

New Jersey's CommonCore

What the Common Core Means for Students in Grades 9–12

The Common Core State Standards were developed by states and written by educators and education experts to provide a consistent, clear and rigorous set of learning expectations for all students. New Jersey adopted the standards in 2010, and for the past four years, our educators have been transitioning classroom instruction to align to the Common Core State Standards. The standards define what students are expected to know and do in each grade. New Jersey school districts continue to develop curriculum and choose the books that may be used for instruction. Teachers maintain control over their lessons and plans.

New Jersey adopted these standards to make sure students graduate with the essential knowledge and skills needed to succeed in life. The standards are based in research on other high-achieving countries and were created to meet the expectations of college coursework and career demands. New Jersey students will graduate ready for college or their chosen career path due to the deeper learning achieved through instruction aligned with these stronger standards.

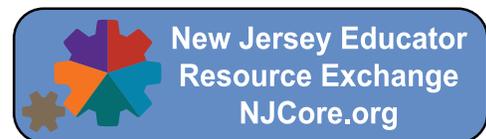
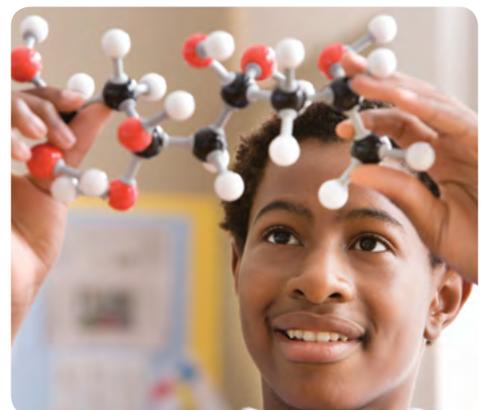
IN THE CLASSROOM

New Jersey's Common Core State Standards are changing the way our students learn by developing and reinforcing core knowledge and skills across grade levels and subject areas. In Grades 6–12, the standards also include reading and writing standards for social studies, science and technical subjects. More importantly, the Common Core State Standards focus on deep analysis and critical thinking skills that are crucial in the 21st century. For teachers, the New Jersey Common Core State Standards provide fewer, clearer standards and the opportunity for instructional shifts in both mathematics and English language arts (ELA).

Here are a few examples of what Grade 9–12 teaching and learning now look like in New Jersey classrooms under the Common Core:¹

- Understanding more from and making fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of evidence to support an analysis
- Making more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within a book, essay, or article
- Evaluating arguments and specific claims; assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is sufficient; and as appropriate, detecting inconsistencies and ambiguities
- Writing a literary analysis, report, or summary that develops a central idea and coherent focus and is well supported with relevant examples, facts, and details
- Conducting several research projects that address different aspects of the same topic, using more complex books, articles, and other sources
- Responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesizing comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; and resolving contradictions when possible
- Making strategic use of digital media to enhance understanding of findings and to add interest
- Determining or clarifying the meaning of words and phrases, choosing flexibly from multiple strategies, such as using context, Greek and Latin roots, and consulting specialized reference materials
- Working with rational and irrational numbers, including working with rational exponents
- Solving problems with a wide range of units and solving problems by thinking about units
- Solving real-world and mathematical problems by writing and solving nonlinear equations, such as quadratic equations
- Interpreting algebraic expressions and transforming them purposefully to solve problems
- Analyzing functions algebraically and graphically, and working with functions presented in different forms
- Working with function families and understanding their behavior (such as linear, quadratic, and exponential functions)
- Proving theorems about geometric figures
- Solving applied problems involving trigonometry of right triangles
- Using coordinates and equations to describe geometric properties algebraically
- Making inferences and justifying conclusions from sample surveys, experiments, and observational studies
- Working with probability and using ideas from probability in everyday situations

Source: ¹ National PTA's Guide to Student Success, www.pta.org



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Beyond content changes in the classroom, New Jersey's Common Core State Standards provide the opportunity for new instructional practices that foster student engagement in our classrooms through lessons that include project-based learning and peer discussions. Student-led and small group work are emphasized to build strong communication and collaboration skills. The instructional shifts are focused on building students' critical thinking and communication skills, as well as helping students understand how classroom learning relates to the real world.

Below are the main instructional shifts in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The chart provides guidance on how each shift should look in the classroom, and lists a few examples of available resources teachers can utilize in the classroom.



INSTRUCTIONAL SHIFT	IN THE CLASSROOM	LEARN MORE
ELA – Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction	Students should read and write about real-life events, such as historical events, science experiments, biographies and news articles, in addition to grade-appropriate literature.	Inquiry Based Teaching: Discussing Nonfiction—Lead an inquiry-based discussion using primary historical sources.
ELA – Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and nonfiction	Students should be able to identify facts and information in a text to support their opinions or answers. Prompts such as, “How do you know that?” or “Where did you find that information?” should be used in class discussions.	Silent Tea Party—Make predictions from quotes to prepare for challenging texts.
ELA – Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary	Students should read increasingly complex texts that focus on building a strong vocabulary and understanding words that appear across content areas or with multiple meanings. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to determine word meaning when sufficient context is provided by the text. Some academic vocabulary will need to be explicitly taught.	Scrabble Lesson—Use poetry, the dictionary, and Scrabble to understand how to use words with multiple meanings.
Math – Focus	Students will focus on the content presented in the following critical areas: Algebra I – Understanding linear, exponential and quadratic relationships Geometry – Use of transformations in understanding similarity and congruence Algebra II – Modeling situations using linear, quadratic, exponential, polynomial, rational and radical functions	Hunt Institute's Helping Teachers: Coherence and Focus—Explains focus in mathematics for classroom teachers.
Math – Coherence	Students should understand how different math topics relate to others across courses. Collaboration among all high school teachers should be encouraged so that they are aware of the foundations set in the previous grades and the expectations for later courses.	Hunt Institute's The Importance of Coherence in Mathematics—Provides a clear description of coherence across grade levels.
Math – Rigor	Students should apply their understandings to solve appropriately complex real-world problems. Instruction should place an emphasis on integrating conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency.	12 O'Quad High: Trigonometry in Flight—Students apply knowledge of trigonometric functions.

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LEARN MORE

- [New Jersey Department of Education Common Core State Standards Video](#)
- [Council of the Great City Schools' Three-Minute Video](#)
- [National PTA Parents' Guide to Student Success](#)
- [Council of the Great City Schools' Grade by Grade Roadmaps](#)
[English language arts](#)
[Mathematics](#)

NEW JERSEY EDUCATOR RESOURCE EXCHANGE

New Jersey, in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), has created the New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange at NJCore.org. The New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange is New Jersey's central resource for:

- Learning about New Jersey's Common Core State Standards, New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, and Model Curriculum Framework;
- Uploading and sharing lesson plans and other instructional resources with fellow educators throughout the state;
- Accessing high-quality instructional resources tagged to each standard in each grade level;
- Spreading awareness about the standards and sharing resources with parents to extend students' learning at home.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

[New Jersey's Model Curriculum Framework](#) provides educators a suggested way to incorporate the standards into five units across each grade level.

[The EQuIP \(Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products\) Rubric](#) created by Achieve is an evaluation tool to determine lesson and unit alignment to the Common Core State Standards.

- AchievetheCore.org
- America Achieves' commoncore.americaachieves.org
- BetterLesson.com
- LearnZillion.com
- Readwritethink.org
- ShareMyLesson.com
- TeachingChannel.org

