasks, and technology integration, follows each description.

Key Ideas and Details: Standard 1

Standard 1 addresses the following overarching college and career readiness (CCR) anchor standard for reading: *Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text*. In grades 3 through 5, this standard is expressed as shown in Table 2.1.

Looking across the grades, the standard requires a shift from understanding text through an examination of explicit information provided by the author to making inferences based on details provided in the text. Cognitively, this changes the level of expertise

TABLE 2.1. Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details (Standard 1)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

from asking and answering questions by drawing on the information provided to making predictions and inferences and then explaining reasoning by drawing on details offered in the text.

In third grade, a focus on reading as thinking is a crucial foundation to the concept of this standard: understanding what is read. In order for students to "determine what the text says explicitly," there must be a cognitive commitment to following the author through the story. Unlike informational texts, narrative texts are linear and sequential: Understanding what is to come is built on what comes prior. Therefore, it is important for teachers to model and nurture a "my brain is on" habit of mind when reading. Focusing on cognitive engagement in earlier grades to grasp the implicit details of a story supports the increasingly challenging connections required for making inferences in later grades.

The following vignette illustrates how one teacher impresses the "reading is thinking" habit of mind among her third-grade students:

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

"OK, friends. Move to the carpet quickly and quietly while I grab a book I'd love to read to you," Mrs. Cresep calls to her students as they finish their morning work. When they are seated, she directs them to look at the cover of the book *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart.

"So, let's get our brains ready to hear a story. What can we already tell about the story just by looking at the cover?"

"It's about a girl," offers Alecia.

"How do you know?" prompts Mrs. Cresep.

"Because there's a picture of her on the cover, and she's holding a plant . . . and something that looks like a knife," Alecia responds.

"Hmmm. It does look like a knife," Mrs. Cresep offers, squinting at the cover illustration. "Does that make sense?"

"Well, the book is about 'The Gardener,' " interjects Terrell, pointing to the title. "It's probably one of those little shovel things you use to dig up the dirt."

"Well, that makes sense—I think it's called a *trowel*. It's like a little handheld spade. So what else is our brain telling us about this book by looking at the cover?" Mrs. Cresep continues.

Loni gestures in the general direction of the cover. "It's sort of weird that she's on a fire escape at the top of a building in the city, isn't it? Where's the garden?"

"Great observation, Loni. Was anyone else wondering about that?" Mrs. Cresep notes students who nod or raise their hands to agree. "Now my brain is *really* curious. Do you want to take a moment to guess with your elbow partner how this young girl could have a garden in the city?"

After students discuss the possibilities for a moment, Mrs. Cresep directs their attention back to the book. "Keep your ideas right up front in your brains while we find out about this gardener. There are lots of interesting things to notice about this book, and while I'm reading it for the first time, I'd like you to keep your brains switched on to think about this garden in the city. When you hear something from the story that gives us an idea of how she might have a garden in the city, put a finger to your temple so that I know you've found something. Are you ready to listen?"

Students, familiar with this cue, sit on their bottoms with their hands resting in their laps and their eyes on the teacher.

> "Great! What is your brain ready to do while I read?" Mrs. Cresep prompts.
> "Think!" shouts the class.
> "Why?"
> "Because reading is thinking!" her students enthusiastically respond.
> "Excellent. Then let's get to it," says Mrs. Cresep, smiling as she turns to the first page.

What Mrs. Cresep does so well with her third-grade students is to bring attention to their level of cognitive engagement when introducing a new learning task. While she does this to introduce lessons across the content areas, the instructional practice of preparing readers to read is a well-documented part of the scaffolded reading experience (SRE) introduced by Graves and Graves (2003) and supported in research by Cooke (2002) and Laing, Peterson, and Graves (2005). In short, the SRE is a framework for planning prereading, during-reading, and postreading activities that scaffold readers in engaging with text to derive meaning. This vignette of Mrs. Cresep's classroom is an example of a prereading strategy intended to prepare students to listen with a purpose, which should support them in cognitively engaging with the text. Having a question in mind as they begin to hear the story allows them to begin the activity with their brains up and running. Mrs. Cresep makes the importance of cognitive engagement instrumentally explicit in her teaching, referring to their brains as a personal tool that is at their disposal and that requires their attention in order for it to develop. In prompting students to engage in the "every person response" of pointing to their temples when they hear evidence in the story, she is giving them a purpose for listening and interacting with the text.

In the prior example, asking and answering questions is a part of the prereading strategy, but questioning continues as a useful marker of engagement during and after reading as well. In addressing these questions, teachers can guide students to discriminate between information found *in the text* that can lead to answers and what can be inferred about the story when combining what the author offers with the reader's background knowledge. As students move through the grades, teachers can guide their students in keeping their minds engaged in making meaning from the text and in supporting their conclusions with evidence from the text.

Key Ideas and Details: Standard 2

The second standard in this category addresses the following CCR anchor standard: *Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas*. In grades 3 through 5, the standard is broken down as shown in Table 2.2.

The focus of this standard is twofold: first to recount and summarize what was read and then to determine the theme of the story, drama, or poem. In third grade, this is referred to as a central message, lesson, or moral, and is readily accessible in traditional stories such as folktales and fables. As the standard moves to the fourth-grade level, more emphasis is placed on finding support for the theme using details in the text, and at the fifth-grade level, the student is encouraged to explore how characters contribute to the development of the theme. In the following vignette, Mrs. Flemons's fifth-grade students are encouraged to search for clues to the theme of poems by first learning more about the author and his setting.

TABLE 2.2. Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details (Standard 2)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
2. Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.	2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.	2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

"Yesterday, we explored the life and background of the poet Langston Hughes on the Internet. Roberto, could you please pull out the foam board that has our bio Post-it notes? We organized these into a time line of his life and talked briefly about the period in our history known as the Harlem Renaissance," reminds Mrs. Flemons.

After reviewing the time line and discussing some of the major events in the poet's life, Mrs. Flemons brings out a stack of folders and sets them on the small-group table. "Now that you know a little about the man and the time in which he lived, let's take a look at his poetry. Each of these folders holds copies of one of Mr. Hughes's poems—the title of the poem is on the front cover. I'd like you to look through the folders during free time today and choose one poem that looks interesting to you. You can look through as many as you like, but choose only one and put it in your homework folder. Before we dismiss today, we'll talk about what we're going to do with them."

