

Common Core Standards

Fall 2012 Update

A new set of expectations will help ensure college and career readiness.

California has joined a national movement to adopt common standards and assessments for English and mathematics. Currently, standards for what students should know and be able to do vary among states, as does the difficulty of the assessments used to determine whether students are meeting those standards. Common standards allow for collaboration among states on best practices and professional development.

Common learning goals provide a clear vision of what educators and parents in all states should aim for. These learning goals help ensure that students meet college and work expectations, and that students are provided rigorous, challenging coursework. The standards are clear, consistent and research-based.



Benchmarked against international standards and top-performing countries, the Common Core Standards also will help students to succeed in a global economy and society.

California's Adoption of the Standards

Adopted in California in August 2010, the K-12 Common Core State Standards were developed through a state-led effort including governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia, through their membership in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers.

The Common Core added strength to existing California standards by including additional standards for vocabulary and new standards for collaborative discussions. Literacy standards that focus on reading and writing instruction during history/social studies, science, and technology also were included. In mathematics, standards were added to demonstrate a stronger emphasis on number sense and algebraic thinking.



The Timeline for Implementation

Implementation of the Common Core in California’s schools will occur in stages beginning this year, with full implementation scheduled for the 2014-15 school year. For now, existing state standards still apply, and student progress will continue to be monitored through the California Standards Tests, or CSTs. By 2014-15, however, the goal is to replace the CSTs with assessments that measure student attainment of the Common Core.

The Long Beach Unified School District has been one of the most progressive school districts statewide when it comes to preparing for the new standards. In fact, curriculum experts from LBUSD have presented on this topic to educators from many other school districts. Last year, with the help of private funding from organizations like The Boeing Co., the Stuart Foundation, and the Packard Foundation, a team of LBUSD educators began orienting lead teachers and other educators here about the new standards. Educators received training, for instance, in how to write modules, or lesson units that will help students attain the new standards.

This school year, teachers will begin to shift some of their instruction practices in anticipation of full implementation by 2014.

How Instruction Will Change

Instruction will begin to shift in both English and math, with students probing more deeply into subject matter, engaging in higher-level reasoning and applying their knowledge to real-world scenarios and problem solving.

Instructional Shifts for English and Literacy:

- **Building knowledge** through non-fiction more than through fiction, with particular emphasis on history and science. Teachers will rely less upon literature (though it will be taught), and more upon “informational text.”
- **Reading and writing** grounded in evidence from text. Students will learn to read like detectives and write like reporters, citing evidence and factual information.
- **Regular practice** with complex text and its academic vocabulary (such as the unique vocabulary used in the sciences).





Sample English test question, prior to Common Core Standards:

California Standards Test (Grade 7)

Students are asked to read a “student’s essay” and make revisions.

72 Which sentence could Jasmine add at the end of paragraph 1 to help develop the situation?

- A Our coach always insisted that we arrive at soccer practice on time.
- B She told us, however, that being a good sport wasn’t always about playing sports.
- C Last year I had played baseball, but this year I had decided to play soccer.
- D The beaches in Finvale County are well-known for their fine swimming water.

73 Which sentence could Jasmine add at the end of paragraph 5 to help summarize her essay?

- A I also looked forward to the end of September when I would help to clean it up again.
- B There are many other beautiful beaches in our county, too.
- C Many bags of garbage were filled at Crescent Beach that day.
- D We usually play soccer on Saturdays, but one time we did something else.

Sample English test question, with Common Core Standards:

Item Type: Constructed Response (CR)

Grade 7

Stimulus Text:

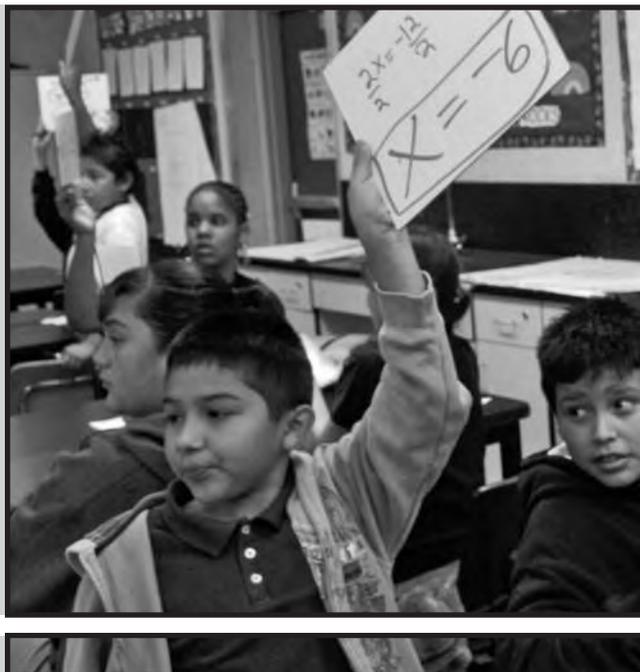
Even on sunny days, the house seemed to sag like a sad, lonely man with drooped shoulders. Just a few flecks of yellow paint were left on it—reminders of a happier time, when children used to play in its yard.

