Common Core State Standards: A New Foundation for Student Success

A Project of
The James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy and the Council of Chief State School Officers

Video Vignette User Guide

James B Hunt, Jr Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy

CCSSO
Council of Chief State School Officers

Introduction

In core academic subjects, U.S. students haven't been keeping pace with their most advanced international peers. Persistent and dramatic achievement gaps still exist in our country. College remediation rates are abysmal. And employers say students are unprepared to perform and thrive in the workforce.

The need to audaciously confront these issues led to a remarkable collaborative effort begun in 2008 by Governors and State Education Chiefs in 48 states. This unprecedented state-led effort aspired to create consistent, shared, and rigorous English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics standards that align closely with college and work expectations and that will set the foundation for greater student success. Practitioners, content experts, teachers, researchers, and leaders in higher education and business all came together to make the effort happen.

This collaboration resulted in the Common Core State Standards (Standards). They are the clearest statements yet about the knowledge and skills that students need to master in order to be prepared for college and careers. To date, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Standards as their own and have embarked upon the hard work of implementing them with care and fidelity.

To assist in that effort, the Hunt Institute and the Council of Chief State School Officers commissioned a series of video vignettes that explain the Standards in far greater depth. Several of the key Standards writers were asked, in their own words, to talk about how the Standards were developed, who was involved, and the goals they set for all students.

These vignettes were developed to help diverse groups – educators, policymakers, parents – better understand the breadth and depth of the Standards and how they will improve teaching, make classrooms better, create shared expectations, and cultivate lifelong learning for *all* students.

Disclaimer

This video series is meant to be a learning tool that, accompanied by the Standards themselves, will bring greater meaning and understanding to educators, policymakers, parents, and the public as a whole. Viewing these videos ***alone*** does not provide comprehensive understanding about the Standards and their benefits for states.

The video vignettes are not intended to substitute for deep exploration and discussion of the Standards. They are not curricula, nor are they instructional materials. They are meant to illustrate, give context, and expand upon the Standards themselves—and should always be used in concert with supporting documents and their appendices.

Video overview

The following video vignettes with key Standards writers are meant to underscore essentials of the Standards, now being implemented in 45 states. The segments are organized into separate Mathematics and ELA sections, and demonstrate critical concepts related to each.

By design, some segments are very general and describe how the standards came to be, how they were designed, and who developed them. They are intended as a broad introduction to the standards and to help put them into context – for education professionals as well as laypeople.

Other segments are very specific and describe particular components of the Standards – such as text complexity in ELA or Progressions in Mathematics. They are deeper discussions of the key topics, and they can be used to expand upon the general segments, or individually to generate a deeper conversation about particular components of the Standards.

Suggested uses for the CCSS vignettes

These vignettes can be used in a number of ways—including, but not limited to:

- **Start compelling conversations** about setting state or district policy goals, orienting staff to new classroom demands, assessing professional development tools, and creating local curricula and instructional materials.
- **Help educators understand the major changes and advances** in their state standards and their impact on what happens in classrooms.
- **Use as strong lead-ins to teacher and administrator engagement** in implementation and in setting higher expectations for students.
- **Help parents understand the true essence of the Standards** – why changes were important, what will be different in the educational experiences of their children, and how shared expectations—between parents and teachers—can help support children's learning.
- **Galvanize support for schools** – educating parents and community leaders toward a shared goal of helping *all* students succeed

Each user should decide how to package the vignettes in a way that best serves individual or organizational purposes. The segments can be used individually or can easily be linked together to create a customized package.

Video Outline/Descriptions

Name	Time	Writer(s)	Short Description/Key Points
Common Core State Standards: A New Foundation for Student Success	2:53	N/A	• Animated introductory segment • History of Standards, development • Promise of college-and-career ready students
The English Language Arts Standards: What They Are and Who Developed Them	8:00	David Coleman Susan Pimentel	• Detailed description of development process • General discussion of ELA standards • Five principles of development
The Mathematics Standards: How They Were Developed and Who Was Involved	8:11	William McCallum Jason Zimba	• General discussion of mathematics Standards • Aspirations for mathematics instruction at higher levels • Greater mastery through focus and coherence • Review of groups involved • General discussion of mathematics progressions • What is and is not included at the elementary level • What happens at middle school • Discussion of migration away from strands and into domains of mathematics
The English Language Arts Standards: Key Changes and their Evidence	6:24	David Coleman Susan Pimentel	• Historical context of the need for change in ELA Standards • Five critical shifts from earlier standards: text complexity; analysis, inference and evidence; writing to sources; mastery of writing and speaking; academic vocabulary • Importance of academic vocabulary, especially for English Learners
Writing to Inform and Make Arguments	3:35	Susan Pimentel David Coleman	• Required mastery of three kinds of writing • Analytical writing • Rendering complex information clearly • Student writing styles/multiple disciplines
The Balance of Informational and Literary Texts in K-5	2:14	Susan Pimentel	• Shift the balance to 50 percent informational texts and 50 percent literature in elementary grades • Importance of balance in preparing for later grades and non-literary texts
Literary Non-Fiction in Grades 6-12: Opening New Worlds for Teachers and Students	1:33	Susan Pimentel	• Expanded use of literary non-fiction in later grades • In-depth discussion about the value of teacher expertise in cultivating students' deeper understanding of complex and varied texts
Literary Non-Fiction in the Classroom: Opening New	2:27	David Coleman	• Opportunities for students to delve more deeply into more varied texts, especially

