



Mastering the English Language Arts Standards: Scaffolding for Success for All Learners

Charting the Cs
Conference 2025:
*To Literacy and
Beyond*

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Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

Topics for Today

- Legal Foundations and the Standards
- Implementation Connections to the Standards
- Reading Alt MCA Sample Passage and Items
- Unpacking a Standard Example
- Unpacking Standard Group Activity
- Unpacking a Benchmark Activity
- New Accommodations for Reading MCA IV in 2026
- Resources

Legal Foundations and the Standards

- FAPE
- IDEIA, IDEA, ESEA, NCLB
- AA-AAAS

- Depth: not defined in federal lang.
- Breadth: scope, range
- Complexity: level of cognitive difficulty

Implementation Definitions

- Accommodations: the HOW
- Modifications: the WHAT
- Depth, Breadth, Complexity: considers both the WHAT and the HOW; use as a framework to design instruction

Implementation: Making Connections

- Teams should consider appropriate depth, breadth, and complexity when planning:
 - Individual lessons
 - Whole units
 - IEP accommodations, modifications, goals, and objectives
 - District teams can support their teachers and case managers by including these considerations in curriculum selection
- Collaboration tip! Ensure all teachers and service providers understand the WHY behind considering depth, breadth, and complexity so they buy in to the planning process and provide appropriate supports.

Implementation: Accessibility Frameworks

Differentiation

Learning
Progressions

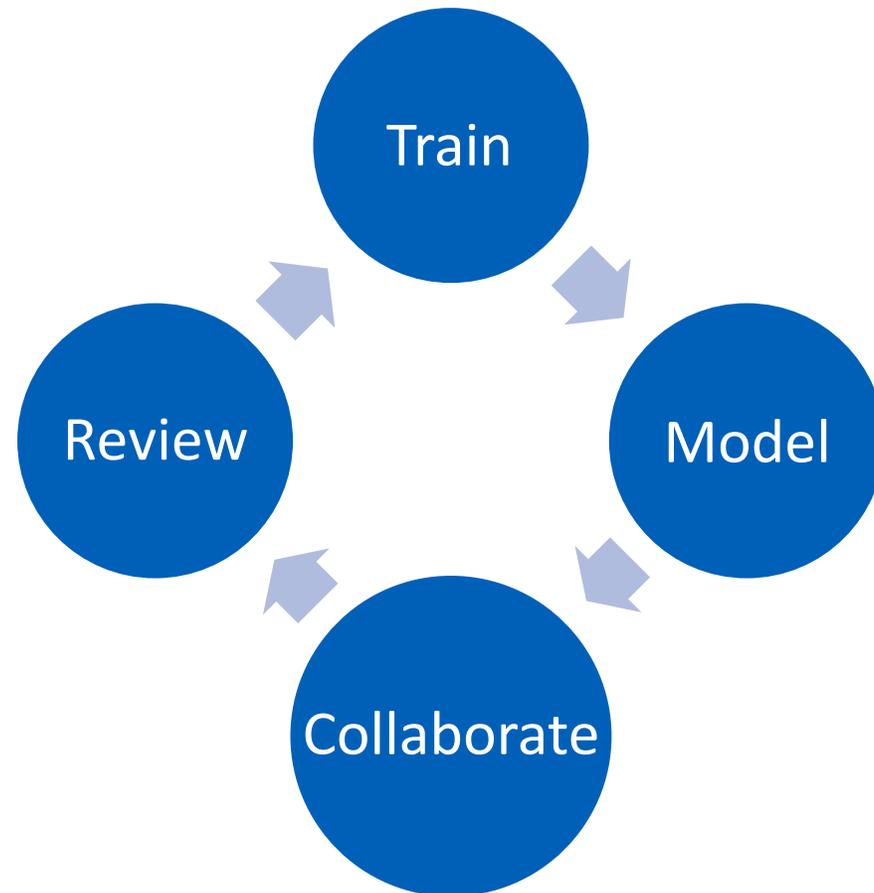
Task Analysis

Universal
Design for
Learning

Assistive
Technology

Person
Centered
Practices

Implementation: Continuing Connections



Grade 10 Sample Reading Passage 1

Biking with Anthony

- 1 Amy and her older brother, Anthony, love riding bikes together. When Amy first learned to ride her bike, she couldn't go very far. She only rode with Anthony around the neighborhood. Anthony encouraged her to ride her bike every day so that she could get better.



