



Houghton
Mifflin
Harcourt

A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH



collections

Grades 6–12



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Overview

The **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections** program is a Grades 6–12 literature textbook series that is a comprehensive resource for addressing all expectations of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Rich, engaging, and complex texts are the program’s anchor—challenging and supporting all students to become critical and close readers. The program fosters success in writing across varied genres through models of effective writing and provides ample opportunities for speaking and writing about texts.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate clearly and explicitly the scientific research base for the program. The program is built around what we know about effective instruction in the English classroom—how to teach students to read complex texts and to write effectively across genres—and what we know about how best to meet the needs of all learners through differentiation, ongoing assessment, and 21st-century technological tools. The **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections** program integrates each of these research strands into a program that research suggests will support students as they encounter and produce increasingly complex texts.

To help readers of this document make the connections between the research strands and the **Collections** program, each strand includes the following sections:

- **Defining the Strand.** This section summarizes the terminology and provides an overview of the research related to the strand.
- **Research that Guided the Development of Collections.** This section identifies subtopics within each strand and provides excerpts from and summaries of relevant research on each subtopic.
- **From Research to Practice.** This section explains how the research data are exemplified in the **Collections** program.

The combination of the major research recommendations and the related features of the **Collections** program will help readers better understand how the program incorporates research into its instructional design.

A reference list of works cited is provided at the end of this document.

Introduction to the Common Core Aligned *Collections* Program

By now, educators across the United States are familiar with the Common Core State Standards, which indicate what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level.

In Grades 6–12, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are organized by five strands:

1. Reading Literature
2. Reading Informational Text
3. Writing
4. Speaking and Listening
5. Language

The standards and strands directly relate to the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards. The Anchor Standards broadly outline the understanding and skills students should master by the end of high school. This alignment in the progression across grade levels helps to ensure that, by meeting the standards, students are well prepared for college or for a career.

While the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening—as English/language arts teachers have always done—the standards also identify some important shifts in instruction. The standards focus on the importance of

- including a balance of informational and literary texts,
- teaching with increasingly complex texts (the staircase of complexity) across grade levels,
- requiring the use of text-based evidence to support ideas and analysis, and
- developing students’ academic vocabulary base.

The **Collections** program was designed and written to closely align with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Every time students learn a new concept or practice a skill, they are working on mastery of one of the standards. Every collection opens with the **Key Learning Objectives** that show which of the Common Core expectations students will meet through the lesson.

The front matter of each book provides **Correlation** information so that teachers can see what students should understand and be able to do by the end of the grade. Each Common Core State Standard is shown, along with a correlation for where that standard is met in the **Student Edition** and **Teacher’s Edition**, and for Writing and Speaking and Listening, where the standard is met in the **Digital Collection/Lesson**.

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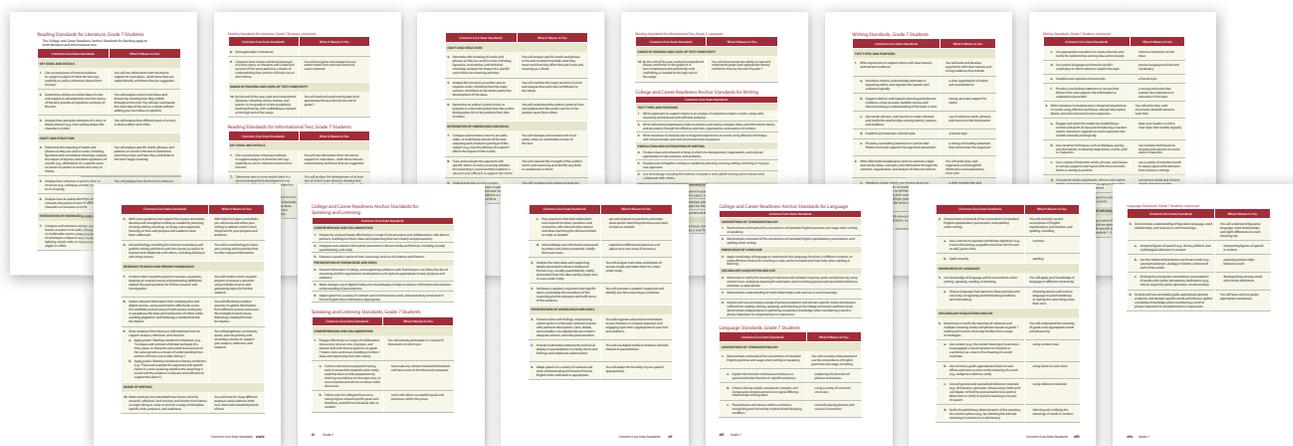
For example, from the Grade 7 front matter:

Reading Standards for Literature

| Common Core State Standard | Student Edition /Teacher's Edition |
|--|---|
| KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS | |
| <p>1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> | <p>Student Edition 15, 16, 36, 73, 108, 126, 127–130, 131–134, 154, 171, 173, 174, 179–182, 214, 244, 246, 248, 256, 325, 334</p> <p>Teacher's Edition 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18a, 31, 32, 34, 36, 40, 42, 63, 65, 67, 69, 72, 73, 74, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 108, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 121, 124, 126, 149, 150, 151, 153, 154, 170, 172, 173, 174, 174a, 192, 213, 214, 214b, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 249, 250, 253, 254, 256, 284, 285, 287, 288, 289, 291, 294, 296, 297, 299, 300, 302, 321, 322, 323, 325, 327, 328, 330, 331, 332, 334</p> |
| <p>2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> | <p>Student Edition 35, 36, 42, 68, 69, 75, 76, 108, 126, 148, 153, 154, 214, 247, 248, 255, 256, 304, 324, 325, 333, 334</p> <p>Teacher's Edition 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38a, 42, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 75, 108, 126, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 156a, 172, 174b, 214, 247, 248, 248a, 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 304, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 331, 332, 333, 334</p> |
| <p>3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</p> | <p>Student Edition 15, 16, 35, 36, 68, 69, 107, 108, 125, 126, 154, 255, 256, 303, 304, 333, 334</p> <p>Teacher's Edition 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18a, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38a, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70a, 93, 94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 103, 106, 107, 108, 110a, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 154, 156a, 249, 250, 253, 254, 255, 256, 258a, 284, 286, 292, 296, 297, 298, 300, 302, 303, 304, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 336a, 336b</p> |

The front matter of each book in the **Collections** program offers a description of the standards in student-friendly language so that students can better understand what it is that they are expected to know and be able to do by the academic year’s end.

| Strand | What It Means to You |
|--|---|
| Reading Literature (RL) | This strand concerns the literary texts you will read at this grade level: stories, drama, and poetry. The Common Core State Standards stress that you should read a range of texts of increasing complexity as you progress through high school. |
| Reading Informational Text (RI) | Informational text encompasses a broad range of literary nonfiction, including exposition, argument, and functional text, in such genres as personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, memoirs, and historical and technical accounts. The Common Core State Standards stress that you will read a range of informational texts of increasing complexity as you progress from grade to grade. |
| Writing (W) | For the Writing strand you will focus on generating three types of texts—arguments, informative or explanatory texts, and narratives—while using the writing process and technology to develop and share your writing. The Common Core State Standards also emphasize research and specify that you should write routinely for both short and extended time frames. |
| Speaking and Listening (SL) | The Common Core State Standards focus on comprehending information presented in a variety of media and formats, on participating in collaborative discussions, and on presenting knowledge and ideas clearly. |
| Language (L) | The standards in the Language strand address the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics; knowledge of language; and vocabulary acquisition and use. |



Strand 1: Complex Texts

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts.

National Governors Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2010a, p. 10

... the kinds of books that stimulate powerful discussion do more than tell a compelling story. They challenge us to re-examine our beliefs, to tread on dangerous ground, to consort with heroes and monsters. While such books are more difficult to read, they are the ones we never quite forget, that haunt us long past when the last page has been read. Those are the books that work best for classroom study.

Jago, 2011, p. 16

Defining the Strand

What is reading? As Fox and Alexander (2011) state, “Reading is the complex communicative behavior of deriving meaning from presented text.” They continue, “Learning to read is becoming able to participate in the behavior of reading in ways that support one’s purposes and satisfy one’s needs” (p. 7). Effective middle- and high-school teachers create opportunities for students to become better readers. To do so, students must encounter a wide range of texts; read for enjoyment and information; and analyze, interpret, synthesize, and critique what they have read.

As students progress, the texts they encounter become increasingly complex, as do the meanings they gain from those texts. By the time students complete high school, they must be “able to read and comprehend independently and proficiently the kinds of complex texts commonly found in college and careers” (NGA and CCSSO, Appendix A, 2010b, p. 2). To achieve this,

... students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries...Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal U.S. documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 35).

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s *Collections* engages students with thought-provoking, high-quality, complex texts. Each lesson is anchored by text—questions and tasks are text-dependent, and discussion and writing activities require students to cite text and make connections across texts. By incorporating varied genres of texts and extended texts, the program ensures that students have the skills to independently comprehend challenging informational and literary texts.

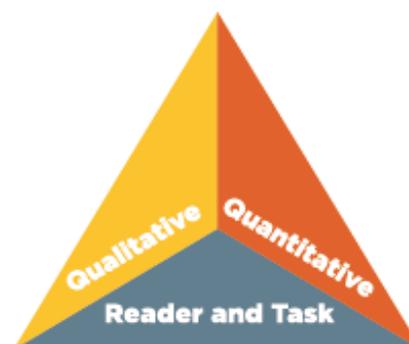
Research that Guided the Development of the *Collections* Program

Text Complexity

Students read and write in English classes at every grade level; what changes is the complexity of the texts that they encounter and produce. With the creation of the Common Core State Standards and state adoption of increasingly rigorous expectations in English language arts, the discussion of text complexity has been at the forefront in recent years. Text complexity is central to the construct of the Common Core, as “The Common Core State Standards hinge on students encountering appropriately complex texts at each grade level to develop the mature language skills and the conceptual knowledge they need for success in school and life” (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 3).

Text complexity can be measured in different ways—by a quantitative calculation of the length of words or the complexity of sentences, or by a qualitative analysis of the content and levels of meaning of the text. In an attempt to integrate these different text elements, the creators of the Common Core (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a) identify three factors involved in measuring a text’s complexity:

1. A qualitative evaluation of text, which looks at the levels of meaning in the text, the structure of the text, the conventionality and clarity of the language, and the knowledge demands that the content places on readers.
2. A quantitative evaluation, which involves readability measures and other calculations of text complexity based on word and sentence length and familiarity.
3. A matching of the reader to the text and task, which involves considering the reader’s motivation, knowledge, and experiences, and the task’s purpose and complexity.



The texts which students encounter should increase in complexity across these qualitative and quantitative factors across grade levels. Educators must employ expert judgment in some of the qualitative analyses, but for the quantitative analysis, developers of the Common Core created a staircase of complexity to show how the scales of text complexity build across grade levels to ensure college and career readiness (see Appendices to the CCSS, as well as the 2012 supplement to Appendix A).

Complexity matters. Increasing the complexity of texts used for instruction across grade levels is essential to adequately prepare students for 21st-century school and work. In 2006, ACT, Inc. analyzed test data and concluded that the primary difference between those students who reached the benchmark score level and those who did not was the ability to answer questions based on complex texts. This data relates to a worrisome problem: While the level of texts that students will encounter in school and in the workplace has increased, few students are adequately prepared to comprehend these complex texts (ACT, 2009).

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How can educators best support students in reading these kinds of texts?

The writers of the Common Core recommend a close reading approach in which students and teachers work closely with the text (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012). In a qualitative study, Fisher and Frey (2012) looked at close reading instruction at the elementary level and found that students were able to approach complex texts with greater skill when they engaged in re-reading and close reading procedures. In their study of what they term a “content” approach for reading comprehension instruction—in which the teacher’s attention was focused on directing students toward the content of the text and working closely through the text together—McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) found that the content approach engaged “students in the process of attending to text ideas and building a mental representation of those ideas” (p. 219).

Practice and exposure to extended texts, too, helps students to comprehend and work with complex texts—and build the reading stamina they need.

Text Quality

Simply because a text is of appropriate complexity does not mean that the text is worth teaching. The texts used in the classroom must meet the criteria for quality. The texts that students read must be worth the kind of attention afforded by close reading. In their qualitative study which examined the implementation of close reading instruction at the elementary level, Fisher and Frey (2012) found that the quality of texts mattered; teachers agreed that not all texts were worthy of a close reading.

The elements of text quality are addressed by the Common Core State Standards. When texts are considered qualitatively, teachers look at the levels of meaning in the text, the structure, the language, and the content, as well as the interaction of the reader with the text. A number of elements work together to make a text a high-quality text.

One element for determining text quality is whether the content of the text is relevant—and will help to build students’ content and background knowledge. Numerous studies have shown that deepening students’ knowledge of the topic improves their comprehension (Graves, Cooke & LaBerge, 1983; McKeown, Beck & Blake, 2009). As Stotsky (2010) suggests, based on a national survey of literary study in Grades 9, 10, and 11, “...there is no substitute for a coherent curriculum that addresses culturally and historically significant authors, literary periods, and movements in our own or other civic cultures, or careful analysis of assigned texts” (p. 24).

Another element is the length of the text. Students benefit from encountering complex texts in their entirety. While at first glance, one might assume that a shorter passage would be “easier” for students to comprehend, research supports the notion that an extended passage—with its elaboration of ideas and greater use of contextual clues—actually supports readers. Research findings show that more readers demonstrated a failure to accurately monitor their comprehension with short excerpts than with full versions of text (Commander & Stanwyck, 1997).

Yet another element of text quality is whether the text is of interest to students. Texts used in the classroom should engage students' interest and motivate them to continue reading. Studies have shown a high correlation between personal interest and text learning—and these findings hold up “for both short and long text, narratives and expository text, younger and older students, and students with high or low reading ability” (Schiefele, 1999, p. 265). Students who are interested in what they are reading are mentally engaged (Hidi & Boscolo, 2006); in their study, Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, Humenick, and Littles (2007) found that “interest and positive affect for reading invariably were associated with high cognitive recall and comprehension of text” (p. 306). The use of interesting texts has also been shown to increase students' generalized motivation for learning (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks & Perencevich, 2006). Research across grade levels from elementary through high school has shown that students who are interested in a text persist with reading and completing tasks related to the reading (Ainley, 2012). Well-written nonfiction texts on topics of interest, and fiction texts with interesting characters, exciting plots, and familiar themes will engage readers. Other properties of texts that have been shown to increase student interest include interesting topics (Schiefele, 1999; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001, 2006), appealing format (Schraw, Bruning & Svobada, 1995), relevance (Schraw & Dennison, 1994), and appropriate language and complexity (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001, 2006).

When selecting texts for high student interest, teachers must also consider the use of media in the classroom. Media is increasingly relevant and engaging in the lives of students who are “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001); as a result, we should broaden our understandings of what constitutes literacy, and focus on developing multiliterate students, argues Alvermann (2007). Varied media should also be considered texts—and students should engage in activities to build their critical comprehension of varied media “texts.”

