

Q&A: Common Core

The New York State Regents adopted Common Core Standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and math in July 2010 in an effort to support student college and career readiness. To help parents understand these standards, the **New York State School Boards Association** has provided answers to frequently asked questions about the Common Core.

Q: What is the Common Core?

A: The Common Core is the name given to new standards in K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) and math that 45 states and the District of Columbia, along with some territories, have voluntarily adopted. The National Governors Association and The Council of Chief State School Officers jointly led the move to the Common Core standards. Teachers, researchers and parents had input in their development.

For states that adopt them, the standards ensure that students have the same rigorous curricular goals and benchmarks to ensure they are college and career ready, and on par with their peers from different countries. They also ensure that students who move to another state have the same educational standards.

- reading age-appropriate texts closely
- using support from the text to discuss reading passages put in that text
- using supportive evidence from multiple sources in writing
- increasing vocabulary

For **math**, they include:

- limiting the number of topics learned and learning them more in-depth
- learning built upon prior years' knowledge bases
- fluency and accuracy
- in-depth knowledge of math concepts
- ability to apply math concepts to everyday life

Q: What does the Common Core emphasize?

A: The new standards are defined by six "instructional shifts" each in ELA and math, designed so students are college and career ready.

For **ELA**, they include:

- an emphasis on both fiction and non-fiction
- an understanding of life from text as opposed to understanding through hands-on tasks or the teacher

Q: How are the new standards applied in the classroom now?

A: For the 2012-13 school year, grades 3-8 ELA and math curricula and assessments in New York were aligned to the Common Core. In June 2014, Common Core Regents Exams in ELA and Algebra I will be administered.

Q: Where can I get more information about the Common Core?

A: The New York State Education Department has a website with Common Core information and resources. Go to www.engageny.org. For additional information, go to www.core-standards.org.