

A quick guide for observing classroom content and practice

Working with appropriate **complex texts**, students should:

## Read About It

1. Literature
2. Informational Text
3. Foundational Skills

## Think About It

4. Higher-Order Reasoning

## Talk About It

5. Comprehension/ Collaboration
6. Presentation

## Write About It

7. Opinion
8. Informative
9. Narrative



During a **4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA instructional block**, you should observe the teacher integrating the grade level ELA standards and students engaging in a variety of the following standards and practices:

Students engage daily with complex literature and informational texts:

- Key Ideas and Details:** use of details and examples to explain what text says explicitly and to make inferences, theme, summary, main idea and supporting details
- Craft and Structure:** meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; major differences among poems, drama, and prose including structural elements of each; overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information; different points of view, and firsthand and secondhand accounts of event
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** connections between text and visual or oral presentation; similes and metaphors, interpretation and contribution of oral, visual, or quantitative information, author's use of reasons and evidence to support specific points

Students engage daily in practices that promote word reading accuracy and reading fluency:

- Phonics and Word Recognition:** word analysis, using decoding words of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns and morphology to read words in and out of context
- Fluency:** accurate and fluent reading to support comprehension, using context or rereading as necessary

Students engage daily in higher-order reasoning:

- Examine** in depth character, setting, events, procedures, ideas, or concepts using specific text-based information and details
- Compare and contrast** treatment of similar themes, topics, and patterns of events; integrate information from two texts on same topic
- Demonstrate understanding** of the effects of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
- Conduct** short research projects that build knowledge about different aspects of a topic; use evidence to support analysis, reflection, and research

Students engage daily in collaborative work:

- Comprehension and Collaboration:** rules for discussions, building on others' ideas, expression of own ideas, requesting clarifications, paraphrase information from diverse media and formats, speaker's reason and evidence to support points
- Presentation:** organized presentation using appropriate facts and details, speaking clearly, appropriate vocabulary, use of audio and visuals to enhance topic development, correct use of formal and informal English, command of standard English grammar and usage

Students engage daily in extended writing time (using standard English grammar, conventions) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences:

- Opinion:** topic, related opinion and reasons using linking words, and conclusion
- Informative/Explanatory:** topic, paragraphs or sections, appropriate headings, illustrations or multimedia, precise language/vocabulary, conclusion

**ELA What to Look For** The example below features three Indicators from the [CT Common Core of Teaching](#). These Indicators are just a sampling from the full set of Standards and were chosen because they create a sequence: the educator plans a lesson that sets clear and high **expectations**, the educator then delivers high quality instruction, and finally the educator uses a variety of **assessments** to see if students understand the material or if re-teaching is necessary. This example highlights teacher and student behaviors aligned to the three Indicators that you can expect to see in a rigorous 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA classroom.

<b>Domain 1</b>	<b>Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What is the teacher doing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Selecting developmentally appropriate complex texts (e.g., texts with metaphorical language)</li> <li>•Focusing attention on academic language (e.g., linguistic complexity, conventions, and vocabulary)</li> <li>•Highlighting when an author uses figurative language purposefully</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What are the students doing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Understanding what they will learn in a lesson and how it connects to prior learning</li> <li>•Persisting when engaging with meaningful literacy tasks</li> <li>•Using rich academic language when speaking and writing</li> <li>•Support their opinions with evidence</li> </ul>

**Connections to Theory and/ or Research**

<b>Domain 2</b>	<b>Planning for Active Learning</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What is the teacher doing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Designing lessons that integrate standards and strands</li> <li>•Highlighting when students draw explicitly upon class content during discussions with peers</li> <li>•Grouping students based on data and adjusting grouping as needed (using both homogenous and heterogeneous grouping)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What are the students doing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Showing persistence and focus in working together toward a shared goal</li> <li>•Recognizing types of structures that texts use (e.g., compare and contrast)</li> <li>•Reading a variety of complex texts to advance academic learning</li> </ul>

<b>Domain 3</b>	<b>Instruction for Active Learning</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What is the teacher doing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Using multiple formative approaches to assess student learning (e.g., writing and oral responses during reading group)</li> <li>•Conducting frequent checks for student understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly</li> <li>•Using scaffolding as needed and providing multiple opportunities for students to practice new linguistic patterns, features, and vocabulary</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What are the students doing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Purposefully incorporating feedback from teacher and peers into actions</li> <li>•Demonstrating learning in multiple ways (e.g., writing and oral responses during reading group)</li> <li>•Engaging in meaningful writing in response to text</li> <li>•Using exemplars to inform their work</li> </ul>

\*This document is based on the CT Core Standards Classroom "Look Fors" and the MA Curriculum Observation Guide.