Finally, high-quality literature should not be available only for certain populations of students. In their study on discussion-based approaches in middle and high school English classrooms, Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003) found that “upper-track classes read more traditional literature and essays; lower-track classes read more young adult literature and poetry” (p. 714). These kinds of differences put students on a permanent track, with struggling learners never having the exposure to foundational texts that they need.

The Centrality of Text

In order to become more adept at reading the kinds of texts that they will encounter in future school and work, students need rich experiences working with these texts. In their revised criteria for publishers of Common Core-aligned materials (2012), Common Core State Standards' authors Coleman and Pimentel state:

At the heart of these criteria are instructions for shifting the focus of literacy instruction to center on careful examination of the text itself. In aligned materials, work in reading and writing (as well as speaking and listening) must center on the text under consideration. The standards focus on students reading closely to draw evidence and knowledge from the text and require students to read texts of adequate range and complexity (p. 1).

What the Common Core authors advocate—and what teachers are increasingly realizing students need—is for greater focus on texts, and increased instruction on how to read texts closely.

According to Cummins (2013), close reading is

... when the reader analyzes any given text at the word or phrase level and also at the paragraph and section levels. As the reader analyzes the text, he or she determines which details are most important and how these fit together logically to convey the author's central idea(s) or theme(s). As a result of close reading, the reader begins to critically evaluate these ideas or themes (p. 1).

To support students in close reading, teachers can provide rich, high-quality texts as well as scaffolds such as focused, text-dependent questions and instruction on related skills, such as annotation.

Annotation is one strategy closely related to close reading. When students annotate a text while reading, they add notes, highlight, or underline to identify important ideas, mark examples, or call attention to specific words, lines, or passages. "Annotation is the written result of the mental process of comprehension that occurs as the reader absorbs the material on the page" (Spatt, 1983, p.163). Kennedy (1985) conducted a study of college students in which students were assigned the task of reading a set of articles and writing about them. In her study, "truly fluent readers did much more source re-reading and notetaking at the postreading/prewriting phase than at the writing phase" (p. 443). Good readers annotated as they read—and referred to these notes when they wrote about what they read—suggesting that some readers may need support in learning to annotate and use their notes to think about the text.

A Multi-Genre Approach

While literature remains the primary focus of the English language arts classroom, educators and administrators are increasingly recognizing the need for a balanced, multi-genre approach.

Reflective of this multi-genre approach, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mentions the importance of literary texts (fiction, literary nonfiction, and poetry) and informational texts (exposition, argumentation and persuasive texts, procedural text and documents). In NAEP, passages are distributed differently by grade level, with a heavier weight on informational texts as students progress.

| Distribution of Literary and Informational Passages by Grade Level in 2009 NAEP Reading Framework | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| Grade | Literary | Informational |
| 4 | 50% | 50% |
| 8 | 45% | 55% |
| 12 | 30% | 70% |

(National Assessment Governing Board, 2008).

The Common Core State Standards also strongly emphasize a multi-genre approach. The “Range of Text Types for 6–12” (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 57) include the larger text types of stories, drama, poetry, and literary nonfiction—and detail genres within each of these larger text-type categories. The Standards also stress the importance of content-area instruction in reading, and advocate for “balancing the reading of literature with the reading of informational texts, including texts in history/ social studies, science, and technical subjects” (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 5).

In addition to expanding students’ familiarity with different genres and their structures, teaching with texts of varied genres in the English classroom builds students’ background knowledge. Jago (2004) states it plainly: “Reading is the best way to build background knowledge” (p 11, 12). Informational texts may be particularly helpful in increasing students’ knowledge base. In a study which compared students’ content knowledge after reading a narrative text compared to an informational text on the same science topic, researchers found that students answered more questions correctly and recalled more key concepts in response to the informational text (Cervetti, Bravo, Hiebert, Pearson & Jaynes, 2009). The relationship between reading informational texts and building content knowledge is reciprocal; reading more builds content knowledge, and greater content knowledge supports comprehension. In a study with students in Grade 3, Best, Floyd, and McNamara (2008) found that students’ comprehension of narrative text was most influenced by reading decoding skills, while their comprehension of expository texts was most influenced by their knowledge base. From their research, “We can conclude that children

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with less prior knowledge will struggle to form a coherent situation model when reading expository texts because they are not able to generate the necessary inferences” (p. 153).

Informational texts, too, are important for preparing students for success in school and work. Most of the reading students will encounter in school, in work, on the Internet and elsewhere is informational. As Duke (2004) asserts, “We are surrounded by text whose primary purpose is to convey information about the natural or social world. Success in schooling, the workplace, and society depends on our ability to comprehend this material” (p. 40). Informational texts are written to convey information to readers about the natural or social world, and are one way that most of us come to understand the world around us. In an effective literacy program, students need exposure to high-quality literary *and* informational texts.

Informational texts can also serve as motivational tools in the classroom—particularly for those students who prefer to read nonfiction or who are interested in the topics of the texts (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002).

So, how best to integrate literary and informational texts into the classroom?

Research suggests that the approaches students take to reading and comprehending fiction and informational texts differ (Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007), and that students need experiences with and instruction in reading both kinds of texts. “. . . Students need to be supported in learning how to read across multiple texts” (Ogle & Blachowicz, 2002, p. 270). Readers need specific, advanced skills to comprehend content-area texts (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Arguments should also be a focus in a multi-genre approach to the English language arts classroom, and are particularly appropriate for older students. Research suggests that students’ skill with the recognizing and analyzing the structure of arguments develops over time and with experience (Chambliss & Murphy, 2002). But even with younger students, instruction in argument is beneficial. As part of a research study on teaching argument to young children, Riley and Reedy (2005) found that instruction in argument led to improved critical thinking.

Strategies instruction has been shown to be effective for content-area readers (see Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, Rintamaa & Madden, 2010; Duke, 2004; National Institute for Literacy, 2007; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Hollingsworth & Woodward, 1993; Nokes & Dole, 2004; Snow, 2002; Underwood and Pearson, 2004). To develop content-area literacy, students need instruction and practice in the form of high-quality content-area texts, teacher modeling, explicit strategy instruction, and scaffolding.

Williams (2005) conducted a series of studies and found that at-risk students were able to transfer what they learned to new texts when they were given explicit instruction with a focus on text structure.

Vocabulary

Research has long documented the connection between vocabulary and comprehension (see Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; the National Reading Panel Report [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development], 2000; and the more recent results of the 2009 and 2011 NAEP Reading Assessments, which found that “at all three grades, students who scored higher on vocabulary questions also scored higher in reading comprehension” [National Center for Education Statistics, 2012a]).

Because of the documented connection between vocabulary and comprehension, building students’ vocabulary is an important instructional goal. As Marzano and Pickering (2005) state, “Given the importance of academic background knowledge and the fact that vocabulary is such an essential part of it, one of the most crucial services that teachers can provide, particularly for students who do not come from academically advantaged backgrounds, is systematic instruction in important academic terms” (p. 3). Furthermore, many adolescent readers with difficulties struggle with content-area vocabulary (Carnegie Council of Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). Stahl and Nagy (2006) estimate that the vocabulary-knowledge gap between successful readers and struggling adolescent readers may be in the thousands, or even ten thousands, of words.

One way to think about vocabulary, and which words are important for instruction and learning, is to consider words in three tiers. Tier 1 includes basic, everyday vocabulary; Tier 2 includes high-frequency vocabulary that is important for reading comprehension and useful across many domains; and Tier 3 includes words that are specific to certain contexts and content areas. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002, 2008) outline this useful model, which describes categories of words with which students may need support. (Note that while the tiers are numbered in the order of the most frequently occurring to the least, all tiers are essential for comprehension and vocabulary growth.) Research on adolescent vocabulary learning often also makes a distinction between academic and content-area vocabulary. Baumann and Graves (2010) distinguish general academic vocabulary from domain-specific academic vocabulary in this way. General academic vocabulary includes those words that appear across content areas, but are less common in literary texts. Domain-specific words are those words that appear in content-area texts and are specific to the domain. As Nagy and Townsend (2012) put it, “Words are tools; academic words are tools for communicating and thinking about disciplinary content.”

What kind of instruction is most effective for building students’ Tier 2 and Tier 3, their academic and their content-area vocabularies? Instruction is most effective when vocabulary instruction takes place in context—using words to learn and communicate about content. The findings of Stahl and Fairbanks’ 1986 meta-analysis suggest that the most effective vocabulary instruction includes definitions and context, involving students in deeper processing and providing multiple exposures to the words.

Explicit instruction is important (McKeown & Beck, 1988; National Reading Panel, 2000). Another finding that is consistent across research on vocabulary teaching and learning is the need for multiple exposures. Words must be encountered a number of times before learning occurs (Baumann &

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Kame'enui, 1991; Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Dixon-Krauss, 2001; Graves, 2006; Kolich, 1988; National Reading Panel, 2000; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). Providing multiple exposures allows for a deeper understanding of words—their multiple meanings, uses, and connotations (McKeown & Beck, 1988). The research of Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002, 2008) supports these findings. “Students who received rich, frequent instruction did better on a variety of measures” (p 77, 78).

Instruction in word morphology can also be effective. Teaching students about words (Nagy, 2007) provides them with a framework for learning other new words. When learners understand words' structures, they have a powerful tool for vocabulary growth (Templeton, Bear, Invernizzi & Johnston, 2010). Flanigan, Templeton, and Hayes (2012) suggest that generative vocabulary instruction, which focuses on word roots and affixes, can help students to use their current vocabulary base to build a more extensive vocabulary. The researchers suggest that this kind of word analysis is particularly helpful for learning academic and content vocabulary because most of these words contain Greek or Latin roots and affixes. Because the majority of unfamiliar words students encounter are morphological derivatives of familiar words (Aronoff, 1994), students with morphological analysis skills can more successfully broaden their academic vocabulary and comprehend new texts (Carlisle, 2010; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007). Goodwin and Ahn's 2010 meta-analysis supported this, finding that morphological skill instruction improves students' literacy achievement and was “particularly effective for children with reading, learning, or speech and language disabilities, English language learners, and struggling readers” (p. 183).

Collaborative Discussion

Classroom discussion differs from simple participation in that it involves sharing and generating ideas, rather than simply the seeking of correct answers. “Discussion can be defined . . . as the open-ended collaborative exchange of ideas among a teacher and students or among students for the purpose of furthering students' thinking, understanding, learning, or appreciation of text” (Wilkinson & Nelson, 2013, p. 299).

Research has shown that classroom discussions are effective in engaging students and building their comprehension and analysis of complex texts. It appears that the exchange of ideas that takes place in the classroom is key to students' development. Langer (1995, 2000, 2001) has identified discussion—when used to develop students' understanding rather than as an assessment of recall—to be a particularly important element of effective English language arts classrooms.

In their examination of discussion-based approaches in middle and high school English classrooms, Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003) found that discussion-based approaches enhanced students' understanding of complex texts, and were effective for low- and high-achieving students. “. . . High academic demands and discussion-based approaches were significantly related to spring performance. . . . [and] these approaches were effective across a range of situations, for students of

varying levels of academic ability. . . .” (p. 719). Their findings suggest that an emphasis on discussion helps students to “internalize the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in challenging literacy tasks on their own” (p. 685). In part this may be because of the “spontaneous scaffolding or support for developing ideas” (p. 722) that is possible in an open discussion.

In his review of the history of comprehension and discourse in American classrooms and his research on the use of discussion, Nystrand (2006) found that “[a] number of studies show that reading comprehension is enhanced by the classroom interaction of students with their teachers and peers, including both small-group work and whole-class discussion” (p. 398). Murphy and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of 42 studies on the effects of classroom discussion and concluded that “many of the approaches were highly effective at promoting students’ literal and inferential comprehension” (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey & Alexander, 2009, p. 759).

What makes for a quality classroom discussion? In their review of research on discussion, Wilkinson and Nelson (2013) found that the most effective discussions include these elements:

- Discussions are structured and focused.
- Discussions are teacher-led but not teacher-dominated.
- Students are given ample time to “hold the floor.”
- Students are prompted to discuss texts through open-ended questions.

Reznitskaya and colleagues concluded that when discussions encourage students to consider other’s perspectives and argue (through explanation, elaboration, support) about texts, students think more critically about the text in question—and come away able to apply this thinking to other texts (Reznitskaya, Anderson, Dong, Li, Kim & Kim, 2008). The quality and complexity of the text is an additional element central to the effectiveness of class discussion; Van den Branden (2000), in his research on whole-class discussion, “found that discussion promotes reading comprehension when problematic and difficult passages are the focus of sustained interaction” (in Nystrand, 2006, p. 399).

Finally, classroom discussions promote speaking and listening—skills which are often underemphasized in the educational setting, but which play a crucial role in students’ experiences in their personal and working lives outside of school (Palmer, 2011). With instruction and practice, students can learn to carefully choose their words, organize their ideas, employ effective gestures, pace speech for emphasis, and captivate audiences (Palmer, 2011).

Connecting Reading and Writing

Reading and writing are connected. They develop together naturally (Calkins, 1994; Sulzby & Teale, 1991). We can see connections between reading and writing at the word level (word recognition, spelling) and at the text level (comprehension, composition) (Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, Graham & Richards, 2002). And, they require similar strategies (Lewin, 1992). Both require setting a purpose,

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activating relevant prior knowledge, constructing meaning, and revising hypotheses or understandings during meaning making (Pearson & Tierney, 1984). In their effort to describe the relationship between reading and writing, Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) identified four types of knowledge essential to success in both reading and writing: (1) *Metaknowledge* about the processes involved in reading and writing; (2) *Domain knowledge*, or prior knowledge of a topic and vocabulary; (3) *Knowledge of text attributes*, from the word level to the larger genre or format level; and (4) *Procedural knowledge and skill to negotiate reading and writing*, or the ability to apply knowledge to practice.

Because of these connections, it makes sense that improving students' knowledge and skill in one area will improve their knowledge and skill in the other. Reading and writing share a reciprocal relationship. Just as research shows that writing is a tool that can increase reading achievement and critical thinking (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Connor-Greene, 2000; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991), research shows that reading (as a model or as a source for content information) can improve writing (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991; Tierney, Soter, O'Flahavan & McGinley, 1989). When students read and write, they become better at both (Shanahan, 2006).

Reading and writing together improves achievement, enhances communication skills, and builds critical-thinking ability (Cooper, 2000). Connecting writing with reading helps students to process new information and comprehend complex ideas (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). Tierney and Shanahan's research (1991) showed that engaging students in writing activities improves reading ability. Research shows that the many specific benefits of integrating reading and writing include increased word learning (Baker, Simmons & Kame'enui, 1995b; Klesius & Searls, 1991); increased retention of reading content (Santa, Havens & Harrison, 1989); improved revision skills (MacArthur, 2007); higher-quality independent student writing (Corden, 2007); and support of ELL students (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer & Rivera, 2006a).

In 2010, Graham and Hebert published a report for the Carnegie Corporation entitled *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*. For this report, the researchers conducted a meta-analysis of research on the connection between writing and reading. "The evidence," they concluded, "is clear: writing can be a vehicle for improving reading. In particular, having students write about a text they are reading enhances how well they comprehend it" (p. 6). In the studies they reviewed, "Writing about a text proved to be better than just reading it, reading and re-reading it, reading and studying it, reading and discussing it, and receiving reading instruction" (p. 22).

