

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 **3rd 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:** ask and answer questions referencing text explicitly; retell stories, fables, folktales, myths from diverse cultures; central message, lesson, or moral and key details ; main idea and key details
- Craft and Structure:** meaning of words and phrases, literal from figurative language; meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; identify common structural elements of fiction; describe how each successive part of a text builds on earlier sections; text features and search tools own point of view versus author’s, narrator’s, or character’s
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** use of specific aspects of illustrations to convey meaning in words in a story, logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs

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

- Phonics and Word Recognition:** word analysis, including decoding of words with common prefixes and Latin suffixes, derivational suffixes, multisyllable words, and irregularly spelled words
- Fluency:** accurate and fluent reading to support comprehension, using context or rereading as necessary

Students engage daily in higher-order reasoning:

- Examine** character traits, motivations, and feelings; how actions of characters contribute to events; relationship between historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, mathematical ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures—using temporal (time and sequence) and cause/effect language
- Compare and contrast** themes, settings, and plots of stories written by same author about same or similar characters, most important points and key details presented in two texts on same topic
- Demonstrate understanding** of word relationships and nuances in word meanings
- Conduct** short research projects that build knowledge about a topic; gather information from various sources and sorting evidence into provided categories

Students engage daily in collaborative work:

- Comprehension and Collaboration:** rules for discussions, building on others’ ideas, expression of own ideas, requesting clarification, main ideas and supporting details from diverse media and formats, ask and answer questions about information from speaker—offering elaboration and detail
- Presentation:** reporting on topic, text, or story with facts or relevant details; speaking clearly in complete sentences; appropriate vocabulary, recordings of story or poem readings; use of visuals to clarify ideas; use of complete sentences; 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 supporting reasons using linking words, and concluding statement
- Informative/Explanatory:** topic with facts, definitions and details; illustrations when appropriate, linking words and phrases, and concluding statement or section
- Narrative:** in prose or poem form to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, descriptive details, and clear sequences; speaker, narrator and/or characters, dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings, temporal words and phrases where appropriate, closure

ELA What to Look For The example below features three Indicators from the [Standards of Effective Practice](#). 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 3rd grade ELA classroom.

Expectations
(Standard II, Indicator E) Plans and implements lessons that set clear and high expectations and also make knowledge accessible for all students.

What is the teacher doing?

- Creating culturally responsive lessons that engage and sustain student attention
- Selecting appropriate complex texts (e.g., texts with metaphorical language)
- Focusing attention on academic language (e.g., linguistic complexity, conventions, and vocabulary)

What are the students doing?

- Understanding what they will learn in a lesson and how it connects to prior learning
- Using rich academic language when speaking and writing
- Support their opinions with evidence
- Identifying how an author uses figurative language purposefully

Instruction
(Standard II, Indicator A) Uses instructional practices that reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work; engage all students; and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.

What is the teacher doing?

- Designing lessons that support successful cooperation in culturally sensitive ways
- Helping students understand characteristics of different types of text
- Grouping students based on data and adjusting grouping as needed (using both homogenous and heterogeneous grouping)

What are the students doing?

- Making connections between reading, writing, speaking and listening
- Drawing explicitly upon content they have learned in class in conversations with peers
- Reading and comprehending a variety of complex texts

Assessment
(Standard I, Indicator B) Uses a variety of informal and formal methods of assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding to develop differentiated and enhanced learning experiences and improve future instruction.

What is the teacher doing?

- Using multiple formative approaches to assess student learning (e.g., writing and oral responses during reading group)
- Using scaffolding as needed and providing multiple opportunities for students to practice new linguistic patterns, features, and vocabulary
- Providing exemplars of work (e.g. mentor texts, student work)

What are the students doing?

- Purposefully incorporating feedback from teacher and peers into actions
- Demonstrating learning in multiple ways (e.g., writing and oral responses during reading group)
- Engaging in challenging learning tasks regardless of learning needs (e.g., linguistic background, disability, academic gifts)
- Engaging in meaningful writing in response to text