

Welcome to this introduction to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, English Language Arts & Literacy.

This presentation is brought to you by the Massachusetts SABES ELA Curriculum & Instruction Professional Development Center.

“Start where you are. Do what you can. Use what you have.” (Arthur Ashe)

Well, where are you?

- With years of experience in standards-based teaching but new to adult ed.?
- New to teaching in general, or simply new to these standards?
- Are you an ELA teacher trying to incorporate science and social studies content into your classes, or a science or social studies teacher trying to incorporate ELA and literacy skills into your classes?

Wherever you start from, you have a lot of great experience. By combining that experience with what you have here, the English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, you can do a lot.

Take a moment now, if you haven't already, to get out your copy of the CCRSAE or to pull it up online. To find it online, go to www.sabes.org/CCRStandards, and click on the link for “the actual CCRSAE”.

Why bother with the CCRSAE?

- These standards are created with the end in mind, detailing the skills needed to be successful in learning on the job and in higher ed., and breaking down those skills into earlier levels.
- These standards are actually useful—they can help you to take the stress out of deciding which academic ELA skills are essential, leaving you free to make other equally important decisions about how to teach the content, what else to include in your classes, and what your particular students need.
- These standards can help you to keep track of skills across the components or domains of ELA: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and aspects of understanding the language itself.
- These standards can help you to differentiate for your students.



- These standards can help you to coordinate across classes, between levels, and even between yourself and yourself from month to month and throughout the year.
- Finally, a major compliance requirement for WIOA is that adult ed. teachers use educational standards, and that those standards be aligned with the K-12 standards. The CCRSAE are a verbatim subset of the Common Core State Standards.

But, this is huge! How do I unpack, use, and reference all these standards? It could take all my time just to sort through what's here.

Well, that's true. Ultimately you do want to become as familiar as you can with these standards, but there are shortcuts...

For example, here is a wonderful chart of all ELA anchor standards, available on the SABES ELA website.

- As you can see, there are four domains in English Language Arts: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language.
- Although the standards are numbered, these numbers do not represent an order in which they should be taught, or a hierarchy of importance.
- There is intentional overlap between the four domains. Content is repeated in more than one domain to underscore its importance. In addition, each standard is not meant to be a separate focus for instruction and assessment. They are meant to be bundled together.

This chart on pages 96 and 97 of the CCRSAE illustrates some of the connections and deliberate redundancies. For example, finding and using evidence comes up in Reading anchor 1, Writing anchor 9, and Speaking and Listening anchor 1.

Academic or Tier 2 vocabulary has a central role in comprehending complex text. Reading standard 4 and Language standards 4 and 6 all focus on academic vocabulary.

It's time to review! Think of the answers to these three questions:

Q1: How many domains are there in the ELA standards, and what are they?

A1: There are 4 domains: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.



Q2: Does the numbering of the standards mean an order in which they should be taught?

A2: No. The numbers are just to keep track and do not indicate a hierarchy of importance. However, once you get into the actual standards you will see that there are five levels, represented by the capital letters A through E, corresponding to grades k-1 up through grades 9-12.

Q3: Why do some skills show up in multiple domains?

A3: Repetition underscores the importance of these skills and how they manifest in different domains. Also, the standards are meant to work together, not in isolation.

How can you make these standards your own?

Try creating your own code names for each anchor standard by selecting one, two, three, maybe even up to five keywords for each anchor, that capture its essential meaning.

For example, Reading anchor 1 says,

“Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Site specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.”

A possible code name for Reading anchor 1 is ...“Close Reading”.

Take some time, after this video, to go through and put code-name post-its all over your standards. But before we move on, a word of caution: in reality, each word of each standard is important. So while this is a very worthwhile activity, don't let it end here. Refer back to the actual standards as often as possible.

As you flip through the ELA standards you'll come to the Foundational Reading Standards on page 40. There are already five levels, A through E, corresponding to grades K-12, so where do these foundational standards fit in?

These standards are about phonological awareness, phonics & word recognition, and fluency. In other words, the mechanics of actually being able to read. These foundational reading standards go along with ELA Reading levels A, B, and C, and also fit with the STAR reading initiative that is strongly recommended for teaching students at the grade-level equivalent range of 4-8.



What is an effective way to refer to a standard so that you or a colleague can find it again?

Let's say that you want to teach research writing skills to some level B students. Writing Anchor 7 is about conducting research.

You could use the notation in parenthesis at the end of a level standard. However, this refers to the common core state standard from which it was taken, so using this will not help you to find this standard again within the CCRSAE document. Instead, since it is Writing anchor 7, level B, call it W7B. Easy.

Time to practice!

Let's say that you teach level D, and you want to work with your students on writing conclusions. How might you find, and then notate, the relevant standard?

First, pull out that handy chart of anchor standards, and zoom in on the writing anchors. It seems most likely that writing conclusions will be somewhere in the first four standards, which are about writing arguments, writing informative and explanatory texts, writing narratives, and producing clear and coherent writing. Next, look in the CCRSAE for more detail. The writing standards start on page 22. But it turns out that conclusions are in two different anchor standards, 1 and 2. Now what?

What next depends on what kind of writing you want to do with your students.