Later that day, Mrs. Flemons asks her students to pull out the Langston Hughes poem they chose. "Tonight, I'd like you to read your poem three times. Read it the first time silently, then the second time out loud. The third time you read it, I want you to underline five words in the poem that you think are important to what the poem *means*. You know something about the author and the challenges he faced as a writer in the early part of the 1900s. So use this information to think about what he wants the reader to understand from his poem. Tomorrow, we'll set aside some time to share what you think."

The next day, students meet in small groups according to their chosen poem. "So how do your 'important words' compare?" asks Mrs. Flemons. "If you have something different than your classmates, please offer a reason for why you chose the words you did. You may have a sense about what the author is trying to say that is helpful or different. Remember, Mr. Hughes is trying to send a message to us here, and great poets always choose their words very carefully. Take about 10 minutes and see if you can figure out what the message is, and then we'll share what we've got. We'll see if it fits with who we thought Langston Hughes was from our biographical research on him. You may begin now, please."

What Mrs. Flemons is hoping to impress on her fifth graders is that poets have reasons for writing what they write, and that part of their craft is to carefully choose words and arrangements of words to get a message to the reader. As with any good mystery, unlocking the theme to a poem requires some background research on the part of the investigator. For this reason, the preliminary online research on the life of Langston

Hughes and the literary period of the Harlem Renaissance is key to preparing students to determine the themes in his poems. Assigning students to focus on the words they think are important to the meaning of the poem focuses their attention on evidence from the text to support their group discussion of the theme of the poem. In this way, Mrs. Flemons facilitates clear connections between authors and literary themes.

Key Ideas and Details: Standard 3

The final standard in this category addresses the following CCR anchor concept: *Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text*. The standard is addressed across the grades as shown in Table 2.3.

In gleaning the key ideas and supporting details of text, Standard 3 directs students to attend to specific story elements in order to comprehend the story. In third grade, describing characters and their influence on the sequence of events in a work of literature is foundational to exploring characters, settings, and events in greater detail. In fifth grade, students should be prepared to compare and contrast story elements within a text, which is supported by a fourth-grade focus on describing singular elements well, as demonstrated in the following vignette.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Mr. Sullivan gathers his fourth graders to the reading area and instructs them to bring their reading journals with them. As they find seats on ottomans, bean bags, and pillows, he projects an image of a book they read earlier in the year onto the interactive white board. "Remember *Frindle*?" he queries.

"Yeah, Nicolas is still my hero. I wish I could get away with everything he did!" chortles Maurice.

"You do," challenges Kiera, as sniggers of laughter erupt.

"Well, I'm glad you liked *Frindle* because our next read-together is a book by the same author, Andrew Clements," Mr. Sullivan redirects. "It's called *No Talking*, and it pits boys against girls in a battle of wills."

"Oooo—I'll bet I know how that will go!" a voice calls out from the back of the room.

"Well, maybe you do and maybe you don't." Mr. Sullivan smiles. "We'll just have to read and find out, eh? But let's make it interesting. Whenever there's a standoff, like there will be with the fifth-grade students and the teachers in this story, it's helpful as a reader to try to understand the character of each of the main players. What are they like and why do they do what they do?"

TABLE 2.3. Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details (Standard 3)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
3. Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).	3. Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

> " Like profiling someone, right, Mr. Sullivan?" asks Bella.
>
> "Yes, just like that! In fact, that's a great analogy. There are four characters in this book who will have their own reasons for taking a stand in this story: two fifth graders, Dave and Lynsey; the principal, Mrs. Hiatt; and a teacher, Mr. Burton. As we read the first chapter today, choose one of those characters and profile them—that is, take notes about what they look like, what they say, and what they do." Mr. Sullivan projects a new slide of a three-column table with the headings Look, Say, and Do.
>
> "Make a table in your notebook that has three columns, like this," Mr. Sullivan continues, pointing to the table projected on the white board. "You can wait until the end of the first chapter to decide who you want to profile, but I want you to try to become an expert on this character. As we read through the rest of the chapters tomorrow and then all of this week, take notes on how your character looks, the types of things he or she says and does. Then you'll want to think about what this says about the characters and why they do what they do—their reasons and motivations. Try to become an expert on your character and speak for him or her when we talk about the story, got it?"
>
> "Got it!" the class replies.

Mr. Sullivan supports his students in a during-reading activity by having students profile a character. He provides a scaffold for the activity by directing students to focus on how their chosen character is described in the text as well as by what the character does and says. During the reading of the first chapter, Mr. Sullivan pauses frequently to think aloud about these explicit details in the text, supporting students in noticing and recording both explicit details and implicit hints to a character's personality and motivations. As he progresses through the chapters, he is keen to gradually release this responsibility to the students as they become experts on their character and, ideally, begin to offer explanations for why the characters in the story behave as they do. In this way, he leads them to understand story elements in literature in a deep and personal manner.

Craft and Structure: Standard 4

In the category of Craft and Structure, Standard 4 addresses the following CCR anchor standard: *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.* The standard changes across the grade levels as shown in Table 2.4.

TABLE 2.4. Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure (Standard 4)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., *Herculean*).	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

Standard 4 begins a focus on the author's craft in creating a work of literature and the structure or form of that work. Specifically, this standard directs the learner's attention to figurative language and words that have classical etymologies. In the third grade, an understanding of literal versus nonliteral words serves as entree to developing facility with figurative language elements, which might include *s*imiles, *h*yperbole, *a*lliteration, *m*etaphors, *p*ersonification, *o*nomatopoea, and *o*xymorons (*shampoo*). In the following vignette, however, Mrs. Dreesbach's fourth-grade class is attending to classical elements directly by reading and performing Greek myths.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

"Move into your base groups, please," instructs Mrs. Dreesbach. "We've got a job to do and it's going to take a lot of planning and cooperation."

Her students recognize her use of the word *job* to mean that their soon-to-be announced project was going to extend beyond the classroom. Once settled, Mrs. Dreesbach continues:

"As you probably recall from last year, the third graders are learning about ancient Greece." Mumbled confirmation from students greets this statement. "So we've been asked by the third-grade teachers to share some of our expertise with their students."