Item Prompt:

These sentences begin the description of a setting. Write a paragraph that develops this description and fits the mood and situation. Use vivid details about sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and/or feelings in your paragraph.

Instructional Shifts for Mathematics:

- **Focus:** Instruction will focus more intently where the standards focus.
- **Coherence:** Major topics will be linked across grade levels, so skills are layered upon one another as the student progresses through school.
- **Rigor:** Students will be taught to be fluent in math concepts so that they can achieve deeper levels of understanding, allowing them to apply their learning to real-world scenarios.



Sample math test question, prior to Common Core Standards:

California Standards Test (Grade 4)

- 33 There are 58 cases of soda in a warehouse. If there are 24 cans of soda in each case, how many cans of soda are in the warehouse?
- A 1392 C 1292
B 1362 D 1262

Sample math test question, with Common Core Standards:

Extended Response (Grade 4)

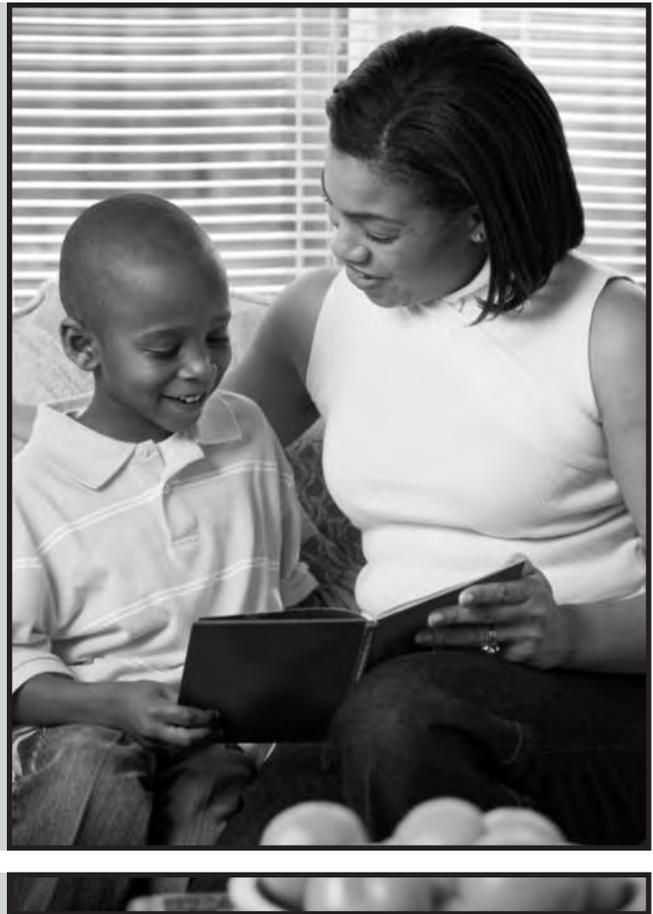
Pablo solved a multiplication problem using two different methods. He made a mistake in either Method W or Method Z.

Method W	Method Z														
23×49 $\begin{array}{r} 20 \times 9 = 180 \\ 3 \times 9 = 27 \\ 20 \times 4 = 80 \\ 3 \times 4 = + 12 \\ \hline 299 \end{array}$	23×49 <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Area Model</td> <td rowspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Rectangle Sections</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">40</td> <td style="text-align: center;">+ 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">20</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">800</td> <td style="text-align: center;">180</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">+ 3</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">120</td> <td style="text-align: center;">27</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"> $\begin{array}{r} 800 \\ 120 \\ 180 \\ + 27 \\ \hline 1,127 \end{array}$ </td> </tr> </table>	Area Model		Rectangle Sections	40	+ 9	20	800	180	+ 3	120	27			$\begin{array}{r} 800 \\ 120 \\ 180 \\ + 27 \\ \hline 1,127 \end{array}$
Area Model		Rectangle Sections													
40	+ 9														
20	800	180													
+ 3	120	27													
		$\begin{array}{r} 800 \\ 120 \\ 180 \\ + 27 \\ \hline 1,127 \end{array}$													

Identify the method where Pablo made a mistake and explain what he should do to correct it.

How Parents Can Support Student Success:

- Along with allowing children to select fiction and literature, encourage reading of informational, non-fiction text. Engage in discussions about the text.
- Encourage children in the early grades to learn their basic math facts. This basic foundation remains necessary before students can build their problem-solving skills.
- Encourage your child to stick with it whenever a math problem seems difficult. This will help your child see that everyone can learn math.
- Praise your child when he or she makes an effort, and share in the excitement when he or she solves a problem or understands something for the first time.



Learn more about Common Core at these websites.

- Pta.org (A Parents' Guide to Student Success)
- corestandards.org
- cde.ca.gov (California Dept. of Education), search for K-8 California Common Core Standards Parent Handbook
- cgcs.org (Council of the Great City Schools), search for Parent Roadmaps