

# Understanding Common Core State Standards

*Increasing the rigor and  
relevance of today's curriculum  
to prepare students for their  
future, not ours.*

## **Common Core Terminology:**

**Shift** – A change in how teachers teach and how students learn

**Text** – Any written work

**Non-fiction** – Texts about real-life events or facts

**Evidence** – Bits of proof from the text

**Judgment** – A student's conclusion about what they have read

**Speed and Accuracy** – How quickly a student can solve math problems correctly

## **Q: What are the Common Core State Standards?**

*A: The Common Core State Standards create clear expectations for what students in Pre-K through 12th grade should be able to do in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics. The standards will help all students across the State learn the same skills to ensure they are prepared for college and careers following graduation. The standards include changes, or "shifts," in how teachers teach to help children succeed in the topics and skills that matter most.*

## **Q: What's shifting? What are the changes?**

*A: The Common Core State Standards ask teachers to make 12 major "shifts" or (changes) in their classrooms – six shifts in English Language Arts (ELA) and six shifts in Mathematics.*

### **ELA**

- Read more non-fiction
- Learn about the world through reading
- Read more challenging material
- Talk about reading using "evidence"
- Learn how to write from what is read
- Know more vocabulary words

### **Math**

- Build on learning year after year
- Spend more time on fewer concepts
- Use math facts easily
- Develop speed and accuracy in solving problems
- Really know it, really do it
- Use math in real-world situations

Parents across New York want to know more about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CCSS is a nationwide initiative that allows states to share a common definition of readiness at each grade level. If students are to graduate high school fully prepared, they must meet the benchmarks set by the Common Core - at every grade and in every classroom. Here, you will find information and some frequently asked questions and answers about the standards and ways that your child's classroom is changing.

For more information and resources on what you can do to help your child adjust to these higher expectations, contact your child's classroom teacher, school principal or visit:

**EngageNY.org**



# Common Core and Our Children's Test Scores

## ELA and Math Assessment Changes:

### Increases in Rigor

Questions will be more advanced and complex

### Focus on Text

Students will be required to read, analyze passages, and answer questions with evidence gathered from the text

### Depth of Math

Students will demonstrate a conceptual understanding of real-world math

## Q. Why do we need state assessments?

*A. Assessment tests do not measure the worth and intelligence of our children, but are an important tool for improving student achievement. The new tests will help principals and teachers identify those students who might need extra support to successfully move on to the next grade level.*

## Q. Will these new tests be harder?

*A. At first, the new tests may seem more difficult. This is normal. The new tests will be based on the "shifts" in the Common Core State Standards.*

## Q. Will student test scores drop?

*A. The number of students that score at or above grade level will likely decrease. This decrease should not necessarily be interpreted as a decline in student learning or a decline in teacher performance. These new assessments will provide a more realistic picture of where students are on their path to being well prepared for the world that awaits them after they graduate from high school.*

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The 2013 grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments are best thought of as a new assessment. New York State, for the first time, will be reporting student grade-level expectations against a trajectory of college- and career-readiness reflective of the Common Core State Standards.

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