

English Language Arts Standards

Third Edition

for teachers of students ages 11–18+

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*National Board Certification
Promotes Better Teaching,
Better Learning, Better Schools*

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Preface

About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (National Board) is a not-for-profit professional organization, created and governed by practicing teachers and their advocates. The founding mission of the National Board is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by

- maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do;
- providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards; and
- advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification into American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

Recognized as the “gold standard” in teacher certification, the National Board believes higher standards for teachers means better learning for students.

Founded in 1987, the National Board began by engaging teachers in the development of standards for accomplished teaching and in the building of an assessment—National Board Certification—that validly and reliably identifies when a teacher meets those standards. Today, there are 25 certificate areas that span 16 content areas and four student developmental levels. The essence of the National Board’s vision of accomplished teaching is captured in the enduring document *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, at the heart of which are the Five Core Propositions:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

The National Board believes that board certification should become the norm, not the exception, and should be fully integrated into the fabric of the teaching profession. In other professions, such as medicine, engineering, and architecture, board certification has helped to create a culture of accomplished practice and is a major reason why those professions are held in such high regard by the public. Those professions did what teaching must now do: strengthen the coherent pipeline of preparation that begins in pre-service and continues through board certification and beyond, with each step engineered to help teachers develop toward accomplished. More than 110,000 teachers had achieved board certification by 2014, a number which represents the largest group of identified teaching experts in the country. Given the size of the teaching workforce, however, this sizable number represents fewer than 3 percent of teachers.

For most children that means they go through their entire schooling without being taught by a board-certified teacher. Each teacher who pursues board certification helps to close this gap, strengthening the profession and the quality of teaching and learning. In a world where board certification is the standard that all teachers aspire to and most achieve, students experience accomplished teaching throughout their schooling, unleashing their potential.

About the Standards

Every child deserves an accomplished teacher—one who is qualified to equip students with the skills to succeed in a global community. The core mission of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is to create field-specific standards for accomplished teaching that are grounded in the Five Core Propositions and that articulate the actions that accomplished teachers employ to advance student learning. Each standards document represents a professional consensus on the attributes of practice that distinguish accomplished teaching in that field. Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate the standards into their undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs.

Standards are developed and revised by a committee of 12–15 members who are representative of accomplished professionals in their field. A majority of standards committee members are practicing Board certified teachers. Other committee members are experts in academic content and child development, including teacher educators, researchers, and other professionals in the relevant field. Standards are disseminated widely for public comment and subsequently revised as necessary before adoption by the National Board’s Board of Directors.

Throughout the development of both the standards and the certification process, the National Board ensures broad representation of the diversity that exists within the profession; engages pertinent disciplinary and specialty associations at key points in the process; collaborates closely with appropriate state agencies, academic institutions, and independent research and education organizations; and establishes procedures to detect and eliminate instances of external and internal bias.

National Board Standards and certifications are defined by the developmental level of the students and by the subject or subjects being taught. Teachers select the subject area that makes up the substantive focus of their teaching. They may choose Generalist certificates if they do not focus on one particular subject area in their practice. The four overlapping student developmental levels (listed below) indicate the age of the majority of their students.

- Early Childhood (EC)—ages 3–8
- Middle Childhood (MC)—ages 7–12
- Early Adolescence (EA)—ages 11–15
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood (AYA)—ages 14–18+

About Certification

National Board Certification® is a voluntary, standards-based process designed for teachers to transform the Five Core Propositions into practice. In order to be eligible for certification a teacher must

- Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution¹;
- Have a minimum of three years' teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school level; and
- Where it is required, hold a state teaching license.

The assessments, aligned with the Five Core Propositions and the standards, are designed so that teachers demonstrate their practice by providing evidence of what they know and do. The evidence-based assessment honors the complexities and demands of teaching.

In 2014, the National Board initiated revision of the assessment to make the process more flexible, affordable, and efficient for teachers. In all certificate areas, candidates for National Board Certification are now required to complete four components: three portfolio entries, which are submitted online, and a computer-based assessment, which is administered at a testing center. Teachers develop portfolio entries that require analysis of their practice as it relates to student learning and to being a reflective, effective practitioner. Designed to capture what a teacher knows and is able to do in real time and in real-life settings, the portfolio consists of description, analysis, and reflection focused on student learning that is captured on video and in student work samples. The process requires teachers to reflect on the underlying assumptions of their practice and the impacts of that practice on student learning.

Teachers also demonstrate content knowledge by responding to open-ended and multiple choice questions delivered at a secure testing site. The assessment center component complements the portfolio, validates that the knowledge and skills exhibited in the portfolio are accurate reflections of what a candidate knows, and provides candidates with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio.

Assessments are based on the standards and are developed for every certificate area by educators who specialize in the same content and student developmental level as the candidates. Educators who are themselves practitioners in the certificate area score the submitted portfolio entries. They must successfully complete intensive training and qualify for scoring on the basis of their understanding of National Board Standards and scoring guidelines.

¹ Candidates registering for the Career and Technical Education certificate are required to hold a bachelor's degree only if their state required one for their current license.

Foundation of National Board Certification for Teachers

Five Core Propositions

The National Board framework for accomplished teaching was established in its 1989 publication, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. The Five Core Propositions serve as the foundation for all National Board standards and assessments, defining the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and commitments that accomplished teachers demonstrate. Teachers embody all Five Core Propositions in their practices, drawing on various combinations of these skills, applications, and dispositions to promote student learning.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Accomplished teachers base their practice on the fundamental belief that all students can learn and meet high expectations. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and understanding of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, language, family circumstances, and peer relationships. They view students' varied backgrounds as diversity that enriches the learning environment for every student.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They consult and incorporate a variety of learning and development theories into their practice, while remaining attuned to their students' individual contexts, cultures, abilities, and circumstances. They are committed to students' cognitive development as well as to students' ownership of their learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, perseverance, civic responsibility, intellectual risk taking, and respect for others.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and applied to real-world settings. While maintaining the integrity of disciplinary methods, content, and structures of organization, accomplished teachers develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students so they can think for themselves.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and draw upon pedagogical and subject matter understandings to anticipate challenges,

modify their practice, and respond to students' needs. They also demonstrate a commitment towards learning about new strategies, instructional resources, and technology that can be of assistance. Their instructional repertoire and professional judgment allow them to generate multiple paths to knowledge in the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems so they can continue exploring and advancing their understanding.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Accomplished teachers view themselves as facilitators of student learning within dynamic instructional settings. They create, enrich, maintain, and alter learning environments while establishing effective ways to monitor and manage those environments and the student learning that occurs within them. They possess a comprehensive knowledge of instructional methods, know when each is appropriate, and can implement them as needed. They use instructional time constructively and efficiently, customizing physical layout, resources, and instructional methods. They enlist the knowledge and support of a wide range of stakeholders to provide their students with enriched opportunities to learn. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of pedagogical approaches they may take, as well as the suitability of these approaches for particular students.

Accomplished teachers know how to engage students in varied settings and group configurations. They create positive and safe learning environments that guide student behavior and support learning, allowing the schools' goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students and value student engagement, supporting them as they face and learn from challenges.

Accomplished teachers assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They apply their knowledge of assessment to employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding. They use the information they gather from monitoring student learning to inform their practice, and they provide constructive feedback to students and families. They collaborate with students throughout the learning process and help students engage in self-assessment.

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Accomplished teachers possess a professional obligation to become perpetual students of their craft. Committed to reflective learning, they are models of educated persons. They exemplify the virtues they seek to inspire in students—curiosity, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences—and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter, and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in established theories, but also in reason born of experience. They engage in lifelong learning, which they seek to encourage in their students.

Accomplished teachers seek opportunities to cultivate their learning. Striving to strengthen their teaching and positively impact student learning, teachers use feedback and research to critically examine

their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Accomplished teachers participate actively in their learning communities to promote progress and achievement. They contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on policy decisions, curriculum development, professional learning, school instructional programs, and other functions that are fundamental to the development of highly productive learning communities. They work collaboratively and creatively with families and the community, engaging them productively in the work of the school and cultivating students' connections with the opportunities, resources, and diversity they afford.

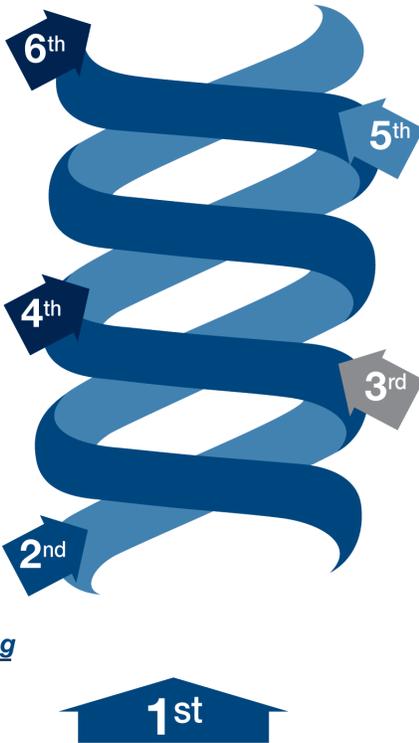
Accomplished teachers can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives and their knowledge of student needs. They are knowledgeable about and can advocate for specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Architecture of Accomplished Teaching

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching provides a view of how the use of the Five Core Propositions and the standards that are developed from them result in student learning. As depicted in the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching illustration, shown below, one strand represents teaching practice as grounded in the Five Core Propositions, while the other strand represents the teacher’s impact on students and their learning.

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching: What is underneath the surface?

Set new high and worthwhile goals that are appropriate for these students at this time



Reflect on student learning, the effectiveness of the instructional design, particular concerns, and issues

Evaluate student learning in light of the goals and the instruction

Implement instruction designed to attain those goals

Set high, worthwhile goals appropriate for these students, at this time, in this setting

Your Students - Who are they? Where are they now? What do they need and in what order do they need it? Where should I begin?

Five Core Propositions

-  **Teachers are committed to students and their learning**
-  Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
-  **Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning**
-  Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
-  **Teachers are members of learning communities**

The National Board program certifies accomplished teachers who positively influence student learning through effective teaching practice. The process includes the core propositions for all teachers, a common set of accomplished teaching standards specific to the content field and students’ developmental levels, and a set of evidence-based assessments specific to the field that certify what accomplished teachers know and do.

Standards

Introduction

Note from the authors of these standards:

Dear Candidate:

We realize that this document, which attempts to lay out all of the skills and knowledge that an English language arts teacher must possess in order to be considered accomplished, may seem overwhelming at first. Remember that these standards were written by teachers, for teachers. The standards were born out of many months of intense discussion, and are the fruit of years of study, experience, and reflection. We hope that you see yourself, your own practice, your students, and your professional aspirations reflected in this document. We hope that you engage in a productive dialogue with the text, that it helps you realize the breadth of your current expertise, and that it inspires meaningful reflection and growth. Please accept our respect, our encouragement, and our spirit of collaboration as you embark on this journey of professional development.

English Language Arts: Definition and Responsibility

Language is uniquely human; it allows human beings to explore the essence of who they are and to connect with others. Language is the conduit through which all learning flows. Language enables people to communicate their thoughts and emotions, to create intellectual structures, and to solve problems. A free society is dependent upon its citizens' ability to clearly articulate not only their knowledge, but also their hopes and dreams.

The field of English language arts consists of the interrelated skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and producing. A text may be spoken, written, or constructed solely of images. There is power in all words, but the written word is forever. Through reading, people connect to eternity and to each other. Readers can transcend the limitations of the immediate; they can empathize with characters from remote time periods and distant countries. Readers can find safety when they are feeling vulnerable and community when they are feeling isolated. Furthermore, readers form powerful bonds with each other as they experience a text and construct meaning together.

Through writing, speaking, and producing visual texts, students can develop their ideas and command attention. They can become agents of social change. They can open doors to new opportunities for themselves and others. When language is used clearly and precisely, it can help to discern what is false and clarify what is true.

The English language arts promote an active stance in the world. Those who can use language to interrogate reality help to support the free exchange of ideas. They can articulate their ideals and advocate

for the realization of those ideals. However, there is also a playful and aesthetic aspect to language. Through the study of English language arts, students learn to appreciate the nuances of language and to delight in the ways words can be used to enchant, to shock, to instruct, and even to mystify.

The English language arts provide skills for lifelong learning. Success in English language arts has a powerful effect on success in other classrooms, other disciplines, and nonacademic aspects of life.

The Shifting Nature of English Language Arts

These standards reflect the shifting nature of English language arts. The craft of teaching is always changing, but in recent years, the world has become increasingly dynamic. Many aspects of society are in flux. Factors such as economics, migration, and expanding definitions of family are having powerful effects on teaching. Students may lack a strong connection with their local community, turning to other sources of influence to establish a sense of identity and belonging. Teachers need to understand the ways students engage with society and tap into the cultural, social, and political forces that influence young people.

Due to rapid technological innovation, communication is evolving. Students have developed literacies outside the classroom that teachers must understand and value. Although the traditional skills of reading and writing remain central to learning, visual and audio texts are increasingly important educational media. Therefore, English language arts teachers must now help learners become proficient in viewing and producing as well as in reading and writing. Teachers must assist students in making judgments about the validity, effectiveness, and impact of messages in every medium.

Technology has the potential to empower teachers and students, but it can also present challenges. Students have become accustomed to great immediacy and ease of creation in the digital world; as a result, they require more individualized attention in the classroom. Accomplished teachers realize that technology is more than just a tool for presenting the same types of lessons that were used in the past; technology represents a paradigm shift in education. When implemented in an enlightened and effective manner, technology can help to close achievement gaps. Technology can increase the closeness between students and teachers, expand the social and collaborative nature of education, make inquiry more integral to learning, provide new opportunities for real-time communication, and increase the chances of success for all students.

Accomplished Teachers and Their Students

Being a teacher is a humbling opportunity to honor one's students—both who they are and who they are becoming. It is the responsibility of a teacher to motivate young people to reach a place where they can recognize and develop their own voices. Accomplished teachers believe that every student can achieve, learn, and grow; therefore, teachers promote their students' individuality.

The practice of accomplished teachers is rooted in hope and in love. Accomplished teachers always put their students first. Their mission is to equip their students to be tomorrow's leaders. They teach students to be effective communicators, thoughtful processors of information, and creative problem solvers.

Accomplished English language arts teachers take responsibility for both the emotional and the intellectual aspects of learning. They promote rigorous academic standards, but they implement these

standards flexibly. Teachers validate their students in order to help students reach their fullest potential and to become lifelong learners.

To prepare students for future opportunities, teachers systematically assess their students. They then create engaging instructional activities which will motivate students to think for themselves and grow intellectually. In the eyes of accomplished teachers, the curriculum is not something that exists outside students. Rather, the curriculum is driven by students' needs, interests, and backgrounds, and students are constantly involved as active participants rather than passive recipients. As a result, students take ownership of the learning process. Student-centered expectations drive students to move beyond their current levels of learning, regardless of their demographic or personal circumstances.

Accomplished English language arts teachers model a global perspective. They understand that postsecondary education and the world of work exist within international networks; therefore, teachers prepare students to communicate and collaborate globally.

Accomplished teachers convey to their students an elevated vision of education. Education is rooted in real-world issues, but it is more than a pragmatic set of skills. Language gives us ways to think about the good, the true, and the beautiful; to ponder what it means to be human; and to reflect on our purposes in life.

The Standards Document: Its Nature, Structure, and Goals

The Structure

Although all aspects of teaching English language arts are inextricably related to each other, the committee separated the field of English language arts into twelve standards to make it easier for readers to analyze their own practices. The order of the standards within this document does not indicate their relative importance, nor does it imply that a candidate will move through them in a prescribed order. The standards can be approached in different ways. For example, one might view Knowledge of Students; Fairness, Equity, and Diversity; Learning Environment; and Instructional Design and Implementation as capturing the foundations of teaching. Reading and Viewing, Writing and Producing, Speaking and Listening, Language Study, Inquiry, and Assessment can be perceived as the pillars of the discipline. The standards on Advocacy and Collaboration can be seen as representing overarching dispositions that permeate all of the other standards.

Candidates may read the standards in the order in which they are presented in this document or in any other order that makes sense to them. Candidates will undoubtedly revisit specific standards based on what they are focusing on at a given moment. Interaction with these standards can be as fluid and recursive as the process of teaching is.

Each standard exhibits a consistent structure. Standards are organized according to what teachers know, how they apply this knowledge in the classroom, and how they reflect on the topic. The fact that reflection is embedded throughout the standards document indicates the paramount importance of reflection to accomplished teaching and to National Board Certification. Candidates should note that reflection is always student-centered.

The Creation of the Document

These standards were created by a committee consisting of English language arts teachers and higher education professionals. Committee members represented a wide range of communities, schools, and student populations served. Rural, suburban, and urban perspectives were represented, as were virtually all corners of the nation. Some committee members had many decades of teaching experience, whereas others were relatively new teachers. Nearly all members of the committee were National Board Certified Teachers. During their deliberations, committee members worked hard to establish an inclusive community in which all perspectives were respected and included. A diversity of opinion and a wealth of experience were combined to create the present document.

The standards document was designed to reflect the current state of the English language arts field and to anticipate likely future developments. The committee's first step was to deconstruct the second edition of the English Language Arts Standards for both early adolescence and adolescence and young adulthood. The committee identified concepts and language that should be retained, elements that should be modified, and facets of accomplished English language arts teaching that needed to be added. Then the committee defined the structure of the new document, adding new standards as needed. Next the committee assembled the new text, taking care to use wording and examples that were unlikely to become dated over the expected life of the document. Each participant had the opportunity to work on each of the twelve standards in a small subgroup and then to review the entire document line-by-line with the whole committee. Thus, every word of each standard reflects a carefully achieved consensus on the part of a highly diverse and highly qualified group of English language arts practitioners and higher educators.

A common thread throughout the lengthy and complex discussions was the following question: How can we create a document in which prospective candidates can view themselves? Committee members addressed this concern by including a wealth of examples that illustrate what abstract principles look like as they play out in different contexts.

Examples

Examples are included throughout the standards to illustrate what an accomplished English language arts teacher knows and can do. Examples represent both Early Adolescents and Adolescents and Young Adults. The examples are meant to be illustrative, not prescriptive. Accomplished teachers should use the examples to better understand the related skills and knowledge, and to identify similar accomplished examples from their own practice. Examples should spark the reader's reflection and creativity rather than prompt imitation. The breadth of examples is intended to demonstrate the principle that there are as many different ways to fulfill the expectations of a standard as there are teachers.

In some examples, specific special populations are referred to; however, this is not always the case. The committee wanted to stress the point that accomplished teachers differentiate instruction for all students, not merely for a few officially designated groups. Teachers attend precisely and sensitively to the students in their care, whether their students' needs arise from a long-lasting health condition, the challenges of a particular lesson, the motivation to learn at a faster pace, the ability to speak another language more fluently than formal English, a circumstance at home, a learning style preference, the emotional challenges that come with adolescence, or a documented individual education program.

Major Changes Since the Last Revision of the English Language Arts Standards

The first major revision is that, whereas in the past there were separate English Language Arts Standards for Early Adolescents and Adolescents and Young Adults, there is now a single document for teachers of both developmental groups. This change continues a trend set by other NBPTS content-area standards such as English as a New Language, Mathematics, and Social Studies-History, and it reflects the belief that teachers of early adolescents and teachers of adolescents and young adults think about their practices and their disciplines in similar ways while honoring the specific needs that tend to accompany their students' age group.

The revised standards of this third edition reflect an intensified emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. It has always been important for teachers and students to understand the intersections among different disciplines, but in today's society, it is essential for students to synthesize and produce knowledge in multilayered, multidisciplinary ways, and for teachers to be able to do the same for their own professional growth and as part of their work with colleagues and larger communities.

This version of the English Language Arts Standards contains three new standards: Inquiry, Collaboration, and Advocacy. The standard on Inquiry represents the importance of the accomplished ELA teacher's commitment to teaching students to ask questions, to make connections, and to actively interrogate the assumptions that surround them. Accomplished teachers eschew passivity and adopt an inquiry stance toward their practice and the influences that shape their classrooms. The decision to consolidate the Professional Community standard, Family and Community Involvement standard, and Family Outreach standard of the previous editions into one new Collaboration standard results from the belief that collaboration is not a series of discrete interactions; it is a disposition and organizing principle of professional practice. Teaching and learning are improved by the coordinated interaction of colleagues, by cooperation between teachers and their students, and by close connections between school and community. A standard devoted to Advocacy was created because now, more than ever, accomplished teachers have the responsibility to advocate for the teaching profession, for students and their learning, and to help students see themselves as advocates for their own interests and for the causes they embrace.

Content Knowledge (formerly referred to as Knowledge of English Language Arts in the standards for adolescence and young adulthood and Knowledge of the Field in the standards for early adolescence) and Self-Reflection are examples of threads that were stand-alone standards in the previous edition but no longer appear in this manner. The committee's rationale for embedding content knowledge in each standard was that effective pedagogical decisions and techniques take place in the context of robust, up-to-date, content knowledge. All aspects of accomplished teaching are predicated upon content knowledge.

Similarly, because reflection pervades all aspects of accomplished teaching, the committee decided to embed reflection throughout the document rather than treating it as a separate entity. The reflection piece appears at the conclusion of every standard as a way of emphasizing its preeminent importance to the profession.

Conclusion

This third edition of *English Language Arts Standards* reflects the dynamic state of the field. This document represents a tribute and a challenge to practitioners engaged in teaching language arts at the

highest level. By actively seeking to remain open and responsive to developments in society and in the nature of literacy, English language arts teachers can foster personal growth, promote rich and varied literacy development in their students, and spur positive change in the world.

Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

English Language Arts Standards describes what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The standards are meant to reflect the current professional consensus about the essential aspects of accomplished practice. The deliberations of the English Language Arts Standards Committee were informed by various national and state initiatives on student and teacher standards that have been operating concurrently with the development of NBPTS Standards. As the understanding of teaching and learning continues to evolve over the next several years, these standards will be updated again.

An essential tension of describing accomplished practice concerns the difference between the analysis and the practice of teaching. The former tends to fragment the profession into any number of discrete duties, such as designing learning activities, providing quality explanation, modeling, managing the classroom, and monitoring student progress. Teaching as it actually occurs, on the other hand, is a seamless activity.

Everything an accomplished teacher knows through study, research, and experience is brought to bear daily in the classroom through innumerable decisions that shape learning. Teaching frequently requires balancing the demands of several important educational goals. It depends on accurate observations of particular students and settings, and it is subject to revision on the basis of continuing developments in the classroom.

The paradox, then, is that any attempt to write standards that dissect what accomplished teachers know and are able to do will misrepresent, to a certain extent, the holistic nature of how teaching actually takes place. Nevertheless, the fact remains: certain identifiable commonalities characterize the practice of accomplished teachers. The standards that follow are designed to capture the knowledge, artistry, proficiency, and understandings—both deep and broad—that contribute to the complex work that is accomplished teaching.

The Standards Format

Accomplished teaching appears in many different forms, and it should be acknowledged at the outset that these specific standards are not the only way it could have been described. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished teaching, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of teaching that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but that are not discrete when they appear in practice.

Standard Statement: This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished teacher of English language arts. Each standard is expressed in terms of observable teacher actions that have an impact on students.

Elaboration: This passage provides a context for the standard, along with an explanation of what teachers need to know, value, and do if they are to fulfill the standard. The elaboration includes descriptions

of teacher dispositions toward students, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, and their stances on a range of ethical and intellectual issues that regularly confront them.

In addition, throughout the document are examples illustrating accomplished practice and demonstrating how decisions integrate various individual considerations and cut across the standard document. If the standards pull apart accomplished teaching into discrete elements, the examples put them back together in ways more clearly recognizable to teachers. Because the National Board believes there is no single right way to teach students, these examples are meant to encourage teachers to demonstrate their own best practice.

English Language Arts Standards Statements

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished teachers of English language arts into the following twelve standards. The standards have been ordered to facilitate understanding, not to assign priorities. They each describe an important facet of accomplished teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice. These standards serve as the basis for National Board Certification in English Language Arts.

Standard I: Knowledge of Students

Accomplished English language arts teachers acquire knowledge about their students to advance students' learning in the English language arts and to prepare students for successful participation in the world.

Standard II: Fairness, Equity, and Diversity

Accomplished English language arts teachers practice fairness and equity because of their commitment to the acceptance and appreciation of others. Accomplished teachers use a variety of strategies and materials to address disparities among students and provide meaningful learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Standard III: Learning Environment

Using their understanding of the ways in which physical and relational factors combine in the classroom, accomplished English language arts teachers purposefully design inclusive learning environments that engage, challenge, and support student learning.

Standard IV: Instructional Design and Implementation

Accomplished English language arts teachers use their knowledge of students, their discipline, and pedagogy to design and implement instruction that promotes the learning of all students.

Standard V: Reading and Viewing

Accomplished English language arts teachers engage their students in reading and viewing a wide range of texts. Teachers support all students in developing the dispositions and proficiencies necessary for comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, and appreciating the texts.

Standard VI: Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide instruction in the processes, skills, and knowledge about writing that their students will need to effectively produce a variety of texts for a range of audiences and purposes.

Standard VII: Speaking and Listening

Accomplished English language arts teachers equip students to become effective communicators by strengthening their speaking and listening skills for various purposes within a broad range of contexts.

Standard VIII: Language Study

Accomplished English language arts teachers develop their students' appreciation of the functional and aesthetic aspects of language and expand their students' capacity to use language effectively.

Standard IX: Inquiry

Through inquiry, accomplished English language arts teachers foster dispositions in students to examine multiple perspectives; promote a process that prompts students to ask critical questions; encourage students to act on what they have learned; and equip students with the tools needed to examine, organize, manage, and analyze information.

Standard X: Assessment

Accomplished English language arts teachers create and select valid assessment tools as part of an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluating student learning. Teachers use assessment results to provide meaningful feedback to students, engage students in self-assessment, shape instructional decisions, and communicate to various stakeholders.

Standard XI: Collaboration

Accomplished English language arts teachers collaborate to improve instruction and student learning, advance the knowledge and practice of the field, enhance their professional identities, and foster collaboration in their classrooms and beyond.

Standard XII: Advocacy

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for their students, for the content of English language arts, and for their profession.

Standard I

Knowledge of Students

Accomplished English language arts teachers acquire knowledge about their students to advance students' learning in the English language arts and to prepare students for successful participation in the world.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that teaching is founded on the knowledge of students. Teachers use knowledge about early adolescents and young adults to make sound and deliberate instructional decisions to positively affect student learning. Accomplished teachers genuinely like working with young people. They believe that all students can learn, even though not all students progress in the same way or at the same pace.

Accomplished English language arts teachers¹ obtain insight into many aspects of students, including the knowledge, talents, and interests each student brings to the learning environment. Because accomplished English language arts teachers understand that gaining knowledge about learners must be an ongoing process, they are always alert to opportunities for increasing their understanding of their students' cultures, concerns, and aspirations. Teachers then apply the information they have gathered in many ways, from adjusting their perspectives about students, to adapting instruction, or modifying the learning environment. Accomplished teachers not only use their knowledge about students to make the learning process easier or more familiar; they also use their understanding to challenge students' thinking and inspire them to try things they might not have attempted on their own.

Understanding Early Adolescents and Young Adults

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that there are specific developmental characteristics associated with early adolescence and young adulthood. Teachers expect, accommodate, and value a wide variation in the maturity and life experiences of early adolescents and young adults within the same learning environment. Through classroom experience and knowledge of research, teachers develop a broad perspective on patterns of adolescent physical, social, emotional, and language development. They then use their accumulated knowledge to foster students' literacy development.

¹ All references to *teachers* in this document, whether stated explicitly or not, refer to accomplished English language arts teachers.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that a particular concern within the early adolescent and young adult experience is youth culture, which is defined as the blend of experiences, styles, behaviors, and interests that characterize adolescence. Although it is not always possible to have broad knowledge of youth culture, accomplished teachers become familiar with it through research, course work, and direct experience. Even when an accomplished teacher is not thoroughly knowledgeable about students' current interests, it is still possible for the teacher to build relationships by demonstrating interest in what students know and care about. To whatever extent is possible, accomplished English language arts teachers are familiar with the television programs and movies that early adolescents and young adults watch; the books and magazines they read; the music they listen to; the electronic or virtual experiences they participate in, create, or encounter; and the ways in which they communicate with one another. Many accomplished teachers go beyond simply knowing the names of significant games, books, movies, and cultural icons; they read, watch, play, and learn about some of them in depth. Students are more likely to be engaged when accomplished teachers are interested in them.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are aware of the influences that shape early adolescents' and young adults' individual identities. They recognize that students may grapple with their own awareness and appreciation of their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic heritage; family¹ setting; socioeconomic status; sexual orientation; gender; disability; prior learning experiences; personal interests; and academic and social experiences. Teachers understand that their students' identities are fluid, and they use this knowledge to create a supportive and flexible learning environment. Accomplished teachers are tenaciously committed to learning more about students' backgrounds, abilities, and attitudes; caring for them; and guiding their development as literate human beings. Teachers respect and celebrate students' individuality.

Accomplished English language arts teachers closely examine their students' first works for clues to their literacy development and interests. Teachers are vigilant throughout the school year, developing understandings about individual students through conversations, interactions with parents, observations of student work, various assessments, and other experiences inside and outside the classroom. To accomplished English language arts teachers, the act of knowing their students encompasses understanding each student's capacity to read, view, write, produce, speak, and listen in English. Teachers also seek to understand the particular communication and language needs of students for whom English is a new language, students with disabilities, other students needing extra support, and students who can benefit from advanced challenges. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers are keenly aware of the diverse challenges and realities students face, such as health issues—whether physical or psychological—and any other obstacles to student learning. Teachers are sensitive to changes in students' appearance and behavior. Teachers do not overreact, but they respond quickly and appropriately to determine whether these changes are

¹ The terms *family* and *parent* are used throughout this document to refer to people who are the primary caregivers, guardians, or significant adults in the lives of children.

significant and problematic. Because accomplished teachers know a great deal about their students, they are more likely than less accomplished observers to detect subtle signals when a student is in crisis and to respond appropriately.

Accomplished English language arts teachers systematically observe students in group settings to analyze group dynamics. They understand that students are shaped by their interests, cultures, families, communities, schools, and classes, and although they do not stereotype students, accomplished teachers understand that they can gain useful insights based on the groups with which students identify. Accomplished teachers can perceive subtle differences among similar groups. For example, they perceive that the cohort of students in one grade may vary remarkably from the cohort of students in another grade within the same school, despite the fact that the gender and demographic breakdowns of the two groups are relatively the same. Teachers know that their students differ in their knowledge, needs, and dispositions, and that students perform differently in different contexts. Knowing students means knowing the fears and dreams that inspire them, the issues that stir them, and the causes that speak to them.

Applying Knowledge of Students

Accomplished English language arts teachers use knowledge about early adolescents and young adults in general and their students in particular to build positive relationships. Accomplished teachers know how to build trust and support in ways that increase students' overall academic success and their proficiency within each of the language arts.

To build trusting relationships with their students, accomplished English language arts teachers honor their students' passions and concerns. Teachers also behave in an approachable manner and make themselves available. For example, teachers may attend before- and after-school programs, extracurricular school events, and community activities. Accomplished teachers use the knowledge gained through professional occasions to establish appropriate outlets as needed for students. For example, a student struggling with a loved one who is experiencing a terminal illness might benefit from reading a novel about a character in a similar situation, and might even use the novel as the gateway to conversations with the teacher about this issue. However, accomplished teachers are sensitive to their students' individual temperaments; they understand when to intervene directly and when to act more reticent in order to respect a student's privacy. Although teachers observe professional boundaries and remain in adult roles in all relationships with students, their professional status does not prevent them from being accessible, caring, and eager to share knowledge that will empower students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use their knowledge of students to strategically match the best instructional practice with individual students or groups of students, differentiating support as needed to foster students' literacy development. Accomplished teachers adjust the curriculum to match the student in ways that promote learning within each student's optimal range of development. Teachers

know that targeting instruction that is challenging to a student while being sensitive to his or her developmental level enhances the potential for student engagement with learning and fosters growth. Accomplished teachers do not assume that students share the same background or aspirations. For example, accomplished teachers know their students sufficiently well to recommend independent reading that matches students' interests and instructional or independent reading level. In cases when teachers assign the same book for the entire class, they know their students' reading levels well enough to adjust and vary their instructional strategies as necessary. Accomplished English language arts teachers are adept at creating assignments that build on individuality, and they provide students with opportunities to read, view, write, and produce varied types of texts about topics that interest them. Teachers also can help students develop knowledge and skills in areas in which they might not currently have an interest, skillfully creating engagement with subjects that might otherwise provoke boredom or resistance. Accomplished teachers ensure that every student has the opportunity for their individual voice to be heard. (See [Standard IV—Instructional Design and Implementation](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers systematically learn about their students' knowledge of global issues and current events. Teachers then purposefully address the gaps between what students know and what they need to know to become active, knowledgeable, and critical participants in a global world. Accomplished teachers cultivate student awareness of important events occurring in other countries and then connect these events to the English language arts learning environment. For example, a teacher might help students draw parallels between a contemporary totalitarian society described in a news article and a fictional dystopia such as the one described in *The Hunger Games* or "Harrison Bergeron." The teacher might then build on students' awareness of the connections between the real and the fictional by asking students to write their own short story using an exaggerated scenario based on a contemporary issue. Accomplished teachers help students see the importance of their voices and roles in a world whose problems and solutions are increasingly interconnected.

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their knowledge of their students as a way to gauge the effectiveness of their practice on student learning. Teachers monitor ways in which they connect their knowledge about students to their practice. Accomplished teachers understand ways in which their application of knowledge about students is more or less effective in engaging students in instruction. In order to identify areas in which they must update their knowledge of students, teachers use classroom experiences and other kinds of interactions with students. Teachers seek out ways to better understand their students and incorporate that knowledge into daily instructional practice.

Accomplished English language arts teachers determine the extent to which their knowledge of their students affects student learning. A teacher might notice that a student who never exhibited this behavior before suddenly starts falling asleep in

class. The teacher might seek out information from colleagues and the student's parents to determine whether the change in behavior is driven by a lack of interest in academics or is the result of factors unrelated to school. A teacher might also seize an opportunity to use one student's specialized knowledge to enhance learning for other students. For example, if the class fails to understand the idea of allusions in literature, a student who is a proficient gamer might cite the analogous ways in which allusions are used in video games. An accomplished teacher would analyze this situation and determine whether a detailed discussion of this connection would serve as an illuminating example or as a distraction. If the former, the teacher might invite the student with game expertise to discuss how allusions are used in specific video games.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on a regular basis to improve their knowledge about students and apply this knowledge in more productive ways. Accomplished teachers review all the methods available for gathering and applying knowledge about students. When they realize that their insight is somehow limited, accomplished teachers identify resources for obtaining the knowledge they need. These resources may include classroom experiences as well as conversations with students, other educators, parents, and community members. A teacher might invite students to bring in artifacts such as favorite movies, books, songs, or television shows to stay current with youth cultural interests. Accomplished teachers learn about their students through various means, including out-of-school avenues such as musical, artistic, athletic, and other community events. Accomplished teachers realize that some of their most powerful professional learning is inspired by the students themselves.

Standard II

Fairness, Equity, and Diversity

Accomplished English language arts teachers practice fairness and equity because of their commitment to the acceptance and appreciation of others. Accomplished teachers use a variety of strategies and materials to address disparities among students and provide meaningful learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the principles of fairness, equity, and diversity, and they effectively apply these principles, along with their knowledge of students, in their classrooms. As stewards for the interests of students, accomplished teachers are vigilant in ensuring that all receive an adequate share of attention. Accomplished teachers recognize their own biases and do not allow them to negatively interfere in their decisions.

Accomplished English language arts teachers uphold fairness and equity in their daily interactions with students. Teachers understand that *fairness* refers to acting with clarity and consistency and providing each student with the support the student needs to be successful. Teachers who apply fairness are careful to counter potential inequity and avoid favoritism. In the classrooms of accomplished English language arts teachers, attention to equity is central. Teachers understand that *equity* requires a deep commitment to justice. Accomplished teachers do not treat all students alike, for similar treatment is not necessarily equivalent to equitable education. Equity is brought to bear in the way that teachers create instructional settings that promote rigorous learning for all students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand and value the diversity of their students. Teachers understand that a commitment to *diversity* involves the appreciation of each student's cultural, linguistic, religious, regional, and ethnic heritage; family configuration; socioeconomic status; sexual orientation; gender; body image; physical and cognitive exceptionalities; prior learning and literacy experiences; learning style; political views; and personal interests, needs, and goals. Teachers reflect on their use of the knowledge of diverse cultures and contexts to enrich instruction and to help students learn about different cultures within their schools, their communities, and the world.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that ensuring fairness, equity, and diversity is not a simple proposition. To ensure these principles, teachers

must have an appreciation of human differences and an understanding of how best to respond to them. Hence, accomplished teachers employ what is known about effective and ineffective practice with diverse groups of students, and they strive to learn more about how best to accommodate differences. Accomplished teachers understand that for the learning environment to be a good place for some students to learn in, it must be a good place for all students to learn in.

Creating a Learning Environment that Promotes Fairness, Equity, and Diversity

Accomplished English language arts teachers create a learning environment characterized by acceptance, inclusion, and appreciation for what each individual brings. Accomplished teachers have welcoming attitudes and are eager to work with each of their students. They model dispositions and actions that encourage fairness, equity, and respect for diversity, and they build their students' capacities to support and value one another's ideas, contributions, and accomplishments. Accomplished teachers encourage dialogue so that all voices are honored and heard. For example, teachers might use Socratic circles to illuminate and explore differing perspectives on texts, embracing both agreement and respectful disagreement as pathways for generating new ideas. Accomplished teachers understand that by modeling how to express and navigate different viewpoints, they can help students develop tolerance and conflict-resolution skills that will help them now and in the future.

Accomplished English language arts teachers proactively address issues of diversity to promote equity and ensure that all students receive equal opportunities to learn and advance. Accomplished teachers foster in their students respect for and appreciation of others, regardless of personal and academic differences. Accomplished teachers provide students with opportunities to read and view texts that are representative of human diversity in order to explore the scope of humanity, the people they want to become, and the people they do not want to become. Teachers appreciate and respect differences in the personalities and temperaments of students and realize that the backgrounds of students in a single classroom invariably include a tremendous wealth and variety of human experience. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for voices that are silent or not present in the classroom. Teachers try to minimize the expression of bias and stereotypes in online environments as well as in school, and when they encounter bias in any forum, they rally against it. By challenging bias, teachers inspire students to do the same. Accomplished teachers firmly believe that students are entitled to be proud of their roots and personal identities. Teachers are committed to social justice, empowering early adolescents and young adults to start to take control of their own lives and decisions rather than relying on others.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are proactive about respecting and valuing identity, personality, and culture. They uncover and address the prejudices and stereotypes that often lead to misunderstanding, bullying, discrimination,

dehumanization, and violence. Accomplished teachers recognize the different forms, scopes, and contexts that insensitivity can take and guard against all of them, from the subtle to the extreme. When they become aware of hostile dispositions among their students, teachers work diligently to address, neutralize, or eliminate them where possible, using a multitude of available resources. Accomplished teachers recognize that addressing these overt and covert attitudes and behaviors is essential to preserving a safe learning environment.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the importance of respecting the cultural values and norms that students bring from home. They involve parents and other caregivers in sharing the traditions of families as one way of promoting students' understanding of and respect for diversity. Accomplished teachers realize that students' identities are fluid from day to day, and that students grapple with cultural patterns of behavior, societal norms, peer expectations, and developmental stages. Teachers realize that as students work to discover how all these influences intersect, they may embrace, emphasize, reject, and question various aspects of their cultural backgrounds and identities. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#) and [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers prepare students to be global citizens by creating a learning environment that acquaints students with cultures beyond their community. Teachers recognize that many of today's students will be working in careers that currently do not exist and in social contexts that have not yet evolved. Therefore, teachers provide opportunities for students to gain an awareness of the complexities of emerging issues and differing perspectives at local, national, and international levels. Teachers help students celebrate the diversity of the human condition, connect with others, and adapt to a world that is constantly changing.

Adapting Instruction as a Means of Establishing Fairness and Equity

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that the equitable treatment of students may sometimes involve treating students differently. To be fair and equitable, teachers must know their students' needs and consider each student individually. This consideration means that teachers play to their students' strengths and provide extra support when needed, allowing students differentiated opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Accomplished teachers deliberately seek out paths that will provide insights into their students' learning styles, interests, and experiences, and then they connect this information to their instructional decision making. Teachers sensitively frame the way they approach a lesson, a piece of literature, or a classroom discussion using detailed knowledge of students' diverse outlooks and backgrounds.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that students come to the classroom with prior experiences and perspectives that both differentiate them from and connect them with their peers. Accomplished teachers are well attuned to this variety and guide students to create classroom norms that address, accept,

and celebrate these differences and similarities. Moreover, accomplished teachers understand the many ways students seek to distinguish themselves from their peers. They monitor and respond appropriately with strategies that will not only advance student learning, but also improve understanding among students and foster a shared sense of community.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are committed to providing every student with the help needed to progress as an inquisitive, informed, responsible, creative, and literate human being. Teachers understand that such growth is best supported by a collaborative learning community in which all students participate fully in a comprehensive curriculum; therefore, teachers vary their approaches for reaching all students. For example, an accomplished teacher might provide peer tutoring, provide students with an opportunity to work with a computer program, or group students within small, heterogeneous groups to address a specific need. Teachers monitor the progress of group work, ensuring that each student in a group is accorded respect and that all have a fair chance to participate in appropriate ways.

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for a high-quality, challenging education for all students, including those for whom English is a new language and students who belong to groups that lack access to rich, robust, and relevant curriculum and materials. Accomplished teachers look for ways to meet all students' needs and raise achievement levels. Teachers acknowledge the existence of the achievement gap and seek ways to accelerate students' academic growth. They are aware of the specialized attention that some students need, and they modify their instruction and assessments accordingly. Accomplished teachers are proponents within their classrooms and in larger contexts for the inclusion and success of all students; therefore, they ensure that students who are at the proficient and advanced levels are challenged just as students who are striving toward proficiency are supported. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#) and [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers are attuned to the special characteristics of students with physical or learning disabilities, or exceptional cognitive, social, emotional, or linguistic needs. Teachers select and use appropriate instructional resources, including assistive technologies, and they modify the physical layout of the learning environment as needed. Accomplished teachers allocate instructional resources, including one-on-one attention, according to the unique needs of each student. Teachers may arrange students with exceptionalities in small, heterogeneous groups to facilitate interactions among pupils from different backgrounds and of different ability levels.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students appreciate varying forms of language and learn how to appropriately select and use different forms based on the communicator's purpose, audience, and context. Teachers recognize that no form of communication is politically neutral; they acknowledge the issues of power related to what society values as legitimate communication. Accomplished teachers understand that although Standard American English is a gatekeeper to many benefits of society, other forms of language usage have value in the classroom

community. Accomplished teachers are aware of the ways in which language reflects cultural diversity, and they capitalize on the richness of language that students bring to class and to texts to heighten students' sensitivities to issues of culture. (See [Standard VIII—Language Study](#).)