"So what do they want us to do?" asks Celeste.

"They want us to come up with some dramatic interpretations of Greek myths—to tell some of the stories in an interesting way for the third graders. You can do a Reader's Theatre type of thing where you just read your parts, or a short play with props and acting—it's up to your group. But you need to make it understandable to third graders, which might be difficult because some of the words in Greek myths are not very common and may be hard to understand."

"So how do we do that?" asked Jonathan.

"Let's take a look," said Mrs. Dreesbach, passing out copies of *Greek Myth Plays* by Carol Pugliano-Martin. "We'll read through the first play together and pick out words that might be difficult for third graders to understand. Then we can think of ways to make it easier to understand."

"Maybe we could give them a cheat sheet with the confusing words on them," offered Chelsea.

"Or we could have one of us 'pause' the play and explain words?" Donovan thought aloud.

"All good ideas," agreed Mrs. Dreesbach, "And you can keep those in mind as we read through this first play together. Then you and your group choose one of the plays from the book to work on. Once you've brainstormed what *kind* of 'dramatic interpretation' you want to do, we can make a plan for getting it done."

By reading and performing Greek myths, Mrs. Dreesbach allows her class to explore the language of a classical culture and learn about characters and events that are often alluded to in literature. The activity she chooses to support this standard offers opportunities to explore vocabulary, build fluency through the repeated readings that are required to rehearse a performance, and develop background knowledge of another culture. Having a real audience and purpose for engaging in the activity delivers an element of importance and excitement that gives students a reason to do their best.

Craft and Structure: Standard 5

Standard 5, which continues the focus on craft and structure of text, addresses the following CCR anchor standard: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. The standard is expressed across the grades as shown in Table 2.5.

In attending to the structure of literature, Standard 5 focuses on the parts-to-whole aspects of various forms of writing, such as stories, dramas, and poetry. Beginning with a familiarity of the terms used to refer to these written forms, such as *chapter*, *scene*, or *stanza*, a more evaluative and critical stance to understanding the completed structure of a piece can be understood, as exemplified in the following vignette featuring Ms. Harrison's third-grade class as they are guided through a series of units on individual forms with lessons in making comparisons and distinctions.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Ms. Harrison welcomes her third graders back from lunch. "I need you all on the carpet in five, so please put your things away and find a spot—and bring your individual white boards and markers, please."

As students settle in from the break, Ms. Harrison opens a program on the interactive white board. She directs their attention to the board, where a series of words in boxes are floating in a slow progression across the screen.

"We've completed a unit on stories that included chapter books, and then a unit on poems and another on plays. And we've learned a lot of words that have to do with these types of literature. Do you see some of those words here?" she asks.

"I see the word *scene* and it's a part of a play," offers Jasmine.

"Do you agree, class?" Ms. Harrison gestures for Jasmine to come to the board as students respond affirmatively. Then she touches the three icons at the bottom of the display. The words *stories*, *plays*, and *poems* each appear on one of the icons. "Jasmine, could you drag the word *scene* into the icon that looks like a script? Great. A scene is a part of a play. Can someone else tell Jasmine another word that is a part of a play?"

"The word *act*—see? It's right there close to the top of the board," directs James.

"Do you agree that an *act* is a part of a play?" Ms. Harrison queries as Jasmine slides the word to the script icon. "How is that different from a scene?"

TABLE 2.5. Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure (Standard 5)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
5. Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as *chapter*, *scene*, and *stanza*; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.	5. Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.	5. Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

"Well, a play has acts and an act has scenes, right?" Sammy suggests.

"Does that sound right to everyone?" Ms. Harrison prompts and students nod in agreement. "So then, what do scenes have?"

"Lines!"

"And how do we know whose line is whose?"

"By the character names," the class chimes.

"They're in all caps," adds Maurice.

"Right. So Jasmine, see if you can find the word box with *CHARACTER NAMES* in all caps to slide into the script icon. And we'll need to drag the word *lines* in there as well."

Jasmine drags and drops each of the words associated with plays and dramas into the script icon. Ms. Harrison then asks her to click on the icon to open it, revealing all of the words associated with this literary format.

"Now you get to be clever. With your elbow partner, draw a diagram that shows how all of these words used to talk about parts of a script relate to each other. For example, Sammy already helped us remember that a scene is a part of an act, right? How could you draw that?"

Ms. Harrison gives the students a few moments to draw their diagrams before asking them to hold up their white boards, inviting a few pairs of students to share their ideas. She then provides instructions for center time, noting that one of the centers will be at the white board, where they can work in groups to create similar sorts and diagrams for the literary formats of chapter books and poems. "OK, does everyone know which center to go to first? Excellent! Blue Group with me at the guided reading table, please!"

Ms. Harrison supports her students in understanding the terminology related to forms of literature through the use of organizing structures, such as those that can be developed using interactive white board software. In fact, she has created several "games" for organizing these terms beyond the one just described, and students work in groups during center time to practice their familiarity with them at the white board. One of these activities invites students to mark and refer to actual stories, dramas, and poems by drawing and labeling the structure of the piece on the white board. Her expectation is that students use this terminology when discussing the texts they read together during small-group and whole-class discussions.

Craft and Structure: Standard 6

The third and final standard in the category of craft and structure supports the CCR anchor standard that further fosters critical analysis: *Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text*. The standard shifts its focus across the grades as shown in Table 2.6.

TABLE 2.6. Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure (Standard 6)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
6. Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.	6. Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.	6. Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

As students move through the grades, Standard 6 guides them in developing an awareness of the influence of point of view in order to fully understand the characters and events in a story. In order to develop an understanding of how events can differ depending on a character's viewpoint, students first learn to identify and compare or contrast these various perspectives. In the following vignette, Mr. Maneno's fifth-grade class uses this analysis as a springboard to a Writer's Workshop, where they will write from the perspective of an antagonist in a folktale or legend.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Mr. Maneno strolls to the assortment of legends and folktales that have accrued on the display shelf in the classroom library. Choosing one of the books, he raises the book, displaying the cover to the class, and inquires: "So, Robin Hood—good guy or bad guy?"