Tierney, Soter, O'Flahavan, and McGinley (1989) compared the performance of undergraduates in different conditions—combinations of reading only, writing only, reading and writing in conjunction—and found that students who both read and wrote significantly outperformed those in all other groups. Their conclusion was that "the present data support the view that reading and writing in combination have the potential to contribute in powerful ways to thinking" (p. 166).

From Research to Practice

Text Complexity in Collections

The **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections** program offers texts across the grade levels that meet the guidelines for text complexity as defined by the Common Core State Standards in terms of

- quantitative measures of text complexity;
- qualitative measures;
- matching tasks, texts, and readers; and
- through the inclusion of extended texts.

With rich themes, distinctive language, stylistic elements, and high knowledge demands, complex texts from all genres challenge students to grow as readers and thinkers.

For a quantitative analysis of text complexity, teachers can look at the **Instructional Overview** to see the Lexile level for each text that forms a part of the collection.

In addition, the program supports teachers in better understanding the staircase of text complexity envisioned by the creators of the Common Core—and using this understanding to evaluate texts for complexity.

The **Collections** program provides a rubric to support teachers in analyzing texts independently for text complexity so that teachers can be assured that their text selections are appropriately challenging to meet the expectations of the Common Core and the demands of the 21st century.

The **Collections Text Complexity Rubrics** help teachers identify the dimensions of complex texts. Found on the Planning page in the Teacher’s Edition prior to each selection, this rubric adds the qualitative dimensions for each selection.

The **Collections** program is designed to build students’ comprehension skills so that they are prepared for increasingly complex texts at each grade level. One way that the program helps to build students’ comprehension is by developing their fluency skills. The **Collections** program makes connections between the Common Core State Standards Speaking and Listening expectations and the Reading expectations. When students perform a read-aloud of a written piece this helps to promote their reading fluency—and thereby develops their comprehension.

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Text Complexity Rubric' for the text 'A Quilt of a Country'. The rubric is organized into two main sections: Quantitative Measures and Qualitative Measures. The Quantitative Measures section includes the text title and Lexile level (1260L). The Qualitative Measures section includes four categories: Levels of Meaning/Purpose, Structure, Language Conventionality and Clarity, and Knowledge Demands. Each category has a horizontal scale of five colored circles (yellow, orange, red, orange, yellow) indicating the complexity level. The red circle indicates the current level of complexity for each category.

| Text Complexity Rubric | |
|------------------------|--|
| Quantitative Measures | A Quilt of a Country Lexile: 1260L |
| Qualitative Measures | Levels of Meaning/Purpose more than one purpose; implied, easily identified from context |
| | Structure organization of main ideas and details complex but mostly explicit |
| | Language Conventionality and Clarity some unfamiliar, academic, or domain-specific words |
| | Knowledge Demands extensive knowledge of history required |

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Text Quality in Collections

High-quality literature and informational texts—worthy of close reading and text-based analysis—are at the center of the **Collections** program.

Among many other rich selections, the program includes:

- foundational United States texts, such as Abraham Lincoln’s “The Gettysburg Address,” Henry David Thoreau’s *Civil Disobedience*, or Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*
- important literary foundations, such as Greek myths, including “The Flight of Icarus” and “Arachne”
- classic texts, including works by world-renowned masters like Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and Charles Dickens
- contemporary texts, which promote new insights into classic selections, and current popular authors such as Gary Soto, Nikki Giovanni, Margaret Peterson Haddix, and Malcolm Gladwell
- works by acclaimed writers such as Annie Dillard, William Carlos Williams, and Louise Erdrich
- culturally diverse texts, such as works by Pablo Neruda and Gwendolyn Brooks
- 21st-century selections, which offer current perspectives on how to improve society
- complex arguments, in which writers cogently and strongly support their claims

Each selection opens with a feature in the **Teacher’s Edition** entitled **Why This Text?** which provides a rationale for the text, highlighting its strengths and the features which make it effective for instructional use.

The Centrality of Text in Collections

The **Collections** program keeps text at the center of every lesson. **Anchor Texts** are at the core of each collection. Complex and challenging, the **Anchor Texts** provide a cornerstone for exploring the collection topic and are integral to the **Selection** and **Collection Performance Task**. **Anchor Texts** focus students on specific topics for text-based study, with related selections included in the program’s **Close Reader**.

Throughout, students engage in close reading of **Anchor Texts** and related texts offered in the **Student Edition** and the **Close Reader**. Students learn to analyze the author’s language and content and annotate while reading with the **Strategies for Annotation** feature. During and after reading, students respond to text-dependent tasks and questions and make connections and compare across texts.

The program’s **Close Reader** allows students to apply standards and practice close reading strategies in a consumable print or digital format. The program’s **Close Reading Screencasts** provide modeled conversations about text at the point of use in the **eBook**.

Both the **Student Edition** and the **Close Reader** include text-dependent questions that require students to re-enter the text and cite evidence to support their claims.

A Multi-Genre Approach in Collections

The varied genres included in the **Collections** program ensure that students will develop skills and strategies for independently and proficiently reading literary and informational texts and media. In addition, these texts serve as models for students as they write in varied genres.

To help teachers with an at-a-glance overview, introductory pages for each collection clearly label the genre of each selection.

| Examples of Varied Reading Text Genres in Collections | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Grade 6, Collection 1 | Grade 7, Collection 1 | Grade 8, Collection 1 | Grade 9, Collection 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Story • Poem • Online Article • Magazine Article • Informational Text • Online Science Exhibit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Story • Online News Article • Editorial • TV News Interview • Essay • Greek Myth • Poem • Informational Text | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Story • Personal Essay • Research Study • Essay • Memoir • Documentary • Poem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argument • Blog • Short Story • Essay • Speech • Photo Essay • Poem |
| Grade 10, Collection 1 | Grade 11, Collection 1 | Grade 12, Collection 1 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Story • Movie Trailer • Court Opinion • Editorial • United Nations Declaration • Poem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Account • History Writing • Drama • Film • Short Story • Argument • Essay • Poem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay • Book Excerpt • Graduation Speech • Op-ed • Science Article • Novel Excerpt • Short Story • Drama • Opera • Production Image | |

Digital tools support the program’s multi-genre approach to reading. **Informational text on fyi** (hmhfyi.com) is linked to each collection topic and is curated and updated monthly.

Media lessons prompt students to read news reports, literary adaptations, ads, and websites as complex texts. Lessons based on media—the program’s **Media Analysis** features—provide opportunities for students to apply analysis and techniques of close reading to other kinds of texts.

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In addition, to enrich students' perspectives, both the **Student Edition** and **Close Reader** include selections by writers from diverse cultures.

To align with the Common Core focus on argument, argumentative and persuasive texts throughout **Collections** build students' abilities at analyzing the arguments in texts. Through the range of informational texts—including speeches, commentaries, and essays—students analyze claims and supporting evidence.

Vocabulary in Collections

Vocabulary acquisition is a focus of the **Collections** program.

Throughout the program, students acquire facility with new vocabulary words—both **Academic Vocabulary** and **Critical Vocabulary**—through frequent, repeated exposure as they analyze and discuss the selections in the collection.

Before reading, each collection opens with **Academic Vocabulary** in which students are provided a list of words, along with their definitions and related forms, that they can preview before encountering them in the texts and using them in their text-based discussion and written work.

| Word | Definition | Related Forms |
|--|--|---|
| aspect (ās'pəkt) <i>n.</i> | a characteristic or feature of something | aspectual |
| cultural (kul'chər-əl) <i>adj.</i> | of or relating to culture or cultivation | agriculture, culture, cultured, multicultural |
| evaluate (ī-vāl'yōō-āt') <i>v.</i> | to examine something carefully to judge its value or worth | evaluation, evaluator, evaluative |
| resource (rē'sōrs') <i>n.</i> | something that can be used for support or help | resources, resourceful, natural resources |
| text (tĕkst) <i>n.</i> | a literary work that is regarded as an object of critical analysis | textbook, textual, texture, textile |

During reading, the **Student Edition** defines bolded words from the text in the sidebar. Students have the definition where they need it—at the point at which they encounter the word in the text. The **Teacher's Edition** offers suggestions for teaching and discussing these words along with definitions and suggested questions to engage students in thinking about and applying knowledge of the words.

After reading, students have the opportunity to practice and apply their understanding of new words and vocabulary skills through the **Critical Vocabulary** and **Vocabulary Strategy** (with such topics as **Latin Roots, Noun Suffixes, or Connotations and Denotations**) activities.

To see some specific examples of vocabulary instruction in **Collections**, see these pages in the program’s **Student Edition** and **Teacher’s Edition** (noted in **bold** font).

| Examples of Academic and Critical Vocabulary Instruction and Applications in Collections | |
|---|---|
| Grade 6 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 5, 18, 38, 43, 52, 60 , 63, 67, 72, 75 , 133 Critical Vocabulary: 4, 10 , 15, 17, 20, 23, 27 , 35, 42, 49, 52, 54 |
| Grade 7 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 8, 20, 24, 33, 47 , 53, 57, 62, 65, 72, 91 Critical Vocabulary: 4, 5 , 17, 32, 33 , 37, 44, 45, 47 , 51, 64, 65 |
| Grade 8 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 6, 17, 34, 46, 56, 72, 76 , 79, 83, 88, 91 Critical Vocabulary: 4, 6, 8, 10, 16 , 29, 31, 32, 33, 36 , 39, 42, 43 |
| Grade 9 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 5, 13, 22, 31, 34 , 37, 41, 46, 50, 57, 60 Critical Vocabulary: 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 , 19, 21, 22, 23 |
| Grade 10 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 5, 20, 26, 34 , 41, 45, 50, 53, 62, 65 , 83 Critical Vocabulary: 3, 4, 6, 11, 16, 18, 19 , 23, 25, 28, 31, 33 , 37 |
| Grade 11 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 9, 13, 24, 40, 78, 88, 92, 98 , 103, 108, and so on. Critical Vocabulary: 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14 , 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30 , and so on. |
| Grade 12 | Academic Vocabulary: 2, 5, 10, 22, 35, 38, 51, 53 , 67, 71, 76, 79 , and so on. Critical Vocabulary: 4, 5, 6, 10, 14 , 17, 21, 22, 23 , 29, 33, 35 , 45, and so on. |

In the **Student Resources**, the **Glossaries** provide definitions for selection, academic, and domain-specific vocabulary, conveniently compiled in a single location. Vocabulary supports in the **Student Resources** also include the following:

Vocabulary and Spelling

- Using Context Clues
- Analyzing Word Structure
- Understanding Word Origin
- Synonyms and Antonyms
- Denotation and Connotation
- Analogies
- Words with Multiple Meanings
- Specialized Vocabulary
- Using Reference Sources
- Spelling Rules
- Commonly Confused Words
- Homonyms, Homographs, and Homophones

Glossary of Literary and informational Terms

Using the Glossary

Pronunciation Key

Glossary of Academic Vocabulary

Glossary of Critical Vocabulary

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Collaborative Discussion in Collections

Throughout the **Collections** program, students have the opportunity to engage in rich, collaborative, academic discussions of the texts they are reading. To enrich the analysis and discussion of each text, students compare and contrast selections, exploring elements such as author’s choices, themes, and the structure of arguments.

Following readings in each collection, students engage in **Collaborative Discussion** using the prompts offered in both the **Student Edition** and **Teacher’s Edition**.

| Examples of Collaborative Discussion in the Collections Student Edition | |
|--|--|
| Grade 6 | See pages 12, 32, 38, 46, 54, 60, 88, 94, 102, 112, 124, 152 |
| Grade 7 | See pages 14, 28, 34, 40, 48, 67, 74, 84, 91, 106, 124, 140, 146 |
| Grade 8 | See pages 26, 36, 49, 66, 72, 76, 94, 101, 116, 122, 128, 147 |
| Grade 9 | See pages 6, 16, 24, 28, 35, 51, 68, 71, 76, 84, 92, 118, 128 |
| Grade 10 | See pages 8, 13, 16, 20, 34, 39, 54, 59, 66, 74, 80, 105, 125 |
| Grade 11 | See pages 18, 31, 68, 71, 74, 83, 92, 99, 116, 124, 136, 146 |
| Grade 12 | See pages 14, 19, 26, 42, 59, 63, 88, 104, 110, 118, 126, 128 |

In the **Interactive Lessons** in the **eBook**, students have the chance to learn more about the specific skills involved in effective collaborative discussion, such as in this digital Grade 7 lesson.

Participating in Collaborative Discussions

There's power in putting your heads together.

COMMON CORE 6-8CC7SL.1.1

Interactive Lessons

1. Introduction
2. Preparing for Discussion
3. Establishing and Following Procedure
4. Speaking Constructively
5. Listening and Responding
6. Wrapping Up Your Discussion

Connecting Reading and Writing in Collections

Connections between reading and writing are made throughout the **Collections** program.

Both the **Student Edition** and the **Close Reader** include text-dependent questions that require students to re-enter the text and cite evidence to support their claims.

As students read, they are prompted to cite text evidence to support their responses, encouraging them to summarize, analyze, infer, and think critically about the text.

| Examples of Citing Text Evidence in Collections | |
|--|--|
| Grade 6 | See pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 |
| Grade 7 | See pages 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| Grade 8 | See pages 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28 |
| Grade 9 | See pages 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| Grade 10 | See pages 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 27, 29, 30 |
| Grade 11 | See pages 5, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 33, 39, 40 |
| Grade 12 | See pages 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31 |

As shown in the **Integrated Program Contents** page, the **Student Edition**, along with the **Close Reader**, explores each collection topic. Each collection is wrapped up by the **Collection Performance Tasks**, which offer the chance for students to integrate what they have learned in their varied readings into a performance—which might result in an **Opinion Essay**, an **Expository Essay**, a **Memoir**, a **Poetry Analysis**, or some other Common Core aligned performance. With these cumulative tasks, students draw on their reading and analysis of the collection’s selections, as well as on additional research.

Strand 2: Purposes for Writing

Writing well is not just an option for young people—it is a necessity. Along with reading comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy.

Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 3

Writing is a highly complex cognitive ability which comprises a range of different cognitive processes. It includes low-level processes focused on handwriting and spelling and higher level processes associated with determining and structuring content in such a way as to meet the demands of the reader. Unlike speech, writing is late-developing and requires protracted instruction and practice.

Torrance & Fidalgo, 2013, p. 338

Defining the Strand

Along with teaching students to effectively comprehend complex texts and gain familiarity with a rich body of literary and informational texts, developing students' writing abilities is another important goal of the English classroom. The ability to write well is crucial for students' social, academic, and professional advancement, and is essential for 21st-century learning and success in today's economy (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). As Graham and Perin concluded after large-scale study into research on effective writing instruction, helping students "to write clearly, logically, and coherently about ideas, knowledge, and views will expand their access to higher education, give them an edge for advancement in the workforce, and increase the likelihood that they will actively participate as citizens of a literate society" (p. 28).