Identifying and Implementing Resources for Fairness, Equity, and Diversity

Accomplished English language arts teachers seek out a blend of resources, opportunities, and activities that will enhance and celebrate cultural differences. Teachers want all students to see themselves, others like them, and those different from them in literary selections. Accomplished teachers use student diversity as a powerful resource to strengthen the classroom community, accelerate student success, and facilitate student acceptance of differences.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use a wide variety of resources to promote opportunities for their students to learn appreciation and acceptance of others. Teachers use their content knowledge to select fiction and nonfiction texts that allow students both to see themselves in selected texts and to expand their awareness of the world around them. Regardless of the demographics of the classroom, accomplished teachers strive to introduce students to texts of many cultures. Using texts drawn from a range of traditions and examples that are inclusive of both genders and of many ethnicities, cultures, and languages, teachers provide students with new lenses through which they can view the host of ethical and moral issues that authors portray through their visions of the world. With carefully selected texts, teachers help students investigate the different functions, purposes, and roles that literacy plays in their own communities and in various cultures. Accomplished English language arts teachers ensure that the texts and learning experiences they select are authentic to the traditions and beliefs of the cultures described. To ensure authenticity, teachers consult current literature, experts among their colleagues and the community, their students, students' families, and other reliable sources. They conduct a dialogue with their students in which similarities and differences are discussed, and common ground is found. Accomplished teachers help students understand the political, social, and cultural contexts of works that were created in distant times or places; teachers also help students evaluate the relevance of these texts in the here and now. (See [Standard V—Reading and Viewing](#) and [Standard VII—Speaking and Listening](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the importance of developing students' skills with technology to equip them for the needs of an ever-changing global society. Teachers also recognize the potential of technology to enhance students' ability in the realm of creative problem solving. Therefore, accomplished teachers help ensure fair and equitable access to technology in their classes and within the school, whenever possible. Regardless of students' immediate circumstances, accomplished teachers help their students become aware of the possibilities for the use of technology to advance their education.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use technology to support instruction. Teachers collaborate with specialists and advocate for the use of technology to support English language arts learning of all students, including students with exceptionalities and English language learners. An accomplished teacher might show respect for a student's innate disposition by encouraging a reticent student to participate in an online class discussion as an alternative to speaking aloud in class. Teachers are aware of any disparities that may exist among their students concerning their prior experiences with technology and their access to technology at home and school. Teachers take limitations regarding access into consideration when making assignments, and, when possible, they develop creative solutions to help compensate for a lack of access to technology.

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in ensuring equity. They monitor their own preconceptions and actions for the effects that their cultural backgrounds, biases, values, temperaments, and personal experiences have on their teaching. They recognize and acknowledge their aesthetic preferences and philosophical outlooks. They understand how their beliefs and predispositions may affect their interactions with students whose backgrounds, beliefs, values, learning styles, or personalities are significantly different from their own. Teachers make sure that fairness and respect for individuals permeate all aspects of their instructional practice. For example, teachers may exchange students' papers with other teachers or cover student names to safeguard against unfair biases in scoring. Teachers seek to achieve mutual understanding with students, and they treat each student fairly and with honor, dignity, and respect.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review evidence to determine the extent to which fairness, equity, and diversity are part of the learning environment. Teachers consider ways in which they organize instruction and interact with students to promote fairness, equity, and diversity, and they also reflect about how they increase the awareness and practice of these principles among their students. Accomplished teachers seek out the reasons students do or do not succeed, which may stem from issues related to fairness, equity, and diversity. For example, a student may have failed to hand in an essay assignment because he did not have access to the necessary library materials for research. An accomplished teacher would ensure that all students have access to materials needed to complete an assignment. Accomplished teachers also monitor whether their students are becoming more considerate of divergent opinions and more accepting of others. For example, accomplished teachers might examine patterns of classroom discussion to determine the degree to which students are listening to one another and otherwise behaving in ways that show openness to the contributions of their classmates.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their instruction on a regular basis to increase their knowledge, expand their skills, and adjust their practice on behalf of fairness, equity, and diversity. Accomplished teachers are innovative and take risks to enrich students' cultural understandings to help students

reflect on their experiences. Accomplished teachers are lifelong learners; they engage in professional reading experiences, learning communities, blogs, networks, workshops, or classes to build their capacity to work with diverse students. When possible, they contribute professional writing and presentations about fairness, equity, and diversity. Teachers understand that cultures are dynamic and constantly evolving; therefore, teachers never consider their own cultural learning complete.

Standard III

Learning Environment

Using their understanding of the ways in which physical and relational factors combine in the classroom, accomplished English language arts teachers purposefully design inclusive learning environments that engage, challenge, and support student learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers carefully and intentionally design and manage all aspects of the learning environment, from the physical space and the physical resources within it, to the movement of people and objects, the personal relationships within the environment, and the emotional climate created by the interaction of all these elements.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use their knowledge of students to create learning environments that celebrate diversity and allow all students to flourish academically and emotionally, whatever their backgrounds and exceptionalities. Accomplished teachers realize that in today's world, the learning environment extends beyond the walls of the classroom and the school and into the local and online communities. Teachers understand that a positive learning environment depends on the quality of the relationships within their classrooms. They are aware that their ability to relate to students is key, and they also understand that it is vitally important to promote mutual respect among students. Accomplished teachers realize that a successful learning environment must be negotiated and co-constructed with the members of a learning community, and therefore accomplished teachers elicit a concerted effort from their students in this endeavor.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are aware that they have varying degrees of control over the ways in which they can influence and shape the learning environment. They make the best use of the power they have in this domain, and they advocate for better and more equitable environments by fostering positive relationships with other education stakeholders. When necessary, accomplished teachers negotiate the expansion of their influence over learning environments. Accomplished teachers continuously reflect on the learning environment, seeking ways to improve its effectiveness.

Educational Setting

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that in today's world, education takes place in the physical space of the classroom, in physical spaces outside the classroom, and in virtual spaces—both those accessed through formal,

teacher-directed activities and those accessed through a multiplicity of informal, student-directed activities. Accomplished teachers encourage learning in all these educational settings and honor the ways in which students create and manipulate their own learning environments.

In the classrooms of accomplished English language arts teachers, the physical space is clearly defined and articulated but also adaptable for different functions. The design is neither too lax nor overly rigid, with necessary resources well organized and easily available. Accomplished teachers are aware of the many ways in which physical layout contributes to the tone and mood of a classroom. Therefore, teachers make purposeful decisions regarding the arrangement of furniture, seating, and classroom displays. For example, an accomplished teacher might create a forbidden word wall when focusing on improving diction, or create an area for displaying star work to motivate students to excel. Even when accomplished teachers are working in challenging physical surroundings, including old or minimally equipped and maintained buildings, they are still intentional about the ways they design an effective learning environment.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that a significant aspect of creating a learning environment is grouping learners. Accomplished teachers are skilled at differentiating between learning tasks and goals from which students will benefit by working collaboratively and goals that are more easily attained by students working alone, and teachers adjust the environment for both kinds of work. Accomplished teachers have a clear vision of appropriate arrangements at the time they plan an activity, but they also make in-the-moment modifications to ensure optimum learning opportunities for all students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers have clear and definite purposes for how they use space and where they place students and themselves. For example, on the day of a test, an accomplished teacher might arrange students in rows, whereas on a group discussion day, the teacher might seat students in one large circle. In addition to taking activities into consideration when placing students, accomplished teachers analyze other factors, such as students' personalities, skills, and interpersonal relationships. Accomplished teachers recognize that seating two particular students next to each other may facilitate collaboration and peer assistance or may interfere with learning, depending on the students and the task.

Accomplished English language arts teachers appreciate the fact that the classroom learning environment may include virtual spaces where, under the direction of the teacher, students perform language practice, develop critical work, and engage with media. When possible, accomplished teachers incorporate virtual learning environments in instruction, monitoring the virtual environment for age and developmental appropriateness and augmenting this environment with scaffolds. For example, students might blog about personal interests in an effort to create connections with one another, and then the teacher could model virtual interaction and engagement in an effort to support positive connections among students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that today's learning environment fluidly extends beyond the classroom. It extends into physical spaces such as community centers and into virtual spaces that promote synchronous and asynchronous interaction with a larger society. Accomplished teachers recognize that the hybrid space of physical and virtual environments is not merely an option for students, but a major reality of twenty-first-century engagement. Teachers capitalize on students' connection to the hybrid space, and when possible, teachers provide opportunities for students who lack access to this space.

Accomplished English language arts teachers prepare students for physical and virtual public life by helping them navigate the types of interactions, ways to collaborate, and types of individuals they will encounter. Teachers help students gain insight into and control over important issues in their lives through self-reflection and participation in the larger arena of public discourse. Accomplished English language arts teachers help students assume roles in the broader world by gaining entrance into the civic, professional, and business arenas. Teachers help students use their language skills to contribute to the local and global community. By designing a learning environment that emphasizes the relational nature of learning, accomplished teachers give students the tools for effective real-world communication. Students of accomplished teachers learn to function successfully in public spaces because they understand that they can influence the environment in which they find themselves.

Climate of the Learning Environment

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that the quality of relationships in the learning environment—how students interact with one another and with the teacher—is significant in fashioning a learning environment that nurtures the academic as well as the personal growth of early adolescents and young adults. Accomplished teachers know that students must be supported if they are to take creative risks, offer conjectures, question the assertions proposed by others, and feel comfortable when their own ideas are challenged. Teachers establish classroom cultures of trust in many ways, such as referring to “our” classroom to build a sense of ownership among students. Accomplished teachers work with students to uphold classroom norms, share responsibilities, and attend to one another's needs as a way of building a supportive culture. Students know they can rely on accomplished teachers to consistently treat students with respect and ensure that students do likewise with one another.

Accomplished English language arts teachers manage their classrooms effectively. They establish predictable routines early in the year and make transitions seamlessly to create a learning environment in which students know what to expect and feel safe. Although it is important to include students in some of the decision making in the classroom, accomplished teachers maintain responsibility for many aspects of the learning environment, such as where students will sit, how attendance is taken, what routines will be observed for the opening of class, how students will respond orally, and how to manage classroom supplies.

Accomplished English language arts teachers engage students in purposeful, positive behaviors that may look quite different depending on the individual teacher's style. For example, a teacher might be perceived as unduly strict by an outsider but be valued by students as the "teacher who cares too much about me to let me slide by." Alternatively, a learning environment that appears noisy and chaotic may actually be effectively organized to support productive student work.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that a student's relationship with the teacher is a crucial aspect of the learning environment because student conduct is primarily a function of student engagement. Accomplished teachers are skilled at limiting disruptions to the learning process through their awareness of classroom dynamics, grouping decisions, and relationships with students. The common denominator in all healthy learning climates is a foundation of mutual respect and concern for others shared by teacher and students. When problems do occur, teachers know how to deal with them firmly and fairly. For example, if a student causes a disruption, an accomplished teacher would respectfully redirect the conversation and might choose to talk to the student privately.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that fostering consistent student engagement is a crucial component in creating a productive learning environment. Teachers are adept in balancing intellectual rigor with relevance, high interest, compelling tasks, and interaction. Accomplished teachers help students learn to participate actively in discussions of texts, share their ideas with one another, listen attentively to one another, and, in general, display their involvement in the field of language arts. Teachers are equally comfortable employing whole-class, one-on-one, peer-group, or other grouping approaches—depending on the instructional purpose at hand. (See [Standard VII—Speaking and Listening](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the importance of their dispositions to the learning environment. They demonstrate their passion for the language arts so that students will perceive that language and literature are genuine sources of enjoyment and discovery. They model curiosity about literature and the uses of language, and they encourage each student's literacy practices while maintaining high expectations. Accomplished teachers understand the healthy role that humor can play in the learning environment. They are confident in their adult role and command respect, yet they also respond comfortably to good-natured irreverence aimed in their direction. Accomplished teachers are caring, fair minded, and supportive of each student's well-being.

Although accomplished English language arts teachers are candid about their extensive knowledge and experience in all of the language arts, they do not project themselves as infallible. They model the idea that gaining knowledge and insight from the study of literature and other texts is a never-ending quest that is intrinsically rewarding. By talking about their own experiences as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers, teachers demonstrate to students that false starts and mistakes are part of the learning process.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that students must learn to have their ideas challenged without rancor or fear of embarrassment. Accomplished teachers are vigilant about not countenancing student-to-student harassment in either subtle or overt forms. Accordingly, teachers work to create learning environments in which all students are not only physically safe, but can develop competence in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills without an inhibiting fear of failure or social stigmatization. Teachers encourage respect for the diversity of language backgrounds, traditions, life experiences, and knowledge that each student brings to the classroom conversation. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Because accomplished English language arts teachers understand that relationships among adults have a profound effect on the learning environment, these teachers demonstrate professionalism in their relationships with coworkers. Accomplished teachers strive to create or involve themselves in networks of support within the school because they realize not only that such networks can intervene with students in crisis, but also that cohesive adult support fosters a culture in which every student matters—a culture conducive to personal growth and academic achievement.

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in creating supportive learning environments. They monitor the learning environments for which they are responsible to consider ways in which these environments promote positive learning outcomes. Teachers recognize ways in which respect, classroom organization, planning, and other factors contribute to a well-functioning learning environment. They seek out ways to optimize environmental conditions that will improve student learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to determine the extent to which the learning environment has helped students reach learning goals. Teachers strive to reflect on every aspect of the environment, from seemingly superficial details such as whether materials are readily accessible to subtle and profound issues such as whether relationships are conducive to student learning. Teachers carefully observe student behavior and may survey their students in order to assess the choices that have affected the learning environment. If a teacher notices that students are reading more because of the ready availability of books in the learning environment, the teacher might then seek out more avenues for acquiring books to continue to offer a wide selection for all readers. Accomplished English language arts teachers also consider, to the extent possible, which seating arrangement is best suited to the activity at hand. Teachers regularly ask themselves questions such as: “Did I sufficiently prepare my students to engage in whole-group and small-group interaction?” and “Should those particular students have been paired together?” Teachers strive to monitor how their own interactions with students affect the timbre of the learning environment. For example, a student might disengage from a conversation with the teacher, prompting the teacher to identify

whether the teacher's body language, vocal tone, or word choice contributed to the student's behavior. Reflection could prompt the teacher to approach the student in a more open or appropriate manner.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that regular reflection is an important part of purposefully designing and maintaining successful learning environments. Teachers stay abreast of current technology and educational strategies through professional development, reading, and writing. Accomplished teachers visit colleagues' classrooms to compare those learning environments with their own and to observe and discuss ways to improve their own classroom learning environments. Accomplished teachers understand that creating a learning environment is an evolutionary process, that the process is recursive, and that, with reflection, the environment can improve over time.

Standard IV

Instructional Design and Implementation

Accomplished English language arts teachers use their knowledge of students, their discipline, and pedagogy to design and implement instruction that promotes the learning of all students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that the ultimate purpose of English language arts instruction is to equip students to be critical evaluators and skilled producers of a variety of forms of communication. Accomplished teachers also understand the role that English language arts instruction can play in equipping students to live fulfilling and responsible lives, engage in civic responsibility, and become lifelong learners. Teachers use their knowledge of students, their knowledge of English language arts, and the principles of instructional design and implementation to set attainable and worthwhile learning goals for students and to develop meaningful and equitable learning opportunities, while extending to students an increasing measure of control over setting goals and choosing how to pursue them. Accomplished teachers frequently integrate reading, writing, producing, speaking, listening, viewing, and inquiry opportunities within English studies and across the other disciplines. English language arts teachers select, adapt, and use instructional resources that support active student exploration of language processes. Teachers read widely, and they draw on their knowledge to choose high-quality texts that exemplify the diversity of human experience. Accomplished teachers possess content and pedagogical knowledge of reading, writing, language study, speaking, and listening, and they know how to incorporate that knowledge into their lessons. Teachers take the initiative to keep updated on current research, materials, and technologies related to instruction in English language arts. However, they also are cognizant of techniques that stand the test of time, incorporating and, when necessary, updating these techniques according to changes in students and the contexts in which they work. Accomplished teachers continually reflect on their instruction and its outcomes to improve student learning.

Establishing Instructional Goals

Accomplished English language arts teachers are goal oriented. They draw on their knowledge of their students, of the ways in which language is learned, and of the substance of the English language arts field when setting attainable and worthwhile learning goals with their students. Teachers are aware that they do not have complete freedom in setting these goals. In most cases, teachers' broadest

instructional goals are defined at the state and district levels. Furthermore, English language arts teachers regularly receive course assignments that describe the general nature of the material on which they are expected to focus. However, within this overarching context, teachers make significant instructional planning choices that shape the flow of learning. They make state and district goals applicable to their learning environments and establish additional learning goals that reflect the cultivated understanding of language arts that they are trying to inculcate in their students.

At the beginning of the school year, accomplished English language arts teachers determine where students should be academically at the close of the school year; then they plan instruction to ensure that students master these goals. Accomplished English language arts teachers use national, state, and local standards and many types of student data to set instructional goals, knowing that one test score does not define a student's ability in the learning environment. Accomplished teachers determine what types of initial assessments will be used and when to administer them. They then implement the assessments, analyze the results, and develop lesson plans. For example, an accomplished teacher might look at district, state, and classroom assessments to determine a student's individual skill level and then adjust lesson plans accordingly. Teachers collaborate with specialists to assess students' needs when necessary. Accomplished teachers gather data throughout the year and refer to this accrued data to drive instruction. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers use knowledge of their students to provide a clear sense of purpose in the learning environment and to set high expectations for all students. In some cases, teachers have a vision of success in English language arts that is beyond that conceived of by the students themselves. When designing learning goals and opportunities, teachers acknowledge that students learn at different rates but stress that despite this variation, all students are capable of meeting high and rigorous goals. Teachers recognize that young adolescents and young adults are more highly motivated when they perceive that their language explorations are serving their own ends. Furthermore, the ultimate goal of education—cultivating independent, self-reliant learners—requires students to develop a sense of self-direction. Therefore, in the learning environments of accomplished English language arts teachers, educational goal setting is an interactive process that takes place between the student and the teacher. For example, to help students become more aware of the challenges that exist in their writing, a teacher might guide students toward identifying specific traits that characterize high-quality writing and then provide students with tools for tracking their scores in these traits. This endeavor would enable students to set the goals that would best strengthen their writing. Teachers could ask students to return to the goals on the completion of each successive paper and identify evidence of personal growth. Teachers carefully negotiate with students a steadily increasing measure of control while maintaining a critical balance: they encourage self-directed learning, but they ensure that students make choices within a framework of ambitious, long-term learning goals informed by their teachers' knowledge of English language arts. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#).)

Throughout the year, accomplished teachers focus instruction on learning outcomes that help students comprehend and ultimately succeed in the world beyond their immediate surroundings. English language arts teachers also move students outside their realm of familiarity. For example, an accomplished teacher might engage students in inquiry focused on a current issue that students have not previously been exposed to and then help them explore its relevance to a global community.

Selecting Resources

Accomplished English language arts teachers are familiar with the range of resources needed to provide instruction in all of the language arts. These resources include, but are not limited to, literary and informational texts used to teach reading, research tools used to teach inquiry, grammar resources and model texts used to teach writing, and technological tools used in various forms of production.

Accomplished English language arts teachers make informed decisions about which instructional resources will best support their curriculum and benefit their students. Teachers continually update their knowledge of resources by referring to research, participating in professional development, and collaborating with colleagues. Furthermore, accomplished teachers recognize that students bring resources, such as their personal backgrounds, to instruction. By learning about students and from them, accomplished teachers can capitalize on students' prior knowledge and interests to create a relevant, rich, expansive curriculum. Accomplished teachers provide students with access to a variety of texts and tools—ranging from print resources to electronic, interactive media—to accommodate all ability levels and interests.

To the extent possible, accomplished English language arts teachers skillfully choose texts that appeal to early adolescents and young adults. In addition to meeting curricular goals, these textual resources exhibit such qualities as the imaginative use of language; the development of complex, nonstereotypical characters; and the sensitive portrayal of human experience. In situations where teachers are required to teach mandated texts, they find creative ways to link these texts to their students' needs. Teachers recognize that almost all texts present dilemmas of the human condition that can spur profound questions for students, improving their critical reading, writing, viewing, speaking, and language skills.

Accomplished English language arts teachers also encourage students to self-select texts for reading, listening, and viewing and topics for speaking, writing, and producing. Teachers urge students to select texts that represent diverse views so that they can become informed citizens who recognize the complexity of society. Teachers do not allow their own lack of familiarity with specific cultural contexts to keep them from exploring new works with their students; rather, they expand student choices of culturally responsive resources by enlisting help from members of diverse communities and cultures, and they learn from students themselves the meanings

of words and customs from the students' experiences. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Within the limits of what is available, accomplished English language arts teachers help students select and gain experience in working with technology. Teachers incorporate these tools into the learning environment to help students meet goals that are anchored in relevant standards. Accomplished English language arts teachers show students how to identify a variety of sources and then locate, evaluate, synthesize, and apply information from those sources. Accomplished teachers recognize that the rapid increase in the availability of information and the proliferation of new and emerging technologies that can be accessed by teachers and students provide new challenges as well as new opportunities. Teachers help students realize that consumers need to address the questions of credibility and ethics that arise when information is widely shared and easily acquired.

Accomplished English language arts teachers creatively pursue resources to enrich the learning environment. They might pursue grant money; donations; free or used materials; or ideas from colleagues, parents, and community members. Accomplished teachers keep apprised of and use online resources to create the richest possible learning opportunities for students.