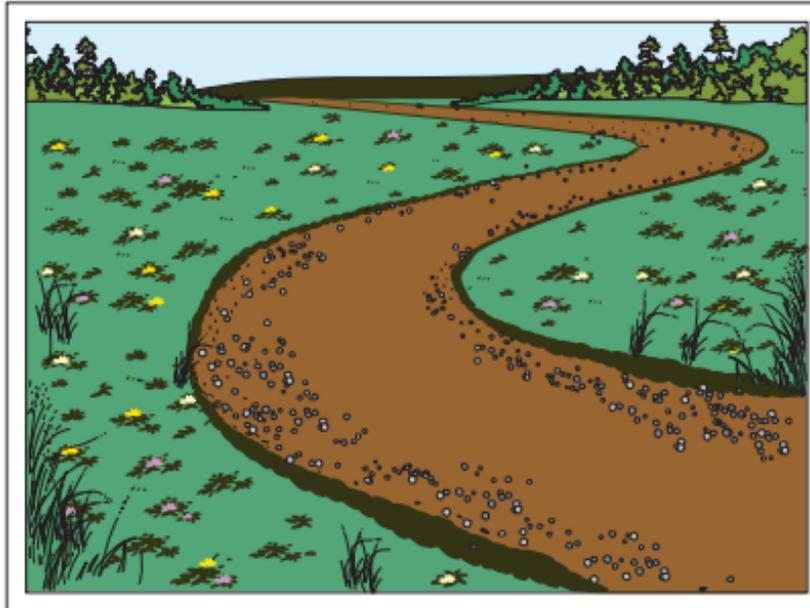
Grade 10 Sample Reading Passage 2

- 2 The more Amy rode her bike, the better she got. Anthony suggested that they go to the park to ride their bikes. Amy and Anthony stayed on the paved bike paths in the park.



Grade 10 Sample Reading Passage 3

- 3 One day Anthony asked if Amy wanted to learn how to ride her bike on the dirt paths in the park. Amy was nervous, but she really wanted to try a new challenge. Amy and Anthony practiced riding around curves and on rocky bike paths. Amy worked hard, and after weeks of practice, she felt ready to try riding on the dirt paths.



Grade 10 Sample Reading Passage 4

- 4 The next morning, Amy and Anthony packed their bikes and drove to the park. Amy was excited to ride her bike on the dirt paths in the park. They rode around curves and over rocky paths just like they had practiced. She was able to ride on the dirt paths all by herself.



Grade 10 Sample Reading Passage 5

5 Amy and Anthony had so much fun riding their bikes that day. Anthony was proud of Amy for finishing the dirt paths. Amy was glad that she learned how to ride a bike so well. She can't wait for their next bike ride through the park!



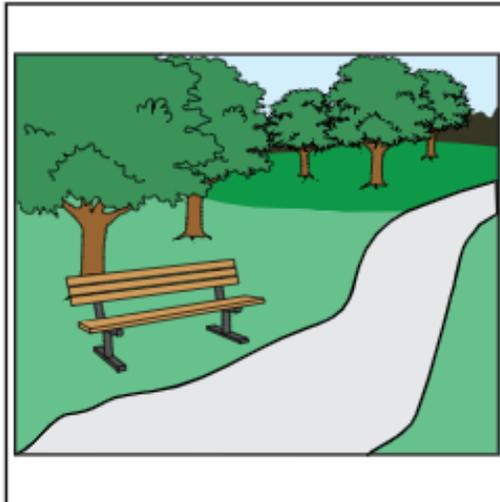
Access Point A Item

Here is a sentence from paragraph 4.