How best can teachers support students in developing their writing skills? One element in effective writing instruction is the inclusion of varied genres. The National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) refers to varied communicative purposes. The Common Core State Standards focus on producing varied text types and purposes. Whatever these different writing products and forms are called, to be prepared for college and work students need to be exposed to multiple genres in their reading and expected to produce varied genres in their writing. Students must be able to inform and persuade, and narrate events. Another element of effective writing instruction is writing to sources. Students need practice using evidence, and writing to sources, so that their writing is grounded in evidence. Finally, students must be taught to use standard English in the context of writing instruction, and be given opportunities for practice.

Throughout the **Collections** program, students write in varied genres and develop their skills as writers. The program integrates reading and writing, placing an emphasis on the development of effective skills in both.

Research that Guided the Development of the *Collections* Program

A Multi-Genre Approach

As students learn to write, and continue to write increasingly complex texts, they move from writing simple narratives and explanations to writing more in-depth informative essays and arguments. How do they develop skills for writing in these genres, with their associated forms and structures?

“Genre knowledge develops, in part, from experience with text structures. . . .” (De La Paz & McCutchen, 2011, p. 45) so exposing students to varied genres is important. Research findings suggest that re-reading a book supports students’ use of similar genre features in their own writing (for example, see Pappas, 1991), and that greater exposure to reading from a specific genre will lead to greater ability with those elements of writing (Duke & Kays, 1998 in Donovan & Smolkin, 2006).

Students need to have experience with the kinds of purposes for which they will write in typical workplace, school, and real-life situations. One way of thinking about these different genres and purposes is to look at the NAEP framework. In the 2011 NAEP writing framework, students are assessed on three communicative purposes:

- **To persuade**, in order to change the reader’s point of view or affect the reader’s action
- **To explain**, in order to expand the reader’s understanding
- **To convey experience** (real or imagined), in order to communicate individual and imagined experience to others (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012b, p. 4)

Because younger children are naturally exposed to more narratives, they have an awareness of narrative structures first, which is then typically followed by the development of expository genre knowledge and finally control over the argumentative text structure (De La Paz & McCutchen, 2011). In order to match these progressive “levels of student development and instructional focus” (Salahu-Din, Persky & Miller, 2008, p. 5), the twelfth-grade NAEP writing assessment includes a greater proportion of persuasive and explanatory writing tasks.

| Distribution of Writing Tasks, by Grade and Communicative Purpose Writing Framework for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| Communicative Purpose | Grade 8 | Grade 12 |
| To persuade | 35 | 40 |
| To explain | 35 | 40 |
| To convey experience | 30 | 20 |

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2012b, p. 5)

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The Common Core State Standards also emphasize the need for students to develop experience writing a range of text types and purposes.

For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college- and career-ready writers, students...need to know how to combine elements of different kinds of writing—for example, to use narrative strategies within argument and explanation within narrative—to produce complex and nuanced writing (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 41).

To this end, the standards specify expectations for arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. “Argument literacy” specifically has been shown to be essential to success in higher education (ACT, 2009). Research suggests that instruction and practice in writing arguments develops students’ critical thinking skills (Riley & Reedy, 2005).

As they gain experience with varied genres, students benefit from ongoing instruction. In *Writing Next*, Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the impact of specific types of writing instruction. Their findings led them to recommend the use of models of varied genres. “The study of models provides adolescents with good models for each type of writing that is the focus of instruction” (p. 20). By analyzing these models, students can identify—and mirror in their own writing—the essential elements, organizing structures, and forms.

In particular, data suggest that students struggle with argument writing. “Persuasive writing is a challenging form of communication even for typically developing writers” and requires “sophisticated uses of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics . . .” (Nippold, Ward-Lonergan & Fanning, 2005, p 126, 125). For those essays written to influence or persuade, only 26% of twelfth-graders performed at the skillful level or above, meaning that they “wrote well-organized essays in which they took clear positions and supported those positions in much of the response” (p. 45). Ferretti, Andrews-Weckerly, and Lewis (2007) discuss this lack of skill in students’ capacities to communicate about controversial issues, consider alternative viewpoints, and develop supporting arguments. To counter these challenges, Ferretti and colleagues recommend an approach to teaching arguments which both takes into account the importance of context and content for argumentation and provides critical standards and questions to help guide students in structuring their arguments.

An earlier section of this report presented research on the benefits of explicitly teaching varied genre characteristics for improving students’ reading comprehension and recall. Similarly, engaging in a reading study in which students are taught, and practice, a strategy focusing on analyzing the text structure has been shown to positively affect students’ writing. In their 1984 study, Taylor and Beach

compared the performance of an experimental group (who received instruction and practice in analyzing text structure) with the performance of a conventional group (who answered and discussed questions after reading) and a control group (who received no special instruction). Their findings? Students who examined text structure produced higher-quality expository writing than students in the other groups. Similarly, Crowhurst (1991) looked at how instruction in persuasive writing and reading persuasive texts would improve students' writing of persuasive texts. To do so, she compared four treatment groups—one group was taught a model for persuasive writing and given practice writing, the second was taught the model and given persuasive texts for reading, the third read novels and wrote book reports and received a single lesson on the model, and the fourth (the control group) read novels and wrote book reports without receiving any instruction on the model. The results indicated support for the positive effect of reading on writing: students who read persuasive texts outperformed others on the organization of their compositions, their elaborations of support, and their conclusions. These studies, and others like them, support the notion that students learn to write effectively in part based on their exposure to and analysis of high-quality, genre-specific texts.

Finally, teaching students specific strategies and structures in writing across multiple genres supports their skill for producing writing in varied genres (see Graham, 2006).

Writing to Sources

An earlier section of this report discussed the connections between reading and writing in terms of the processes involved and the development of skills. Research shows that students who write about texts they have read show more evidence of critical thinking and improved composition (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

In addition, reading and writing are connected because when students write, they write about something—an experience, research findings, a piece of information or, increasingly as they progress across grade levels, a text. In the middle- and high-school grades, students take the information they have gained from doing their own scholarly reading of texts, and employ that information towards the production of their own informational or argumentative text. Teachers assign writing tasks in the context of a text about which students must write with knowledge, analysis, and cited references. As Segev-Miller (2004) describes it, this process of writing from sources is a complex and cognitively demanding activity, in which students must “select, organize, and connect content from source texts as they compose their own new text” (p. 5).

In their study on students composing from sources, Spivey and King (1989) examined students in Grades 6, 8, and 10 as they wrote informational reports from source texts. They found that “general reading ability and success at synthesizing overlap to a great extent” (p. 7) and that students' success at the task was closely related to their comprehension and understanding of text structures.

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The Common Core puts a great emphasis on students writing to sources. According to the authors of the Common Core:

While the link between comprehension and knowledge in science and history texts is clear, the same principle applies to all reading. The criteria make plain that developing students' prowess at drawing knowledge from the text itself is the point of reading; reading well means gaining the maximum insight or knowledge possible from each source. Student knowledge drawn from the text is demonstrated when the student uses evidence from the text to support a claim about the text. Hence evidence and knowledge link directly to the text (Coleman & Pimental, 2012, p. 1).

. . . The Common Core State Standards require students to become more adept at drawing evidence from the text and explaining that evidence orally and in writing (p. 7).

. . . The Common Core State Standards require students not only to show that they can analyze and synthesize sources but also present careful analysis, well-defended claims, and clear information through their writing (p. 11).

For their Carnegie report entitled *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*, Graham and Hebert (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of existing research on the relationship between writing and reading and concluded that teachers should "have students write about the texts they read." Research support for this is clear. "Students' comprehension of science, social studies, and language arts texts is improved when they write about what they read, specifically when they respond to a text in writing. . . .write summaries of a text, write notes about a text, [and] answer questions about a text in writing or create and answer written questions about a text" (p. 5).

In *Writing Next*, Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the impact of specific types of writing instruction which resulted in the identification of eleven elements of effective writing instruction for adolescents. Among their findings? Adolescents benefit from "opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing" and from the use of "writing as a tool for learning content material" (p. 5).

In looking at how students respond to texts and which ways are more effective in producing real learning, Langer and Applebee (1987) concluded that there is greater value when students respond in extended ways to texts, and when they engage in analysis, interpretation, or personalization. In her study which looked at how college students wrote from sources, Kennedy (1985) found that more fluent readers engaged in more re-reading, note taking, and planning prior to writing than did less-fluent readers—who planned mostly at the sentence level and referred back to the text during writing. Her research suggests that less-fluent students can benefit from instruction in how to think about and extract information from texts. Segev-Miller's 2004 study findings suggest that students can be

taught to more effectively write from sources. “. . . According to the subjects’ self-assessments, explicit instruction of the performance of the discourse synthesis task had a significant effect both on their processes and on their products” (p. 25).

Finally, the ability to write to sources and support ideas with specific textual evidence is key in the preparation of effective arguments. Evidence is essential to an argument, which involves a claim, based on evidence, with a warrant that connects the evidence to the claim, backing that supports the warrant, and rebuttals that address counterarguments and competing claims (Hillocks, 2010a; Toulmin, Rieke & Janik, 1979).

Grammar and Language Skills

Grammar is the structure of language and the rules for making meaning in a language. Students who understand grammar understand the varied ways that they can combine words to make meaningful, effective sentences. Grammar is important. When they follow conventions and rules of language and mechanics, writers “ensure understanding and avoid distractions . . . allowing the reader to focus on the writer’s thoughts and ideas” (ACT, 2007, p 46, 47).

Grammar instruction is most beneficial and effective when it is presented in the context of writing assignments and activities that are meaningful for students (Fearn & Farnan, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; Polette, 2008; Weaver, 1997). Students who are taught grammar when working on a specific piece of writing show a greater application than those students taught grammar as a separate activity (Calkins, 1994; Spandel, 2001).

In their meta-analysis looking at the elements of effective writing instruction, Graham and Perin (2007) found sentence combining to be an effective way of enhancing the quality and complexity of students’ writing. This type of instruction “involves teaching students to construct more complex and sophisticated sentences through exercises in which two or more basic sentences are combined into a single sentence” (p. 18). The sentence-combining approach has been shown to be effective with elementary school students (Saddler & Graham, 2005), English language learners (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer & Rivera, 2006b), and across student populations (see Hillocks’ 1986 meta-analysis and the significant, homogenous effect size found for sentence combining).

Several studies have found that grammar instruction is less effective in improving writing than other writing interventions (see, for example, Graham, McKeown, Kiuvara & Harris, 2012). Graham and Perin (2007) found that explicit and systematic instruction in parts of speech and sentence structure did not improve the quality of students’ writing. Fearn and Farnan (2007), however, found that grammar instruction can positively impact students’ writing “if the grammar is functional and used for writing purposes” (p. 63). When they compared the impact of grammar instruction *in* writing with grammar instruction *for* writing, they found that “students in the treatment groups demonstrated enhanced writing performance” (p. 72).

A Research-Based Approach

In addition to the effectiveness for all students of teaching grammar both in context and through applied strategies such as sentence combining, research also suggests that some explicit grammar instruction can be particularly effective for language learners. While grammar correction seems to be ineffective in improving ELL's writing as it does native speakers', grammar is an important understructure for competent writing. As a result, sentence building and combining are recommended strategies, according to Sjolie (2006). In addition, grammar study seems to improve students' reading comprehension, particularly among English language learners (Achugar, Schleppegrell & Oteiza, 2007).

From Research to Practice

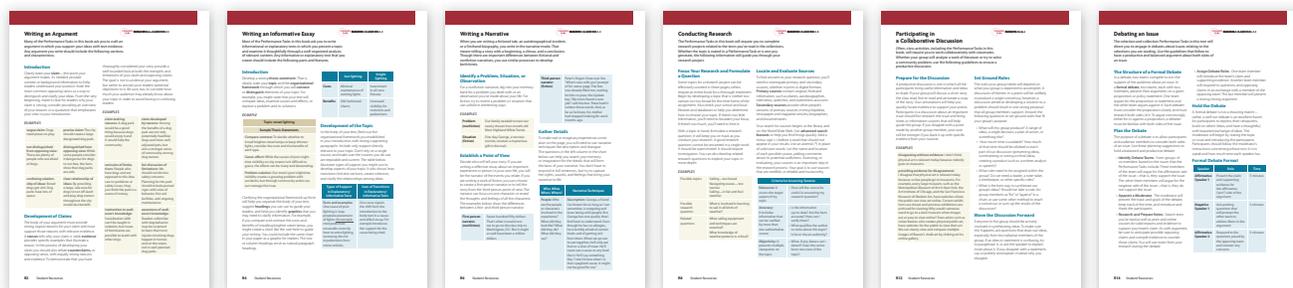
A Multi-Genre Approach in Collections

In **Collections**, students learn to write for varied purposes and in varied writing forms.

Every unit includes lessons, opportunities to **Teach and Practice**, and ideas for how to **Assess** students. **Selection and Collection Performance Tasks** include varied genres and performances, such as:

- Write a Short Story
- Present an Oral Commentary
- Write an Opinion Essay
- Write an Expository Essay
- Write a Memoir
- Write a Poetry Analysis
- Give a Persuasive Speech
- Create a Multimedia Presentation
- Write a Personal Essay

The **Student Resources** section at the end of each print edition includes tools and resources for students to use when writing in varied genres, such as in the Grade 7 **Performance Task Reference Guide**, which includes resources for **Writing an Argument**, **Writing an Informative Essay**, **Writing a Narrative**, **Conducting Research**, **Participating in a Collaborative Discussion**, and **Debating an Issue**.



In addition, twelve **Digital Collections** provide thorough coverage of all Writing and Speaking and Listening Common Core State Standards.

Available in the **eBook**, the **Interactive Lessons** teach students the communication skills they need for successfully:

- Writing Arguments
- Giving a Presentation
- Writing Informative Texts
- Using Textual Evidence
- Preparing a Speech
- Writing an Analytical Essay
- Choosing Relevant Evidence
- Writing Narratives
- Writing as a Process
- Producing and Publishing with Technology
- Conducting Research
- Analyzing and Evaluating Presentations
- Giving a Presentation
- Using Media in a Presentation

Although primarily intended for individual student use, the **Interactive Lessons** also offer opportunities for whole-class and small-group instruction and practice. Each writing-focused **Interactive Lesson** also ends with a writing task for students.

Writing to Sources in Collections

Students gain skill and practice in using textual evidence to support their ideas in writing through the **Collections** program. The program includes texts that are rich and complex enough to support the kinds of evidence-based analysis expected by students.

Both the **Student Edition** and the **Close Reader** include text-dependent questions that require students to re-enter the text and cite evidence to support their claims.

Regular program features support students in close reading and evidence tracking, including the **Strategies for Annotation** feature which supports students in analyzing and evaluating texts.