Designing and Implementing Instructional Strategies

Accomplished English language arts teachers tailor aspects of language arts content to the appropriate instructional strategies to provide optimal learning for early adolescents and young adults. Teachers design lessons that challenge students to reach beyond their present abilities and situations while at the same time accommodating students' individual needs. Accomplished teachers possess a toolbox of instructional strategies that they can use to adjust their practice as appropriate. For example, when students need more explicit instruction to master a skill, accomplished teachers may employ strategies such as think-alouds and modeling. Teachers provide alternative avenues to the same learning destination, realizing that a variety of pedagogical styles can be successful in the learning environment. Accomplished teachers who possess knowledge of their students achieve a high level of engagement in their learning environments; students are involved and believe the work they are doing in the course is relevant to their present lives and futures. For example, an accomplished teacher might have students deeply examine multiple sides of a local issue to see the importance of using communication skills and making informed judgments as a participating citizen.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use complex questions to guide instruction. They design these questions using knowledge of their students and knowledge of standards. They also consider overarching themes, goals, careers, and concepts of social justice. Accomplished teachers use questions to construct and pace daily lessons, units, courses, and long-term goals, and they provide students with a clear picture of how each experience in the learning sequence builds on prior learning and aligns with the overall curriculum. Accomplished teachers help students

learn to form their own central questions and develop their own purposes for inquiry: ones that are cross-disciplinary, investigative, and sustaining. Teachers model how students should frame and pursue authentic learning in and outside the classroom.

Accomplished English language arts teachers demonstrate a contagious enthusiasm for their field, which helps students appreciate language and literature as genuine sources of enjoyment and discovery. Accomplished teachers often assume the role of co-learners: reading, writing, and discussing alongside their students; reacting honestly to ideas; and demonstrating their openness to fresh interpretations of familiar texts. Although teachers are candid about their extensive knowledge and expertise in the language arts, they do not project themselves as infallible. They model the idea that gaining knowledge and insight from a variety of texts is a lifelong activity that has intrinsic as well as practical value. Accomplished teachers also realize that their own attitudes can influence student learning; therefore, they carefully manage the ways they interact with students. They exhibit an open-mindedness to students' ideas, understanding that when an instructional leader models intellectual flexibility, students will be more likely to listen to and respect one another's ideas.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are sensitive to the diversity in their learning environments and are thus purposeful about encouraging students to find and express their own voices. Teachers seek information about important cultural and ethnic events and experiences from students, parents, and other community members. Teachers draw on students' background experiences, when appropriate, to broaden class discussions and foster enriched learning. They provide connections to challenging curricula through lessons that appeal to a variety of learning styles and are creatively adapted to individual student needs. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#).)

Accomplished teachers are responsive to the skill levels, needs, and interests of their students. Accomplished teachers scaffold reading instruction for some students by filling in needed background knowledge, making connections, chunking the text, or slowing the pace. For other students, teachers may provide challenges through curricular extensions, a brisker pace, or increased rigor. Accomplished teachers may support writers through minilessons, make a writing task less intimidating by breaking it into discrete pieces, provide student models of differing proficiencies, or supply mentor texts. Accomplished teachers recognize that students have varying reading levels; to address this situation equitably and provide for student success, they may assign similar texts of different readability levels or audiobooks. Teachers' decisions in differentiating instruction are thoughtful, purposeful, and tied to standards and respect students' dignity. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#), [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#), [Standard V—Reading and Viewing](#), and [Standard VI—Writing and Producing](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that providing students with meaningful choices is an important element of sound instruction. Choice can manifest itself in a number of ways. For example, a teacher might select a range of titles centered around a specific theme and allow students to select from the

provided list. Alternatively, students might all study the same text but then opt for different ways to demonstrate their understanding of that text. Choice can be an especially powerful tool in the process of inquiry, where students brainstorm ideas and pursue a project, anchored in standards, and of significant interest to them. In addition to increasing students' sense of ownership over their learning, choice can foster metacognition. Students learn that choice should not be random or merely intuitive; choice is most successful when it follows a careful analysis of one's own learning style and instructional needs. (See [Standard IX—Inquiry](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers perceive the content and instruction of English language arts as a springboard into global awareness and civic action. Accomplished teachers build civic awareness in the English language arts classrooms. They do this, for example, by including various texts representing diverse cultures and viewpoints. Teachers build civic responsibility by helping students learn to take action on behalf of local and global opportunities, challenges, and issues. Accomplished teachers show students how to build on their backgrounds and interests and access materials so they can participate as global citizens.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use a range of assessment methods to monitor student progress and plan and modify instruction. Assessments are planned in an integrated manner alongside goal setting and decision making about students, resources, and instruction. Teachers rely on assessment findings as one means to adjust their original plans for individual students, small groups, and the entire class. In addition, accomplished teachers use the results of assessments to provide feedback to students so that they can make accurate and realistic judgments about their own progress. When students assess their own performance, teachers may use these evaluations as another source of information for constructing a profile of student progress. Accomplished teachers understand that assessment is critical for helping teachers decide to stay the course, apply new strategies and reteach, or extend what students are learning. Accomplished teachers appropriately communicate assessment results to various audiences. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their instructional design and implementation. They deliberately observe, analyze, and improve their instructional practice for the purpose of achieving instructional goals. Accomplished teachers recognize and can articulate the reasons for their decisions, clearly linking student outcomes to their instructional actions. They understand circumstances in which learning occurs, and they reflect on the extent to which the instructional strategies promote their students' growth. Teachers see reflection as the engine that drives improved teaching and student learning and reflect continuously on curriculum design: how units, lessons, and assignments meet instructional goals and student needs.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to identify what went well, what did not, and why. An accomplished teacher might consider

the following questions: “What are the goals of instruction?”, “How can I determine whether students have mastered these goals?”, and “How will I respond if they learn, and how will I respond if they do not?” For example, a teacher might initially assume that, because of a lively discussion, all the students in the class have understood a given concept. However, after analyzing written responses, a video recording, or a student participation log, the teacher might realize that the students in one section of the room were not paying attention to the discussion. Such an analysis might lead the teacher to reteach material, restructure groups, or reconsider the vehicles for student response. In a different situation, if a teacher noticed that when students were asked to blog about a book that most of them completed the assignment in a thoughtful and engaged manner, the teacher would examine the factors that distinguished this performance from that of a less effective unit of study. Identifying the contributing factors that led up to the blog’s success would help the teacher replicate this success with a different group of students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on an ongoing basis to improve their instructional design and implementation. They explore innovative as well as enduring practices and continually reflect on how all practices can improve student engagement and student outcomes. Accomplished teachers do not blindly adopt new pedagogy simply because of its popularity. They analyze new methodologies through the lens of research, their own past experience, and the particular needs of their students. Accomplished teachers strategically incorporate teaching methods that improve student learning.

Standard V

Reading and Viewing

Accomplished English language arts teachers engage their students in reading and viewing a wide range of texts. Teachers support all students in developing the dispositions and proficiencies necessary for comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, and appreciating the texts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the profound importance of reading and viewing for early adolescent and young adult learners. Teachers know that when students read and view texts of many kinds, they encounter people and situations with which they are both familiar and unfamiliar, they are introduced to people they admire and revile, they are exposed to the human condition at its core, and they develop a broader understanding of the world. This exhilarating journey gives birth to voices, hopes, and dreams.

Accomplished teachers realize that the act of reading is no longer limited to deciphering and interpreting words on the printed or digital page and that today's students must become critical readers of texts in many different media, including illustrations, graphic novels, photographs, television programs, online broadcasts, advertisements, magazines, newspapers, films, songs, speeches, debates, websites, multimedia resources, and works of art. Therefore, the word text in this document refers to both print and nonprint text, whether this meaning is stated explicitly or not.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that reading and viewing involve the construction of meaning and that active readers and viewers intentionally engage with text. Teachers understand that reading and viewing are contextual; they are affected by the nature of the text, the situation in which the text was created, and the situation in which the text is being read. A student's ability to construct meaning depends on the student's background knowledge, interest, skill, purpose, and developmental level. Reading and viewing are also intentional; readers and viewers must apply strategies to derive deeper meaning from text. Realizing that reading and viewing are social processes, accomplished teachers continually assess and reflect on their instructional practices to enhance students' growth as readers and viewers. (See [Standard VII—Speaking and Listening](#).)

The Purposes of Reading

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that students engage in reading and viewing for many reasons. Purposes may include, but are not limited to, gathering information, challenging one's perspective, stretching one's imagination, understanding the human condition and the world, and simply reading for pleasure. Ideally, the goal of accomplished teachers is to inspire a love of reading and skill in reading, ultimately creating lifelong learners.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students understand that one's purpose for reading should influence the way one chooses and approaches a text. For example, a student in search of a specific item of information might skim quickly or, in the case of digital text, perform a keyword search. A student with a different purpose, such as analyzing the viewpoint in a controversial documentary, would need to carefully follow the logic of the premise and evaluate the facts used to support it. Teachers help students realize that one's purpose can change as one engages with a text, and that new strategies may flow from a revised purpose. For example, a student who starts out by skimming a text for a fact may encounter an engrossing argument and decide to slow down, read more carefully, and then reread. Accomplished teachers help students set purposes for reading and viewing, leading them to develop and articulate their own purposes and strategies. Ultimately, students will employ these skills in disciplines other than English language arts. For example, when solving a mathematical equation, students understand the necessity of going slowly, taking things apart, and checking understanding. In social studies and science, students learn to pay close attention to features such as headings and subheadings to identify main ideas and chunks of information.

Genres

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that students need experience recognizing various genres, including, but not limited to, poetry, drama, novels, biographies, speeches, journal articles, essays, video games, and documentaries; students also need exposure to both canonical and contemporary texts. Accomplished teachers help students appreciate each genre's unique characteristics. Teachers instruct students about the purposes and features of various genres to prepare students to become more sophisticated thinkers and communicators.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students understand the features of texts. For example, teachers explain the structures of novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. They help students analyze plot, including flashbacks and foreshadowing. They teach poetic forms such as haiku and sonnets. They help students analyze organizational patterns, rhetorical devices, graphic elements, and other features that help convey meaning to the reader. For example, a teacher might model how to analyze a political cartoon or persuasive essay for propaganda techniques and fallacious reasoning. Accomplished teachers explain how to assess the currency, reliability, and bias of sources and data. They help students become aware of how the careful interpretation of themes, viewpoints, archetypes,

stereotypes, symbolism, figurative language, allusions, motifs, and other conventions can lead to deeper understanding of a text. Accomplished teachers instruct students about the ways in which commercial, social, cultural, and political messages are embedded in texts.

Instructional Strategies

Accomplished English language arts teachers have the pedagogical skills necessary to help all students improve the way they navigate through text. Teachers understand that the meaning-making process is influenced by a multitude of factors, including the purpose for reading; the evolving knowledge, interest, and skills that the student brings to the task; and the nature of the text. Accomplished teachers are sensitive to the ways in which these factors interact, and they adjust and implement strategies in light of the particular context rather than following a prescriptive or formulaic approach. Teachers motivate students to find personal meaning in texts through a variety of best-practice, research-based instructional techniques.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are able to select appropriate texts based on student needs because they are aware of students' comprehension levels and individual interests. Teachers can identify and access materials that have a wide range of readability; they also know how to provide texts with similar subject matter in different formats and at different levels of difficulty, such as a Shakespeare play and a high-quality graphic novel or film version of that story. Accomplished teachers introduce students to the richness of literary traditions within and across cultures, both to reflect the diversity of students in the learning environment and to increase students' global awareness of traditions they have never directly encountered. Teachers select texts that evoke profound questions around issues such as coming of age or justice. Accomplished English language arts teachers view their school media center and their library media specialist as important resources for their students and themselves. Teachers present challenging, high-quality texts to all students, and they provide the strategies necessary for students to improve their skills in reading and viewing. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers use a variety of appropriate instructional activities to help students plan, engage with, and respond to ideas and topics in their reading and viewing. Teachers show students how to monitor their understanding of texts in order to make decisions about how to adjust their reading pace and how to determine what to read carefully, what to read quickly, what to skip, and what to reread. In the case of digital resources such as websites, digital databases, video, and other media, teachers instruct students in specialized strategies such as analyzing the camera angles, voiceovers, and music that a director used in a filmed short story to add subtleties to the narrative. (See [Standard IV—Instructional Design and Implementation](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers use scaffolding to help students learn how to interpret more complex texts over time. When students experience challenges, accomplished teachers help them work through the ensuing frustration

by giving them strategies to unlock meaning and continue. Teachers model for students how to visualize what they are reading, summarize what they have read, and ask and answer questions about texts. In the case of nonprint texts, teachers teach students to be active viewers in order to pay attention to detail, to make inferences, and to interpret complex visual features to derive deeper meaning. Accomplished English language arts teachers provide students with a range of resources that help them interpret texts. For example, a teacher might show students a nineteenth-century portrait to help them visualize the clothing and hairstyle of a character from a historical novel, or provide students with literary criticism to help them understand complex imagery in a poem. In a different context, a teacher might use emoticons to help an English language learner to develop precise vocabulary for the range of emotions that a character experiences.

Accomplished English language arts teachers model the way that experienced readers progress through difficult text. As students read a novel written from multiple perspectives, for example, teachers can help them track the narrator for each section. Teachers may help students synthesize information from each chapter to determine the main idea of an informational text. Accomplished teachers recognize that effective interpretation of text is recursive, so they teach students how to revisit sections of a text to clarify, deepen, or modify an evolving understanding. For example, when students are analyzing the relationship between characters, teachers may emphasize the importance of returning to the characters' many interactions over the course of the text to follow the dynamics of the relationship. Similarly, teachers may replay a portion of a film that foreshadowed a significant event.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are lifelong readers and sophisticated viewers who model reading and viewing behaviors for their students. Teachers share stories of their personal experiences with texts: the difficulty and frustration of taking on challenging texts and the excitement, satisfaction, and accomplishment they derive from reading and viewing. Accomplished English language arts teachers enjoy finding the connections between reading and other parts of life, and they model this open and curious disposition. Accomplished teachers demonstrate that literature is a tool for building a shared vocabulary and set of allusions with the rest of the English-speaking world and show how these shared references can connect popular culture with canonical works in a layered way. Accomplished teachers recognize that sharing their passion is a powerful tool for cultivating a similar passion in their students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that reading and viewing are interrelated with writing and speaking. Teachers realize that building reading and viewing skills enhances the skills of writing and speaking. For example, a reader draws a conclusion from a text using clear evidence contained within the work, whereas a writer embeds clear evidence in a text to guide the reader toward a specific interpretation. Viewing and producing are similarly related. A viewer interprets the meaning of visual symbols, and the producer creates those symbols. Teaching students to read and view critically demystifies the sometimes intimidating processes of writing and producing because students perceive that writing and producing involve a set of logical, understandable, manageable steps.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students learn to derive meaning from texts through writing activities such as response or dialogue journals, graphic organizers, and formal analytical essays. Accomplished teachers also develop reading through oral activities such as question posing; student-led but teacher-facilitated discussions; dramatic performances such as role-playing, readers' theatre, and dance; and visual representation. To deepen students' understanding of texts, accomplished teachers regularly foster opportunities for public conversation so that students can meaningfully express their ideas and then clarify their understanding about what they have read or viewed. Accomplished teachers may facilitate small student-led group discussions; whole-class discussions; and conversations outside the classroom, such as video conferencing, discussion boards, written correspondence, and book clubs.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that reading and viewing are interrelated with the study of language. In the course of teaching reading and viewing, teachers focus on vocabulary, word choice, and sentence structure as they relate to style, voice, and rhetorical effect. Teachers know that reading is the single greatest way to develop students' vocabularies and overall language fluencies, but they also realize that intentional vocabulary instruction before and during reading is an important component of reading assignments. Teachers demonstrate how words are conceptually related to one another through such activities as etymological study, semantic mapping, classification, and the study of word structures. Students of accomplished teachers also learn a range of word-attack strategies that they can apply to unfamiliar words, such as consulting the dictionary, analyzing roots and affixes, analyzing inflections, transferring their knowledge of foreign languages, and making inferences based on contextual clues. (See [Standard VIII—Language Study](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers create independent, critical readers and viewers by scaffolding students' thinking through complex issues. Accomplished teachers understand that all students need support regarding different aspects of reading and viewing. Teachers understand that students may grapple with comprehension of print and nonprint texts for a variety of reasons, including unfamiliar vocabulary, difficult figurative language, and complex sentence structure. Students' background knowledge, cultural assumptions, and lived experiences may also significantly influence students' understanding of text. Whereas most early adolescents and young adults already possess the skills to decode and read with some fluency, some early adolescent and young adult students continue to experience difficulty. In these cases, accomplished teachers offer sensitive assistance and developmentally appropriate materials that respect the student's chronological age and interest. For example, in the case of a student who reads significantly below grade level, an accomplished teacher would strive to locate a text with a lower readability level but with age-appropriate content. The teacher would also be sensitive about how to present the book in a way that shows respect for the student's dignity as a learner. When student difficulties are profound, teachers may need to create partnerships with other adults such as reading specialists, reading or literacy coaches, teachers of English language learners, or special education teachers to help all students experience growth. Accomplished teachers realize that

the goal of all support strategies is ultimately to empower students to interpret texts on their own.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that many students can be reluctant readers at times. This reluctance may have interrelated, complex causes related to both skill and emotion. Students may struggle with the rigor of the structure, vocabulary, or content, and they may have had negative prior experiences with reading. Some may lack interest in specific subject matter or genres. Skilled readers who are accustomed to comprehending with ease may resist certain texts because they are not used to frustration and may even feel that their identities as proficient readers are being challenged. Accomplished teachers inspire interest in reading and generate confidence in their students by helping students select relevant, accessible, engaging texts that appeal to students' interests, experiences, and genre preferences. When students are ready for additional challenges, accomplished teachers offer more sophisticated, challenging material. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that assessment is an ongoing process that helps drive instruction. They know that to comprehend texts proficiently, students draw from a variety of reading and viewing strategies to relate new ideas to what they know, to attend to how well they are understanding the text, and to monitor and improve their comprehension. Teachers may assess students' skills in these strategies through activities such as process journals, sticky notes, student think-alouds, or individual conferences. Accomplished teachers who have taught their students strategies for comprehending and interpreting paintings or films might assess their students' ability to comprehend and interpret a film director's technique and its contribution to the film's message, or how an author's treatment of theme compares to a visual artist's treatment of the same theme. For example, an accomplished teacher might assess students' ability to compare and contrast Lee's treatment of racism in Bob Ewell's attitude toward Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Rockwell's treatment of racism in *The Problem We All Live With*. In another example, an accomplished teacher might ask students to interpret Robert Mulligan's use of camera angles in the court scene of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) to deepen students' understanding of the characterization of Atticus Finch. In such assessments, an accomplished teacher reinforces the strategies needed to develop students' ability to read texts critically.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use a variety of methods to assess students' comprehension. They may quickly monitor in-process reading comprehension during class by using student-response systems, and they may check for literal comprehension of a short story by using exit questions or by having students map the main events of the plot. To assess students' skill in making inferences, teachers may have students outline the claims of an argument or write about the traits of a character, citing evidence for their inferences.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the many ways in which reading skills can be assessed. They study student performance data to form hypotheses about the strengths and needs of their students, both individually and

as a group. They recognize where their students fall on a critical reading continuum, and they make adjustments to broad-based plans to tailor appropriate instruction for individuals as well as for the group. To the extent possible, accomplished teachers embed the reinforcement of targeted reading skills in their regular instruction and monitor progress on those skills, rather than teaching to the test by practicing the skills in isolation. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their reading and viewing instruction. They monitor the effectiveness of a particular lesson and then repeat, replace, or modify it based on the degree to which it succeeded. They recognize the need to alter plans, texts, and instructional techniques after reflecting on students' knowledge and interests. They understand the processes underlying reading and viewing and reflect on ways in which the application of the knowledge of these processes improves their students' reading and viewing. They seek out ways to involve their colleagues, parents, and community members in reading and viewing instruction.

Accomplished English language arts teachers periodically review available evidence to determine the extent to which reading goals have been achieved. For example, after realizing that their students are struggling with the impact of setting on a particular story, an accomplished teacher might bring in video or print resources to build the students' background knowledge of the time and place described. Conversely, a teacher might notice that one student reads a book more quickly than the rest of the class. Instead of assuming that the student needs more to read, the teacher would consider a range of factors, including knowledge about the student, assessment data, available resources, and the learning environment to determine next steps in supporting and enriching the student's reading experiences. Accomplished teachers are skilled in checking for understanding. Through careful assessment, they determine individual students' strengths and weaknesses as readers and viewers, and they plan their future lessons to build and enhance needed skills. Accomplished teachers also guide their students toward reflection about their own reading and viewing, showing them how to use tools such as maintaining an online record of one's reading. Accomplished teachers may ask their students to reflect on a particular aspect of text, such as character, to deepen understanding.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on a continual basis to improve their reading and viewing instruction. Accomplished teachers read, reflect, and engage in their own research about reading and viewing. They tailor their professional development to their needs and may also share their knowledge with their colleagues in the field through presentations, online publications, meetings, or informal discussions. Accomplished teachers reflect on their own practice to consider the kinds of new knowledge they need about the processes of reading and viewing and related pedagogy and assessment techniques. English language arts teachers consider, experiment with, and assess new pedagogy and selectively integrate valid instructional approaches into their learning environment.

Standard VI

Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide instruction in the processes, skills, and knowledge about writing that their students will need to effectively produce a variety of texts for a range of audiences and purposes.

