

# Introduction

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## *How to Use This Book*

**T**he Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects were designed to allow teachers and students to vary their approaches to learning while maintaining a strong level of academic rigor. With the advent of the CCSS, now more than ever, teachers are working to infuse reading and writing across the curriculum in purposeful and meaningful ways. This book focuses on the literacy standards for Grades 6–12, which include two strands: Reading and Writing. It is important to note that according to the CCSS, the Reading and Writing standards are meant to complement the specific content demands of the disciplines, not replace them. Within this book, we refer to the Anchor Standards by strand and number; in other words, *R.3* means *Reading Anchor Standard 3*.

The Reading Standards reflect the CCSS' great emphasis on reading of informational texts aligned with the **National Assessment of Educational Progress** (NAEP) Reading Framework. Reading Standard 10 requires the reading of high-quality texts in a range of genres of increasing complexity.

The Writing Standards consist of two different types of writing: argument and explanatory. If instruction is to be aligned with the NAEP Writing Framework, the major focus of writing throughout high school should be on arguments and informative/explanatory texts (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center]/Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010b). It is our hope that this book will help content-area teachers better understand and address the CCSS.

## **OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

We based the structure of this book on our first book, *Getting to the Core of English Language Arts, Grades 6–12: How to Meet the Common Core State Standards With Lessons From the Classroom* (Giouroukakis & Connolly, 2012). In the first chapter of this book, we provide an overview of the CCSS for Literacy in the Content Areas and a rationale for their creation. Also, we include a discussion of best practices regarding lesson design. Our experiences as high school teachers and as graduate education professors for preservice teachers

have led us to value the Backward Design framework of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. We make clear the connection between the CCSS and the development of students' skills and knowledge by highlighting common verbs used (a) in the analysis of students' career and college readiness, (b) in the CCSS, and (c) by Bloom to designate higher-order thinking. In addition, we discuss Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences as a guide for your reflection on how meeting the CCSS helps you to address the needs of your students. We also discuss Dewey's concept of the productive citizen and the greater purpose that this concept can give to students' efforts to meet and exceed the standards.

In Chapter 1, we focus on the Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. In Chapter 2, we discuss the benefits of the CCSS for the teaching of reading in the content areas. Chapter 3 includes three reading lessons in History/Social Studies for Grades 6–12. Chapter 4 includes three reading lessons in Science and Technical Subjects for Grades 6–12; each reading lesson is based on one of the three strands of the Reading College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards:

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

To streamline the language in our book, we consistently refer to the CCR Anchor Standards simply as *Anchor Standards*.

In Part II, we focus on the Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. In Chapter 5, we discuss the benefits of the CCSS for the teaching of writing in the content areas. Chapter 6 includes three argument writing lessons, one in each content area—History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Chapter 7 includes informative/explanatory writing lessons in each of the three content areas.

## LESSON FORMAT

In Chapters 3, 4, 6, and 7 we provide sample lessons that are meant to serve as examples of CCSS-based lesson design. An introduction at the start of each applications chapter provides, for your consideration, some questions that we hope will make your reflection on lessons for that strand more meaningful.

Before each lesson narrative, we include a template that outlines the workings of the lesson. This template includes the following:

1. Topic and Grade Level—Content-area topic and grade levels 6–8, 9–10, or 11–12
2. CCSS Strand—Reading or writing
3. Text Types and Purposes—Argument or informative/explanatory
4. Timing—The expected number of class periods in which the lesson takes place, although this will vary from class to class

5. Backward Design Components of the Lesson—Include Desired Results/CCSS Addressed, Acceptable Evidence, and Learning Experiences and Instruction
6. Teaching Strategies Utilized—Include guidance and monitoring, modeling, cooperative learning, discussion, and writing process
7. Supplemental Resources—Additional resources for teachers to adapt and revise the lesson to best fit their students' needs
8. Technology/Media Opportunities—Ways of incorporating technology and media into the lesson
9. Service Learning Links—Ways to tie student learning with outreach to the school, local, or global community
10. Variations—Ways to modify or extend the lesson to meet the diverse needs of the student population, including variations such as opportunities for making interdisciplinary connections and incorporating additional or varied texts, skills, and instructional strategies

This template is meant to serve as a preview of the lesson narrative and as a model for the analysis of your own lessons. We provide a blank copy of the same template in the Appendix to serve as an organizer or checklist when you create new lessons.