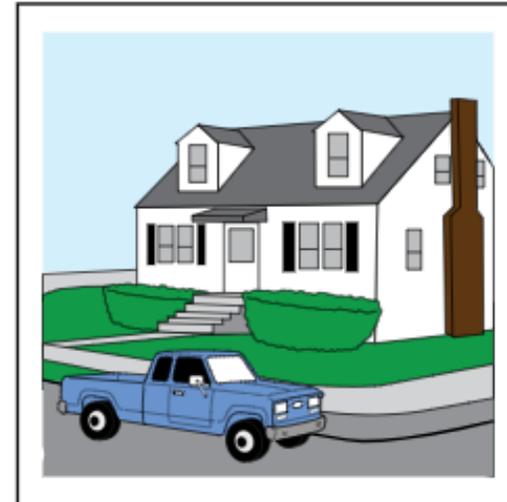
The next morning, Amy and Anthony packed their bikes and drove to the park.

What picture shows the word park?

A.

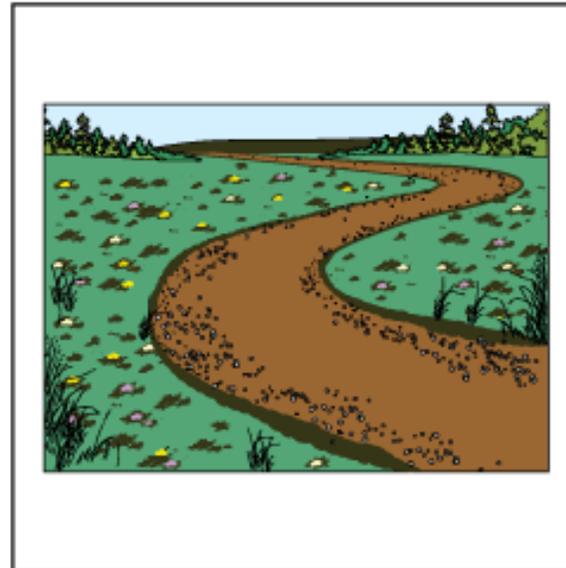


B.



Access Point B Item

In paragraph 3, which word shows why Amy was nervous on the path?



A. Asked

B. Rocky

C. Weeks

Access Point C Item

Here is a sentence from paragraph 2.

Anthony suggested that they go to the park to ride their bikes.

Why did Anthony suggest biking at the park?

- A. The park has a wide path where friends can ride together.
- B. The park has a grass path with many trees and flowers.
- C. The park has a paved path like the neighborhood.

Unpacking A Standard Grade 10 Example

Standard R8	General Benchmark 10.1.8.1	Extended Benchmark 10.1.8.1
Examine the impact of vocabulary, including words and phrases, on content, style and meaning of complex literary and informational texts.	Evaluate the impact of vocabulary, including key words or phrases with multiple meanings, on content, style and meaning of literary text.	Explain the impact of vocabulary on keywords, content, and meaning of literary text.

Access Point Descriptions Grade 10 Example

Extended Benchmark: Explain the impact of vocabulary on keywords, content, and meaning of literary text.

Access Point A: The student will match a word or phrase with multiple meanings from the text to a picture.

Access Point B: The student will identify a word that would have the greatest impact on the text

Access Point C: The student will explain the impact of choice of word/phrases on content, style, or meaning of the text.

Extended Benchmark Details

Benchmark Description

- Specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard in this grade level

Extended Benchmark Description

- Written based upon the benchmark to be reduced in depth, breadth and complexity

Access Point Details

Access Point Descriptions

- Access Point A: Describes skills with the least complexity
- Access Point B: Describes skills with moderate complexity
- Access Point C: Describes skills with the most complexity

Writing Extended Benchmarks (EBM)

- Look at the main skills and core knowledge in the general benchmark
- Decide what can be reduced in the general benchmark to reduce the depth, breadth, and complexity
- Begin with a verb
 - Use Verb list or DOK list as needed
 - Think of the skill you are targeting and DOK level when picking a verb
- Add in the key skills that apply to the benchmark

Reducing Depth, Breadth, and Complexity Examples

- This could be the verb used
 - “Evaluate the impact of vocabulary” changed to “Explain the impact of vocabulary”
- This could be limiting the skills to a portion of the skill
 - “Content, style and meaning of literary text” changed to “Content and meaning of literary text” by taking out style
- This could be changing a skill to less complicated skill
 - “Key words or phrases with multiple meanings” changed to “Key words”