Accomplished English language arts teachers have a broad understanding of the ways in which the traditional field of writing is evolving to incorporate varied forms of production. Accomplished teachers realize that, no matter what the ultimate product may be, effective writing and producing involve the processes of formulating, revising, and refining texts to share ideas in compelling and meaningful ways. Accomplished teachers understand that their role is to help students refine the skills they need to communicate for specific purposes, to specific audiences, and in specific forms. Teachers understand the value and purpose of each writing or producing task, and they choose activities that develop each student's communication skills in response to student needs and interests and to learning goals.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that writing and producing are not limited to the academic environment. Today's students are regularly writing and producing meaningful texts outside school; these include private texts such as journals, diaries, and poetry, and more public texts such as social media, messaging, online videos, and blogs. Accomplished teachers recognize that today's students are no longer passively consuming texts; rather, they are often simultaneously consuming and producing them. Students see media products as ripe for adapting, remixing, and recreating; furthermore, authorship is often collaborative rather than individual. Out-of-school writing mirrors the traditional writing process in many ways but is different in other respects. Accomplished teachers know how to capitalize on out-of-school writing and producing so that students grow as effective writers and producers in both academic and nonacademic contexts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that writing and producing are ways to communicate understanding, demonstrate acquired knowledge, share experiences, defend claims, promote entertainment, connect with others, and experience enjoyment and beauty. Teachers respect their students' abilities as innate communicators and build on these abilities to empower students' voices, expand their thinking, and equip them with the tools to write across the curriculum. Accomplished teachers instill in students the dispositions recognized as central to success in writing and producing: engagement and open-mindedness, accuracy and imagination, determination coupled with adaptability, and the willingness to

analyze one's own thought processes. Teachers provide an equitable space for both individual development and collaboration, and they use writing as a means of developing students' sense of civic responsibility and their global awareness.

Knowledge about Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that their students need to gain experience with a wide range of writing and producing tasks to progress in their overall expertise. Accomplished teachers possess and apply knowledge about the purposes, genres, processes, and evolving nature of writing and producing. They understand that public forms of writing and producing can be used to inform, explain, entertain, describe, illuminate, persuade, influence, beguile, impress, or otherwise affect an audience. Accomplished teachers understand that private forms of writing and producing can be used to promote self-awareness, clarify the writer's thoughts, or work through emotions.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are fluent, effective writers and producers who themselves regularly practice writing and producing. They model the love of writing and producing and the satisfaction gained from effective communication. Accomplished English language arts teachers have expertise in the technical aspects of writing; they know the rules of English grammar, usage, and composition and understand how to create a distinct voice. They understand and appreciate devices such as figurative language, symbolism, dialogue, foreshadowing, and characterization. They comprehend many ways of structuring texts, depending on the purpose, format, audience, or medium involved. For example, teachers understand that designing a website involves presenting material in a nonlinear or multilayered fashion as opposed to sequencing ideas linearly in a traditional printed text.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are familiar with the full range of genres that students can write and produce, including, but not limited to, critical essays, research papers, policy documents, song lyrics, fiction, screenplays, poetry, websites, digital stories, creative nonfiction, responses to literature, journalism, memoirs, captioned photographic essays, book trailers, social media, wikis and blogs, video games, mobile applications, and audio compositions. Teachers understand the conventions and purposes associated with various genres, but they also realize that genres can be redefined and combined according to different contexts and purposes. Accomplished teachers explore emerging genres for their potential in developing standards-based knowledge and skills in English language arts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that it can be helpful to think of writing and producing in terms of stages such as prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They also acknowledge that not all writing and producing requires each step in the process; that students may approach the steps in different ways; and that the order of the steps may change depending on the context, purpose, and audience. Teachers recognize the recursive nature of writing. For example, a student writer preparing a college admissions essay often revises

the text many times to perfect the final product, altering the essay for submission to different colleges. A student writer completing an illustrated class biography might need to revise drafts based on new life events.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that writing and producing are means of connecting with literature, culture, and society, as well as with personal growth, opinions, and feelings. Teachers know that effective writing and producing encompass skills that are refined in the learning environment but that can have immediate impact and application in the real world. Accomplished English language arts teachers explain that good writing and producing must move beyond the merely formulaic to reflect the student's ability to retrieve information, select relevant details, organize topics logically, synthesize ideas, generate insights, and evaluate the results of their work. Students of accomplished teachers learn that the goal of public writing is to create fluent, connected, and relevant texts that engage the audience. Ultimately, accomplished teachers know how to help their students gain expertise in using writing and producing to cross many different contextual borders.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are aware of the strong connections that exist among the language arts. They know that students who are strong readers are likely to have greater control over their writing than students who have trouble reading or who choose not to read. Likewise, students who are articulate speakers can often build on their speaking and listening skills to become better writers and producers. Teachers understand that students can also use writing and producing to explore the questions developed through inquiry. (See [Standard V—Reading and Viewing](#), [Standard VII—Speaking and Listening](#), and [Standard IX—Inquiry](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers are also aware of the relationships that exist among language arts and other disciplines. Accomplished teachers understand that language arts students need specific skills to produce meaningful texts in other content areas. Teachers also understand that students can use writing and producing to reinforce their learning in other subjects. For example, an accomplished teacher might model how summarizing can reinforce a student's comprehension of a mathematical concept, or how writing a personal narrative can deepen students' appreciation for a historical memoir such as Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* or Mary Chestnut's Civil War diaries. English language arts teachers might invite colleagues in other disciplines to instruct their students. A film teacher might teach language arts students how to create podcasts or short films, or a social studies or science teacher might illuminate the topics about which English language arts students are writing and producing texts. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that students are more connected to peers, media, and the world at large than ever before. Youth converse across space and over time in a hyperproductive fashion. Regular engagement in textual conversations, media production, and participatory gameplay acculturates students toward meaningful production that invites feedback, immerses students in collaborative communities, and values student knowledge. Accomplished teachers

capitalize on these components of engagement when constructing and implementing in-class production.

Accomplished English language arts teachers instruct students in the etiquette of participating in online forums. Teachers contrast the tones and styles appropriate for academic versus social communication. They also teach students how to participate in such forums effectively, for example, by considering the potentially negative impact of overusing elements such as capital letters, excessively short sentences, and abbreviations. Students learn to temper a disagreement with an introductory phrase, and realize how their comments will appear online, for example, in the context of a previous discussion or in isolation. Accomplished teachers instruct students in the effective use of hyperlinks, showing them how to insert such links so that they do not interrupt the flow of the text in a jarring way.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that technology tools, particularly social media sites and text messaging, have the potential for misuse by early adolescents and young adults, particularly through spreading rumors and in cyberbullying. Accomplished teachers actively teach students that not only do writers have ethical responsibility for their work, but also that there can be school sanctions and legal consequences for writing that is hurtful, slanderous, or hateful. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Instructing Students in Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers design instruction to provide their students with varied opportunities for writing and producing texts. In the learning environments of accomplished teachers, writing instruction provides appropriate scaffolding, feedback from both teachers and peers, time for recursive revision, and varied writing and producing tasks to help students progress. Accomplished teachers design writing instruction so that students have the opportunity to demonstrate growth over time. For example, a teacher might have students return to a previous writing activity, either by revising a text written earlier in the year or by performing a new but similar writing task incorporating feedback from a previous assignment. Accomplished teachers recognize students' varying levels of proficiency and strive to differentiate their instruction so that all students are appropriately challenged and supported. Teachers prepare students to be independent writers and producers with a broad repertoire of skills, processes, and strategies.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students understand that producing text is a complex, recursive thought process in which the writer makes choices as the result of careful reflection on what to express and how best to express it. Accomplished teachers help students understand that, as with anything of value, writing and producing a meaningful text requires planning and hard work. They help students set goals and determine relevant processes to achieve those goals.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that successful writers and producers can articulate a clear understanding of function, form, and audience, and

that writing and producing require the use of cognitive skills, applied continuously and systematically throughout the development of a work. Therefore, accomplished teachers empower their students with the ability to choose among various forms and functions and then analyze the impact of those choices on achieving the writer's message and purposes for varied audiences. For example, an accomplished teacher would help students explore the different ways a poem and an essay convey a message.

Accomplished English language arts teachers explain that authentic writing and producing frame particular perspectives influenced by the students' personalities, prior experiences, cultures, ideas, and interactions with their audiences. Accomplished teachers give students many opportunities to work with their peers to help them develop, test, and refine ideas within a web of social interactions. Teachers help student writers achieve a careful balance between considering others' comments and retaining a strong individual voice that expresses their own knowledge and perspectives. Teachers remind students that expressing ideas is a social process; to communicate effectively, a writer must retain a keen awareness of the audience.

Accomplished English language arts teachers show students models of argumentative, informative, narrative, aesthetic, and creative texts and help students see that successful writers and producers integrate strategies significant to each genre, such as selecting the most persuasive visuals in a public service announcement or carefully structuring a logical organizational pattern in a research paper. Accomplished teachers discuss different types of model texts with students, depending upon whether they are struggling or experienced writers.

Accomplished English language arts teachers teach students to analyze the elements that go into making a product communicate its intended meaning. Accomplished teachers help their students understand that, although organizational structures vary from one genre to another, the parts of a text must always relate to the whole. In multigenre texts and in texts with hyperlinks, organizational structures may be varied and complex, but meaning still coheres around the writer's organizational decisions. Teachers explain that conventions are important because they help to convey information in a clear, systematic, and efficient manner, thereby maximizing the impact of a text on viewers or readers. Accomplished educators teach grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation in such a way that student writers can immediately put their knowledge to use in their own writing. When such an activity would further a learning goal, accomplished teachers may also instruct students in the mechanics of composing nonprint texts, such as films; for example, a teacher might help students manipulate technical elements such as lighting, camera angles, and framing to create meaning. Accomplished teachers help students understand how and when it can be effective to defy conventions, supplying models from great poets, programmers, and others who broke rules in creative and evocative ways.

Accomplished English language arts teachers teach the craft of writing in both isolated and integrated lessons and at many structural levels: diction, sentences,

paragraphs, and complete texts. For instance, a teacher might provide students with guidance about diction by pointing out instances of effective word choice in their writing and asking them to articulate why those particular words are so compelling. Teachers might teach sentence construction through sentence-combining activities or sentence study based on models. They might also have students revise their own sentences within various kinds of texts. A teacher might teach writing at the paragraph level by having students first write a simple paragraph with a main idea and a simple list of supporting details and then layer and connect details in a more mature and fluent way. At the holistic level, teachers help students gain skill in producing cohesive and coherent writing in extended texts. (See [Standard VIII—Language Study](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers encourage their students to share their own writing and producing. Teachers provide varied opportunities for students to assess, discuss, and publish the texts they are creating. In the learning environments of accomplished teachers, students learn to be intensely aware of their audiences. A teacher might assign students to write a movie review one way when casually reporting to their friends via social networking and then in a different way when constructing a formal review for the school newspaper or blog.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the critical role that publication plays in the teaching of writing and producing. The public context for writing and producing creates a need to draft, edit, and revise in disciplined ways to address the needs and expectations of varied audiences. Publishing also creates opportunities for authentic feedback for students. Accomplished teachers convey to their students that publishing can range from sharing a journal entry with classmates, to writing a proposal for a substantial change in the school, to publishing work on a publicly constructed and monitored site. In some cases, teachers who strive to publish their own work provide powerful models for students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers respond with genuine interest to the writing of all students, model the effect that writing has on an audience, and provide fair and constructive responses to improve the writing of every student. Accomplished teachers understand the personal nature of writing and producing, and they know that students reveal a great deal about their personalities, their imaginations, their dreams, their backgrounds, and their experiences through their work. Teachers understand that writing can give voice to every student, regardless of their level of fluency with language. Accomplished teachers know that the essence of an effective and meaningful writing style is an individual voice, so they support their students in developing a voice that reflects and values their individuality. Teachers respond to student writing with sensitivity and take advantage of opportunities to build students' sense of confidence and competence as communicators.

Accomplished English language arts teachers present writing and producing as means of connecting to texts, to diverse cultures, to our society, and to the meaning of our lives. They teach writing and producing in a way that promotes fairness, equity, and respect for diversity. Accomplished teachers infuse their learning environments with rich texts representing a broad range of cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds

to spark inquiry, enrich language study, build cultural awareness, and serve as models for writing. Teachers encourage students to produce texts that celebrate their knowledge, their cultural identity, and the meaning they find in their lives. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that writing and producing can help students explore the world beyond their immediate surroundings and become members of new communities. Accomplished teachers guide students toward the production of texts that address inequity, question power structures, and strive to promote a more just world. Accomplished English language arts teachers instill in their students the desire and the ability to use communication skills to participate in the democratic process through such activities as writing editorials, commenting on blogs, and creating letters to public officials. Teachers help students identify opportunities to explore, promote, or defend the causes with which they identify.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that their students need an awareness of the ethics governing the use of various media. Accomplished teachers help students understand the nature of intellectual property, as well as the value of research. Teachers guide students toward the responsible use of copyrighted information, including strategies for avoiding plagiarism and instruction in conventions for quoting text and for in-text citations and lists of sources. When students produce works that use images, music, movies, or other media created by others, accomplished teachers help them understand and apply the doctrine of fair use. Accomplished teachers value students' writing as intellectual property and impress a sense of ownership and their rights as creators in their students. When teachers use student work for their professional purposes, they honor student ownership by obtaining permission from the student.

Resources for Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide models of writing for students to use in developing and reflecting on their own work. Teachers supply a range of models in terms of genres, purposes, audiences, and quality. Accomplished teachers strategically develop and select models of writing and producing in response to specific student needs and learning goals. For example, some models might provide positive exemplars whereas others might portray common challenges, such as how to craft sentences and paragraphs, select and sequence visual or digital media, and strengthen word choice or mechanics.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students develop their own tools for writing, including composing and editing guides and scoring rubrics. Teachers understand that students need to learn how to locate and use model texts and reference materials, including print and electronic thesauruses, dictionaries, research journals, examples of literary criticism, and indices. Accomplished teachers explain how to employ resources that address issues such as word choice and the mechanics of writing. Teachers provide opportunities for working with a variety

of production tools, including digital tools when possible. Accomplished teachers consider students' access to technology when making assignments, and they help students use resources such as school computers, computers in public libraries, and Internet-enabled mobile media devices as pathways toward digital equity. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Assessment of Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers align their assessments to what they teach about writing and producing. Accomplished teachers know that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning, so they design classroom assessments that allow each student to show what he or she knows and is able to do. The results of these assessments inform the teacher's future instruction. Teachers are also aware of large-scale assessments their students will be encountering, and they adjust and align their curriculum and instruction to prepare their students for these assessments. When possible, accomplished teachers advocate for assessment programs that are research-based and proven effective in the development of student writers and writing programs. (See [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers prepare their students for high-stakes writing tests by teaching them to produce high-quality text on demand and within a designated time frame. Accomplished teachers model prewriting strategies for quickly organizing ideas and making efficient choices of topics based on one's knowledge base. To improve on-demand writing skills, an accomplished teacher might assign a writing assessment for which only the students' content, organization, or style would be assessed and then provide students with targeted feedback.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that multiple assessments are necessary for a rich portrait of students' current capabilities. Accomplished teachers know which kind of writing or producing prompts to present to assess what students know, how students engage in writing and producing for various purposes (e.g., persuading, informing, or storytelling), and how students write or produce for both personal and public audiences. For example, a student's response to a writing prompt might give insights into the student's facility with the formal structures of the English language. However, the same student's online composing might better reveal the student's ability to translate thought into compelling text. Accomplished teachers know that students might be better at communicating through certain formats; therefore, they give students opportunities to perform in various contexts. Ideally, writing and producing skills must be assessed by more than one product and in more than one genre to gain a more complete picture of patterns in student work over time.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that students should be evaluated by many readers and viewers, including peers, as part of a substantial and sustained process of assessment. Accomplished teachers recognize that peer involvement can be powerful at many stages of the writing process; peers can be

valuable editors and critics, helping shape future drafts and suggesting new strategies and styles. Teachers understand that to realize their potential as critics and to avoid pitfalls such as hurting others' feelings or being overly directive, students need instruction in peer-assessment techniques. Therefore, teachers create structures for providing feedback on writing and have students practice using those structures with samples before engaging in peer review with one another. Accomplished teachers examine the feedback peers give one another, learning both from the comments students give and the comments they receive.

Accomplished English language arts teachers also encourage students to engage in self-assessment as they revise and edit their own work. Teachers provide students with many tools for self-assessment, such as rubrics or checklists, each tailored to the specific writing task and to the developmental level of the students. Accomplished teachers use the process of self-assessment to help students build metacognitive skills that support writing. A teacher might build a student's ability to self-assess by identifying an area of weakness but then having the student make decisions about how to ameliorate the problem. A student might then progress to the stage of independently evaluating a single piece of their writing in the light of clear criteria. Ultimately, students might build portfolios of work created over time and write final reflective pieces about what the portfolios reveal about their development as writers. In this way, accomplished teachers prepare students to engage in their own independent writing and producing.

Accomplished English language arts teachers assess the progress of their students and reflect on their instruction, considering ways in which they can help their students develop in their writing and producing skills, including enriching their voices and the scope of their writing, building on out-of-school experiences, and learning how to use writing and producing in multiple contexts for many purposes and audiences. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in teaching writing and producing. They monitor their own expertise in writing and producing as well as assessing students' progress. They use assessments to reflect on how well their students grow in their control over writing and producing, including their engagement in the writing process, their word choices, and their attention to purpose and audience. Accomplished teachers recognize the value of high-quality work even if it is not written in accordance with their own stylistic preferences. They maintain elevated standards while remaining open-minded toward new genres, techniques, and content. Accomplished teachers reflect on the ways in which conceptions and methods of writing and producing are constantly changing, and they learn as much as they can about emerging modes and genres. Teachers consider the extent to which the learning environment is supportive of students sharing their work, and teachers seek to achieve growth in all their students as writers, producers, and successful communicators.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to determine the effectiveness of their practices. Some teachers might be gratified to note that after they have provided instruction in the benefits and techniques of prewriting, students are voluntarily engaging in this step of the writing and producing process. Other teachers might notice that students are overly fixated on the scores they have received for texts they have produced instead of focusing on detailed revision feedback. In response to this observation, accomplished teachers would refine their feedback practices so that students are encouraged to perceive trends in their own writing. Teachers also focus on evidence that highlights the degree to which students understand and apply specific aspects of the writing process. For example, a teacher might notice that student comments on peers' texts show that they understand the concept the class is currently studying. A teacher would use this information as a signal that the class is ready to progress.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on a regular basis to continually learn about the teaching and learning of writing and producing. For example, teachers experiment alongside their students with new and sometimes unfamiliar modes of writing and producing. They study their students' experiences—both their successes and challenges. They interact with colleagues to learn what works and does not work well, and they may participate in virtual or physical communities of writers and producers. When they feel uncomfortable in particular areas, accomplished teachers acknowledge their discomfort and seek out ways to improve their own skills and ways of applying their skills for the benefit of their students. Teachers are open to the dynamic ways their field is changing, and they relish the learning opportunities that these changes present.

Standard VII

Speaking and Listening

Accomplished English language arts teachers equip students to become effective communicators by strengthening their speaking and listening skills for various purposes within a broad range of contexts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that speaking and listening are fundamental skills for language development and human interaction. Teachers know that speaking and listening are closely interrelated behaviors that enable students to make sense of their world as they absorb, analyze, and synthesize information and then reflect, develop, and express meaningful responses. Accomplished teachers engage students in speaking and listening for varied purposes, in wide-ranging contexts, and with specific strategies.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that speaking and listening involve literacy skills that require students to construct meaning in ways analogous to the ways they construct meaning through writing and reading. Therefore, accomplished teachers integrate speaking and listening with writing, producing, reading, and viewing. Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that some early adolescents and young adults are uncomfortable when asked to share their thoughts orally or converse with other individuals and groups, and therefore teachers scaffold speaking opportunities for such students. Teachers understand that a flexible approach to speaking and listening instruction creates fairness and equity by affording students with diverse strengths and temperaments alternative entry points into the curriculum.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are themselves adept at speaking and listening, and they consistently model these skills for students. Teachers establish high expectations for their students and provide a clear understanding of these expectations. Accomplished teachers facilitate and adapt to student needs with definite objectives in mind, using feedback and other assessment tools to help students navigate the complexities and challenges of speaking and active listening. Teachers understand that speaking and listening are used to establish social and emotional relationships, acquire practical skills, absorb and articulate academic content, conduct inquiry, advocate for oneself and others, practice citizenship, participate in civil and democratic dialogue, and function in the adult world. Therefore, teachers continuously reflect on the effectiveness of the speaking and listening opportunities within the learning environment.

Purposes and Contexts for Speaking and Listening

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the many purposes of speaking and listening, and they realize that speaking and listening take place in a wealth of contexts. Teachers know that different contexts afford varying opportunities for applying speaking and listening skills, and they are aware that particular students flourish in some situations and need more practice in others. Therefore, accomplished teachers provide multiple contexts in which students can develop their speaking and listening skills.

Accomplished English language arts teachers structure activities to encourage students to listen with appreciation, critical awareness, and empathy. Teachers help students receive, comprehend, assess, and evaluate aural information; follow oral directions; respond appropriately to verbal and nonverbal cues and feedback; pick out main ideas and significant details; and appreciate the free expression of others. Accomplished teachers help students develop into purposeful listeners who process what they hear and are attentive, open-minded, and respectful. Opportunities for students to listen for different purposes and in various contexts include listening to an individual versus a group, listening quietly versus listening as part of a conversation, listening to a person who is physically present versus listening to recorded speech, listening to a speaker using an unfamiliar dialect versus listening to someone who uses the students' native dialect, and listening for important details versus listening for general ideas.

Accomplished English language arts teachers also provide their students with many contexts for speaking. Activities may include, but are not limited to, small-group or whole-class discussions of texts, debates, mock trials, oratorical advocacy, extemporaneous speaking, storytelling, podcasts, documentaries, and student broadcasts of morning announcements. Accomplished teachers explain to students the different purposes for speaking: to inform, to entertain, to inspire, to describe, to persuade, and to inquire.