"Good guy," says Trevor, affirmed by several other students.

"Who says?" Mr. Maneno probes.

"Well, he stole from the rich to give to the poor, so that makes him a good guy, right?" offers Ginnella.

"Yeah, but he stole, and that's not a good thing," Marcus reasons.

"So if you were a poor person and Robin Hood stole some money from a traveling merchant and gave it to you, he'd be your hero, right?"

Students nod their agreement.

"But if you were the rich guy he stole it from, he's just a thief," Simon calls out.

"It seems that your point of view makes a difference in the telling of the story, doesn't it?" Mr. Maneno questions as he pulls a book from his briefcase. "Here is a version of the Robin Hood story you might not have heard before." Mr. Maneno, holds up the second book.

"What makes this one different?" asks Meghan.

"This!" Mr. Maneno grins, flipping the book over to reveal the back cover. "This is the story from the point of view of the sheriff of Nottingham. Do you think his telling of the Robin Hood story will be any different?"

"Oh, yeah," grins Alecia. "He's probably going to make him out to be a juvenile delinquent!"

"Well, we're going to read this new point of view of Robin Hood. This will inspire us to think about what other points of view are missing from some of our favorite legends up here." Mr. Maneno points to the other books on display. "Then, my friends, we are going to give voice to some of those characters who might have something else to say about our favorite heroes. Are you game?"

A resounding "Yeah!" from the class reveals their eagerness.

Mr. Maneno is a gifted writing instructor who makes good use of the reading of literature to both entertain and inspire his students. Each year he succeeds in developing a community of writers who read and readers who write, keeping the connections between enjoying and creating stories and other forms of communication productive and invigorating. His students have learned to read with an eye to how a piece is crafted and are guided in deconstructing what makes a good story, drama, or poem "work" before using that information to craft their own versions. This encourages a deep understanding of the author's craft as well as a wide awareness of the various structures that can be used to develop entertaining and informative writing.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7

Only two of the three standards in the category of Integration of Knowledge and Ideas relate to the use of literature in the classroom. The first, Standard 7, builds on students' maturing appreciation for literature: *Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words*. The standard is expressed across the grades as shown in Table 2.7.

Understanding the visual elements of literature, drama, and poetry in grades 3–5 requires not only an awareness of visual elements but also a sense of how these elements support and enhance the meaning of the text. Moving from an evaluation of illustrations and descriptive writing, students can come to develop a broader appreciation for the visual arts and their contribution to communicating literature. In the vignette that follows, Mrs. Starzyk's third-grade class is beginning this journey.

**LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION:
INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS**

Mrs. Starzyk has just completed a presentation on the history of the Caldecott Medal awards for artwork in picture books to her third-grade students. Today she carries to each table group a stack of books, one for each student. Each of the books is a Caldecott award winner.

"Today, we're going to select our own Caldecott Medal book. Each of you is going to serve as a judge, rating a book you choose from the stack and then coming up with a nomination from your group."

"Cool," says Peggy. "What are we looking for? How do we decide?"

"Good question," responds Mrs. Starzyk, placing a stack of judging forms on their desks. "The Caldecott judges have five areas that they look at, but we're going to condense it to just three. Look up here at the screen, please." A judging form, which she placed under the document camera, is projected for large-scale viewing. "Here's what the judges might think about when they look at the illustrations. First, is the art really good? That is, are you really impressed with how well the artist created the illustrations?" She uses two of her favorite book covers—one a watercolor and the other graphic art—as examples, giving her justification for why she thinks they're good examples of this criterion. "The second thing they might look for is how well the illustrations help readers to understand the story. For example, in this illustration, I can really tell that the boy is frustrated." She places another illustration under the document camera. "And here, in *The Giving Tree*, the line drawings really help us to see how the tree loves the boy, don't you think? Without these illustrations, it would be hard to imagine how the tree and the boy have this long-term relationship!"

TABLE 2.7. Reading Standards for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 7)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
7. Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).	7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.	7. Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

> Mrs. Starzyk projects yet another illustration. "And here is the last criterion we can use to judge our books. How well do the illustrations appeal to the intended audience, in this case kids your age? Do they look like something only grown-ups would like or something that is kid-friendly?"
>
> "So do we judge our own book first?" Shannon questions.
>
> "Yes. You'll need to read through your book and pay attention to the illustrations. Are they well done? If so, check the box on your judging form that says, 'The artwork is really good'." Mrs. Starzyk points out the first statement on the judging form. "Then give some thought to how well the illustrations help you to understand the story. Do they help you see the action or understand how a character feels? If so, check the box beside the second statement, 'The illustrations help me understand the book better.' And last, if you think the illustrations are really appealing for kids, check the box by the third statement: 'The illustrations would be interesting to children.' Got it?"
>
> Students nod their agreement.
>
> "Then let's get started! Choose a book from the stack and give it a read. After you've filled out the judging form, meet with your group and talk about whether your book should be nominated for the class award from your table. Only one book can be nominated from a group, so be sure to have good reasons why you think a book is a good choice or not. Try to choose a strong candidate for the class vote and be ready to give a good 'book sell' to convince the rest of the class to vote for the book you choose. We can also have some runners-up if we feel there is more than one good choice. Mrs. Walworth has offered to let us make a display in the media center of our favorite Caldecott winners. So let's get reading!"

At this level, Mrs. Starzyk's third graders are given a purpose for attending to the interactions between text and art by participating in a classwide Caldecott judging event. The judging form that students use to evaluate the books they read support them in applying a critical eye to the ways in which the illustrator contributes to the comprehension of a story and supports the reader in taking pleasure from reading it. In later grades, this awareness can be broadened across a range of visual media and graphical/textual integrations, such as graphic novels and digital presentations.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9

The final standard that addresses the integration of knowledge and ideas relates to the CCR anchor standard that supports the continued development of students' analytical skills: *Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.* Across the grades, the standard is expressed as shown in Table 2.8.

