
Common Core State
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Common Core State
Standards for Grade 6

*Language Arts Instructional
Strategies and Activities*

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Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and
Activities

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Introduction

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects were developed to ensure that students are ready for the challenges of college and career literacy by the end of their high school years. The standards were developed around K–12 grade-specific areas of reading literature and informational text, writing, speaking and listening, and language. These research- and evidence-based standards are rigorous and are aligned to the College and Career Readiness anchor standards, which establish what all students should know and be able to do upon entering postsecondary institutions.

At a time when schools across the nation are looking for ways to improve student achievement in most content areas, it seems reasonable to combine the standards and effective instructional

strategies as you create activities to help with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

When you look at the CCSS, think of the standards as representative of what students need to know and be able to do and what you need to do as a teacher to help Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities them be successful. Based on the identified CCSS and other skills, students need to know how to compare and contrast, summarize information and take notes, create visual representations of information, work together collaboratively, conduct research, and be able to ask and answer higher-order questions. Additionally, to help students achieve success, teachers need to provide ample opportunities to practice new skills and demonstrate and enhance new learning.

A multitude of studies have been conducted over the past thirty years. From these studies, Education Northwest, formerly Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (2005), compiled a list of effective instructional strategies with descriptions, Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities research findings, and implementation suggestions. When developing activities to address CCSS, keep in mind the strategies of identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities learning, generating and testing hypotheses, questions, cues, and advanced organizers, and homework and practice. As teachers, provide many opportunities for homework and practice as you implement the CCSS.

There's no guarantee that activities based on any strategy will help in every instance, Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities and it may be quite possible that some strategies are more effective in certain subject areas and grade levels and with students from different backgrounds and aptitudes. Whether or not you use a strategy will depend on your students' previous knowledge and current abilities.

It is the intent of this book to give teachers a ready-made resource to use when planning lessons around CCSS. In each section you will find grade-appropriate, ready-to-use activities aligned to specific CCSS in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. All you need to supply is the content-rich text.

It is my hope that you will find Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities this an essential component of your instructional materials as you plan your curriculum for the students of the twenty-first century.

Chapter 1

Instructional Strategies and Activities: An Overview

Many of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) can be taught and reinforced using a variety of activities combined with CCSS and effective instructional strategies. According to Visual Teaching Alliance (VTA; www.visualteachingalliance.com), “approximately 65 percent of the population are visual learners” and “90 percent of the information that comes to the brain is visual.” The VTA also states that “the brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than text” and that “visual aids in the classroom improve learning by up to 400 percent.”

The use of graphic organizers—visuals—enables students to better organize their thinking and Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities gives a visual frame of reference for information. Students are able to see the connections between previous learning and new knowledge. Graphic organizers increase students’ abilities to use higher-order thinking skills, facilitate retention of information, are very brain friendly, and appeal to the multiple intelligences of visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, and naturalist. The use of graphic organizers also helps those students who are English as a second language (ESL) or English language (EL) learners comprehend concepts more easily as there are fewer words to comprehend.

When you write lesson plans, think about the various graphic organizers you can use in Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities activities: T-charts, Venn diagrams, matrices, concept maps, word webs, mind maps, graphs, chains, flow charts, and lists. Several suggestions are given throughout this book, but you may find a different organizer to help you help your students link new information to Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities old or organize thoughts. Not all organizers are age or grade appropriate so choose carefully. Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities

For those standards that are not appropriate for graphic organizers, you will find suggestions for a wide variety of structures that you can use in your classrooms. The ideas you find do not represent a definitive list and you may adapt those suggestions to use in other instances.

The instructional strategies described on the next few pages have been identified as effective Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities practices by various educational practitioners based on a multitude of research. *Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities* addresses the use of these strategies with respect to the K–12 CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and provides a multitude of ready-to-use activities.