Accomplished English language arts teachers acknowledge the speaking and listening skills that students bring to the learning environment. They tailor contexts that build on the abilities that students possess, teach skills that students lack, and continuously expand and refine students' capacities. For example, upon recognizing that a student who struggles with writing is an eloquent speaker, a teacher might have the student use audio recordings such as podcasts as a strategy for prewriting a formal essay. The student could convey ideas orally, and then listen to the podcast and convert the spoken word to a written product. (See [Standard 1—Knowledge of Students](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students explore, understand, and appropriately use, or code-switch among, the different forms of language found in various home, school, and community settings. Teachers are aware that in informal situations, students speak for purposes different from those in class, often moving between Standard American English and more colloquial idioms. Teachers

celebrate the diversity of language in their learning environment and validate linguistic and dialectal variations within the learning community, such as the regional speech patterns of various ethnicities. However, teachers make it clear that a speaker must always consider audience and context and that Standard American English is essential in formal communication. (See [Standard VIII—Language Study](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that speech expectations vary across social, cultural, and familial contexts. Teachers are sensitive to factors that may cause some students to be reluctant to speak and others to be more loquacious. For example, cultural norms might make one student reserved, whereas a family's interactional style might make another child especially verbose. Accomplished teachers build on casual classroom conversations to develop skills that can be used to explore language arts content. Teachers respectfully elicit participation from all students and work to maintain a balance among speakers so that everyone's contributions are valued.

Pedagogy and Strategies for Teaching Speaking and Listening

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide relevant experiences to help students practice the full range of speaking and listening skills necessary for successful participation in the world. Teachers seek to advance students' abilities for a variety of purposes and audiences by creating rich conversations—in whole groups, small groups, and with a partner—that are built around significant content. Language arts teachers also realize the importance of engaging students in authentic conversation about their interests to establish a bridge for future learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers establish a learning environment in which language is used in ways that show respect for others. Teachers help students understand the emotional power of language; for example, they may directly address the effect of using labels and name-calling. These teachers go beyond merely pointing out the potential hurtfulness of language; they analyze the countereffect of positive and respectful language. Accomplished teachers create a trust-filled learning environment in which all students will risk participation in oral activities; teachers know how to support students who sometimes struggle when asked to think out loud, speculate in front of others, and compose publicly. For example, a teacher might have students share ideas by rotating through several small groups before presenting to the class as a whole. The teacher could also ask students to prepare their thoughts in writing before class and then use these notes for in-class discussion.

Accomplished English language arts teachers support the development of students' listening skills and abilities in a variety of ways. Teachers model active listening in the day-to-day management and monitoring of the class. They show that by listening closely to students' ideas, they can raise the overall level of discussion. They demonstrate through their reactions that they notice and value skillful word choices and rich metaphors. Accomplished teachers also demonstrate how listeners should respond when they are confused by what they have heard, for example, by tactfully but persistently requesting clarification.

Accomplished English language arts teachers may use formal public speaking assignments to teach students to be members of an attentive audience. Students of accomplished teachers learn that attending to a formal speech involves appreciating how visual elements such as facial expression, gestures, and graphic aids can enhance or detract from a message. Teachers also explain how the auditory features of tone, volume, and speed can convey meaning and affect audience engagement. Accomplished teachers instruct their students in the skills of taking appropriate notes, summarizing key points, and drawing inferences.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use ideas generated during small-group and whole-class discussions as scaffolding for more formal public speaking assignments. Teachers make students aware of the need to follow the conventions of formal speech in formal oral presentations. Teachers encourage students to attend carefully to such elements as clarity, relevance, and organization; types of arguments used; and word choice and word order. Teachers explain that it is essential to avoid vocalized pauses, slang, colloquialisms, and mistakes in usage and to speak with adequate articulation and projection. Teachers emphasize the importance of audience awareness and model the appropriate style of presentation for different purposes. Teachers also instruct students in the use of visual aids that can help the audience understand the message and that enhance the speaker's credibility. For example, a student might build a model, develop a poster, or use digital presentation aids to more effectively convey an idea or support an argument.

Accomplished English language arts teachers have students practice speaking skills in academic discussions. Accomplished teachers help students develop their academic vocabulary so they can participate in such discussions, and teachers group students strategically. Teachers instruct students in the techniques of effective dialogue so that they stay on task, co-construct meaning, respectfully challenge ideas, negotiate conflict, and appreciate divergent viewpoints. Teachers might have students map their peers' participation in a discussion, analyze the flow of the discussion, and categorize the contributions. Teachers also provide the necessary support and conditions to ensure that all students can contribute to the discussion. Accomplished teachers explain to students how the skills acquired in classroom discussions and debates will be applicable to future academic and workplace settings.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that some students have speaking and listening challenges that require specific teacher attention. A teacher might need to spend extra time on appropriate audience behavior in a class where students interrupt, are blatantly inattentive, or are rude. There might be students in the class who are English language learners, others who have auditory processing difficulties or hearing impairments, or some who communicate via sign language. Accomplished teachers work closely with appropriate specialists to implement strategies within the classroom structure to ensure that these students participate successfully in the oral and aural discourse of the classroom. Teachers also build community by sensitizing classmates to the challenges of their peers and suggesting ways to empathetically support their efforts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that technological tools are available in many learning environments; therefore, they adopt appropriate digital tools to enhance students' speaking and listening skills. Teachers may record students' own speech to help students identify patterns such as fluency, pacing, and articulation, or teachers may provide video models of effective speaking techniques.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are themselves fluent and adept users of the spoken word; they read aloud to their students and are familiar with speech and debate. Teachers demonstrate effective speaking in their day-to-day leadership of the class by conveying directions and information clearly and cogently and by sharing stories and accounts with a style and vividness that students might want to emulate. For example, an accomplished teacher might orally retell a myth or legend with verve, changing vocal pitch and accent to bring dialogue to life. Accomplished teachers model for students how the spoken word can clarify writing, and how debate can help formulate opinions that can be conveyed in writing.

Integration

Accomplished English language arts teachers acknowledge that fluent readers and writers are not necessarily active listeners or effective speakers. Alternatively, fluent speakers and attentive listeners may not be effective writers or readers. Accomplished teachers assess each student's skills within all the strands of language arts and then build on strengths and remedy challenges across the entire discipline. For example, in the case of a student who consistently gives one-word spoken answers, an accomplished teacher might see if the student could answer more expansively via writing and then transfer those more articulate answers to the act of speaking. In the case of a student who is more comfortable with speech than writing, the teacher might have the student voice-record the response to a prompt and then use the recorded response to compose an essay. Other techniques for integrating oral and written language might include using a fishbowl discussion to spark ideas as part of a prewriting exercise, having students read their work out loud as a strategy to catch errors, and conducting a turn-and-talk activity to help students understand a text they are reading.

Accomplished English language arts teachers instruct students in the development of their inquiry skills through a combination of speaking and listening. For example, a teacher might use literature circles to help students make a variety of important connections between texts and ideas. Teachers design tasks and ask questions that inspire students to look beyond their own cultural, gender, and personal perspectives. Teachers help students consider the quality of literary selections from contrasting critical viewpoints and speculate on what criteria might have been used to select award-winning texts. Teachers support English language learners, for example, by encouraging them to provide examples of key concepts from their own lives and their native literature or to use graphic representations to illustrate thoughts they cannot yet express in English. Teachers recognize that all students benefit from strategically planned integrated instruction on speaking and listening skills in the overall curriculum. Given clear examples and explicit instruction, students of accomplished

teachers learn to pay attention to one another's comments about texts, ask pertinent questions, work collaboratively toward consensus or appreciation of divergent ideas, and ultimately realize that speaking and listening are key skills for self-discovery as well as for strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide opportunities for students to write about what they have heard in order to retain information and reinforce the connection between listening and writing. Teachers modify the pace, duration, and scope of their lectures, including appropriate wait-time to comply with research that states that students are not able to pay close attention and write at the same time. Accomplished teachers also know when and how to have their students employ tools such as graphic organizers and note-taking strategies in order to better process and retain oral information.

Accomplished English language arts teachers focus on the interpersonal power of language and its use in conflict resolution. Accomplished teachers model and instruct students in speaking and listening skills that lead to solving problems, debating important issues, and persuading public entities to consider important issues. Such skills lead to acceptance of divergent viewpoints and enhance the quality of the learning environment, as well as foster the development of leadership skills for civic involvement. Activities that foster these skills might include discussions related to classroom-level issues such as materials usage or the responsible use of language; school-level issues such as the dress code or antibullying messages; and local, state, national, and global issues such as hunger or disaster relief efforts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that digital tools can help students build relationships outside their school and immediate community. Teachers realize that digital tools affect the connections among the modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in important ways. By teaching students digital etiquette and then facilitating digital conversations that span cultures and borders, accomplished teachers help to open up new worlds for their students.

Assessment of Speaking and Listening

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that there are multiple purposes for assessing speaking and listening, including to check their students' listening comprehension, reading comprehension, articulation, fluency, presentation skills, organizational skills, and ability to converse and co-construct meaning. To achieve these purposes, accomplished teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment tools including, but not limited to, monitoring classroom conversations and using checklists, rubrics, and probing questions. A teacher might ask students to summarize what they have learned from a peer's oral presentation, apply what they have heard to a new setting, or adapt it for a different audience. Teachers focus on behaviors that signal attentiveness, such as eye contact, nodding, note taking and facial expressions, and use these behaviors to judge the overall quality of each student's listening. Accomplished teachers encourage students to self-assess their processes and performances in speaking and listening. For example, prior to a

discussion, the student might set a performance goal and then reflect on the goal after the discussion. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers comprehend that assessing a student's oral language may help gauge that student's overall literacy development and diagnose particular needs. For example, a student who uses the same words repeatedly may need to be taught synonyms. A student who always speaks in short, simple sentences may benefit from practice in combining ideas to create more complex structures. If a student exhibits the need for intensive intervention, an accomplished teacher would solicit the necessary support from specialists. Accomplished English language arts teachers pay special attention to assessing any student whose speaking and listening skills are emerging, including, but not limited to, English language learners and students with exceptionalities. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on the fundamental role that speaking and listening play in human interaction, and they reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction of these essential skills. They continually observe, analyze, and seek to improve the quality of their teaching of the skills of speaking and listening. They understand their role in creating conditions for speaking and listening, including encouraging students' respect for one another and ensuring that students have the skills to engage successfully in oral language activities. Accomplished teachers seek out ways to improve speaking and listening instruction for their students by reflecting on the ways their students engage in speaking and listening.

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in promoting speaking and listening. When reflecting on student participation in speaking and listening, accomplished teachers rely heavily on their knowledge about students. For example, an accomplished teacher would explore whether a particular student's reticence resulted from a lack of preparation, a lack of understanding, or shyness. Through this type of reflection, accomplished teachers work with students to more effectively engage them in speaking and listening.

Accomplished English language arts teachers continually consider new ideas and express a willingness to try new methods to achieve success in the instruction of speaking and listening. Accomplished teachers reflect on the ways they conference with students to set goals. They determine the best methods for assessing speaking and listening, interpret the results of assessment, and set new goals based on assessment results. Accomplished teachers solicit feedback from peers, students, colleagues, parents, and administrators on the effectiveness of their speaking and listening instruction and how they can create an environment that supports learning through speaking and listening. Teachers may also model self-reflection for students and use peer-to-peer or teacher-student feedback to assess student progress.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on a regular basis to improve their instruction. They reflect on new forms and possibilities for students with speaking and listening. They interact with other colleagues and other professionals to explore new ways to support student learning. They read, research, and participate in professional learning related to these strands of the language arts; for example, they might participate in digital conferencing and distance learning seminars about speaking and listening. Accomplished teachers engage in speaking and listening experiences, such as debates and other forms of public speaking, to improve their instruction.

Standard VIII

Language Study

Accomplished English language arts teachers develop their students' appreciation of the functional and aesthetic aspects of language and expand their students' capacity to use language effectively.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are well versed in the basic underpinning of their discipline: language. They recognize the flexible, shifting nature of language, understanding that languages have evolved over time in relationship with one another and in response to significant cultural, social, and economic forces. Accomplished teachers are well informed about the history of the English language and how it continues to develop in terms of pronunciation, word choice, idiomatic usage, degree of formality, speed of delivery, intonation, and grammatical structure. They understand that English is both a tremendously empowering communicative tool and an artifact of human ingenuity with a fascinating history, a vigorous present, and an expansive future. They are aware that language use is closely related to context and that varied modes of English language usage have different effects on listeners and readers.

Accomplished English language arts teachers encourage their students to approach the study of the English language with objectivity, open-mindedness, curiosity, and an alertness to the many stories and nuances of meaning embodied in our language and its rich dialectal variations. Accomplished teachers understand that certain language forms provide greater access to the economic, political, and academic advantages of society than do other forms; therefore, teachers promote language study as a means of equitable access to social benefits for all students. Because language study is integrated across reading, writing, speaking, and listening, accomplished teachers usually evaluate language skills as a part of a larger whole rather than in isolation.

The Evolving Nature of the English Language

Accomplished English language arts teachers acquaint students with the development of the English language. For example, they might discuss major influences from the Greeks and the Romans to the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans. In addition, accomplished teachers guide students to discover the infusions of vocabulary that came into English from other sources, such as the Native American words absorbed by English colonists and the Arabic words introduced into English by travelers on the trade routes between England and the Middle East during medieval

times. Accomplished teachers demonstrate that language is an evolving human invention, and they capitalize on the language diversity in a learning environment to examine the words that constantly enter English from other languages.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand how historical events have influenced the growth of the English language. For example, they help students explore how advancements in the field of technology have changed the language, from the printing press to modern technology, or how words from specialized fields can become part of everyday usage. Teachers might have students identify words such as “mouse” that have acquired new definitions as new technologies have been invented. Furthermore, accomplished teachers show students how English came to have abundant synonyms and how some words became taboo words while others were accepted as formal and proper. An accomplished teacher might help students understand the concept of how language changes by asking students to predict which of their own slang terms and casual expressions will find their way into the mainstream language and perhaps into the dictionary.

Accomplished English language arts teachers accept that language use and language contexts are always evolving. New words enter the language, old words develop new meanings, and grammatical structures are modified. Accomplished teachers understand that rapidly developing technology has not only resulted in the introduction of new words, but also has affected the speed with which these words become widely used in everyday language. Teachers realize that the language of youth and popular culture is rapidly spreading to the world at large. Accomplished teachers are aware of changes not only in vocabulary, but also about the alterations taking place in the use of grammar and punctuation and in what constitutes acceptable usage. For example, teachers are aware of the increasing tendency to use as verbs certain words that were once used only as nouns. Accomplished teachers welcome alterations in language as tools for teaching and deepening students’ appreciation for language’s role in communication.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use the study of literature as a natural opportunity to survey the history of the English language. By reading novels and plays, students can notice how language has shifted over time and across locations. Accomplished teachers help students learn how to read earlier forms of language and understand their social and historical contexts. For example, a teacher might have students compare the language in different translations of *Beowulf*.

Language in Context

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize and value the diversity of language forms in the United States and know that dialects are richly expressive communicative tools. Teachers realize that each student speaks with a dialect that reflects a particular regional upbringing, ethnicity, occupation, age, and socioeconomic class, and teachers continually affirm their students’ entitlement to and pride in the variations of English that they and their communities employ. At the same time, accomplished teachers know that effective use of Standard English not

only facilitates oral and written communication, but also creates greater access to the economic, political, and academic advantages of society. Therefore, teachers strategically integrate the rules of grammar and usage in the language arts curriculum by showing students how to apply conventions in formal writing and speaking.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that early adolescents and young adults who use a nondominant dialect frequently experience anxiety when asked to speak and write according to the more broadly accepted language conventions; students may view complying with this request as a relinquishment of their cultural identity. Teachers therefore proceed sensitively, respecting the integrity and value of their students' home or group languages while modeling and teaching the formal conventions of English. Accomplished teachers may initially focus more on written rather than spoken language when teaching standard conventions. They know when and when not to emphasize error correction to encourage risk taking, promote a positive attitude toward learning, and facilitate students' engagement in classroom discussions. In essence, accomplished English language arts teachers do not try to eradicate dialectal variation from their learning environments; rather, they seek to expand their students' range of communicative competencies. (See [Standard VII—Speaking and Listening](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers explain the necessity of reading the situation in which one is communicating, and they model how to select the language that suits the context. For example, a teacher might explain that it would be appropriate to employ formal language when receiving an award from a community group, persuading the school board to change the dress code, or emailing an authority figure. However, it would be acceptable to use less formal English when writing or speaking to family and friends.

Accomplished English language arts teachers expose students to many regional and global variations of English. They seek out texts that demonstrate variations in vocabulary and dialect and analyze how these differences lend authenticity and local color to the text. For example, a teacher might have students explore the way that the language used in the works of Sharon Draper, Junot Díaz, or Willa Cather conveys a sense of place and culture. Accomplished teachers may also explore fictional dialects such as those created for *The Hobbit* or *Star Trek* to examine the stereotypes and character traits that variations in speech can suggest.

Accomplished English language arts teachers discuss the emotional impact of language. For example, teachers help students see how words can cause harm to others, sometimes unintentionally. Accomplished teachers urge students to use language carefully across all contexts, from formal papers to text messages. Teachers help students understand the results, including legal consequences, of the careless or immature use of language. Teachers model for students the use of unbiased language such as gender-neutral terminology and demonstrate how to harness the power of language to effect positive change in the world. Students of accomplished teachers see language as a tool, one that can help them not only communicate fairly,

but also advocate for themselves, for others, and for their beliefs. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#) and [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers deliberately point out examples of how and why authors use formal, informal, and inflammatory language, discussing the reasons behind these choices. For example, the characters in *The Outsiders* speak in language that some audiences find objectionable, but an accomplished teacher would sensitively point out that this language is used in the novel to convey character.

Instructional Approaches

Accomplished English language arts teachers make strategic decisions about which elements of language study to emphasize and how to teach them based on the backgrounds and needs of their students. Teachers possess a repertoire of instructional strategies to engage students with language—including its grammar, meaning, and conventions. Accomplished teachers guide students in the exploration of language both through planned units of study and through teachable moments that arise in all the strands of language arts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know how to convey to students that conventions are the underlying rules of language. Teachers understand that, while isolated lessons on particular aspects of grammar and usage may occasionally be useful, the rules of grammar can most effectively be elucidated and applied in context. Accomplished teachers use formal and informal assessment methods to identify the areas where their students struggle with grammar, usage, and mechanics, and then they create planned interventions to make improvements. Teachers draw on both students' writing and published texts that can serve as models for how to effectively use the conventions being studied. (See [Standard IV—Instructional Design and Implementation](#) and [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers use multiple strategies for teaching vocabulary. For the most part, they approach vocabulary within the context of speech and written texts, pointing out how authors' and speakers' choices of words affect meaning. Teachers present a range of vocabulary strategies to help students access challenging texts and to develop precision in using English. For example, when preparing students to read an informational text, a teacher might provide students with instruction on how to use their knowledge of Latin roots and affixes to interpret technical terms. Similarly, by using literary texts as models, students can see how word choice affects meaning as well as style and tone.

Accomplished English language arts teachers incorporate resources such as newspaper reports, song lyrics, commercials, and political speeches to study the power of language. They may point out how a writer's or speaker's control of denotation and connotation can influence the reader or listener. For example, accomplished teachers might help students uncover examples of denotation and connotation that enhanced national propaganda in times of war, shaped nations'

perceptions of distant peoples and lands, and alternatively elevated or debased certain occupations depending on a society's values. Teachers might also make transparent to students how novelists use connotation to develop characters and create mood. Accomplished teachers demonstrate how to effectively use a thesaurus to deploy more varied vocabulary when writing or making a formal speech. To help students understand the importance of selecting the appropriate synonym or antonym, a teacher might compare drafts of a manuscript to the published text, noting how the meaning and tone has changed through each phase of the process.

Although most vocabulary instruction is incorporated into reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities, accomplished English language arts teachers may, in certain circumstances, teach with a primary focus on vocabulary skills and strategies. They might give students practice distinguishing among commonly confused or misused words, or provide students with sets of related words, such as lists of shades of the same basic color, and have them play with the examples to create different effects. Teachers might teach the strategy of using context clues to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word or give all students practice writing metaphors and similes.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that one of the pleasures of language study is experimenting with words, and they appreciate the enjoyment as well as the cognitive challenge that puns, rhymes, oxymorons, malapropisms, idioms, and forms of figurative language provide to early adolescents and young adults. Teachers might have students compile their own illustrated dictionaries or have students create dramatic performances of idioms to deepen their understandings of the language. Teachers might develop students' responsiveness and attentiveness to language use by providing opportunities for students to produce poems, speeches, songs, and digital media. Accomplished teachers encourage students to use language as a vehicle for humor, vivid description, the exploration of emotion, the creation of drama, and precise explanation. Teachers understand that such language exercises not only enliven language, but also reinforce the understanding of literary devices.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that although all students acquire English language skills differently, English language learners and students with exceptional needs often face especially complex challenges. In interacting with these students, accomplished teachers are particularly sensitive in their use of language. Teachers may adjust their speaking rate, provide explicit instruction in academic vocabulary, clarify idioms, avoid confusing terms, or restate rather than merely repeat important ideas. Teachers make use of visual supports as well as performance strategies, such as selecting photos to illustrate adjectives describing character traits or acting out a series of synonyms such as skip, hop, lope, walk, stroll, and amble to clarify nuances. When appropriate and possible, accomplished teachers seek the expertise of language and reading specialists to make the curriculum accessible to all students. Accomplished teachers periodically make use of small, homogeneous groups to create safe havens in which English language learners can converse and gain the confidence to speak in larger, mixed-group settings. However, teachers

monitor such small-group discussions and use strategies such as reflecting English language learners' ideas back to them as a means of elevating the group's oral language skills.