Worlds for Students			literary non-fiction • Addresses student engagement with many sources: e.g. the *Preamble to the Constitution*, Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, and King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*.
Literacy in Other Disciplines	3:50	David Coleman	• How ELA Standards apply – and require mastery – across several disciplines (History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects) • In-depth discussion of Madison and *Federalist Paper 51*
Text-Dependent Analysis in Action: Examples From Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*	10:20	David Coleman	• In-depth analysis and discussion of Dr. King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* • Explanation of the cognitive requirements of the Standards • Examples drawn from specific, well-argued paragraphs
Conventions of Standard English Writing and Speaking	1:44	Susan Pimentel	• Asserts the importance of good grammar • Applying complex conventions to writing and speaking as grade levels increase • Discussion of formal and informal communications
Speaking and Listening: The Key Role of Evidence	2:24	Susan Pimentel	• Standards for speaking and listening • Focus on collaboration in multiple settings in work or college • Preparation, respect, and problem-solving in formal and informal situations
The Crucial Role of Higher Education and Business in Developing the Standards	1:42	David Coleman	• Outline of the range of higher education professors and practitioners who were involved • Articulation of business leader involvement
The Mathematics Standards: Key Changes and Their Evidence	4:36	William McCallum	• General discussion of mathematics Standards and goals • Description of domains and increased focus and coherence • Discussion of domains' discrete life spans • General description of the differences for high school mathematics, including real-world applications and modeling
The Importance of Coherence in Mathematics	4:37	William McCallum	• In-depth description of coherence in mathematics, with examples • Need for mathematics domains to fit together for college and career preparation • Flows of the domains in mathematics; moving into a unified whole • Algebra as an example

The Importance of Focus in Mathematics	2:42	Jason Zimba	• First-year college remediation challenges • Mismatch between higher education and K-12 – more mastery of fewer topics vs. covering more • Focus as it relates to teachers' needs to build a solid foundation in early grades • Solid early foundation enabling greater success later
The Importance of Mathematical Practices	4:02	William McCallum	• Standards for Mathematical practice – processes and proficiencies • Habits of mind of the mathematically proficient student • Description of modeling; applying mathematics outside the math classroom • Using mathematics tools in flexible, sophisticated, and relevant ways across disciplines • Technology, structure, and generalization
Mathematical Practices, Focus and Coherence in the Classroom	1:13	Jason Zimba	• Habits of mind • Coherence and focus • Implications for the classroom
Whole Numbers to Fractions in Grades 3-6	1:57	William McCallum	• Detailed description of the progression from adding and multiplying whole numbers into working with fractions
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	1:52	Jason Zimba	• Detailed description of the three domains of numbers and operations (Operations and Algebraic Thinking; Number and Operations in Base Ten; and Numbers and Operations – Fractions) • Arithmetic as a rehearsal for Algebra
High School Math Courses	2:49	William McCallum	• Careful, prescribed sequence of mathematics that builds skills and mastery for elementary and middle school • Explanation of two reasons for a different approach to high school • How mathematics is better connected and cohesive at high school levels • Modeling and probability/statistics in all math subjects

The Importance of Mathematics Progressions	2:02	William McCallum	• Progressions, with examples • Design of math progressions and how they play out in domains over grade spans • Connecting topics logically and sequentially
Mathematics Progressions -- From the Student Perspective	3:08	Jason Zimba	• Student-centered discussion of the progressions in domains from one grade to another
Gathering Momentum for Algebra	2:08	William McCallum	• Description of "Algebra Wall" – a challenge for many students under previous standards • Ramp building from kindergarten to Algebra in all domains
Mathematics Fluency: A Balanced Approach	1:56	William McCallum Jason Zimba	• Balance between procedural fluency and conceptual understanding, with examples • Building on required fluencies
Ratio and Proportion in Grades 6-8: Connections to College and Career Skills	1:01	Jason Zimba	• Ratio and proportion—connections in elementary and middle grades and real-world application • Foundations for high school mathematics
The Mathematics Standards and the Shifts They Require	1:14	Jason Zimba	• General discussion of math standards • Aspirations for higher math performance • Links and cohesiveness • Meeting goals of focus and coherence
Helping Teachers: Coherence and Focus	1:39	William McCallum	• Role of teachers in drafting math standards • Coherence – seeing forward and backward • Focus—doing fewer things more deeply • Details that help teachers • Fractions highlighted
Shifts in Math Practice: The Balance Between Skills and Understanding	1:02	William McCallum	• General discussion • Clear expectations • Balance between skills and understanding • Higher cognitive demand • More time for teachers to go more deeply with their students • Preparing students to not only "do" the math, but "use" the math

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