A Research-Based Approach

Among many others, specific **Strategies for Annotation** include:

| Examples of Strategies for Annotation in Collections | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 6, Collection 1 | Grade 7, Collection 1 | Grade 8, Collection 1 | Grade 9, Collection 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Language (p. 6) Describe Stories: Character and Setting (p. 10) Using Context Clues (p. 15) Describe Stories: Plot and Suspense (p. 25) Greek Roots (p. 35) Analyze Structure (p. 39) Cite Evidence (p. 47) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Inferences (p. 7) Analyze Story Elements: Plot and Setting (p. 12) Latin Roots (p. 17) Analyze Structure (pp. 21, 23, 26,) Trace and Evaluate an Argument (p. 27) Determine Theme (p. 34) Analyze Story Elements: Myth (p. 35) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Stories: Character (p. 15, 27) Analyze Language (p. 20) Using Context Clues (p. 29) Determine Central Idea and Details (p. 37) Using a Glossary (p. 39) Cite Evidence (p. 45) Analyze Nonfiction Elements (p. 50) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delineate and Evaluate an Argument (p. 7) Patterns of Word Change (p. 9) Analyze Author's Choices: Text Structure (p. 17) Determine Central Idea (p. 24) Denotation and Connotation (p. 26) Analyze Seminal U.S. Documents (p. 29) |
| Grade 10, Collection 1 | Grade 11, Collection 1 | Grade 12, Collection 1 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Character: Motivations (p. 9) Using Context Clues (p. 11) Analyze Impact of Word Choice: Compare Tone (p. 21) Words from Latin (p. 23) Analyze Author's Choices: Tension and Surprise (p. 28, 35) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine Central Ideas (p. 19) Archaic Vocabulary (p. 21) Determine the Meaning of Words and Phrases (p. 32) Specialized Vocabulary (p. 34) Analyze Language (p. 69) Analyze Structure (p. 79) Determine Themes (p. 84) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Inferences: Draw Conclusions (p. 6) Analyze Word Choice (p. 12) Determine Central Ideas (p. 15) Context Clues (p. 17) Analyze Structure: Argument (p. 24, 27) Prefixes with Multiple Meanings (p. 29) | |

Digital tools support students' annotations, allowing them to annotate critical passages for discussion and writing, by using **highlighting**, **underlining**, and **notes**. Students who take notes while reading their books digitally can store their annotations and notes using the **myNotebook** feature—to save them for use in **Performance Tasks**. In **myWriteSmart**, students can use the annotations they have gathered and tools for writing and collaboration to complete writing tasks.

In addition, in the **eBook**, the **Interactive Lessons** teach students specific skills needed to write to sources, such as:

Conducting Research

1. Introduction
2. Starting Your Research
3. Types of Sources
4. Using the Library for Research
5. Conducting Field Research
6. Using the Internet for Research
7. Taking Notes
8. Refocusing Your Inquiry

Using Textual Evidence

1. Introduction
2. Synthesizing Information
3. Writing an Outline
4. Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting
5. Attribution

Grammar and Language Skills in Collections

Developing students' grammar and language skills in the meaningful context of their own writing is a focus of the **Collections** program. The program also integrates instruction on **Language and Style** issues throughout each collection.

After reading, students complete a **Language and Style** or **Language Conventions** activity, on such topics as **Sentence Structure, Commas and Coordinate Adjectives**, or **Subordinate Clauses**, among others. Lesson content is determined by style and conventions found in the selections students are reading.

A Research-Based Approach

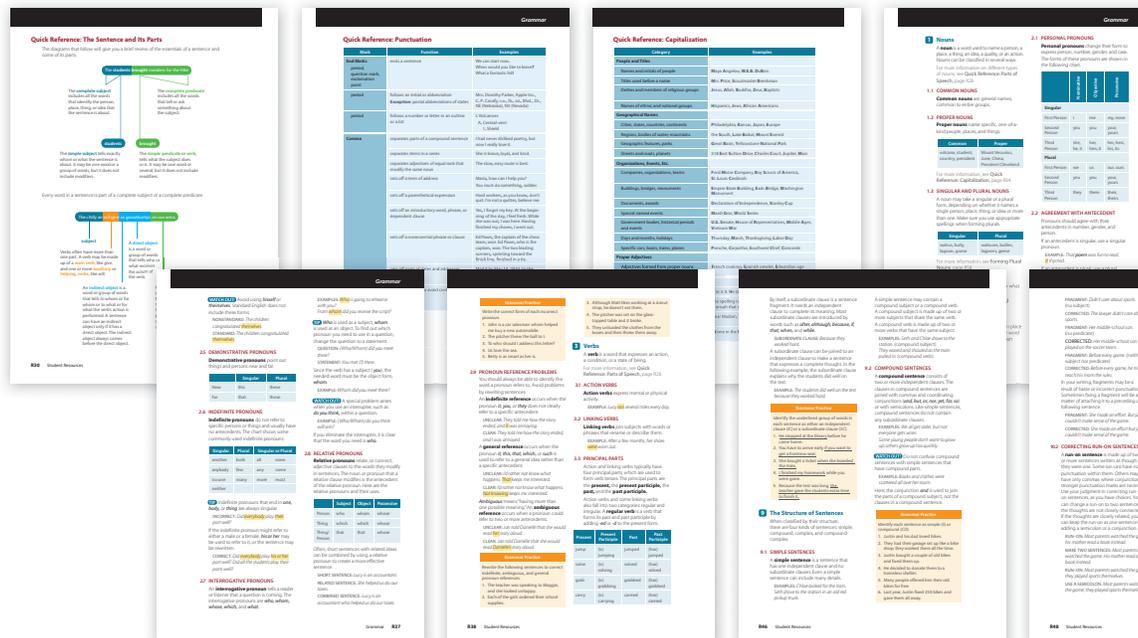
In addition, when students have questions, they can turn to **Student Resources** for answers. This section includes information about grammar, usage, and mechanics, including:

Quick Reference

- Parts of Speech
- The Sentence and Its Parts
- Punctuation
- Capitalization

Grammar Handbook

- Nouns
- Pronouns
- Verbs
- Modifiers
- The Sentence and Its Parts
- Phrases
- Verbals and Verbal Phrases
- Clauses
- The Structure of Sentences
- Subject-Verb Agreement



Strand 3: Teaching to Meet the Needs of All Students

By emphasizing the required achievements, the Standards leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed.

Thus, the Standards do not mandate such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning. Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards.

NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 4

. . . there are any number of processes or techniques that teachers can apply with the assurance that their pedagogical decisions come with the backing of empirical evidence that such processes and techniques work to the betterment of learning and achievement.

...these effective processes and techniques can be based on acts and materials that already populate learning environments—from verbal exchanges to well-chosen examples and from shared learning to self-explanations. Further, these evidence-based processes and techniques embrace the hypermedia and multimedia world in which we all live and learn. . . .

Alexander & Mayer, 2011, p. 248

Defining the Strand

A growing body of research shows that effective teachers make meaningful differences in students' lives. The job of teachers is important. As Hougen and Smartt (2012) put it, "Our students do not have time to waste. You should feel a sense of urgency when you are teaching, making the best use of every minute" (p. 6).

How do the most effective teachers use their instructional time? One way is by using effective instructional techniques to support all students in learning. Studies show that classroom teachers' instructional strategies have a direct impact on students' reading proficiency (Pennington Whitaker, Gambrell & Morrow, 2004). Teachers can meet individual student needs through instructional supports—such as scaffolding or differentiating instruction— to better align tasks, expectations, and pacing to students' current level.

Groups of students, including struggling readers and English language learners, have specific needs. When teachers are aware of these needs, and tailor instruction accordingly, they better help these students reach higher levels of achievement.

The **Collections** program supports teachers and meets the needs of *all* students by providing specific suggestions for scaffolding and differentiation, and for meeting the needs of specific populations such as struggling readers and English language learners.

Research that Guided the Development of the *Collections* Program

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is an instructional technique that involves providing support to students as they learn and reach competence, and gradually decreasing the amount of support provided until students are able to work independently. According to Vygotsky, scaffolding can be defined as the “role of teachers and others in supporting the learner’s development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level” (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). Providing embedded scaffolds is an essential part of transitioning students to independence and “has repeatedly been identified as one of the most effective instructional techniques available” (Graves & Avery, 1997, p. 138). Numerous studies have shown that scaffolding can lead to improved student outcomes—including enhanced inquiry and higher achievement (White & Kim, 2008; Simons & Klein, 2007; Fretz, Wu, Zhang, Davis, Krajcik & Soloway, 2002; Rosenshine & Meister, 1992) and improved reading comprehension (Clark & Graves, 2008; Lutz, Guthrie & Davis, 2006).

Scaffolding students’ reading can “make the difference between a frustrating reading experience and one that is meaningful to students” (Graves & Avery, 1997, p. 138). White and Kim (2008) found that merely giving students books to read had no positive effects; however, with scaffolding in the form of oral reading practice and comprehension strategies instruction, students demonstrated increased achievement. In their study of an instructional model for writing (planning, using strategies, and focusing on text structures), De La Paz and Graham (2002) supported students with scaffolding in the form of cue card reminders. Students in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group, providing longer, more complete, and better-written texts.

Instruction that scaffolds students’ learning includes a logical structure; carefully sequenced models and examples that reveal essential characteristics; progression from easier to more difficult content and from easier to more difficult tasks; additional information/elaboration as needed; peer-mediated instruction; and materials that guide students, such as key words, think sheets, and graphic organizers (Hillocks, 1993). The final element of scaffolding is independent work—scaffolding is removed and students apply what they have learned to new situations.

Scaffolding encompasses many different instructional strategies. Varying scaffolds can be used; what is important is that they consistently provide adequate support as needed. Knowledgeable adults can act as scaffolds in supporting young writers in developing their skills (Santrock, 1996). Research (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008; Stone, 1998) suggests that scaffolds such as the following will support student independence: activating prior knowledge; reviewing previously learned material, modeling and thinking aloud, providing models and different representations, questioning, using cues or tools, and providing useful feedback.

Differentiation

Differentiated instruction rests on the assumption that students differ and that these differences are important to how students will best learn. Teachers who can identify and build on individual student's strengths and weaknesses will ensure that all students can learn (Tomlinson, 2006).

A typical classroom includes students with widely different backgrounds, experiences, skills, and instructional needs (Darling-Hammond, Wise & Klein, 1995). To meet the needs of all students, effective teachers match learning activities to student readiness, interests, and learning preferences (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Stronge, 2002). To meet the varied needs of each student, teachers can differentiate multiple elements of the curriculum, including content, process, and/or products (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). "Differentiation seems a common-sense approach to addressing the needs of a wide variety of learners, promoting equity and excellence and focusing on best-practice instruction in mixed ability classrooms. This makes more sense than the timeworn method of aiming for students in the middle and hoping for the best for those on the upper and lower extremes" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 5).

Students learn in different ways; effective instruction recognizes these modes of learning and incorporates multiple modes. When instruction is differentiated to match students' modes of learning and learning preferences, their achievement increases (Brimijoin, 2001; Cotton, 1995; Dunn, Beaudry & Klavas, 1989; Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2000; Kellough & Kellough, 2003; Sternberg, 1997; Tieso, 2002). Effective differentiation can decrease the achievement gaps in classrooms, as shown in Beecher and Sweeny's 2008 study in which achievement gains were seen across all groups—and achievement gaps reduced—when differentiation was applied in math, reading, and writing instruction. In a multi-year study in elementary and high school, Tomlinson, Brimijoin, and Narvaez (2008) found that differentiated instruction led to lasting gains in achievement for students across student groups, grade levels, and subject areas.

In the classroom, teachers can differentiate instruction in multiple ways. Teachers can adjust the content of the curriculum (what students are learning), they can differentiate the process of how students learn (providing support for the strategies students use to make sense of content), and they can adjust the expected products or demonstrations of learning (assessment) (Tomlinson, 2001). Specific strategies have been proven effective for meeting diverse learners' needs:

- using technology (Kalea, 2007)
- varying the presentation of text and ideas, including orally, in writing, and with visuals
- presenting content instruction in smaller chunks
- providing ample time for discussion
- using and teaching academic English

(Tomlinson, 2004; Klingner & Vaughn, 2004)

Gardner's seminal work (1993) emphasized the need to access and integrate multiple modes to meet students' learning styles and varied intelligences. *Learning style* is used to describe the ways that students best focus on learning and process new information. Because students' preferred learning styles vary, "the same instructional environment, methods, and resources will be effective for some learners and ineffective for others" (Burke & Dunn, 1998, p. 104). Aligning classroom conditions to students' preferred learning style can improve learning (Grigorenko, 1997). By supporting linguistic and nonlinguistic (visual, sensory, etc.) means of acquiring information, teachers support increased reflection and recall, and maximize learning (Kapusnik & Hauslein, 2001; Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001).

Meeting the Needs of Struggling Readers

There is help for students who struggle. Edmonds and colleagues (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of thirteen intervention studies with struggling readers in Grades 6–12 and found that students in treatment conditions showed meaningful increases in their comprehension abilities over students in control groups. For at-risk students, Cunningham and Allington (2007) conclude that "consistently high-quality classroom instruction" has an "enormous impact."

How can teachers best help these students and support them in learning? Students who struggle in the classroom need the same high-quality instruction that all students need, supplemented with intensive instruction on specific skills (Au, 2002). Often, struggling learners are viewed as needing slowed-down instruction. As Allington and Walmsley (1995) point out, however, slowing down instruction ensures that delayed readers will remain behind their peers.

As Common Core State Standards' authors David Coleman and Susan Pimentel (2012) warn:

Far too often, students who have fallen behind are only given less complex texts rather than the support they need to read texts at the appropriate level of complexity. Complex text is a rich repository of ideas, information, and experience which all readers should learn how to access, although some students will need more scaffolding to do so . . .

Curriculum materials should provide extensive opportunities for all students in a classroom to engage with complex text, although students whose reading ability is developing at a slower rate also will need supplementary opportunities to read text they can comprehend successfully without extensive supports (p. 3).

What does high-quality instruction for struggling readers include? From their review of the research literature, Almasi and Palmer (2013) concluded that "reading comprehension programs are most successful when they teach children to be active, engaged readers who are able to monitor their comprehension and self-regulate their reading" (p. 344). Authentic purposes for reading and writing, reading and writing across the curriculum, varied literacy experiences, graphic organizers, and guided

reading and writing have all been shown effective for struggling readers (Cunningham & Allington, 2007). Explicit vocabulary instruction also supports struggling readers in making larger and faster literacy gains (Sedita, 2005).

Strategy instruction is particularly effective with struggling students (Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Pressley, Gaskins & Fingeret, 2006). “The research on comprehension strategy instruction provides powerful evidence that most struggling readers (and many not-so-struggling readers) benefit enormously when we can construct lessons that help make the comprehension processes visible” (Allington, 2001, p. 98). In their meta-analysis, Edmonds and colleagues (2009) found that interventions which taught students multiple comprehension strategies were most effective for struggling readers. In a study of comprehension strategy instruction with students with reading difficulties in Grades 6–11, Anderson (1992) found multiple benefits to strategy instruction—including greater comprehension gains, increased motivation, and greater willingness to engage with classmates in discussion. Additionally, Graham (2006) found that writing strategy instruction particularly benefited lower performers across the studies included in his meta-analysis.

According to Collins (1998), specific textual aids (such as color coding, graphics, and discreet chunks of text) support struggling students, as do specific instructional decisions (such as clearly defining tasks, thoughtfully sequencing tasks, integrating skills into process learning, and providing opportunities to reflect).