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in language study. They monitor their own use of language and the ways they incorporate language study throughout the language arts with appropriate balance and attention. Accomplished teachers recognize their aesthetic, social, and political preferences regarding language, considering biases they have about language and how those biases affect their perceptions of and relationships with students. Accomplished teachers recognize that students' language practices are reflections of their identity. Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the challenges involved in being knowledgeable and responsible in their practices related to language study, including the vast landscape of choices about vocabulary, word choice, conventions, and ways of getting students to know the power and beauty of language.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to determine the effectiveness of their practice, consciously reviewing their curriculum and activities to ensure they are offering students a sufficient variety of relevant and significant experiences in which to apply and improve their skills with language. For example, a teacher might discover that the bulk of their vocabulary instruction has revolved around word choice during writing, but that they have been missing opportunities for building vocabulary during reading. Upon this discovery, an accomplished teacher would most likely integrate vocabulary instruction into the next novel study. Accomplished teachers also look to their students to identify ways in which students can improve their use of language through language study. Teachers look for methods through which students can increase their awareness of bias and their appreciation for the English language, its history, and its various uses.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on a regular basis to expand their knowledge, improve their skills, and develop new strategies regarding language study. Teachers read widely about changes in language, looking for trends and patterns and expanding their experiences and understandings about language. Accomplished teachers are attuned to their students' use of language, and they understand what language reveals about culture.

Standard IX

Inquiry

Through inquiry, accomplished English language arts teachers foster dispositions in students to examine multiple perspectives; promote a process that prompts students to ask critical questions; encourage students to act on what they have learned; and equip students with the tools needed to examine, organize, manage, and analyze information.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are adept at teaching inquiry within the context of language arts. They realize that one goal of inquiry is to instill in students a sense of wonder and the disposition to look for answers that go beyond the simple and obvious; another is to provide students with a sense of ownership over what they have researched and learned. Accomplished teachers realize that the critical nature of inquiry encourages global citizenship because inquiry inspires students to question the larger world and their place within it.

Accomplished teachers look for opportune moments to pose “What if . . . ?” and “I wonder . . . ?” types of questions. Teachers help students see that inquiry requires extended thought, debate, or conversation and that inquiry seldom concludes after one investigation. Accomplished teachers understand that reflection is an essential part of the inquiry process because it helps students identify questions that need further exploration.

The Nature of Inquiry and Learning

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that inquiry can be perceived as a disposition, a process, an action, and a tool. Teachers realize that inquiry allows students to use the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing to more fully understand complex ideas in varying contexts. A well-designed inquiry requires students to develop, understand, and express multiple perspectives on texts, topics, and central questions. Although inquiry is ultimately self-guided, accomplished teachers initially facilitate student learning. Teachers delineate possible pathways for investigation and model the inquiry process. They challenge students to probe deeper and uncover multiple viewpoints about an issue.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are aware of the many ways in which inquiry supports student learning in English and the language arts. Teachers know that engaging in inquiry strengthens students’ academic dispositions, the tools they

use to drive their learning, their process of learning, and their ability to take action as a result of learning. Activities that can promote inquiry include Socratic discussions, online searches, and double-entry journals. These activities by themselves do not ensure inquiry; however, accomplished teachers know how to use practices such as these to develop students' capacity to engage in inquiry.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that the inquiry process begins with students analyzing their background knowledge about a subject. Students then ask questions that trigger the need to know and subsequently seek out reliable and relevant sources of information that address those questions. Students explore the sources; recognize assorted viewpoints, problems, and issues; and then synthesize the information. Accomplished teachers convey to their students that inquiry is complex, open-ended, and recursive in nature, and that the results of inquiry should provoke action or shifts in thinking. Accomplished teachers understand that profound inquiry can take time, and within the constraints on instructional time, teachers maximize the opportunities for this endeavor.

Knowledge of Students and Inquiry

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that teaching inquiry starts with knowing students. The level and type of inquiry in a classroom will differ according to the characteristics of particular students and of the classroom and community. Accomplished teachers prepare for inquiry by asking themselves three key questions: What do students know? What are the reasons behind their knowledge? What can they currently do or not do with their knowledge? Once accomplished teachers have the answers to these questions, they perceive where to begin and how to scaffold students' inquiry. When structuring an inquiry project, an accomplished teacher gathers a variety of resources so that students can begin their investigations successfully and are excited at the prospect of pursuing them. Accomplished teachers understand the necessity of teaching inquiry to all students. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#).)

Knowledge of students allows accomplished English language arts teachers to structure activities in ways that enable students to be successful in a variety of inquiry approaches. Students might compare two or more pieces of literature from a similar time period, about a similar topic, or by the same author. For some students, the starting point of inquiry might be simply understanding that there are multiple viewpoints on a topic. For other students, a point of entry might be taking ownership of a problem in which they have a personal interest and researching possible solutions. Teachers understand that students who know a great deal about a topic may be able to engage in deeper levels of inquiry than students who know less. Accomplished teachers are able to transform what they know about their students into meaningful inquiry experiences.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use their knowledge of students to address fairness, diversity, and equity in inquiry. Teachers use inquiry as a tool to ensure that students consider diverse texts and experience a variety of reading, writing,

producing, viewing, speaking, and listening tasks. Teachers also promote fairness and equity in inquiry by favoring students' multiple ways of knowing and expressing. Teachers understand that inquiry validates students, their diverse experiences, and the unique expertise that each individual provides. Whenever possible, accomplished teachers attempt to co-construct inquiry problem statements with students, parents, and other community members. Accomplished teachers support students in using inquiry to make thoughtful and well-informed decisions and become agents of change on issues important to them. For example, if a younger sibling lacks access to a playground, a student might explore ways to solve this problem.

Purposes of Inquiry

Accomplished English language arts teachers believe that inquiry serves many purposes. Accomplished teachers use inquiry to instill intellectual passion and cultivate curiosity within students, and to develop the dispositions that lead to lifelong learning. Teachers know that inquiry can serve personal purposes, such as building a student's self-awareness or leading to individual accomplishment, as well as public purposes, such as solving problems within the community. Inquiry can even serve purposes that are simultaneously personal and public, such as discovering connections between oneself and the world. Accomplished teachers recognize that inquiry allows students to meaningfully question the world, creatively investigate and challenge their assumptions, examine issues in terms of their relation to larger systems of thought, and reflect on the way that thinking can help young people emerge into a global society. Inquiry can be deeply personal and individual or collaborative. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that inquiry builds the disposition to evaluate different viewpoints through critical eyes and ears and to see the big picture. Teachers help students use the results of their inquiry to empathize and to find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible. An accomplished teacher might lead students through questions that explore the tension between individuality and conformity. For younger students, this exploration might mean discussing the value of being oneself versus following the crowd, whereas for older students, it might involve developing a clearer sense of self and pondering how to contribute to the world. Ultimately, students of accomplished teachers use inquiry to develop self-knowledge, perceiving the personal styles, prejudices, projections, and dispositions that both shape and impede their understanding. Inquiry also helps students develop persistence in trying to clarify confusion and comfort with certain types of ambiguity.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that teaching inquiry is critical to guiding students to manage multiple viewpoints and sources of information in academic settings. Accomplished teachers show students how to ask questions that lead to various perspectives on a topic. Throughout the inquiry process, teachers engage students in various cognitive processes related to their research, beginning with basic explanations and extending to self-knowledge. Accomplished teachers also use inquiry to lead students to many avenues of expression; students select

from multiple modes within language arts to represent their new understandings. However, the ultimate goal of inquiry is always to help students to learn how to ask and answer their own questions.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are aware that inquiry helps students learn to take action. In the classrooms of accomplished teachers, students develop the capacity to explain what they have learned and how they have learned it. Students take a stand on an issue, piece of information, or viewpoint, or frame an explanation, providing thorough support and evidence. Students learn to interpret and convey the results of their thinking, for example, by telling meaningful stories and offering apt translations. They reveal significant historical or personal dimensions of ideas and events and make their research results accessible to their audiences through well-chosen images, anecdotes, analogies, and models. Students learn to adapt and apply the inquiry process to new situations.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that inquiry is a tool that helps students examine, organize, manage, and analyze information. They teach students to look for errors and inconsistencies while evaluating sources. They provide ground rules for inquiry and model rigorous habits of mind. They ask students to have open minds; consider other viewpoints; evaluate assumptions; draw conclusions; test hypotheses; determine the validity, reliability, and credibility of sources; and read critically. Accomplished teachers show students that inquiry is a tool that will help them become lifelong learners and critical problem solvers.

Teaching Inquiry

Accomplished English language arts teachers possess current knowledge about theories and instructional strategies related to inquiry. They understand how to pose significant questions, guide students through the inquiry process, and assess inquiry.

Posing Questions and Problems

Accomplished English language arts teachers believe that all learning begins with a question, and that probing questions result in layered learning. Accomplished teachers know that questions that effectively guide inquiry have a number of characteristics: they have no one obvious right answer, they raise other important questions and often address the philosophical or conceptual foundations of one or more disciplines, and they recur organically through the study of a discipline.

Accomplished English language arts teachers frame questions in a way that provokes and sustains student interest. For example, a far-reaching question such as “How do people experience disaster?” would provide a much better basis for sustained inquiry than “What was it like to be on the sinking Titanic?” Students with less experience with inquiry may start with questions developed by the teacher, whereas students with more experience may develop their own questions.

Guiding Students through Inquiry

Accomplished English language arts teachers use inquiry to help students articulate answers to questions and assess the quality of their answers. Teachers do not guide students in studies that end with purely summative reports of information; rather, teachers use inquiry to identify gaps in knowledge, promote action, and encourage future inquiry within a field. Teachers help students perceive that inquiry is a recursive process that does not end with a single answer; instead, initial conclusions prompt further questions. Teachers ensure that students are comfortable changing their paths of inquiry, and teachers shift their instruction accordingly. By developing students' disposition to ask and answer deep questions, accomplished teachers guide them toward taking the initiative to engage in future inquiry, even when no teacher has required them to.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use inquiry to develop their students' sense of civic responsibility. For example, a teacher might guide students in inquiry about a local or global issue and challenge them to generate solutions, an exercise that could lead to advocacy. Teachers create instructional opportunities to encourage other teachers, business leaders, and community members in an ongoing process of inquiry alongside students. For example, student in-school inquiry focused on perils to the environment might inspire others both within and outside the school to engage in related inquiry and advocacy. (See [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers use inquiry to link English language arts to other content areas and opportunities, recognizing and fostering divergent thinking to make connections. Even when students are engaging with canonical literature or primarily literary themes, inquiry may inspire them to look into related paths and strands. For example, in a unit that uses Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Westerfield's *The Uglies* as a central text, a teacher may help students seek scientific articles about cloning or human behavior to better understand the contemporary, real-world implications of the novels.

Assessing Inquiry

Accomplished English language arts teachers assess and support students throughout the inquiry process and provide evaluations at its conclusion. Accomplished teachers expect and guide students to create meaningful descriptions of their thinking and robust products that represent their inquiry. For example, students investigating air quality in their community might draft a policy recommendation and submit it to a local city council; such a document would be written in Standard English and a formal style. Alternatively, a video created to inform students' peers would be produced in a way that would engage young people and might not adhere to formal conventions.

When assessing inquiry, accomplished English language arts teachers acknowledge the difficulty of evaluating a process that may not always result in a definitive conclusion. Accomplished teachers know that measuring student understanding derived through inquiry is a greater challenge than identifying right and wrong answers on a multiple-choice test. This difficulty, however, does not

deter accomplished teachers from assessing the process of inquiry. They know that understanding must be inferred, not seen directly, and they realize that they can infer understanding from evidence that the student knows *why* (it works), *so what* (why it matters), and *how* (to apply it). (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that reflection itself is an act of inquiry. Teachers reflect on their effectiveness in teaching inquiry and using inquiry to teach English and the language arts. They monitor ways in which they attempt to deepen knowledge about inquiry, expand their repertoire of inquiry skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice. Accomplished teachers recognize ways in which they use inquiry to help students personalize large and global questions to develop personal identity and make meaning. Teachers reflect on how and why inquiry needs to be integrated in various ways across topics, contexts, and the different language arts. Teachers use reflection to make sure that students become proficient with inquiry, thus helping them become independent, active problem solvers who are able to enact change in the world.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to determine the extent to which their inquiry practices are impacting students in desired ways. For example, a teacher might notice that students are asking shallow or superficial questions. The teacher might then create instructional opportunities that help students learn to ask questions that focus on multiple layers, perspectives, concepts, and principles. Alternatively, an accomplished teacher might notice that students are asking questions more frequently than they did at the beginning of the school year. The teacher would point out this encouraging development so that the class could jointly reflect on the factors that led to the improvement. The teacher might continue to discuss with students ways in which they are using questions successfully, and ways in which students more productively engage with their questions for a particular topic or purpose. By observing students' journal writing, teachers might discover that students do not understand the historical context of *Their Eyes are Watching God* or *No Promises in the Wind*; the teacher would then guide students in an inquiry project about how the time period and the novels are connected.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their teaching on a regular basis to improve their inquiry practices. Accomplished teachers recognize that inquiry is integral to the process of reflection. They practice inquiry themselves, developing questions to guide their instruction and learning, and they consult with other colleagues and share inquiry practices. For example, English language arts teachers might partner with science teachers to better understand inquiry from a scientific perspective. Accomplished teachers who grow in their knowledge of inquiry build their capacity to help students become the change they hope to see in their world.

Standard X Assessment

Accomplished English language arts teachers create and select valid assessment tools as part of an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluating student learning. Teachers use assessment results to provide meaningful feedback to students, engage students in self-assessment, shape instructional decisions, and communicate to various stakeholders.

Accomplished English language arts teachers firmly believe that the ultimate goal of assessment is to improve student learning, and they expertly use assessment results to guide instruction. Teachers know that assessment can take many forms and serve multiple purposes, and they are skilled at creating, selecting, and analyzing appropriate assessments as well as sensitively communicating the results to students, parents, and other stakeholders. Teachers understand that valid, high-quality assessments are a powerful resource for teachers to use when reflecting on student progress in order to improve instruction and student learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use a variety of assessment tools to identify the strengths and needs of individual students as well as the overall range of abilities and background knowledge of all the students in a class. Accomplished teachers continuously monitor what students know and are able to do. They understand that assessment is never simply something that is done at the end of a unit of teaching, but rather a method of determining what students know at any given moment, what students are ready to learn next, and how teachers need to differentiate instruction for small groups and individuals.

Accomplished English language arts teachers empower students to use assessment as a tool that they can use to take responsibility for their own learning. Accomplished teachers also help students perceive how assessment functions in real life, in both physical and digital environments. They help students see that the number of hits or postings on a website can be interpreted as an evaluation of the success of that site, and that a job interview is a type of assessment.

Types and Purposes of Assessment

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that although assessment is often associated primarily with high-stakes tests, assessment actually incorporates a broad range of formative and summative tools that are applied

and interpreted over time. Accomplished teachers realize that both basic types of assessment are necessary for sound instructional decision making. Accomplished teachers recognize that assessment is a recursive process that involves identifying initial learning goals, matching assessments to those goals, administering assessments, analyzing results, and setting new learning goals. (See [Standard IV—Instructional Design and Implementation](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that formative assessment takes place during student learning and that it may include such tools as teacher observations, questioning for understanding, exit slips, journal entries, quizzes, checklists, homework assignments, and student self-assessments. The primary purposes of this type of assessment are to gather information to make instructional adjustments and provide regular feedback to students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that summative assessments generally come at the end of a unit, term, or year. These assessments can include products such as tests, portfolios, polished essays, formal speeches, and multimedia projects as well as district benchmark tests. Accomplished teachers understand that the purpose of summative assessment is to determine student proficiency in achieving established learning goals to correct misunderstandings and extend learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that the purpose of local, state, and national assessments is to measure students' acquisition of knowledge and skills in relation to established standards and norms. Teachers realize that these tests often have high stakes; they may be used to rate teacher and school performance or rank students in terms of college eligibility, and may even determine whether students can graduate from high school.

Selecting and Administering Assessments

Accomplished English language arts teachers make fairness a high priority in assessment. They realize that fairness in assessment is based on the clarity and consistency of learning goals, the validity of assessment techniques, the soundness of feedback and evaluation criteria, and the clarity of communication about assessment. Fairness also involves matching assessment tools to students and conducting assessments over a period of time to obtain an accurate determination of students' knowledge and skills. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers translate curriculum standards and expectations into clear student learning progressions because they know that students thrive when directed by comprehensible learning goals and assessment criteria. Accomplished teachers begin the assessment cycle by identifying expected student learning outcomes and by considering how students will demonstrate mastery of those goals. Accomplished teachers initiate the assessment cycle at the beginning of a course, unit, or area of study to determine where students are as individual learners. A teacher might, for instance, ask students to complete reading

or writing surveys to determine their interests and attitudes. Additionally, teachers may administer diagnostic tests or examine national or state test scores as ways of gauging the range of student ability within a particular class. If data is available, teachers might look at expected growth models for students to set individual student goals.

Once desired learning outcomes have been identified, accomplished English language arts teachers design or select valid formative and summative assessments and determine when and how to administer these assessments. Teachers understand that assessments inform deliberate planning, ensuring that all the activities and instructional strategies lead to the desired goals. Accomplished teachers understand that teacher-designed assessments, student self-assessments, and mandated, external assessments together provide a clear picture of student learning; therefore, teachers do not rely on only one form but rather balance various types of assessments. Accomplished teachers consistently collaborate with students and colleagues to design and select valid assessments for specific purposes and needs.

Because they command a wide range of assessment instruments, accomplished English language arts teachers know how to align appropriate assessment tools with the goals of the English language arts curriculum. For example, a teacher may use selected-response items to determine whether students can identify literary devices, but extended-response items to determine whether students can interpret the way the devices are used in a particular poem or novel. Accomplished teachers also use their knowledge of assessment tools to give students choice in how they exhibit their learning. For example, to demonstrate proficiency in argument, a student might be given the choice of creating a public service announcement, writing a letter to the editor, or delivering a speech. Accomplished teachers offer strategic choices based on their knowledge of their students' needs and the diverse ways of meeting those needs. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers apply clear criteria for success to both individual and group performance. Assessment criteria such as rubrics, models, and checklists can be used to monitor progress toward a goal and evaluate whether a student has reached that goal. Whether they are assessing skills or products, accomplished teachers develop criteria that lucidly and concisely communicate to students the expectations for quality and proficiency. To familiarize students with the nature and use of assessment criteria, teachers might provide samples that represent a range of performance levels and ask students to develop and apply appropriate criteria to score and then rank the products or performances. For example, teachers could provide sample essays for students to score in order to calibrate their understanding of the scoring criteria. Accomplished teachers understand the special issues of fairness related to assessing student performances or products that have been created collaboratively, and teachers balance the need for individual assessment against the performance of the group.

Accomplished teachers assess student engagement in the midst of a lesson, gauging student learning and looking out for teachable moments. Teachers phrase questions that uncover student understanding or confusion, then build on

understanding and clarify confusion, and subsequently follow up with more questions. Teachers monitor group work by listening to conversations and posing questions to help students clarify their thinking. Teachers use evidence from their observations to modify instruction in the moment and plan for the future.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that students, teachers, and schools are accountable for student performance on districtwide and statewide tests, and accomplished teachers meet this responsibility in creative and innovative ways. They understand the formats of all mandated tests, and they ensure that the process of preparing students for external assessments provides opportunities for significant learning. Accomplished teachers analyze released tests for the skills that are being assessed and ensure that those skills are addressed in a variety of learning contexts. Accomplished teachers know how to prepare students for mandated assessments. They integrate test preparation with their regular instruction and learning goals by teaching important content and skills along with testing strategies. For instance, teachers may have students work in pairs or groups to analyze and then respond to a test prompt for an on-demand writing assessment, thus incorporating listening, speaking, and critical-thinking skills with writing skills. Students might read, discuss, and score model essays and compare their scores with the scored benchmark. Students might then draft their own responses to the same prompts and compare their essays with the models. Accomplished teachers are sensitive to the effects that high-stakes testing can have on early adolescents and young adults. Teachers work to keep testing anxiety at a healthy level by helping students understand that the pressure to perform tasks is a part of life beyond middle and high schools and by teaching them ways to control and use stress productively. Teachers realize that their students need to perform proficiently on high-stakes assessments, but accomplished teachers seek to provide enriched instruction that goes beyond mandated requirements and that promotes the growth of the whole student. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#) and [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Interpreting and Using the Results of Assessment

Accomplished English language arts teachers communicate explicitly to students and parents about the ways in which students will be assessed, including the expectations for proficiency. Clear feedback and evaluation then help teachers and students adjust their approaches to improve student learning. Accomplished teachers understand and help others see that assessment is an important step in building a solid foundation for learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that an assessment provides insight into student performance at a given moment; therefore, they collect, analyze, and compare data over time, looking for significant patterns and trends. Teachers also know that assessment of student learning takes many forms, and they do not make judgments about students on the basis of any single assessment. Rather, teachers analyze data from many different assessments to build a comprehensive, multidimensional picture of each student's abilities, achievements, and needs. Teachers frequently compare their assessment findings, employing the results of one method to cross-check the accuracy and validity of another. Accomplished teachers

analyze data across the class to determine whether individual students and the class as a whole mastered the skills and knowledge being assessed. Accomplished teachers realize the importance of engaging in continuous reflection, alone and with colleagues, about the data collected from assessment. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers know how to analyze and interpret data from standardized testing programs, and they know how to use that information to design, evaluate, and modify their English language instruction. When possible, teachers work with specialists outside the classroom to ensure that mandated evaluations are consistent with the vision that frames instruction and assessment in the classroom.