- o Writing Anchor 1 is for writing arguments. Level D, small letter e, says, "provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented," so this can be notated as Writing anchor 1, level D, small letter e.
- o Writing anchor 2 is about informative and explanatory texts. Level D, small letter f says, "provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented". Writing anchor 2, level D, small letter f.

You might be thinking, "Now I sort of know what these standards are, and how to find my way around them, but can they help me with what I need to do right now, like differentiate learning for my real students?"

Yes, they can!

For example, look at Reading anchor 2, all about finding main ideas and summarizing.



Whatever level you teach, your group most likely includes students who are at other levels as well. So use the details of the standard to help determine what different students should be aiming for, all the while keeping in mind what the ideal is.

I'll give you a few seconds to look for connections and differences across levels A through E of Reading anchor 2.

Another way to use the standards to help in differentiation is to look at the small letters that break down some of the anchor standards into specific tasks or skills within a given level. For example, writing anchor 2, level D, has six sub-skills.

Perhaps you are working with the whole group on using appropriate transitions, small letter c. Some students could also be asked to be accountable for their concluding statements, or their use of formatting and graphics, if those are skills that they have already worked on.

Ok, but there is so much here! Is there a bigger way to look at these standards? I can't see the forest for the trees.

Yes, there is a way.

All of these ELA standards focus on three key instructional shifts: complexity, evidence, and building knowledge.

Building curriculum around the ELA CCRSAE, and teaching with them in mind, requires us to be aware of these three areas, all of which focus on the text.

What are they reading?

What are they asking about and referring to from what they read?

What are they understanding and learning from what they read?

Complexity: Regularly practice with complex texts and academic language, also known as tier 2 words. Choose text at appropriate levels of complexity using text selection tools and qualitative rubrics.

Evidence: Prioritize finding and using evidence from text, both informational and literary, across reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Require students to answer questions or make claims based on their understanding of having read a text or multiple texts, not retiring entirely on prior knowledge or experience. Emphasize citing the source of evidence in discussions and writing.

Building Knowledge: Teach and practice ELA skills through content-rich nonfiction that also builds knowledge on a topic. Use texts or sets of texts that build content knowledge



in science and social studies, job and career readiness, lifelong learning, and citizenship or participation in society.

What about literature and poetry? Informational texts make up the vast majority of reading required in the workplace and in college. Literature and poetry are not out, as long as quality informational text is emphasized. Hours with our students are few and precious—make the texts that we use in those hours count in more ways than one.

Make it real—put these three instructional shifts to work in your classroom:

Think about what your students are reading, what kinds of questions they are asking and responding to, and how they can best comprehend what they are reading.

Make connections and build knowledge.

Create challenging learning activities that engage your adult learners, are matched to the standards, and that build towards students being able to do something with their learning.

Check in on how you and they are doing and adjust as needed.

If you already teach this way, isn't it nice to be validated?

“Well, OK,” you may be saying, “this is all very good, but these standards aren't everything. I just know they don't include things that are important for my students to learn and succeed in our world.” True! These standards are not a defined curriculum or an order in which to teach.

“The standards are what you point the work at, but they shouldn't define the work, and they can't tell you what to do, how to teach, or who your students are.” (Meredith Liben)

In fact, the standards themselves say that they are not everything. They are not meant to be everything. Really take the time to read the introduction, pages 1 through 11, with special attention to page eight.

What do YOU think is important to include and align with these standards? Is it...

Personal writing, poetry, and great literature?

Scientific observations and investigations?

Bringing history alive out of the pages in a book?



Geography, and exploring the world?

Understanding the neighborhoods and communities in which we live?

Advocating for ourselves and those we care about, which includes understanding others and being understood, whether on a job, in a doctor's office, or at a child's school?

What about exam prep, for those of your students who are getting ready to take the HiSET or GED?

So include what's important to you and your students. Remember that the "RL" in the parentheses of some standards refers to "reading literature", as shown in these examples. Literature is not out, as long as quality informational text is emphasized.

These standards can provide you with structure and support. Build onto them and help your students explore the world and reach for the stars!

We've covered a lot. What should you try to remember?

Well, everything. But here's a place to start:

Embrace those three key shifts and focus on the text

Remember that ELA includes speaking and listening as well as reading and writing, and that speaking and listening are a great entry point into dealing with a text

Remember the reading foundation standards if you teach levels A, B or C

Always include certain standards: R1 (close reading) and R10 (text complexity levels), and the standards to do with academic vocabulary: reading 4, language 4, and language 6

The CCRSAE will provide you with structure and support. Build on them. And do actually look at them as often as possible—it does get easier with practice.

In this introduction we have covered:

A few reasons to care about these standards

How to find, unpack, and reference the standards

A few of the ways that you can use the standards, such as:



- o Differentiation
- o Bundle up: remember all four domains and the foundational reading standards when appropriate.
- o Include certain standards as often as possible; do you remember which those are? (R1 & R10, R4 & L4 & L6)
- o Let the three key shifts guide your instruction, and remember to focus on the text.

Build on these standards.

We have also covered what is and is not included in these standards.

All of the documents and websites mentioned in this introduction, plus additional resources and professional development, can be accessed from the SABES ELA website.

Search for sabes.org, then choose the ELA center for resources, PD, and contact information.

You may also go directly to our CCRSAE page, shown here.

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Thank you.

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