Similarities and Differences

When students identify similarities and differences, the process helps students deepen the understanding of what they are learning. According to Markman and Gentner (1996), identifying similarities and differences is a basic cognitive process. Students use the processes of comparing, classifying, creating metaphors, and creating analogies to describe how items,

events, processes, or concepts are similar or different. Comparison and/or contrast activities help students to better comprehend new concepts and allows the connection of new knowledge to existing concepts.

Teachers should not only point out similarities and differences to students, but should also allow students to develop their own strategies for comparing similarities and differences (<http://netc.org/focus/strategies/iden.php>). Students in Grade 6 should also describe *how* compared elements are different. T-charts and Venn diagrams are effective tools Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities for teachers and students to identify similarities and differences. Matrices can also illustrate these concepts.

Grade 6 Activities

Activities to identify similarities and differences include creating T-charts, two- and three-circle Venn diagrams, organizational charts, classification charts, lists, graphs, maps, summary frames, essays, short research projects, opinion writing, creating analogies, mind maps, or Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities word webs.

Summarizing and Taking Notes

Summarizing occurs unconsciously for most of us; yet, ask a student to write a summary of a chapter or a story and he or she may complain it Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities is too difficult. We need to teach students to give us only the important details—eliminating the trivialities not necessary for comprehension. Valerie Anderson and Suzanne Hidi synthesized various research on summarization. According to Anderson and Hidi (1998/1999), when you first begin teaching summarization, be sure to choose short excerpts with easy text, such as narratives or texts with familiar concepts and ideas. Anderson and Hidi (1998/1999) also indicate that students need to be able to select or delete what is included and then reduce the information into a manageable amount.

Summary Frames

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The use of summary frames helps students select and reduce information for summaries using specific questions and helps Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities students develop a deeper comprehension of the information read. A summary frame is an effective structure when summarizing reading assignments. Studies by Meyer and Freedle (1984) show that reading comprehension increases when students learn how to incorporate summary frames. Summary frames also help students to focus on important information and allow teachers to determine the depth of comprehension through student responses.

Narrative or Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities story frames include information about the characters, setting, actions, feelings, goals of the main character, and the consequences.

Definition frames use four questions: What concept is being defined? To which category Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities does the item belong? What are the attributes or characteristics Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities of the concept? What examples are given to illustrate the concept?

Problem-solution frames introduce a problem and identify one or more solutions following this format: statement of something that happened or might happen that could be problematic; a description of a solution; statements of other possible solutions; identification of a solution with the greatest chance of success.

Questions in an argumentation frame are centered on the information that leads to a claim, the basic statement of Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities focus, examples that support the claim, and concessions made about the claim. You Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities will need to know the abilities of your students to begin using the argumentation frame effectively in your classroom.

Grade 6 Activities

Common summarization activities for Grade 6 include the use of narrative or story, definition and problem-solution summary frames, acrostics, journal entries, visual representations (bulletin boards, posters, models), concept webs, multicolumn T-charts, concept webs, timelines, outlines, 5W and How charts, raps or Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities other songs, mnemonics, and paraphrases. See Appendix A for examples of summary frames.

Taking Notes

The concept of taking notes in class used to imply writing every important word one could remember as quickly as possible or copying the teacher's words from the blackboard, whiteboard, or overhead projector. If we all had photographic memories, then there would be no reason to take notes. However, that is not the case. The good news is that students can be taught how to summarize information and take good Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities notes.

Verbatim notes are the least effective way of taking notes in a classroom setting and are not conducive to selecting and reducing, which is key to taking good notes. When copying the teacher's words, students are not engaged in the information except to the extent that they Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities write down every word. Very little, if anything, is committed to long- or even short-term

memory. Students must identify the key information they are learning about and put it into their own words.

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Taking notes is very personal in style, but students need to be taught various formats to enable them to choose the style that best suits their tastes and needs. Teachers should model good note-taking formats. Begin with outlines of information you are going to present. Impress upon students that reviewing and revising notes can lead to a deeper understanding of the information presented Common Core State Standards for Grade 6: Language Arts Instructional Strategies and Activities and will help the students to make the information their own (Anderson & Armbruster, 1986).

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