In the context of integrating knowledge and ideas across texts, students in third through fifth grades begin to look at an author's body of work as well as the themes that are prevalent in different genres of literature, as illustrated in the following vignette. Mrs. Gore's fourth-grade class has just completed a unit that addressed the identification of the theme of a story, or Standard 2, as well as a unit on how geography affects the way people live. Mrs. Gore is now introducing a new unit for the English language arts that will explore traditional tales from various cultures. Let's see how she weaves Standard 9 into her lesson.

TABLE 2.8. Reading Standards for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Standard 9)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
9. Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).	9. 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.	9. Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION: INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

Mrs. Gore opens the laptop cart and reminds students of the protocol for getting a laptop out of the cart and booting it up. As students set up their computers at their desks, she opens a browser on the interactive white board.

"OK, my friends. We're going to do some exploring today. Someone remind me what the seven continents are."

"Europe, Asia," begins Lindsay.

"North America, South America," adds Chris quickly. His response is followed by moments of quiet.

"We've got three more As left," prompts Mrs. Gore to ignite deeper thinking.

Scott catches her clue: "Australia . . . Africa . . . and Antarctica!"

"Great! Now, do all of these continents have people living on them?"

"Well, Antarctica doesn't really, unless you count the scientists," says Juan.

"For today, we're only going to consider the continents that have cultures on them, so you're right—Antarctica is out." She writes the names of the other six continents on the board. "Because today we're going to find some traditional stories from each of these six continents. Traditional stories are handed down from generation to generation, often told orally, like stories around the campfire. Long ago, people made up stories about how they think things happened, like about how the stars got in the sky."

"Like Greek myths?" asks Sheena. "One of them is about how the sun goes across the sky everyday."

"Yes, very much like that," Mrs. Gore confirms. "Today we're going to find, and then compare, traditional stories about how the world was created, or 'creation stories.' Most native cultures have one, and they might be different from continent to continent." She opens the browser and directs students to the screen.

"Let's talk through how we can find traditional stories and what key words we should use to narrow our search down to creation stories from different areas of the world." She collaborates with students in testing out theories of how to locate creation stories from different parts of the world.

"Great. Now that we know what we're looking for, let's get into groups of four. Each group can choose a continent and find a creation story—a traditional tale about how the world was created. Remember that with a traditional tale the author is unknown. The story was handed down and we don't know quite where it started. Let's get online and see what we can find!"

Mrs. Gore integrates geography and literature in the lesson by leading her class in a search for a particular type of traditional tale from the different continents. This use of literature to compare and contrast the stories handed down in various regions of the world provides an opening to discussion of how geography and culture interact to influence the development of folktales and myths. This integration of social studies and literature supports students in understanding not only the stories they read but also the cultures where they originated.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: Standard 10

The sole standard in the category of Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity addresses the CCR anchor standard for proficiency: *Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently*. The standard is expressed across the grades as shown in Table 2.9.

Clearly, the goal as students move through grades 3 through 5 is to achieve and maintain proficiency in accessing grade-level texts with independence. Standard 10 requires vigilance on the part of the classroom teacher in assessing individual students and designing appropriate guided instruction to help all students reach grade-level proficiency and in extending these skills as they are able. Reading-level assessment should occur frequently enough that appropriate texts could be selected to support the teaching of Standards 1 through 9 through careful selection of texts, as demonstrated in the following vignette.

LITERATURE STANDARDS IN ACTION:
RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY

Fourth-grade teachers Andrea and Kathy meet in the school book room during their planning period. They have been charged by their grade-level team to choose book club options that could be used in an upcoming thematic unit on the Civil War.

"I'm hoping to find some good historical fiction this year. Last year, my students really seemed to get a sense of what it was like to live through the Civil War and Reconstruction Era from a kid's point of view," Kathy offers as they preview the texts on the shelves. "I think adding the book club to the unit is a great idea for this year."

TABLE 2.9. Reading Standards for Literature: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity (Standard 10)

Grade 3 students	Grade 4 students	Grade 5 students
10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

"It does make it relatable," agrees Andrea. "But the trick is to find a range of choices that our kids can read on their own, and my students' reading levels are all over the place this year."

"I know," Kathy commiserates. "We have the grade-level equivalents and interest levels here," she adds, indicating the shelf labels under groups of books. "But that's not the best way to tell. Look here, for instance," she continues, pulling a novel from the shelf and leafing through it. "I used this one as a read-aloud last year, and even though it says it has a 3.5 grade equivalent, there are a lot of difficult words in here." She indicates a passage from the text. "I had to stop and do a fair amount of explaining when I read it with the class, which is fine for a read-aloud, but not so much for independent reading. If only it had a few more illustrations to back up some of these geographical references. My kids will have a hard time picturing just how close some of these battles were without them."

"I know what you mean," agrees Andrea. "I think we need to take a careful look at each one of these in order to put together a good selection for them to choose from for the book clubs. The numbers don't give the full story!"

Learning to read well, with deep and thoughtful comprehension, is a journey toward reading increasingly complex texts. One of the key elements of the CCSS for reading literature is that all students must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through the grades. Being able to read complex text independently and with strong comprehension is essential for high academic achievement—as well as for adult recreational reading down the line. If students do not develop the ability to read complex literature independently, they will read less in general (NGA and CCSO, 2010, Appendix 4). Research suggests that the more students read, the better readers they become (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Cunninghan & Stanovich, 1998; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990), emphasizing the importance of developing students' ability to read increasingly complex texts. Accordingly, avoidance of "complex texts is likely to lead to a general impoverishment of knowledge, which, because knowledge is intimately linked with reading comprehension ability, will accelerate the decline in the ability to comprehend complex texts" (NGA and CCSSO, 2010, Appendix 4).

As teachers work with students to steadily increase the complexity of the literature they are able to read with concentration and stamina, they will need to develop skill at determining how easy or difficult a particular text is to read. The CCSS present a three-part model for thinking about and measuring text complexity that includes qualitative, quantitative, and reader and task dimensions. The use of these measures of text complexity will help teachers match texts to students and instructional tasks. The three-part model emphasizes the complexities of making judgments about the difficulty level of texts.

Qualitative Dimensions of Text Complexity

Teachers will need to make informed decisions about aspects of text—levels of meaning or purpose, structure, language conventions and clarity, and knowledge demands—are best measured by teachers, and they will need to make informed decisions about these aspects of text. Toward this end, the CCSS suggest that these four factors should be interpreted as a continuum of difficulty rather than discrete "stages."