Technology, too, has been shown to be effective with struggling students. Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, and Jones (2010) found that online learning approaches were effective across types of learners—from lower-achieving students to above average. One reason for this may be because multimedia learning environments are able to reach students who learn in different ways—visual learners, auditory learners, and kinesthetic learners. Another reason may be the power of technology to embed scaffolds at the point of use.

Finally, increasing motivation for struggling students is critical. They are often negatively affected “by the grading and grouping practices prevalent in middle and high schools” (National Institute for Literacy, 2007, p. 34). To increase the motivation and self-efficacy of these students, teachers can set clear goals and expectations for student performance (Wigfield, 2004) and provide opportunities for students to interact and discuss the content being learned (Strickland & Alvermann, 2004; Wigfield, 2004).

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners

English language learners (ELLs) are one of the fastest-growing groups of students in the United States (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer & Rivera, 2006b); therefore, it is imperative that teachers meet the specific needs of this population.

A Research-Based Approach

English language learners, like all students, benefit from effective instruction. Generally speaking, the principles of sound instruction for native English speakers hold true for ELLs (Fitzgerald, 1995a). English language learners, however, have some specific needs that should influence instructional decision making.

One primary need of ELLs is to master academic language. While the development of conversational English may take place naturally through social interactions, explicit instruction in academic language may be necessary for students to gain the vocabulary needed to succeed in school (Fitzgerald, 1995b). Academic vocabulary is like a “third” language that takes students much more time to master than social English (DeLuca, 2010). According to Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, and Rivera (2006b), “mastery of academic language is arguably the single most important determinant of academic success for individual students” (p. 5).

His synthesis of ELL research led Fitzgerald (1995b) to conclude that other specific supports for ELLs include explicit instruction on informational text structures to facilitate content-area learning, and instruction focused on helping students to develop metacognitive strategies.

Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, and Rivera (2006b) conducted a synthesis of research on the specific needs of English language learners and concluded that effective instruction for ELLs must include these six elements:

1. Content-area teachers must address ELLs’ literacy needs (through explicit strategy instruction and meaningful literacy activities).
2. Teachers must provide instruction in academic language (through direct, varied, frequent, and systematic instruction in words and word-learning strategies).
3. Comprehension strategy instruction should be made explicit (through strategies instruction, teacher modeling, and scaffolded practice opportunities).
4. ELLs must receive intensive academic writing instruction (through meaningful writing assignments with opportunities to see models and receive feedback).
5. Teachers should diagnose students’ areas for growth and their strengths, and monitor progress through ongoing assessments.
6. Teachers should provide targeted reading skill instruction for those ELLs with specific needs.

Finally, technology as a mode of delivery for instruction for ELLs can have particular benefits. Silver and Repa (1993) conducted a thirteen-week study of sixty-six urban ELL students. Using a pre/post study design, researchers found that students who wrote using a word processor significantly outperformed pen-and-paper control group students on the quality of their writing.

From Research to Practice

Scaffolding in Collections

To help all students gain mastery and reach the stage of independence in their learning, the **Collections** program offers multiple and varied scaffolds as supports.

In **Collections**, instruction through print and online resources follows the same steps—**Teach and Practice, Assess, Extend,** and **Reteach**.

The program follows a **Topical Organization**. Each collection reflects an engaging topic that connects selections for discussion and analysis, so students can explore several dimensions of the topic—building knowledge through reading. The **Close Reader** provides selections related to the collection topic for additional practice and application of close reading skills and annotation strategies.

Available in the **eBook**, the **Collections Interactive Lessons** teach students using an approach that guides them step-by-step through the stages of effective communication, in areas such as:

- Writing Arguments
- Giving a Presentation
- Writing Informative Texts
- Using Textual Evidence
- Preparing a Speech
- Writing an Analytical Essay
- Choosing Relevant Evidence
- Writing Narratives
- Writing as a Process
- Producing and Publishing with Technology
- Conducting Research
- Analyzing and Evaluating Presentations
- Giving a Presentation
- Using Media in a Presentation

The program’s **Interactive Lessons** build skills in a purposeful way, such as in this example on **Writing Informative Texts**.

A Research-Based Approach

Similarly, the **Selection** and **Collection Performance Tasks** build students' skills with a specific task, helping to move them towards independence

The graphic features a row of lightbulbs on a green background. The central lightbulb is illuminated, while the others are unlit. The text 'Writing Informative Text' is prominently displayed at the top left, with the subtitle 'Shed light on complex ideas and topics.' below it. In the top right corner, there is a 'COMMON CORE' logo and the text 'GRADE 7, EDC077112.2, EDC077114.0'. Below the lightbulbs, a blue banner contains the text 'Interactive Lessons' followed by an 8-step list: 1. Introduction, 2. Developing a Topic, 3. Organizing Ideas, 4. Introductions and Conclusions, 5. Elaboration, 6. Using Graphics and Multimedia, 7. Precise Language and Vocabulary, and 8. Formal Style.

Writing Informative Text

Shed light on complex ideas and topics.

COMMON CORE GRADE 7, EDC077112.2, EDC077114.0

Interactive Lessons

1. Introduction
2. Developing a Topic
3. Organizing Ideas
4. Introductions and Conclusions
5. Elaboration
6. Using Graphics and Multimedia
7. Precise Language and Vocabulary
8. Formal Style

For example, in Grade 7, Collection 1 **Collections Performance Task A**, students write a short story. The text lists the elements of an effective short story and then guides students in the stages of writing:

Plan—planning and establishing story elements (listing plot events, deciding on a point of view, considering purpose and audience)

Produce—writing their short stories

Revise—reviewing and revising their drafts

Present—creating their finished copies

Differentiation in Collections

The **Collections** program offers teachers support in effectively differentiating instruction to meet the needs of each student in the classroom.

In **Collections**, teachers are provided with flexible options for instruction. The **Collections Overviews** suggest different starting points, as well as overviews of digital resources and instructional topics for selections, so that teachers can start at the point that their students need.

Instruction in **Collections** always follows the pattern of **Teach and Practice, Assess, Extend**, and **Reteach**. For students who need reteaching, or students who are ready for extension, the **Teacher eBook** offers specific suggestions for interactive lessons and tutorials that provide the additional support, or the additional challenge, that students need.

In the program’s **Teacher’s Edition**, teachers are given specific suggestions for **Student Instructional Support**, including:

- **Scaffolding for ELL Students**
- **When Students Struggle**
- **To Challenge Students**

Meeting the Needs of Struggling Readers in Collections

Teachers and their students who struggle with reading will find ample support throughout the **Collections** program.

Rather than slowing down instruction for struggling readers, who would then fall further behind, the **Collections** program offers additional supports for students to ensure that they gain the skills and strategies they need for success—and that they are supported in reading the same complex texts as their peers.

In **Collections**, the **Teacher’s Edition** offers specific suggestions for **When Students Struggle . . .** For examples of this feature, see the pages listed in the table.

| Examples of “When Students Struggle…” in the <i>Collections</i> Teacher’s Edition | |
|--|---|
| Grade 6 | For examples, see pages 7, 20, 29, 44, 53, 80, 102, 108 |
| Grade 7 | For examples, see pages 10, 22, 25, 40, 44, 66, 74, 80, 90 |
| Grade 8 | For examples, see pages 10, 22, 32, 42, 60, 73, 92, 114, 123 |
| Grade 9 | For examples, see pages 6, 14, 19, 23, 28, 35, 49, 58, 61, 63 |
| Grade 10 | For examples, see pages 8, 30, 37, 54, 58, 63, 74, 96, 100 |
| Grade 11 | For examples, see pages 4, 8, 12, 18, 25, 27, 30, 41, 46, 52 |
| Grade 12 | For examples, see pages 8, 14, 23, 26, 33, 39, 48, 54, 58, 65 |

In the **Collections** program, instructional strategies for helping students develop specific reading skills are offered. For example, in fluency, the **Collections** program makes connections between the Common Core State Standards Speaking and Listening expectations and Reading expectations in order to provide opportunities for students to build skills in fluency. When students working through the *Collection* program perform a read-aloud of a written piece, this helps them build fluency in reading complex texts.

A Research-Based Approach

In addition, in **Collections**, to support the needs of struggling writers, every collection in the teacher **eBook** includes specific support for less-proficient writers. **myWriteSmart** provides step-by-step scaffolding for struggling writers.

Interactive Graphic Organizers support students who can benefit from visual depictions of concepts.

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners in Collections

The **Collections** program offers supports and instructional suggestions throughout to ensure that teachers meet the needs of English language learners.

In addition, the design and content of the program supports ELLs through the focus on:

- Meaningful literacy experiences
- Instruction in academic language
- Explicit strategy instruction
- Intensive academic writing instruction, with models and feedback
- Ongoing assessments of progress
- Targeted reading skill instruction as needed

In **Collections**, the **Teacher’s Edition** offers specific suggestions for **Scaffolding for ELL Students**. For examples of this feature, see the pages listed in the table.

| Examples of “Scaffolding for ELL Students” in the Collections Teacher’s Edition | |
|--|--|
| Grade 6 | For examples, see pages 4, 17, 37, 42, 51, 59, 74, 79, 93, 99 |
| Grade 7 | For examples, see pages 4, 19, 32, 43, 64, 71, 77, 89, 93, 112 |
| Grade 8 | For examples, see pages 4, 31, 41, 54, 71, 75, 90, 99, 105, 121 |
| Grade 9 | For examples, see pages 4, 12, 21, 33, 48, 51, 56, 59, 62, 65 |
| Grade 10 | For examples, see pages 4, 7, 13, 16, 19, 25, 27, 32, 39, 52, 59 |
| Grade 11 | For examples, see pages 3, 6, 10, 14, 16, 26, 28, 29, 39, 42, 48 |
| Grade 12 | For examples, see pages 4, 13, 19, 21, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 47 |

In **Collections**, every collection in the teacher **eBook** includes specific support for English language learners.



Strand 4: Assessment

Effective instruction depends on sound instructional decision-making, which, in turn, depends on reliable data regarding students' strengths, weaknesses, and progress in learning content and developing literacy.

Afflerbach, 2004, in National Institute for Literacy, 2007

To reflect learning that matters, classroom summative measures, whether projects, portfolios—or tests—must be deeply grounded in subject-matter content and processes. And, to support deep learning, formative assessments must elicit student thinking and provide substantive insights rather than quantitative score reports.

Shepard, 2013, p. xix

Defining the Strand

Research shows that students' achievement improves when they receive frequent, consistent, and specific feedback on their progress—and when their teachers use assessment information to drive instruction. Research suggests that there is a powerful testing effect in which student performance is improved through frequent testing even without feedback (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006), perhaps because students study more and are more continuously engaged and motivated.

When regular feedback is included, ongoing assessment can be an even more powerful tool. Black and William (1998a) describe formative assessments as “encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (p 7, 8). Formative assessments provide teachers with the information on student progress and performance that they need to make daily instructional decisions. In an ideal system, assessments drive instruction by giving teachers clear information about where students are and what they need to meet the objectives and standards for learning. Research supports the effective use of assessment as a powerful instructional tool. The use of formative assessments—those ongoing, routine assessments designed to drive instruction—has been shown to have a significantly positive effect on learning (Black & William, 1998b; William, Lee, Harrison & Black, 2004).

For assessments to be effective, they do not need to be standardized, formal assessments. Informal assessments in the classroom provide much-needed information for the teacher. Varied assessment types help students demonstrate what they know and can do. Performance tasks help to assess higher-level skills in a real-world, authentic manner.

The **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections** program provides effective assessment resources to support teaching and learning. The program includes ongoing formative assessments, performance tasks, and varied assessment approaches designed to meet the needs of teachers practicing data-based instruction.

Research that Guided the Development of the *Collections* Program

Performance Tasks

Assessing complex skills and depth of knowledge requires a different form of assessment than a simple fill-in-the-blank, matching, or multiple-choice response. For students to show the full range of what they know and can do in terms of textual analysis, written responses, and so on, a performance assessment, in which students create an answer or product in response to a task or prompt, is needed.

Discussion among educational researchers about performance tasks for assessment is not new; this conversation has been going on for over twenty years. Marzano, Pickering, and McTighe (1993) suggested that performance assessments offer educators the opportunity to assess students across multiple dimensions for learning. Recently, Schneider, Egan, and Julian (2013) concluded that “the value of high quality performance tasks should not be diminished and should be encouraged as an important tool in CA [classroom assessment]” (p. 66).

In defining the elements of an effective student assessment system, Darling-Hammond (2010) said that such a system must “address the depth and breadth of standards as well as all areas of the curriculum, not just those that are easy to measure” (p. 1). This calls for performance on challenging tasks. Darling-Hammond (2010) identifies the characteristics of assessment systems in high-performing nations and finds that “they emphasize deep knowledge of core concepts within and across the disciplines, problem solving, collaboration, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking. As a large and increasing part of their examination systems, high-achieving nations use open-ended performance tasks . . . to give students opportunities to develop and demonstrate higher order thinking skills . . . ” (p. 3).

Performance tasks offer numerous benefits:

- They are authentic. Performance tasks allow teachers to engage students in real-world activities; they “emulate the context or conditions in which the intended knowledge or skills are actually applied” (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], and National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 1999, p. 137).
- They encourage retention. Researchers comparing students’ performance on assessments that include open-ended written responses with performance on multiple-choice tests found that students who wrote responses retained information better than those who responded to multiple-choice items (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006; McDaniel, Roediger & McDermott (2007).
- They serve as powerful models for learning. As educational researchers and practitioners have pointed out for years, if teachers are going to teach “to” a test, then that test should be worth teaching to (Myers & Pearson, 1996). To complete a performance assessment, students have to integrate multiple sources of information and actively apply them. Performance assessments “serve as exemplars of tasks that stimulate and enrich learning rather than just serve as indicators of learning” and they model “what is important to teach and . . . what is important to learn” (Lane, 2013, p. 313).

There appears to be a shift in the American assessment landscape towards greater focus on performance tasks. The SAT, which had been multiple-choice, added a writing section in March 2005, allowing students “to show another aspect of their knowledge, skills, and abilities . . .” (Shaw, Mattern & Patterson, 2011). Assessments based on the Common Core State Standards need to measure higher-level thinking skills through performance tasks and, “With large-scale tests soon aligned with the standards,” these assessments “will have significant influences on assessment done in the classroom” (McMillan, 2013, p. 10).

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment moves testing from the end of instruction into the middle, to guide teaching and learning as it occurs. “In order for assessment to play a more useful role in helping students learn it should be moved into the middle of the teaching and learning process instead of being postponed as only the end-point of instruction” (Shepard, 2000, p. 10). According to Graves, Juel, and Graves (2004), “The purpose of formative assessment is to guide instruction . . .” (p. 544). Teachers need a large amount of information in current time—as they deliver instruction—in order to determine how to continue at each point of each lesson. “As instruction is occurring, teachers need information to evaluate whether their teaching strategies are working. They also need information about the current understanding of individual students and groups of students so they can identify the most appropriate next steps for instruction. Moreover, students need feedback to monitor their own success in learning and to know how to improve” (Pellegrino, Chudowsky & Glaser, 2001, p 225, 266). As Wiggins points out, when formative assessment is used effectively, it becomes completely integrated with effective instruction. “The assessment process is often so unobtrusive to students and teaching, so seamless with teaching and learning, that it is visually indistinguishable from what takes place during good instruction” (Wiggins, 1998, p. 3).