Following the template is a lesson narrative. In each lesson narrative, we indicate, in brackets, the major CCSS for Literacy that are addressed. Here is an example:

The purpose of the activity is to encourage students to analyze how the symbols in the story might have had an influence on German society [R.4, R.5, R.6].

Other CCSS are covered as well, but the major standards are those that the lesson addresses most fully. These lessons are not prescribed instruction; they are meant to be used as models and to be adapted to suit your particular students' needs.

If you think your students need to better develop their writing skills, please do not overlook the reading chapters. (The reverse also applies.) The skills within each lesson in this book are intertwined. For example, students' analysis of strong writing in the chapters "Reading Lessons in . . ." can help them develop as writers. Conversely, students' understanding of the structure of good writing can improve their skills as readers.

Throughout the lesson narratives, you will note the following marginal sidebars:

Tech Connection



Theory Link



Differentiation Tip



Cultural/Linguistic Highlight



Tech Connection indicates how technology is incorporated into the lesson. Theory Link shows how we believe the major, enduring theorists in education (Dewey, Bloom, and Gardner) relate to the lesson. Differentiation Tip helps you to adapt the lesson based on your student population. Cultural/Linguistic Highlight emphasizes supports specifically for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Our purpose in presenting the lessons this way is to make your experience of reading through the lesson narratives similar to the experience of reading through a used book that has already been annotated. Some of the basic thinking is already done for you. We make the connections between the lessons and the CCSS overt by noting the standards in brackets. The marginal sidebars make technology infusion, differentiation, and theoretical and cultural linguistic connections explicit as well.

## LESSON SELECTION

Collecting lessons for this book was an inspiring process. We are so grateful to all who contributed. We sought to vary the types of history/social studies lessons by including U.S., and world/global history. We chose a range of science lessons as well, including earth science, chemistry, and biology. As we sought out technical lessons, we found that our eyes were opened to the creative thinking of computer applications, sports-marketing teachers, and math teachers. Some might question the inclusion of math within the technical subjects, since there is a separate set of CCSS for math. Why should math teachers be concerned with two sets of standards? Literacy skills are needed in all subject areas—including math!

In addition to varying the subject areas covered in this book, we sought to include both literary readings and informational readings. Also, we wanted to present lessons that have clear opportunities for students to work independently to show what they have learned. According to the NGA Center/CCSSO

(2010b), “Students must be able to read complex informational texts in these fields with independence and confidence because the vast majority of reading in college and workforce training programs will be sophisticated nonfiction” (p. 60).

The CCSS call for us to align with the NAEP requirement that a total of 70% of reading completed by secondary students be informational rather than literary by the time they reach 12th grade. This happens fairly naturally since the content areas outside English include mainly informational reading. The majority of the readings in the lessons for this book are informational. However, given that this balance of 70/30 is applicable throughout the subject areas, we include some related fictional readings.

The skills developed through these lessons are intertwined within the literacy strands that are being met as well as across the strands. For example, students need a variety of reading skills to navigate the components of nonfiction or informational texts (higher-order thinking, sophisticated vocabulary, an understanding of universal themes). The skills are intertwined among literacy strands as well. Developing reading skills will also help students improve their writing skills. By reading well-written nonfiction or informational texts, students will gain an understanding of how to best structure their own expository writing.

The lessons in this book are organized according to the Anchor Standards that are most prevalent. For example, the reading lessons are categorized according to the topics of the Anchor Standards for reading (i.e., “Key Ideas and Details,” “Craft and Structure,” “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas”) (see Figure I.1). The writing lessons are organized according to “Text Types and Purposes” (see Figure I.2). Of course, each lesson includes varied types of thinking, so you can expect some overlap within the specified set of Anchor Standards. For example, a reading lesson categorized under “Craft and Structure” still requires students to understand “Key Ideas and Details.” Similarly, a writing lesson may involve explanatory writing along with argument.