1. Levels of meaning: Easier literary texts (less complex) are represented by texts with a single level of meaning, while more difficult literary texts (more complex) are represented by texts with multiple levels of meaning, such as satires, where the literal message of the author is at odds with the underlying message.
2. Structure: The structure of literary texts can range from simple and conventional (low complexity), complex, implicit, and unconventional (more complex). For example, less complex literary texts tend to relate events in chronological order, whereas more complex texts make use of time and sequence manipulations, such as flashbacks and flashforwards.
3. Language conventionality and clarity: Less complex texts have language that is literal, clear, contemporary, and conversational, whereas more complex texts use language that is figurative, ironic, ambiguous, or otherwise unfamiliar.
4. Knowledge demands: Literary texts that make few assumptions about the students' experience and cultural knowledge are generally less complex than texts that make greater assumptions.

Quantitative Dimensions of Text Complexity

The quantitative dimensions of text complexity can be measured or counted, such as word length and word frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion. These aspects are difficult, if not impossible, for a teacher to evaluate efficiently. A number of formulas and software tools are available to help teachers assess these difficult aspects of text and will become increasingly useful.

Formulas to determine text difficulty include the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Dale–Chall Readability Formula, and the Fry Graph Readability Formula. Software currently available include the Lexile Framework for Reading (MetaMetrics, Inc.), ATOS (Renaissance Learning), and Coh-Metrix (University of Memphis). Each of these formulas and software tools has strengths and limitations that need to be considered when assessing text complexity.

Reader and Text Dimensions of Text Complexity

The third dimension of text complexity encompasses reader and task considerations. Accordingly, these aspects of text complexity are related to variables specific to the reader—for example, level of motivation, knowledge, and experiences—and task-specific variables such as purposes for reading and types of questions posed. Reader and task variables must be considered when determining whether a text is appropriate for a given student.

Teachers must use their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the instructional tasks to evaluate reader and task variables. Reader variables include cognitive abilities such as attention, memory, and the ability to draw inferences, as well as motivation (interest, purpose, self-efficacy as a reader, and appreciation of the value of reading) and knowledge (vocabulary and comprehension skill). Task-related variables include purpose for reading and the type of reading being done (pleasure, to answer questions, to prepare for a discussion). It is important to note that students need opportunities to expand their reading abilities, but they also need to experience the satisfaction and pleasure of easy reading so long as there is general movement toward texts of higher levels of complexity across the school year.

Clearly, professional educators face a multifaceted task in guiding their students through increasingly complex texts in pursuit of meeting the grade-level standards in grades 3 through 5. Choosing texts that match both readers and standards is a balancing act that requires vigilance and attention to current best practices in pedagogy. In the following section, we discuss the elements of the language arts block that can support this endeavor as well as the teaching practices that are best supported by the research literature.

USING THE STANDARDS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY

The previous section provided a look into the classrooms of some exemplary teachers and their implementation of CCSS. These teachers embrace the integration of content-area reading with literature instruction that incorporates technology as classroom tools for learning. While the vignettes highlighted serve as inspiration for the teaching of the CCSS, they need to be viewed within the overarching structure of the language arts block.

Structuring the Language Arts Block

The language arts block is often allotted a generous portion of the school day in most districts. The teaching of literature is well supported by assembling a classroom library that includes a variety of genres with a wide range of reading levels and text complexity. Effective educators are also proficient in creating text sets that include both narrative and expository texts on a topic or author groupings that suit the CCSS and interest levels of the students. Establishing a productive working relationship with the media center faculty can buttress the classroom offerings by rotating selected choices through the classroom library on an interim basis.

The language arts block can be configured in many ways, but should include attention to several specific elements in particular:

1. *Teacher read-aloud*. The teacher read-aloud should play a primary role in presenting reading strategies and new skills to students. The beauty of the read-aloud is that it is supported by teacher modeling and thinking aloud, which permits exposure to literature at a challenging level for the students. The strategic read-aloud should include a repeatable definition of the strategy presented as well as a relevancy statement that supports student engagement. For example: "Prediction is a guess about what might happen next in the story. We make our predictions based on what we already know. This helps us to keep our brains switched on while we read, because we want to see if our guess is right."

2. *Guided instruction*. Small-group, skill-based reading instruction is a crucial element of the language arts block if we are interested in helping students of varying levels achieve the standards on grade level and beyond (see Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). This requires attention to formatively assessing students during the presentation of the skill or strategy through practices such as the "every person response" or through follow-up individual and group activities. Noticing the students who are with you, those who are

lost, and those who are well beyond the targeted learning outcome is essential to forming fluid and dynamic groups for guided instruction. The guided instruction itself requires careful attention to the text–reader match to support students in accessing the learning outcome at an effectively instructional level.

3. *Word study.* As students move across the grades, explicit instruction in decoding strategies and vocabulary can be addressed through targeted mini-lessons on increasingly complex word structures, patterns, and vocabulary that are essential to understanding the texts they read. There are well-researched and easily implementable programs, such as *Words Their Way* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnson, 2011) and *Word Journeys* (Ganske, 2000), that can be used to structure mini-lessons and follow-up guided and independent center activities that move students through a developmental sequence of increasingly challenging tasks. Word study supports students in word recognition and vocabulary as well as spelling. Additional support for including these elements in the language arts block can be found in Chapters 4 and 7 of this book.

4. *Self-selected reading.* In order for students to fully appreciate the value of the skills and strategies that support the reading of literature, time should be devoted to the independent reading of self-selected texts. Support for this practice is discussed later in this section. Students can be nurtured toward developing personal reasons for reading through teacher and student book recommendations, access to a wide range of genres and reading levels, and support in choosing texts that are at a "just right" level for enjoying independently. Teachers can further support the practice of reading by conferencing with students periodically on their developing reading interests, integration of reading strategies when reading alone, and ability to share what they have read.

