### Units of Study and Assessment - English Language Arts

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Revisions Needed</th>
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#### I. The Shifts in Instruction and Learning

Quality curricula that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in *ELA/literacy* should reflect these three shifts:

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
2. Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

For more information go to: [http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/](http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/)

*ELA/literacy: Starting in grades 6, CCSS standards exist for literacy in social studies, science, and technical subjects. These CCSS standards are meant to complement the existing NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. According to the CCSS, “The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school” (p. 4). These three shifts should, therefore, be infused into curricula for social studies, science, and technical subjects, as well as English language arts.*

#### II. Curriculum Reading Framework

The reading framework for the K-12 curriculum should be aligned as follows:

K-5: 50% Literary; 50% Informational
6-8: 45% Literary; 55% Informational
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<th><strong>III. Unit Organization and Purpose</strong></th>
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<td>Curriculum units of study are built with the “end in mind.” That means the CCSS ELA/literacy standards should be the place where unit planning begins.</td>
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<td>Quality curricula are organized according to the following principles:</td>
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<td>a) The unit begins with the learning goals—these goals come from the CCSS in ELA</td>
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<td>b) Units might be organized around a genre, theme, or even both. For instance, a sample 4th grade unit might be based upon “Informational Text” centered on the theme of “Heroism.”</td>
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<td>c) End-of-unit assessments are created before unit lesson planning begins. This allows teachers to see the “goal” of the unit.</td>
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<td>d) Standards are then unpacked and turned into learning objectives</td>
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<td>e) Strategies and formative assessments are planned, along with examples of differentiation</td>
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Quality curricula aligned to the CCSS contain the following characteristics:

| a) Grade-level standards placed in the appropriate unit (s) |
| b) Clear examples of interdisciplinary learning |
c) Explicit, systematic development of foundational literacy skills (grades K-2)  


e) Methods of differentiation infused throughout the units of study (see Roman numeral VI below)  
f) Assessed standards are included in units prior to the administration date  
g) A balanced assessment system provides data regarding students’ range of abilities through screening, formative, benchmark, and summative assessments  

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<th>IV. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)</th>
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<td>Student learning objectives for units of study and lesson plans are derived from the CCSS. They are specific and measurable. (Please note, while the NJDOE has SLOs as part of the Model Curriculum framework, they are not the only SLOs that can, or should, be developed.)</td>
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Sample SLO:  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6  
Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.  

Student Learning Objectives:  
Students will read an excerpt from Frederick Douglas’s the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* in order to determine Douglas’s purpose in writing the text.  

Students will analyze Douglas’s text by identifying and writing about
how and why he responds to his critics.

### V. End-of-Unit Assessments

A. The “end-of-unit” assessment gauges to what extent students have achieved specific CCSS. Unit assessments should combine the processes of reading and writing. For instance, a 4th grade unit on reading informational text built around the theme of heroism. An end-of-unit assessment would include 2 appropriately leveled, complex texts with an applicable writing task. Refer to the NJ Model Curriculum End-of-Unit Assessment and sample PARCC assessment items ([https://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessments](https://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessments)) for examples.

B. Genres of Summative Assessments

Alignment to the CCSS in ELA/literacy means that end-of-unit assessments should be framed around three genres of writing (see the anchor standards for writing: [http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/))

This includes asking students to compose texts that are:

1. Informative/Explanatory
2. Opinion/Argumentative
3. Narrative

Refer to PARCC evidence statements, performance-level descriptors and practice tests for information related to assessment: [https://www.parconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs](https://www.parconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs)
VI. Special Needs Populations in Units of Study

Quality units of study, which are aligned to the CCSS, must consider and appropriately plan for the needs of All students.

- Students with disabilities
- English language learners
- Below grade-level learners
- Grade-level learners
- Above grade-level learners

In quality units of study, planning for special needs populations should be infused throughout the curriculum, not as a “separate” category in the unit document.

Resources for curriculum differentiation can be found at:
- Instructional Supports and Scaffolds for Success in implementing the Common Core State Standards: [http://www.nj.gov/education/modelcurriculum/ela](http://www.nj.gov/education/modelcurriculum/ela)

VII. Lesson Plans

Most units and/or lessons meet the criteria to be rated exemplary on the EQuIP Rubric: [http://www.achieve.org/EQuIP](http://www.achieve.org/EQuIP). The four categories of the EQuIP include:

- Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS
- Key Shifts in the CCSS
### CCSS Implementation Curriculum Evaluation Tool

- **Instructional Supports**
- **Assessment**

Differentiation of instruction must also be included in lesson plans. For more information see:

### VIII. Instructional Resources

Instructional resources chosen for curriculum and units of study should match or exceed the criteria in the “Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool for CCSS Alignment in ELA Grades 3 -12 (IMET) – Student Achievement Partners.”


### IX. Text Complexity

Reading Anchor Standard 10 (see below) addresses complex text. Built within the units of instruction, a quality curriculum will provide students with ample opportunities to engage with grade-appropriate complex text. A curriculum unit might include samples of complex text in Appendix B of the CCSS ([http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf)).

To engage and support students successfully when reading complex
text, teachers should consider some of these instructional/reading strategies:

- Close Reading
- Text-Dependent Questions
- Reading with an Annotation System
- Paired Reading
- Small-group Instruction (i.e. Guided Reading)

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

**CCSS ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10**
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

X. Research Writing & Technology

Two Anchor standards in the CCSS speak to the vital skill of infusing technology with writing:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7**
Conduct short, as well as more sustained, research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8**
Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

Quality curricula aligned to the CCSS should contain numerous
experiences for students using “multiple print and digital resources” to conduct “short, as well as more sustained, research projects.” This may include internet research for gathering and using information, multimedia tools and presentations, and online communications. Of particular importance is for students to be critical consumers of language and information. This aspect of technology and research fits with the 21st century theme of “Information, Media and Technology Skills” (see [http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/1._p21_framework_2-page.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/1._p21_framework_2-page.pdf)).

### XI. Speaking and Listening

The anchor standards for speaking and Listening include two main components:

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Quality curricula should include numerous opportunities for students to speak knowledgeably and critically about course content. Additionally, students should be given opportunities to present on content knowledge and ideas, using technology as part of the process.

### XII. Language Development

Curriculum in all disciplines should address skillful acquisition and use of language, especially in terms of vocabulary development. Vocabulary instruction must include words taken from tiers 2 and 3 (See Appendix A, p. 33 for more information). Quality curricula aligned to the CCSS will afford students opportunities to demonstrate:

a) Mastery of Conventions of English (i.e. grammar, mechanics,
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<th>and usage)</th>
<th>b) Knowledge of How Language Works (i.e. stylistic choices)</th>
<th>c) Mastery of Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (See Appendix A, p. 32, for more details about vocabulary instruction)</th>
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CCSS Implementation Curriculum Evaluation Tool