The phrase *formative assessment* refers not to the type of items included or to the specific assessment instrument, but to its use in the classroom. As Christenson, Ysseldyke, and Thurlow (1989) point out, “More important than any specific approach, is the degree to which monitoring is systematically implemented and is both active and frequent.” Whatever the format of ongoing assessment, providing regular and detailed feedback is an important element. Feedback is essential so that students know how to monitor their own performance and know which steps to take to improve (Pellegrino, Chudowsky & Glaser, 2001).

Research suggests that the systematic use of formative assessment informs teaching—and increases achievement. Research shows that providing feedback to students on their performance is a highly effective tool for teachers to produce significant—and often substantial—gains in student learning and performance (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 1998b; Hattie, 1992). Tracking student progress and using a scoring scale, or guide, was found by Marzano and colleagues to result in an average gain of seventeen percentile points over the expected normal gain (Marzano Research Laboratory,

2009). Furthermore, effective use of formative approaches to assessment has been shown to be particularly helpful to lower-performing students. In a study by Fuchs and Fuchs (1986), formative assessment practices that were systematically implemented into classroom instruction were seen to significantly improve the performance of mildly learning disabled students. In their review of the body of research available on strategies most effective with students with mild learning disabilities, Christenson, Ysseldyke and Thurlow (1989) found that regular formative assessment was a common element across effective interventions. Because of the particular benefits for lower-performing students, use of formative assessments minimizes achievement gaps while raising overall achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998b).

Varied Assessment Approaches

In defining the critical elements, Darling-Hammond (2010) concluded that an effective student assessment system and one that aligns with the characteristics of high-achieving countries must “employ a variety of appropriate measures, instruments, and processes . . . [that] include multiple forms of assessment and incorporate formative as well as summative measures” (p. 1).

By using multiple and varied approaches to assessment, teachers can get the valid information needed to guide instructional decision making. “It is increasingly recognized that no one method can uncover the full range of students’ knowledge and that different students may need to show their knowledge in different ways. . . . Thus, in a standards-based system, multiple methods of assessment are used at different times to determine students’ levels of knowledge and skill. . . .” (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, 2000, p 22, 23). Using a combination of assessment approaches, including selected response and constructed response, also helps to counterbalance any interaction effects with gender or other student characteristics (Hogan, 2013).

Several reviews of instructional practices used by effective teachers have revealed that effective teachers use formal tools (such as quizzes or homework assignments) and informal tools (such as discussion and observation) to regularly monitor student learning and check student progress (Cotton, 1995; Christenson, Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1989). Questioning is one effective assessment approach regularly used informally by classroom teachers (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). Even for related processes—such as reading and writing—research suggests that a single assessment would not provide the same data as multiple assessments, which “provide unique and relevant information about students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities” (Shaw, Mattern & Patterson, 2011, p. 161). In addition, varied assessment approaches help to ensure that students are prepared for larger-scale assessments.

When planning varied assessment approaches, one consideration is determining how to ensure that the assessments get at the full range of expected knowledge and skills while reflecting the level of knowledge and skills needed for success. Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels offer one way to think about the rigor of student activities and the cognitive demand of assessments and performance tasks.

The four Depth of Knowledge levels describe the complexity of knowledge required by, for example, an assessment item or task. The four levels are:

1. Level 1 (recall) includes recalling information such as a fact, definition, term, or simple procedure.
2. Level 2 (skill/concept) includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond a habitual response. Key words . . . include *classify, organize, estimate, make observations, collect and display data, and compare* . . .
3. Level 3 (strategic thinking) includes reasoning, planning, using evidence, and a higher level of thinking.
4. Level 4 (extended thinking) includes complex reasoning, planning, developing, and thinking most likely over an extended period of time (Webb, 2007).

Asking questions at Level 1, in which students recall specific facts from a text, for example, is a worthwhile classroom activity to ensure that students understand the facts of a text. Teachers need to also ensure that they ask students to respond to tasks at higher levels so that they can assess the full range of student performance.

Finally, technology is an important tool in classroom assessment. Technology for assessment has many benefits. “Technology can also analyze and provide immediate feedback on performance, and can suggest modifications in instruction where necessary to improve student achievement” (CEO Forum on Education & Technology, 2001). Computer-based assessments can support teachers and students with frequent, consistent, timely, diplomatic, and evaluative feedback (Bischoff, 2000). In addition, technology is important in classroom assessment in order to prepare students for the next-generation assessments they will encounter as they continue through school. Two consortiums developing assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards, Smarter Balanced and PARCC, are developing next-generation assessments that will be computer based in order to provide information quickly so that educators can determine whether students are on a pathway to graduate from high school and are college and career ready (PARCC, 2012).

From Research to Practice

Performance Tasks in Collections

The **Performance Tasks** in the **Collections** program (both **Selection Tasks** and **Collection Tasks**) ensure that students have ample opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Each **Performance Task** in the program creates an opportunity for students to respond analytically and creatively to a complex text. In addition to briefer, selection-focused **Performance Tasks** included after each text selection, the program offers one or two **Collection Performance Tasks** for every collection. These are cumulative tasks in which students draw on their reading and analysis of the collection's selections, as well as additional research. The **Collection Performance Tasks** require students to develop a variety of writing and speaking products, working through the process of planning, producing, revising, and presenting for each task.

Performance Tasks include varied genres and performances, such as:

- Essay
- Opinion Essay
- Expository Essay
- Literary Analysis
- Poetry Analysis
- Personal Essay
- Memoir
- Short Story
- Oral Commentary
- Persuasive Speech
- Multimedia Presentation

With the **Collections Performance Tasks**, students have the opportunity to work together to refine their work. The **myWriteSmart** feature provides a collaborative tool to revise and edit **Performance Tasks** with peers and teachers.

Formative Assessment in Collections

The **Collections** program offers multiple formative assessment tools to support increased student learning and data-based instruction. Tools include both formal assessment instruments and more informal methods for regularly assessing student understanding and skill development.

As students work through each selection in **Collections**, they engage in a **Close Read** in which they respond to prompts, answer questions, and **Cite Text Evidence** to support their responses. Side-

notes in the **Teacher's Edition** offer suggestions for questions teachers can ask to see if students understand the **Critical Vocabulary**. Through these types of during-reading activities, teachers can check in regularly to monitor student comprehension and development.

Every unit in **Collections** provides useful tools and tasks for student assessment. Regular program assessment tools include:

- **Performance Tasks**
- **Lesson Assessments**
- **Selection Tests** (online)
- **Collection Tests** (online)

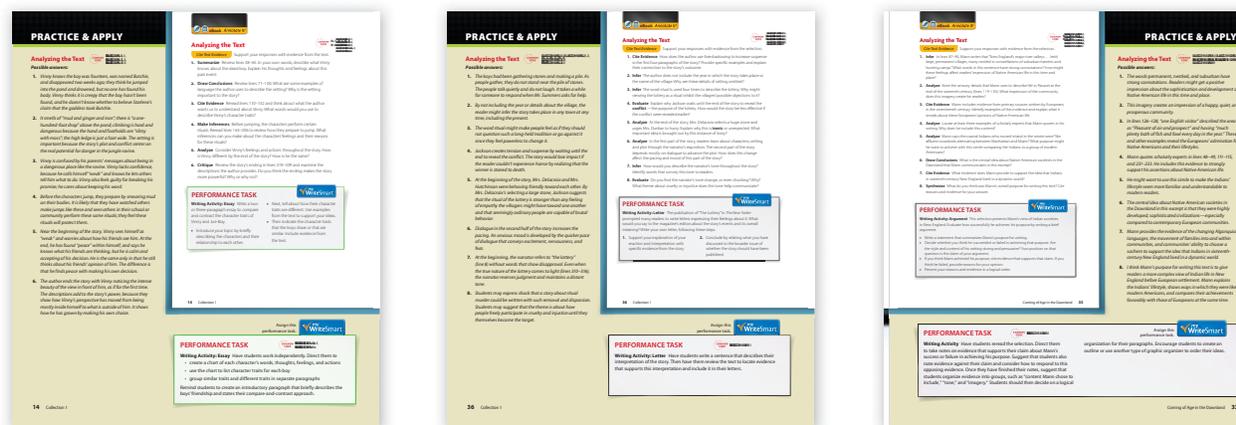
At the end of each selection, with the regular **Assess It!** feature, teachers can access the **Online Selection Test** and can download an editable **ExamView** bank of questions related to the selection. Teachers can assign and manage the formative assessment test that they create online. Additional digital tools support ongoing assessment in the classroom. The **Common Core Enrichment App** provides instant feedback for close reading practice with appeal for today's students.

Varied Assessment Approaches in Collections

A single approach to assessment cannot provide a true picture of student performance. The **Collections** program offers varied approaches to assessment, ensuring that students can show what they know and teachers can accurately assess student performance and plan instruction accordingly.

Varied assessments ensure that teachers get information about how students are performing at varied levels of cognitive complexity. In **Collections**, teachers can get data on both students' knowledge of basic skills and their ability and performance in response to more cognitively complex and challenging tasks.

End-of-selection questions in the **Analyzing the Text** section and responses to the **Performance Task** provide teachers with valuable information about student understandings.



A Research-Based Approach

Rubrics provided with the **Collection Performance Tasks** offer students the chance to self-assess and identify how they did in each of the main categories.

| COLLECTION 1 TASK A | | | |
|---------------------|---|--|---|
| SHORT STORY | | | |
| | Ideas and Evidence | Organization | Language |
| ADVANCED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An engaging conflict is clearly established, developed, and resolved. The setting is skillfully established and developed and helps shape the conflict. Characters are compelling and believable. Dialogue and description are used effectively. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event sequence is smooth, is well structured, and creates suspense. The plot builds to a strong, satisfying conclusion. Pacing is clear and effective. Transition words and phrases effectively convey sequence and indicate shifts in setting. The conclusion clearly reflects a theme, or message, about life. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story has a consistent and effective point of view. Words and phrases are precise and vivid. Sensory language reveals the setting and characters. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are correct. Grammar and usage are correct. |
| COMPETENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A conflict is introduced, developed, and resolved, but it could better engage the readers. The setting is established but could be more developed to shape the characters and conflict. Characters have some believable traits but may need development. Dialogue and description could be more interesting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event sequence is generally well structured but includes some extraneous events. The plot builds to a conclusion. Pacing is somewhat uneven and confusing. Transition words and phrases convey sequence but don't indicate shifts in setting. The conclusion could more clearly reflect a theme, or message, about life. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story has a consistent point of view. Descriptive words and phrases and sensory language are used but could be more vivid and revealing of characters. Few spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors occur. Some grammatical and usage errors are repeated in the story. |
| LIMITED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A conflict is introduced but not developed or resolved; it does not engage the reader. The setting is unclear and does not affect the characters or conflict. Characters are somewhat clear but undeveloped. Dialogue and description are insufficient or uninteresting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events are not well structured, are too numerous, or distract from the plot. The conclusion is unsatisfying, with little suspense, and does not follow from the events. Pacing is distracting or choppy. Few transition words and phrases are used. The conclusion does not reflect a theme, or message, about life. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story's point of view is inconsistent. Precise words and sensory language are mostly lacking. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are often incorrect but do not make reading the story difficult. Grammar and usage are incorrect in many places, but the writer's ideas are still clear. |
| EMERGING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A conflict is not identifiable. The setting is not described. Characters are unclear and underdeveloped. Dialogue and descriptions are not included. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event sequence is not evident. There is no clear conclusion. There is no evidence of pacing. No transition words and phrases are used. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story's point of view is never clearly established. Precise words and phrases and sensory language are lacking. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are incorrect throughout, making reading difficult. Many grammatical and usage errors change the meaning of the writer's ideas. |

Teachers and students benefit from technology-based assessment tools that offer opportunities for more immediate feedback. In **Collections**, teachers can test students' mastery of the standards covered in each digital collection by assigning the accompanying assessment in **myWriteSmart**.



Strand 5: 21st-Century Learning

For hundreds of years the primary vehicle for instruction has been words, such as lectures or textbooks. Advances in computer and communication technologies now allow instructors to supplement verbal modes of instruction with visual modes of instruction, including dazzling graphics that students can interact with. Research on multimedia learning provides encouraging evidence that under appropriate circumstances, students learn better from words and pictures than from words alone . . .

Mayer, 2013, p. 396

The 21st century is a period of dramatic change in defining literacy. Contemporary students use both traditional text and digital media to communicate and locate information for both in-school and out-of-school purposes. This period of change has required researchers, educators, and students themselves to redefine and expand their concept of literacy.

Rhodes & Robnolt, 2009, p. 153

Defining the Strand

Numerous studies have attested to the effectiveness of technology to facilitate student learning and increase achievement in the classroom (see syntheses and meta-analyses conducted by Cheung & Slavin, 2012a, 2012b; Goldberg, Russell & Cook, 2003; Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia & Jones, 2010; Waxman, Lin & Michko, 2003; Tamim, Bernard, Borokhosvski, Abrami & Schmid, 2011; and Teh & Fraser, 1994).

By using technology in and out of the classroom for content learning, teachers meet students where they are, using a medium that engages them. Students ages eight to eighteen spend an average of one and a half hours on the computer each day (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). Nearly all high school students surveyed said that they use technology to study or complete school assignments for homework (CDW, 2011). These students have grown up with technology, leading Prensky (2001) to use the term “digital natives” to describe them.

While studies attest to the positive impact of technology in the classroom, technology alone does not improve student learning. Technology must be used for specific purposes to support content-learning and skill acquisition and must meet design requirements, such as those specified by Mayer in his research (2001, 2005, 2013).

In the **Collections** program, technology is used purposefully and integrated into classroom activities to facilitate instruction and learning. Interactive tools for close reading, annotating, and writing, and resources for additional learning engage students in skill building and practice.

Research that Guided the Development of the *Collections* Program

Technology and Multimedia Learning

The phrase “digital natives,” used to describe today’s technologically-savvy students, has become ubiquitous. The phrase, which originated with Prensky’s seminal 2001 work “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,” describes the fact that today’s students are among the first to grow up with new technologies—such as computers, digital music players, cell phones, and other mobile devices—and to have these technologies serve as integral parts of their lives. Prensky makes the argument that, as a result, students’ brains and their methods of processing information are fundamentally different than the brains of older, “digital immigrants.”

While there is some debate about whether the digital divide falls on generational lines, or if proficiency in technology varies more widely among young people (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008) and is more closely related to factors such as gender, economics, or educational levels (Helsper & Eynon, 2010), what is not debatable is the high level of computer and media exposure and use of today’s youth. Today’s students use these technologies daily (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010), and nearly all use technology to complete school assignments or homework (CDW, 2011). And students want more technology in school rather than less; in a survey of 400 high school students, only 39% indicated that their schools are meeting their technology expectations.