This book is designed to help you become more familiar with the CCSS and to guide you in aligning your lesson plans with the standards. We have striven to get to the core of these state standards and uncover their benefits for the teaching of reading and writing. We believe that the most powerful components of this book are the lessons from the field for literacy in the content areas that guide students in meeting these standards. Most of the examples that we include in this book are tried-and-true lessons that content teachers have taught to actual students in actual classrooms over the past several years. Although some of these lessons were not originally designed with the CCSS in mind, we worked with our contributing teachers to refine these lessons so as to enhance their effectiveness in addressing the CCSS. As we worked with our contributors in this way, we experienced firsthand the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration in planning and reflecting on our craft. We believe that, as presented in this book, all the lessons now align with the CCSS because they include higher-order thinking skills and varied levels of text complexity. We are proud to share them with you.

**Figure I.1** Reading Lessons Organized by Anchor Standard, Content Area, Grade Level, and Lesson Title

| READING IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE |   |             |   |
|--|---|-------------|---|
| Reading Anchor Standard                    | Content Area                                    | Grade Level | Lesson Title                                |
| Key Ideas and Details                      | History/Social Studies:<br>U.S. Government      | 6–8         | Nationalism: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly    |
| Craft and Structure                        | History/Social Studies:<br>World/Global History | 9–10        | Social Causes of New Imperialism            |
| Integration of Knowledge and Ideas         | History/Social Studies:<br>U.S. History         | 11–12       | Vietnam: The Human Face of an Inhumane Time |
| READING IN SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS |   |             |   |
| Reading Anchor Standard                    | Content Area                                    | Grade Level | Lesson Title                                |
| Key Ideas and Details                      | Science:<br>Biology                             | 11–12       | Bonus Science Articles                      |
| Craft and Structure                        | Technical Subjects:<br>Computer Apps            | 9–10        | Vocabulary Videos                           |
| Integration of Knowledge and Ideas         | Science:<br>Earth Science                       | 6–8         | Continental Drift                           |

**Figure I.2** Writing Lessons Organized by Content Area, Grade Level, Lesson Title, and Text Types and Purposes

| WRITING IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS |             |  |                             |
|--|-------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Content Area   | Grade Level | Lesson Title   | Text Types and Purposes     |
| History/Social Studies:<br>U.S. History                            | 6–8         | Mock Trial: Native Americans and European Colonization | Argument                    |
| Science:<br>Chemistry  | 9–10        | Boyle's Law  | Argument                    |
| Technical Subjects:<br>Sports Marketing                            | 11–12       | Fantasy Basketball                                     | Argument                    |
| Technical Subjects:<br>Math  | 6–8         | Math in Everyday Life                                  | Informative/<br>Explanatory |
| Science:<br>Earth Science  | 9–10        | Earth Day  | Informative/<br>Explanatory |
| History/Social Studies:<br>U.S. History                            | 11–12       | Montgomery Bus Boycott                                 | Informative/<br>Explanatory |

## BEST PRACTICES

Throughout the lessons that we include in this book, you will recognize best practices (strategies and activities) for ensuring success in content-area literacy instruction. In the last chapter of this book, we discuss ways you can support reading and writing in your content lessons by employing literacy strategies and activities. Technology has facilitated instruction in today's world, so we provide valuable websites for support in understanding and implementing the CCSS. The last section offers tips for getting to the heart of the common core for literacy in the content areas. We hope to inspire you and give you new ideas by also sharing success stories involving content-area teachers working together.

Our intention is that this book will help you understand the key elements in CCSS-based lessons and apply that understanding to the development of your own curriculum. We are extremely grateful to the teachers who contributed to the book, and we hope that as you read, you consider ways to share your own positive teaching experiences with others.