

Quick Reference Guide: Massachusetts Anchor Standards for Reading



This Guide examines the ten Anchor Standards for Reading of the [Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy](#). To become college and career ready, students must read widely and deeply from a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history, science, mathematics, the arts, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers of books in all content areas.

Books fall open, you fall in.
– David McCord, Poet

Books are the way ... we learn lessons from those no longer with us, that humanity has built on itself, progressed, and made knowledge incremental, rather than something that has to be relearned over and over.

– Neil Gaiman, Author

Analyzing a Complex Text: the Basics

Begin with a text worth reading. A literary text will have interesting ideas about human experience, engaging characters, and expressive use of language. An informational text will present important concepts with accurate information and precise vocabulary. Anchor Standard 10 for Reading sets the expectation that students will become independent and proficient readers of both literary and informational texts.

Proficient and independent reading begins with paying close attention to what the author has written. What happens? Where does the action take place? What do the characters say and think? Answers to these questions are evidence. They help a reader determine the main ideas or themes of a text and draw conclusions about which ideas are important. Sometimes a complex text takes two or three readings or viewings, often accompanied by annotation and discussion, before its meanings become clear. Whether applied to a picture book, a novel, a political news story, or a video documentary, the first three Anchor Standards for Reading provide the foundation for understanding. They work with Standard 10 to form a coherent approach to reading.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what a text states explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from a text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts.

It's a luxury being a writer, because all you ever think about is life.

– Amy Tan, *Novelist*

Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves.

– Lewis Carroll (*Charles Dodgson*), *Mathematician, Novelist, Photographer*

Analyzing an Author's Craft: Word Choice, Structure, and Point of View

Skillful readers analyze how an author chooses words and uses text organization to support an argument, express a point of view, explain a philosophy, or portray a real or imagined world. Close reading analysis is most effectively applied to poetry or other short complex texts with multiple layers of meaning, use of figurative language, and nuanced vocabulary. Anchor Standards 4 through 6 for Reading provide the foundation for detailed close reading.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of a text relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Making Connections: Comparing and Evaluating Texts

Seeking and finding relationships among texts informs the wording of Anchor Standards 7 through 9 for Reading. There are many ways of integrating knowledge and ideas in texts. Young readers learn that words and illustrations in picture books often convey slightly different messages that complement, enhance, or sometimes even contradict one another. Reading and viewing print and media texts increases understanding of how the characteristics of different technologies shape the expression of ideas. More experienced readers will be able to compare differing points of view and approaches, discriminate fact from opinion, and make judgments about the value of authors' reasoning, use of evidence, and conclusions.

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go.

– Dr. Seuss (*Theodore Geisel*), *Author, Illustrator*

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.