Technology is effective in the classroom not only because it engages students through a medium with which they have interest and familiarity. In addition, technology is effective as a means for improving content learning and skill acquisition—particularly when it is used to support instruction and offer practice rather than to present content.

Numerous studies and meta-analyses support the use of computers in the classroom to improve student learning (see Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia & Jones, 2010; Waxman, Lin & Michko, 2003; Teh & Fraser, 1994). Mayer (2001, 2005), a leading researcher in the field of multimedia learning, argues that student learning is increased in multimedia environments because information can be presented in multiple formats, including words, audio, and pictures. Students are able to learn more and retain information when they can access information using these different pathways. To reach their students’ full potential for learning, educators must know how best to integrate technology into the classroom, to use technology not for the sake of technology but for the purpose of facilitating increased learning and achievement.

Tamim and colleagues (2011) conducted a secondary meta-analysis to aggregate the findings of twenty five meta-analyses completed over the past forty years that attempted to answer the question of whether students in classrooms in which computers are used outperform students who do not use computers in the classroom. They found that technology showed benefits to student learning, finding that the “average student in a classroom where technology is used will perform twelve percentile points higher than the average student in the traditional setting that does not use technology to enhance the learning

process” (p. 17). The impact of technology was seen particularly when technology was used “in support of students’ efforts to achieve rather than acting as a tool for delivering content” (p. 17).

In examining research in the field of technology-supported learning, Reimann and Aditomo (2013) concluded that “the key pedagogical message resulting from the research reviewed is that CT use in classrooms will more likely be supporting learning if it is employed for the purpose of students interacting with content and interacting with peers rather than solely distributing and presenting content. There are quantitative variations across different content areas, with the effects on writing seemingly the strongest” (p. 401).

In addition to instructional benefits across disciplines, technology has been shown to be particularly effective in the development of reading comprehension and writing in English language arts classrooms.

Goldberg, Russell, and Cook (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of twenty-six studies which examined the performance of Grades K–12 students who were taught writing with computers compared with those taught in paper-and-pencil conditions. The “results of the meta-analysis suggest that on average students who use computers when learning to write are not only more engaged and motivated in their writing, but they produce written work that is of greater length and higher quality”.

In two separate syntheses on the research evidence to support technology applications for teaching reading, Cheung and Slavin (2012a, 2012b) reviewed over one hundred studies and concluded that technology use in the reading classroom, as compared to traditional instruction, produced a positive effect on the skills of all students in Grades K–12, and particularly on the skills of struggling readers.

In a study of the use of technology to improve students’ ability to use source information, Britt and Aglinskis (2002) found that students who used a computer-based tutorial referenced more text-based evidence than did the group who engaged in more regular classroom activity.

The findings of the 2011 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress support the idea that computer-based learning develops students’ skills in literacy and language arts. Students in Grade 8 “whose teachers more frequently asked them to use the computer to draft and revise their writing scored higher than those whose teachers did so less frequently. Students whose teachers never asked them to draft and revise their writing on a computer scored the lowest” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012b, p. 17). In addition, as stated previously, one of the benefits of a technology-based instructional program is that scaffolds and tools can be embedded at the point of use. Interestingly, in the 2011 computer-based administration of the NAEP writing assessment, students in both Grades 8 and 12 “who used the [online] thesaurus [tool] scored higher, on average, than students who did not use it, and students who used it two or more times scored higher than students who used it only once...” (p. 18). Similarly, the highest performers also used the backspace key and the spell-check tool more frequently than the lowest performers.

A Research-Based Approach

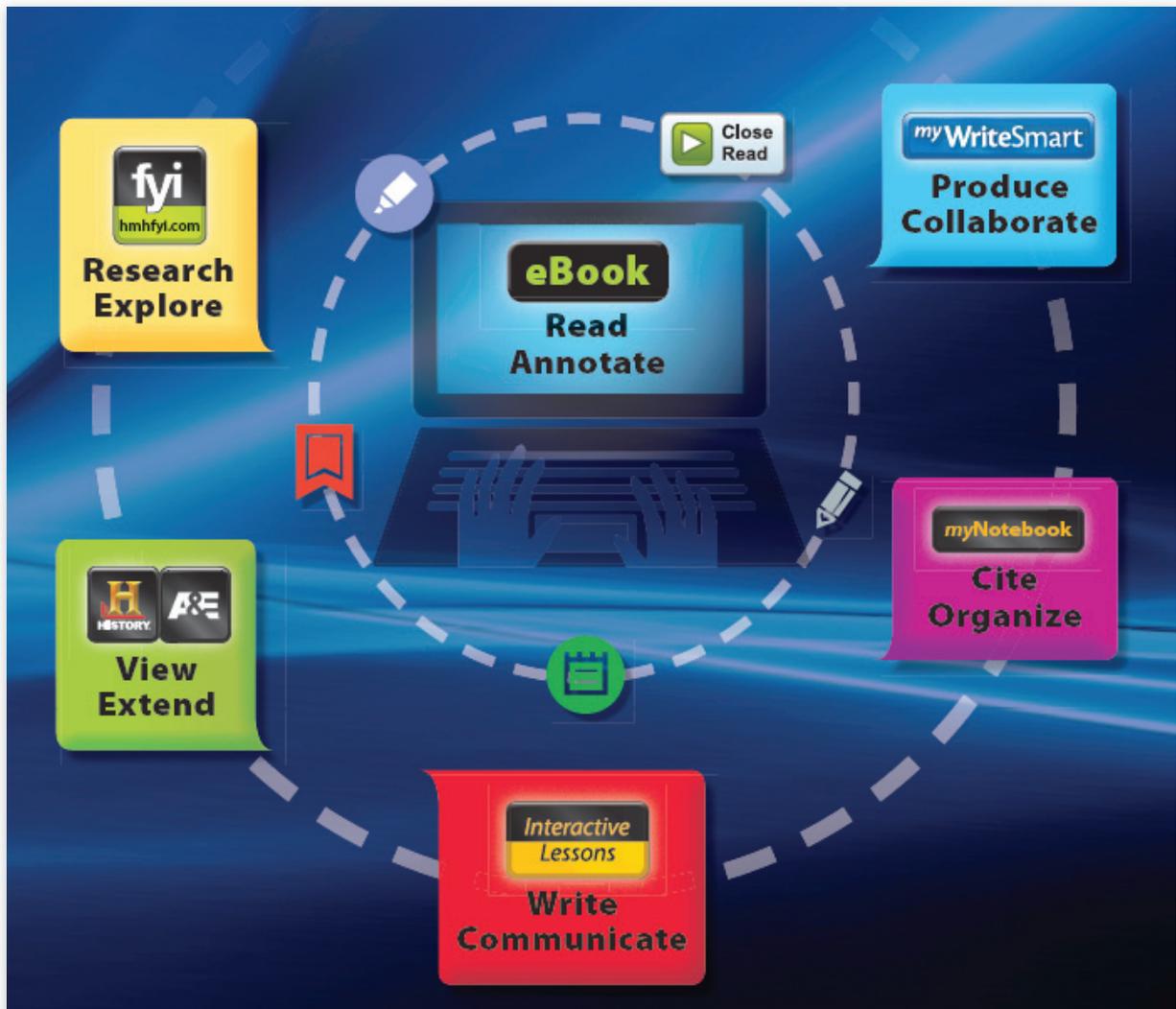
Schools and teachers are using technology in innovative ways. One model is the blended classroom in which teachers employ various instructional mediums, combining face-to-face instruction with online or technology-based instruction. Tucker (2012), a classroom teacher who adopted a blended learning model, found that it engaged students as active participants, helped them to develop communication and collaboration skills, and offered more flexibility for students and teachers. Another way of incorporating technology into the classroom is the flipped classroom, which “uses technology—most commonly teacher-created videos—to leverage learning in a classroom so a teacher can spend more time interacting with students instead of lecturing” (Overmyer, 2012, p. 46). Although the practice lacks a scientific research base, “preliminary nonscientific data suggest that flipping the classroom may produce benefits” (p. 78) because of teachers’ ability to interact with students, provide feedback, engage students with online information, and enable students to pace their own learning (Goodwin & Miller, 2013).

Finally, technology shows specific benefits for assessment. As Darling-Hammond (2010) states

Technology can be used to enhance . . . assessments in three ways: by delivering the assessments; in online tasks of higher order abilities, allowing students to search for information or manipulate variables and tracking information about the students’ problem-solving processes; and in some cases, scoring the results or delivering the responses to trained scorers/teachers to access from an electronic platform (p. 11).

Technology and Multimedia Learning in Collections

In **Collections**, technology is thoughtfully used to support the goals of the program and to engage learners with digital tools. The **Dashboard** offers one-stop access to the complete digital program for **Collections**, as well as management and assessment tools. The program's **eBook**—both the **Student Edition** and **Teacher's Edition**—is the entryway to a full complement of digital resources, and offers a place where students can read and annotate.



The digital resources and tools in **Collections** are designed to support students in grappling with complex text and formulating interpretations from text evidence.

Tools like the **Close Read Screencasts** support students in building their close reading skills; for each anchor text, students can access modeled conversations in which readers analyze and annotate key passages. **Annotation Tools for Close Reading** allow students to note central ideas and details about author's craft. **Interactive Whiteboard Lessons** identified throughout each collection offer teachers a chance to use technology in support of instruction, extension, or reteaching.

A Research-Based Approach

Throughout the program, digital tools offer interactive ways for students to engage in further practice and build skills with complex texts.

- **myNotebook** stores students' annotations and notes for use in **Performance Tasks**.
- **myWriteSmart** offers students the chance to produce and collaborate. In **myWriteSmart**, students can use the annotations they have created, and tools for writing and collaboration, to complete writing tasks.
- **Interactive Lessons** give students the opportunity to write and communicate.

Each collection's overview shows links to digital resources for further learning.



From video links to additional selections and informational texts, a range of digital resources in the **eBook** complements and enriches students' reading.

- Voices and images from **A&E**[®], **bio.**[®], and **HISTORY**[®] transport students to different times and places. These video assets are available at point of use in the **eBook**, adding the images and voices that make selections and historical periods come alive.
- The **fyi** website at *hmhfyi.com* provides additional contemporary informational texts to enhance each collection. These informational texts, linked to each collection topic, are curated and updated monthly, and expand students' background knowledge and create opportunities for discussion and research.

The digital resources and tools in **Collections** offer specific supports for teachers. Each collection in the teacher **eBook** includes:

- support for English language learners and less-proficient writers
- instructional and management tips for every screen
- a rubric
- additional writing applications

Additional digital tools support teachers. The **mySmartPlanner** tool provides a space for teachers to create lesson plans and access resources online. **Professional Development Podcasts** offer professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Collections is a 21st-century program in which students engage in authentic practice of 21st-century skills. Students have ample opportunities to evaluate real websites, engage in digital collaboration, conduct Web research, and critique student discussions.

Conclusion

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Collections is a comprehensive program designed to help all students reach the high expectations of the 21st century and the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts. The esteemed panel of program consultants has created an instructional design of complex and rigorous texts supported by scaffolding and modeling of close reading, analysis, synthesis, and citing of specific textual evidence. Writing instruction is integrated into the program around anchor texts and performance tasks. Language skills and vocabulary strategies necessary for reading and writing complex texts are seamlessly integrated throughout this comprehensive, research-based program. Digital elements and features are integrated to offer teachers and students the resources and tools they need for success.

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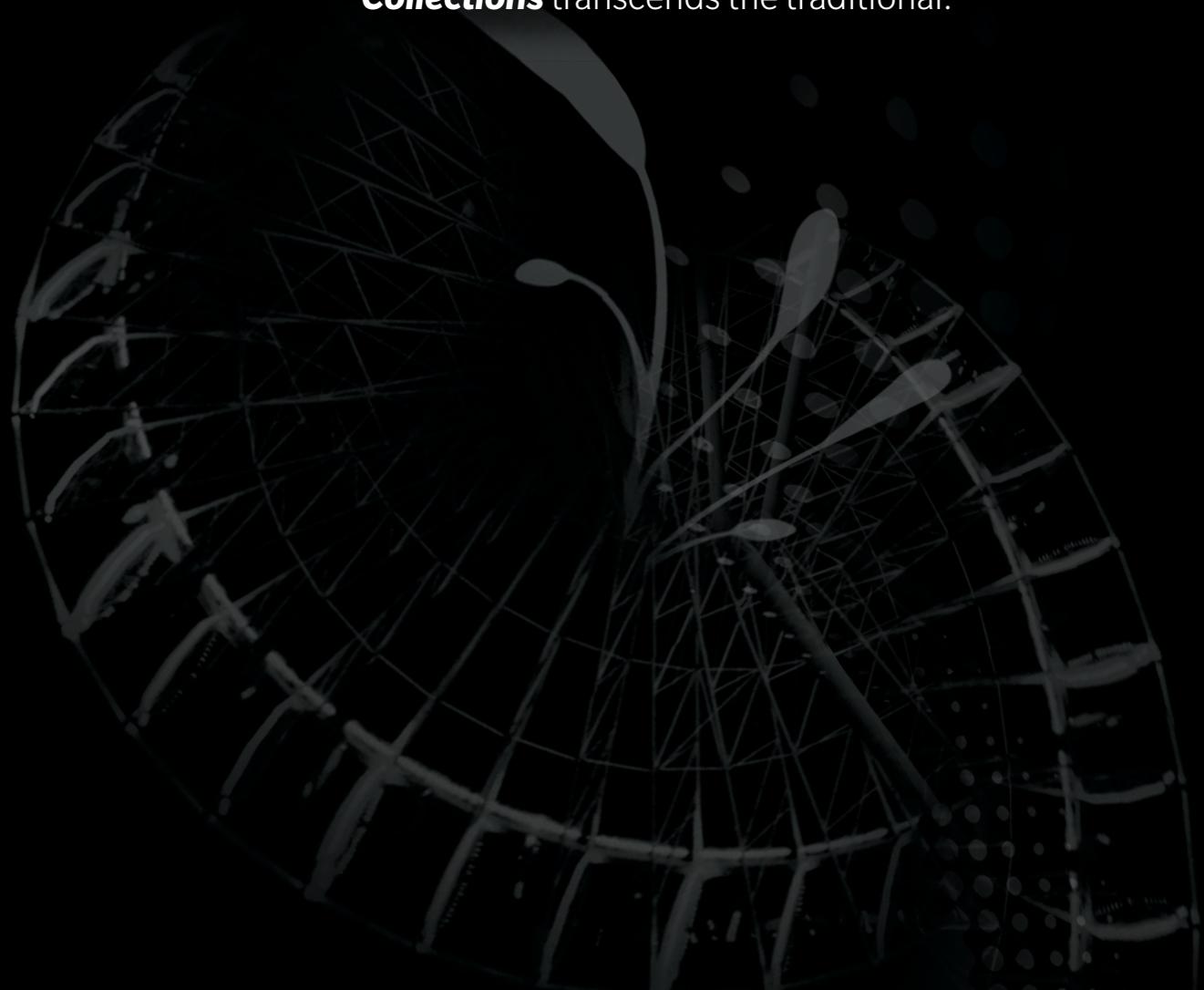


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