Writing Access Points (AP)

- Begin with “The student will (verb)....”
 - Similar to an objective when writing an IEP
 - AP A is at the knowledge level
 - AP B is at the knowledge or comprehension level
 - AP C is at the comprehension or application level
 - Should not be verbatim of the EBM
 - Use specific instead of general verbs

Writing Access Points 2

- Add specific details of the skill to describe what is needed to show knowledge of the skill
 - Examples: match a word or phrase, would have the greatest impact, impact of choice of word/phrases

Tools for Unpacking Standards

- [2020 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts](#)
- Verb List
- DOK List
- Unpacking Benchmarks Guidelines
- Unpacking a Standard Worksheet Example

Writing an Extended Benchmark Practice Activity

Standard R2	General Benchmark 5.1.2.1	Extended Benchmark 5.1.2.1
<p>Read and comprehend independently A) both self-selected and teacher-directed texts, B) complex literary and informational texts, and C) from multiple sources representing perspectives and identities like and unlike their own from dominant, non-dominant and marginalized social groups.</p>	<p>Read independently and monitor understanding of grade-level text; self-correct as needed, independently using strategies including, but not limited to, making inferences and connecting text to background knowledge.</p>	

Writing Access Points Practice Activity

Extended Benchmark:

Access Point A:

Access Point B:

Access Point C:

Unpacking A Standard Activity

Standard W1	Grade K-2 Benchmark 0.2.1.1	Grade 3-5 Benchmark 4.2.1.1	Grade 6-8 Benchmark 7.2.1.1	High School Benchmark 10.2.1.1
<p>Foundations of Writing: Demonstrate knowledge of oral language, orthography, grammar and mechanics to express ideas in writing.</p>	<p>Recognize that words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters, which are separated by spaces, and put in a specific order to create a sentence.</p>	<p>Use correct punctuation (including punctuation of dialogue and commas with clauses), spelling, capitalization and grammar authentically in writing.</p>	<p>Consistently write and edit work for correct punctuation, spelling, capitalization and grammar.</p>	<p>Write and edit work so that it follows the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and purpose, with guidance.</p>

Uses of Unpacked Standards Discussion

- What did you think about the process of unpacking standards?
 - What worked well?
 - What could be changed?
- How would you use the unpacked extended benchmarks and access points?

Social Studies Example Benchmark

Standard 5.3.13.1	General Benchmark	Extended Benchmark
Geospatial Skills and Inquiry: Apply geographic tools, including geospatial technologies, and geographic inquiry to solve spatial problems	Create and interpret both fixed and dynamic maps that represent the same places in early America from different perspectives and times.	Find and describe given locations within early America using fixed maps.

Social Studies Example Access Point Descriptions

Extended Benchmark: Find and describe given locations within early America using fixed maps.

Access Point A: The student will identify a map of early America.

Access Point B: The student will find a given location on a map.

Access Point C: The student will describe a location on a map in relation to another location.

2026 Reading MCA-IV Updates

The Reading MCA-IV will include new accommodations for students:

- Screen Reader Assistive Technology version will be an approved accommodation for a small number of students with documented blindness or vision impairments that severely limits or prevents them from accessing printed text and have not yet learned braille
- Read aloud accommodations (human script, Text to Speech) will be an approved accommodation for a small number of students
 - with documented blindness or vision impairments that severely limits or prevents them from accessing printed text and have not yet learned braille that do not use screen readers
 - with deafness or a hearing impairment whose disability is due to a documented history of early and prolonged language deprivation

New Reading MCA-IV Accommodations in 2026

New accommodation for all students who use assistive technology that interacts with the test form:

- A Non-Screen Reader version for use with other AT devices (ex. using switches or a head mouse)

Resources

- [2020 Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts](#)
- [DOK List](#)
- Verb List
- Unpacking a Standard Worksheet Template
- Unpacking Benchmarks Guidelines



Thank you!

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