Supporting the Standards through Pedagogy

For many students in grades 3 through 5, good reading comprehension comes easily, while for others it is a difficult and sometimes confusing process. Students who are skilled readers use a variety of strategies, become deeply engaged in what they are reading, monitor and evaluate what they are reading, and are able to relate what they read to their own lives (Block & Parris, 2008; Pressley, 2000). According to Pressley (2000), lack of attention to any of these factors will increase the likelihood that reading comprehension development will be impeded.

What is required to improve the reading comprehension of literature for elementary students in grades 3 through 5? Among the elements of effective reading comprehension identified by Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman (2011), the following two are particularly relevant for instruction designed to support students in reading literature with deep and thoughtful comprehension:

1. Provide students with a volume and range of literary texts.
2. Teaching comprehension strategies using literature.

Provide Students with a Volume and Range of Literary Texts

Classrooms where students have ample opportunities to engage in sustained reading provide the foundation that is essential for supporting the development of reading

comprehension. Students who are good comprehenders read more than students who struggle with comprehension (Guthrie, 2004). Simply put, reading practice helps students become better readers. A number of studies have documented that time spent reading, or volume of reading, is associated with both reading proficiency and intrinsic motivation to read (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1993; Foorman et al., 2006; Mizelle, 1997; Taylor et al., 1990). Given the evidence supporting volume of reading, Hiebert (2009) argues that it is surprising that the amount of time students spend in sustained reading of text during the school day has not increased substantially over the years.

In the content areas, text sets that focus on a topic under study, such as a science unit on inventors, could include a variety of genres and reading levels, thereby serving not only as a resource for learning but also as an enticement for reluctant readers. Biographies of inventors and informational books that highlight remarkable inventions could be collected alongside novels and stories on the topic. For example, *The Inventor's Times: Real-Life Stories of 30 Amazing Creations*, which presents inventions as breaking news stories, and the Tom Swift, Young Inventor series would round out a text set with something of interest for a variety of young readers.

Teaching Comprehension Strategies Using Literature

Students require independent facility with comprehension strategies in order to take on the demands of reading increasingly complex text. Block and Pressley (2002) suggest that students be taught to use well-validated comprehension strategies. There are a number of research-based comprehension strategies that, if taught, have been shown to improve reading comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke et al., 2011; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). While there are variations across these lists and terminology, there is general agreement that the following six strategies are beneficial: prediction, think-aloud, story structure, visual imagery, summarization, and question generation.

1. *Prediction*. Prediction involves engaging students in using their existing knowledge to make predictions and then reading to confirm—or disconfirm—these predictions. According to Duke and Pearson (2002), prediction is particularly effective in the reading of narrative text. Research indicates that engaging in prediction increases comprehension and memory of stories (Anderson, Wilkinson, Mason, & Shirey, 1987; Neuman, 1988). Several studies suggest also that prediction activities increase story comprehension only when the predictions are explicitly compared with the text, suggesting that the verification process is as important as the prediction process (Anderson et al., 1987; Fielding, Anderson, & Pearson, 1990).

As prior knowledge supports the quality of the predictions made, predicting supports content-area integration as well. For example, when studying the Civil War, a teacher read-aloud using a text such as *Diary of a Drummer Boy* assists students in using their growing understandings of the events of the war to make predictions about what might happen next in the story.

2. *Think-aloud*. This comprehension strategy involves saying what you are thinking (thinking aloud) while engaging in the reading process. Think-aloud has been shown to improve student comprehension under two different conditions: when students think-aloud while reading and when teachers routinely model think-aloud while reading to

students. According to Duke and Pearson (2002), although studies have generally examined the effect of teacher think-aloud when used as part of a package of reading comprehension strategies, the common finding of positive effects across these studies suggests that teacher think-aloud is an effective strategy (Paris, Cross, & Lipson, 1984).

The strategy of having students think aloud also has been proven effective in increasing reading comprehension. It appears that when students think aloud, it decreases impulsive reading behaviors, such as jumping to conclusions (Meichenbaum & Asnarow, 1979), and leads to more thoughtful and purposeful reading. In addition, student think-alouds have been shown to improve comprehension monitoring (Baumann, Seifert-Kessel, & Jones, 1992).

3. *Story structure.* Research supports the value of teaching students to use story structure to organize their understanding of important ideas. For narratives or stories, text is commonly organized according to character, setting, goal, plot episode, and resolution. Research has shown positive effects for explicit instruction in story structure, and the effects transfer to the subsequent reading of new texts (Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1983; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Greenewald & Rossing, 1986; Morrow, 1984; Nolte & Singer, 1985).

4. *Visual imagery.* The old adage "A picture is worth a thousand words" may explain why the strategy of visual imagery enhances reading comprehension. A robust body of literature indicates that students of all reading abilities profit from instruction on the use of visual imagery. When students are provided with instruction and are encouraged to "make pictures in your head," they have a framework for organizing and remembering text (Gambrell & Bales, 1986; Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993; Pressley, 1976). In addition, comprehension is further enhanced when literature is accompanied by text-relevant illustrations, and students are encouraged to use the illustrations in the text to create a "movie in their head" about what is happening in the story (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993).

As demonstrated in the vignette featuring Mrs. Dreesbach's classroom, supporting Standard 4: Craft and Structure, visualizing can help students to imagine a culture with which they may not be familiar. Developing the lesson, Ms. Dreesbach may choose to have students collaborate on creating scenes, with the assistance of the art teacher, and designing costumes for a presentation to the third graders.

5. *Summarization.* The ability to summarize requires students to read large units of text, determine and differentiate important from unimportant ideas, and then synthesize those ideas in order to create a new coherent text summary that represents the ideas of the original (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Research suggests that instruction in summarizing improves not only the ability to summarize text, but also overall text comprehension. There are a number of approaches to the teaching of summarization. The work of McNeil and Donant (1982) focused on a rule-governed approach, teaching students to engage in the following process:

- Delete unnecessary material.
- Delete redundant material.
- Compose a word to replace a list of items.
- Compose a word to replace individual parts of an action.
- Select a topic sentence.
- Invent a topic sentence if one is not available.

Other approaches to summarizing text are more holistic, such as the GIST procedure where students *G*enerate *I*nteractions between *S*chemata and *T*ext (Cunningham, 1982). In this procedure, students create summaries of 15 or fewer words for increasingly larger amounts of text.

6. *Question generation.* Teaching students to generate their own questions while reading literature has been shown to improve reading comprehension. Perhaps the most widely used strategy is Question-Answer-Relationships (QAR), developed by Raphael and colleagues (Raphael & Pearson, 1985; Raphael & Wonnacott, 1985). This procedure engages students in the process of differentiating three types of questions about text: Right There (the answer is explicitly stated), Think and Search (the answer requires searching the text and identifying inferential text connections), and On My Own (the answer must be generated from the students' prior knowledge). Research on QAR and extensions of this procedure (i.e., QAR Plus) reveal that teaching students to ask questions about text improved their ability to generate questions. According to Duke and Pearson (2002), the most compelling evidence for teaching students to generate their own questions comes from the research on teaching routines that include question generation, such as reciprocal teaching and (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) and transactional strategies instruction (Pressley, 2000).

Reading comprehension instruction should be taught using the gradual release of responsibility model, which transfers responsibility for the use of the strategy from the teacher to the student in the following five stages (Duke et al., 2011):

Stage 1: The teacher provides an explicit description of the strategy and when and how it should be used.
Stage 2: The teacher and/or students model the strategy in action.
Stage 3: Teacher–student collaborative use of the strategy in action.
Stage 4: Teacher guides the students in using the strategy, gradually releasing responsibility to the students.
Stage 5: Students independently use the strategy.

Instruction using the gradual release of responsibility model is inherently recursive; the teacher cycles back through the model as students meet increasingly complex texts. As Duke and colleagues (2011) point out, the gradual release of responsibility instructional model represents a "virtuous cycle." Each time students encounter a new topic or a text that is more complex, such as with intricate language or excessively obscure words, they will need a little scaffolding to "get their sea legs" in those new textual waters. The gradual release of responsibility is in keeping with the CCSS in recognizing that instructional scaffolding is necessary and desirable, and that "instruction must move generally toward *decreasing scaffolding* and *increasing independence*, with the goal of students reading independently" (NGA and CCSSO, Appendix A, p. 9).

CONCLUSION

Deep and thoughtful comprehension of literature is the goal of the ELA Common Core standards related to reading for grades 3–5. Key points in the reading standards include the following:

- The standards across grades 3–5 present a "staircase" of increasing complexity in the texts students must be able to read in order to be ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading.
- The standards require the progressive development of reading comprehension so that as students progress through grades 3–5, they are able to gain more from whatever they read.
- Students in grades 3–5 are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective through reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature.
- The standards across grades 3–5 mandate certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world.

Teachers can support their students in accessing literature across the grade levels by designing a language arts block that provides explicit instruction in targeted skills, strategies, and word study as well as opportunities to respond to literature through discussion and collaborative endeavors. The vignettes provided in this chapter were selected to highlight the use of literature in integrated and thematic instruction and reading/writing connections and to showcase the integration of technology in teaching the CCSS. By carefully choosing texts that match the CCSS and the reading levels of students and providing effective reading instruction, teachers can create a context for developing deep, rich comprehension of literature that supports students in acquiring the literary skills needed to participate fully in a 21st-century world.

BOOKS FOR TEACHING
THE READING LITERATURE STANDARDS IN GRADES 3–5

Title	Author	Publisher
Pushing Up the Sky: Seven Native Plays for Children	Joseph Bruchac	Dial Books
The Ink Garden of Brother Theophane	C. M. Millenq	Charlesbridge
Where the Sidewalk Ends	Shel Silverstein	Harper & Row
Moon over Manifest	Claire Vanderpool	Delacorte Press
Amazing Grace	Mary Hoffman	Penguin
The Invention of Hugo Cabret	Brian Selznick	Scholastic
Math Curse	Jon Scieszka	Viking
Sideways Stories for Wayside School	Louis Sachar	HarperCollins
John Henry	Julius Lester	Penguin Group
Mr. Poppers Penguins	Richard and Florence Atwater	Little, Brown

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

Activities

1. *Reading Literature Anchor Standards 1–10, Literature Integration.* In grade-level teams, create a matrix of state-level content standards in the column headings (i.e., Civil War, Inventors, Ecology) and the grade-level CCSS for reading literature in the row headings. Using this matrix as a guide, collaborate on choosing texts that are on, below, and above grade level that would be suitable for integrating literature in the teaching of content-area topics. Use this information to create text sets that can be shared among the grade-level team.

2. *Reading Literature Anchor Standard 5, Reading/Writing Interactions.* Looking across the CCSS for writing, choose grade-level literature that exemplifies a style of writing. Develop a checklist of structural elements that can be extracted from the text and then used by students when learning to write an original piece during Writer's Workshop. The checklist can be a valuable tool when peer or self-editing the piece.

3. *Reading Literature Anchor Standard 7, Technology Integration.* Work in teams to create an interactive white board program that includes practice games for various CCSS learning targets, such as was highlighted in the vignette for Standard 5. These programs, once created, can be used for instruction as well as for follow-up center activities.

4. *Reading Literature Anchor Standard 10, Structuring the Language Arts Block.* Given a set period of time for the language arts block, such as 90 minutes or 120 minutes, create a weekly schedule that includes attention to the important elements for addressing the reading of literature during the language arts block, as outlined in the Using the Standards throughout the School Day section. Consider too that literacy instruction can extend beyond the literacy block through the use of integrated units that incorporate the content areas.

5. *Reading Literature Anchor Standard 10, Evaluating Texts.* Choose three to five literary texts that are currently used on a regular basis in the teaching of language arts. Using the three-part model outlined for Standard 10 in the Putting the Standards into Practice section, determine the complexity of each text; in particular, consider the ability range of students who could access each text meaningfully. This activity should guide the teacher in developing a procedure for evaluating texts to include in whole-class, group, and individual reading instruction.

Questions

1. What does the term *text complexity* mean? Discuss what teachers can do to support students in developing the skills and strategies they need to become independent readers who can read increasingly complex text.

2. This chapter contains a list of recommended research-based comprehension strategies. Compare and contrast this list with your classroom practice.

3. What literature genres should students in grades 3–5 be reading? Brainstorm teaching strategies and techniques that are particularly appropriate for various genres that will support students in meeting grade-level CCSS.

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