Accomplished teachers communicate regularly with students about assessments and their results. They may discuss how to interpret a variety of assessment results and how to understand rubrics, checklists, scores on standardized tests, and other assessment tools. Accomplished teachers provide clear, descriptive feedback to students about their performance. They understand the motivational benefits of acknowledging students' strengths, and they ask thoughtful questions to prompt students' thinking about how to improve or expand their work. When appropriate, teachers allow students to respond to feedback by revising, retesting, or rethinking. Teachers allow students structured opportunities to reflect on their work, such as writing letters explaining what they accomplished on an assignment and identifying areas for growth.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that the process of converting formal and informal assessment data into grades involves complex judgments. They have sound and consistent rationales for their grading systems, which they can clearly convey to students, parents, and other stakeholders. To create a more nuanced picture of student achievement than a single grade can convey, accomplished English language arts teachers prepare reports of their evaluations that clearly communicate to students, parents, other teachers, and administrators the kind and quality of progress that students are making. Teachers use a range of communications technologies to provide parents with meaningful feedback about students' English language arts progress. This feedback includes showcasing and examining student work in light of clearly defined performance standards. Accomplished teachers can articulate to students, parents, and community members the meanings of standardized tests results, and teachers assist students and parents in seeing academic growth from year to year.

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in assessing students because it is key to understanding what their students know and can do. They understand the need for consistency in the goals and forms of assessment and the need for varied assessments for different purposes, and they recognize when their assessments do or do not match their instructional goals.

Teachers make sure that their assessments effectively communicate student understanding and performance to multiple audiences. Teachers seek out different avenues to keep various stakeholders well informed about the purposes, methods, and results of assessment.

Accomplished English language arts teachers question whether an assessment was appropriate for a given purpose. They systematically reflect on their ability to design appropriate spontaneous and preplanned assessments and collect assessment data. Accomplished teachers reflect on the instincts they rely on to notice and capitalize on a teachable moment. They might use data collected from videotaped lessons, peer observations, teacher or student logs, or quick checks for student understanding, such as head nods, individual whiteboards, or student-response systems, to evaluate the extent to which in-the-moment decisions positively impact student learning. Accomplished teachers also scrutinize their summative assessments to make sure they measure intended outcomes and accurately portray what students know and can do.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to determine the extent to which assessments are appropriate, fair, and able to yield rich information about students. For example, if most of the students in a class missed a particular question on a test or scored poorly on a given domain in a rubric, an accomplished teacher would examine the problematic item or domain for clarity and validity. If the teacher determined that the problem lay in the assessment, the teacher would revise or replace it. If the assessment was clear, the teacher would consider how best to address the related skill or knowledge in instruction so that students could be successful in the future. In some cases, an accomplished English language arts teacher might notice that a subgroup of students did not perform as well as the rest of the class. The group might not have completed a part of an essay or might have completed it with poor or mediocre results. An accomplished teacher might respond to this situation by pulling students together in a small group for additional instruction or by tailoring the assignment directions to the group of students who experienced difficulty to help them do better on the next assessment.

Accomplished English language arts teachers do not just reflect about negative assessment results. When assessment shows that students are successful, teachers reflect on how to celebrate and build on this success. Teachers ponder whether to stay the course, increase the pace of instruction, or raise the level of challenges posed by instruction.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their practice on a regular basis to evaluate how their assessment practices can be improved. They participate in professional development and other educational experiences to improve their understanding of assessment. They seek out ways to organize and interpret data from a variety of assessments, at the state and national levels and in the classroom. Accomplished teachers reflect on ways to improve assessment practices, such as engaging in discussions and advocacy to promote effective assessments.

Standard XI

Collaboration

Accomplished English language arts teachers collaborate to improve instruction and student learning, advance the knowledge and practice of the field, enhance their professional identities, and foster collaboration in their classrooms and beyond.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that collaboration is a disposition, a process, and a tool that allows teachers to positively impact student learning by drawing on the talents and energy of a wide array of individuals committed to a common goal. Accomplished teachers understand that collaboration involves inquiry, compromise, collective reflection, problem solving, community building, and pulse taking. They realize that, although meetings and social gatherings are an important part of the daily life of a teacher, these interactions do not in themselves usually constitute collaboration. Collaboration transcends the merely social; it is purposeful. Accomplished teachers collaborate with students; with colleagues within English language arts and other disciplines; and with the community by forging and reinforcing relationships with community partners and businesses. For accomplished teachers, collaboration is a disciplined, reflective endeavor that is designed to improve student learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that their attitude toward collaboration helps to determine the spirit with which each collaborative endeavor is undertaken. Therefore, they cultivate their own disposition toward collaboration and approach opportunities to engage with others with openness and enthusiasm. They also foster a collaborative culture among their students, colleagues, and the community.

Whether a given effort is mandated, initiated by the accomplished teacher, or suggested by a colleague, an accomplished English language arts teacher embraces the opportunity to collaborate. Accomplished teachers understand and influence the ways in which collaboration takes place, engaging in the most productive methods to improve learning outcomes for students and to further their own personal, academic, and professional growth.

Purposes of Collaboration

Accomplished English language arts teachers inspire and engender collaboration in order to achieve many goals. One is to further their own and their colleagues' growth in pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge to enhance student learning. A

group might address a gap in knowledge, or it might challenge and extend a solid base of understanding. Accomplished teachers know that collaboration with a wide range of professionals puts more information at their fingertips, enabling them to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are intentional in identifying goals for collaborative efforts; they recognize when to focus on discrete objectives and when systemic change is in order. They assess the factors, be they possibilities or constraints, that influence the collaborative process. Rather than passively accepting impediments to collaboration, such as negative dispositions or a lack of common planning time, accomplished teachers strive to find possibilities for group endeavors. Accomplished teachers collaborate effectively, taking into consideration competing claims on their time and resources and skillfully setting priorities.

Forms of Collaboration

Accomplished English language arts teachers choose the form of collaboration that is most appropriate for a given purpose or situation. Their knowledge of students, mastery of the content of English language arts, and skill in the process of collaboration allow teachers to strategically address a specific need. Accomplished teachers systematically investigate and evaluate the ever-expanding forms of collaboration available in many dimensions: physical and virtual, synchronous and asynchronous. Accomplished teachers understand that collaboration occurs on different scales; it can take place between individuals or within small or large groups, and it can be short term or unfold over long periods of time. Whether accomplished teachers are creating lessons to help students who are reading below grade level, organizing the schedules of teachers who want to observe one another's classes, taking advantage of technology to connect their learning environment to one in another country, or supporting a student initiative to address a school or community need, accomplished teachers foster positive educational change through intentional collaboration. (See [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Collaboration with Different Groups

Accomplished English language arts teachers consistently engage in collaboration with three main groups: students, colleagues, and the community. Collaboration looks slightly different with each group, but the distinctions are porous, and a given effort may cross the borders between groups. For example, collaboration with other teachers for interdisciplinary teaching about voter registration would yield collaborative opportunities between teachers and students and might, in turn, encourage student engagement with local business and community organizations. Accomplished teachers have a deep and abiding belief that when all stakeholders, including students, educators, and communities, work in concert, there is the greatest chance of propelling student achievement. Teachers also realize that in times of limited resources and increased demands, collaboration is a powerful tool for meeting instructional needs in fair and equitable ways. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that collaborative efforts should be structured and publicized in a way that provides access for and encouragement of colleagues and interested stakeholders. Teachers also understand that collaboration by diverse stakeholders can improve fairness and equity in language arts education. Accomplished teachers acknowledge that students should be a part of the process of enriching and intervening in their education; therefore, teachers empower student representation, student voices, and student decision making.

Collaborating with Students

Accomplished English language arts teachers regularly engage in collaboration with students, model collaboration for students, and facilitate collaboration among students. Accomplished teachers recognize that collaboration is a key strategy for instilling a lifelong passion for English language arts and for helping students become more self-aware through interaction with others. Teachers guide students to become increasingly able to initiate and to participate in collaboration effectively. Teachers explain to students that collaboration refers to more than simply working in a group; it means partnering in their own education and other meaningful endeavors.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize the right of students to gain an increasing measure of control over their learning on the path to independence. Students are encouraged to work with the teacher to set goals, monitor their own learning, and reflect on results. Accomplished teachers may also collaborate with students as co-learners; for example, a teacher and a group of students might explore the use of an unfamiliar technology to advance learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are skilled at engendering collaboration among students. By establishing and reinforcing norms and by developing purposeful tasks that foster positive interdependence and reflection, teachers create the conditions in which students learn to collaborate effectively. Teachers know when to allow students to select their partners and when to assign groups. In assigning groups, teachers are guided by general considerations of fairness, equity, and diversity and by their detailed knowledge of particular students. Accomplished teachers do not assume that merely placing students in groups or opening the floor for a whole-class discussion will ensure that collaboration will occur. Teachers realize that they must equip students with skills that support collaboration, such as the ability to ask thoughtful questions, respond respectfully to others' ideas, build consensus, compromise, negotiate, and accept ambiguity.

Accomplished teachers provide opportunities for students to collaborate not only face-to-face, but also in online environments if possible. Through an online literature discussion or inquiry project or through electronic penpals, students might work with peers from other classes in their school or in distant schools across the nation or world. Accomplished teachers skillfully manage student collaborations to ensure fairness and equity. Teachers make sure that each student has a voice, including finding comfortable roles for less assertive students. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#) and [Standard III—Learning Environment](#).)

Collaborating with Colleagues

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that ongoing collaboration with colleagues is an essential means of fostering professional growth. Accomplished teachers acknowledge that collaborating with colleagues promotes advances in content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and knowledge of students, and they realize that continual development in these areas positively impacts student learning. Accomplished teachers understand that listening to other voices and other perspectives allows teachers to broaden their understandings and develop as educators. Therefore, teachers collaborate with their colleagues, including other language arts teachers, teachers of other content areas, administrators, coaches, members of their professional networks and associations, higher-education partners, and educational support personnel such as classroom aides and custodians. Whether in self-selected or assigned groups, accomplished teachers make the most of the opportunities within the educational community, focusing on ways to positively affect student learning, school climate, and teacher efficacy.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize the interdependence necessary for effective instruction to take place in their classrooms, and they are willing to advance the knowledge and practice of colleagues. They are also willing to learn from other teachers, including those teachers who specialize in working with students with exceptional needs. Accomplished teachers share the knowledge and insights they have accumulated to strengthen the professional practice of others. For example, they collaborate with less experienced language arts teachers or preservice teachers to help them enter and succeed at the profession. An accomplished teacher faced with an educational dilemma may invite colleagues with relevant expertise into the classroom or may visit others' classrooms to observe their practices. Accomplished teachers share materials. They do not do so casually; rather, they engage in critical conversation about the scope and purpose of the materials and their potential for advancing learning. Accomplished teachers are skillful at initiating and facilitating collaborative experiences with their peers. They honor the consensus of the group, and they also craft variations that meet the needs of their students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use conversations with colleagues, in both the physical and virtual realms, to develop, discuss, and refine strategies to improve the teaching of English language arts and enhance the achievement of students. For example, English language arts teachers might join together to search for new strategies and materials to achieve a specific goal, such as how to construct an inquiry project. An English language arts teacher might collaborate with a special education teacher to plan units of instruction to meet the specific needs of diverse populations. Accomplished teachers may participate in online conversations with colleagues across the district, state, nation, or world.

Whenever possible, accomplished English language arts teachers use collaboration to promote interdisciplinary teaching. They share in the planning of integrated curricula, team-teach with members of disciplines other than language arts, promote reading and writing across the curriculum, and act as resources for colleagues in other disciplines. Accomplished teachers recognize that opportunities

for collaboration can emerge from conversations, whether those conversations arise naturally or are intentionally crafted. For example, a group of teachers from different content areas might realize through casual conversation that environmentalism is a common content thread; they could then collaborate to design interdisciplinary units of study related to this theme.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that collaboration does not occur in a vacuum; it is affected by the school climate. Therefore, teachers cultivate a culture that fosters collaboration. Whether they create, sustain, or reinvigorate a collaborative effort, accomplished teachers understand that within their sphere of influence, their participation is vital. They work with others to identify and build on areas of commonality. For example, an accomplished English language arts teacher might invite other English teachers to view a film to determine whether it can be used by their department or team. Alternatively, an accomplished teacher might participate in an ongoing analysis of student assessments by bringing in a range of student work, asking thoughtful questions, and inviting the suggestions of others. An accomplished teacher might reinvigorate a collaborative community by identifying a new purpose, challenging existing assumptions, or bringing in a new voice or perspective.

Collaborating with the Community

Accomplished English language arts teachers regularly collaborate with members of the wider community because they know that a school reflects the communities represented by its student population. Teachers understand that a community is not just a place; it is the interaction that occurs among people in families, towns, nations, and throughout the world. Working within this larger definition, accomplished teachers are able to collaborate effectively with all types of communities. The fundamental purpose of these collaborations, however, is always the same: to improve student learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers actively seek and build partnerships with the community to establish goals that promote understanding, foster authentic communication, and provide information on school or community-based initiatives. Accomplished teachers seek opportunities within the community to expand students' experiences, especially those related to possible future careers. Teachers may partner with businesses, industries, and community agencies to hold career days or to secure internships, funding, or resources that provide students with firsthand knowledge of the world of work, especially of the value of English language arts in that world.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are aware of the useful roles that community members can play regarding students' English language arts education, and teachers reach out to the community by inviting individuals and groups to participate in the learning environment. When possible, teachers establish ongoing, supportive relationships between students and community members. Often, teachers design assignments with an eye toward involving the whole family in discussions of the learning activity, and they invite caregivers into the learning environment as

observers, presenters, or volunteers. Community members may act as mentors, role models, or tutors; participate in mock job or college interviews; or review student portfolios or presentations. Teachers may even rely on community members' subject-matter expertise to enrich the curriculum and make student learning more authentic. Teachers may organize collaborative book talks with students and members of the community or hold a writing night during which parents, students, and teachers can write together.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use their content knowledge and expressive skills to craft innovative and effective ways to communicate with all parents and engage them in the work of the school. For example, a teacher might enlist the help of colleagues who can write in other languages to translate invitations to academic enrichment programs or college preparation workshops for parents who are not fluent in English. Accomplished teachers are tactful and creative about collaborating with parents and other community members who may have limited free time or who may at first feel uncomfortable about helping in the learning environment.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that students come from diverse home and community settings and family structures. Teachers recognize that schools can benefit from the varied cultural, linguistic, social, and educational experiences that shape students' lives and responses to schooling, so they collaborate with families, caregivers, and communities to take advantage of these sources of knowledge. All in all, accomplished teachers help families, caregivers, and the community understand how to help students become knowledgeable, responsible, literate, and articulate adults who can make important contributions to our democratic society. (See [Standard I—Knowledge of Students](#) and [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in collaborating to positively impact practice and improve student learning. Teachers monitor how they collaborate with students, colleagues, and community members, and they recognize that reflection should occur before, during, and after collaboration to achieve and maintain consensus about the goals and the process. Teachers understand that deliberate choices about where, when, how, and with whom collaboration should occur must be made jointly, and accomplished teachers consider the implications of their choices. Accomplished teachers reflect on ways to encourage all interested individuals to have equitable access to collaborative efforts. As collaboration unfolds, accomplished teachers use reflection to effectively negotiate relationships in accordance with group dynamics. Teachers identify ways to improve in future cooperative efforts, sometimes exploring alternative face-to-face and digital contexts for collaboration.

Accomplished English language arts teachers review available evidence to determine the extent to which collaboration is or is not working. For example, a teacher might notice that a small group of students engaged in a task is floundering.

In response, the accomplished teacher might question whether students were well prepared for the collaborative activity. If the teacher determines that the students were insufficiently prepared, the teacher might educate students about the individual roles they could take on the next time they work within the group. In contrast, after interacting with colleagues in a highly successful collaborative experience, an accomplished teacher would reflect on why the collaboration worked so well. Ingredients could include a common goal, shared commitment among participants, and persistence and mutual respect. After identifying the elements of successful collaboration, an accomplished teacher would reflect on ways to reproduce them with another group. In another situation, students might be uninterested in considering future careers or writing resumes. Upon reflection, the teacher might realize that a way to improve student motivation would be to illustrate the need for this practical skill. The teacher might then collaborate with a community member, such as the person responsible for hiring in a local business, to co-teach students about how to conduct a successful job search—including writing a resume.

Accomplished English language arts teachers continuously reflect on and evaluate their practice and experiences with collaboration. They analyze their own collaborative efforts. They consult with other colleagues about new uses for and methods of collaboration. Whenever possible, accomplished teachers participate in professional development to learn more about collaboration, and collaborate on the planning and presenting of professional development. Accomplished teachers seek out other individuals experienced with collaboration in education, business, and other contexts, and when feasible, they collaborate on local, regional, national, and global levels.

Standard XII

Advocacy

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for their students, for the content of English language arts, and for their profession.

For accomplished English language arts teachers, advocacy is a deliberate, ongoing effort to elicit active, broad-based support for the effective teaching of language arts. Accomplished English language arts teachers engage in advocacy with students, families, the professional community, and the community at large, forming partnerships to foster student achievement. Accomplished teachers advocate for student growth and for literacy as well as for their profession. These teachers also serve as role models for their students, encouraging students to become advocates for themselves. Accomplished teachers are advocates for high-quality educational experiences for all students. Teachers direct their advocacy as appropriate to local, state, and national educational policy makers, skillfully adjusting the style and tone of their efforts with respect to their audience and purpose. Teachers are active and persistent in outreach activities, and they share information without waiting for moments of crisis.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that advocacy is an essential facet of adult responsibility. They use advocacy to build civic participation and a sense of global citizenship among their early adolescent and young adult students. By modeling advocacy, accomplished teachers expand their students' world and empower students to become agents on their own behalf. Accomplished teachers regularly take time to reflect on their advocacy, and as their knowledge of their profession grows, they modify or increase their efforts.

Advocating for Students

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for their students in many ways. Teachers carefully assess their students' strengths and weaknesses and then develop plans and goals to meet identified needs. Teachers advocate for the resources required to move students toward established goals, such as furniture to improve the learning environment or field trips to enhance a unit of study. Advocating for students might also include lobbying district administration for innovative curricula and instruction to meet the needs of struggling readers, allocating space and promoting the publication of student work, gaining funding to provide more rigorous coursework for gifted and talented programs, or encouraging colleagues to integrate more innovative uses of technology to teach English and language arts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students understand the range of ways in which they can apply good communication skills to meet needs related to the field of language arts. For example, teachers might encourage students to use the techniques of persuasive speech and writing to advocate for increased access to educational opportunities and age-appropriate materials. Teachers advocate for students to have the opportunity to form groups and then help students voice their opinions within these groups.

Accomplished English language arts teachers view all their students as capable of learning at high levels, regardless of their backgrounds. Teachers are aware of impediments to student learning, such as physical, social, language, economic, academic, and environmental barriers, and they advocate for solutions to these impediments. Accomplished teachers are aware that the physical needs of their students have an enormous impact on the quality of learning. In the case of a student with a physical disability, a teacher might ask the district to supply a duplicate set of textbooks for the student to keep at home to prevent further stress on the student's condition. Advocacy could involve locating resources for a student whose family has encountered financial difficulties; such a student might need clothes, shoes, or toiletries to feel comfortable coming to school. Accomplished teachers inform students about resources within the community and help students access these resources when necessary. Teachers also recognize their responsibility as reporting agents in situations where students must be protected from harm. In such cases, teachers engage in appropriate interventions, often acting as student advocates.

Accomplished English language arts teachers strive to ensure that students have equitable opportunities to engage with materials related to their learning needs; teachers provide age-appropriate printed texts and access to online resources to enhance individual achievement. Accomplished teachers measure student growth and integrate instruction in ways that address the needs of all students. A teacher may have to research literature from various cultural backgrounds, speak with a student's other current or former teachers, or investigate extracurricular programs that can meet the individual needs and interests of students. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

The goal of accomplished English language arts teachers is to maximize and celebrate the success of all their students and create a learning atmosphere that promotes lifelong learning of English language arts. In order to do so, accomplished teachers may nominate students for programs such as leadership seminars, essay contests, and showcases for student work, including anthologies of student writing. Whenever possible and appropriate, accomplished teachers promote the recognition of student achievement.

Accomplished English language arts teachers seek like-minded individuals to help them co-advocate for their students through both informal and formal means. Teachers work with colleagues to meet the needs of all students, including students with exceptionalities, students in need of additional academic challenges, English language learners, and students who have been overlooked. Accomplished English

language arts teachers serve on student intervention teams or as mentors for specific students. They work with their colleagues to maintain and protect programs and resources that positively impact students, improve conditions, and ultimately advance student learning. Cooperative advocacy may include efforts targeted to the needs of specific students or broad-based initiatives such as school building programs, school scheduling, school budgets, implementation of innovative instruction, and professional development.

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate to ensure that all students are assessed appropriately. They advocate for assessments that are bias-free and focused on student learning. Accomplished teachers advocate for policies and practices that ensure that the results of classroom and mandated assessments are used to drive instruction, monitor student learning, and inform curricular revision. Accomplished teachers are aware of the confidential nature of individual assessment results, and they guard against the inappropriate use of testing data. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#) and [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Student Self-Advocacy

Accomplished English language arts teachers model for students how to use the power of language to advocate for themselves. Teachers help students understand that self-advocacy can be as simple as asking the teacher to clarify instruction. A teacher might also write alongside students, demonstrating effective techniques for informing and persuading audiences. Accomplished teachers provide venues in which students can practice using their voices appropriately and effectively when advocating for issues important to their learning and future lives. For example, a teacher might assign students to write letters to the editor or letters to the principal or to participate in a blog on a topic that interests them.

Accomplished teachers show students how to effectively voice their positions to enact change. For example, a teacher might model how a student could speak with an authority figure with a concern or an appeal. Accomplished teachers support students in developing their ability to self-advocate for educational equity and for fair treatment by peers and adults. An accomplished teacher might encourage students to advocate for accurate depictions in the media of their culture, age group, gender, or other groups with which they identify. Accomplished teachers encourage and support students to take on new advocacy roles, including serving on a student council, attending school board and government meetings, and using digital mechanisms for advocacy, such as social media and the Internet. Accomplished teachers help students understand issues of context, risk, and responsibility related to various forms of advocacy. Teachers also introduce students to alternative models of advocates, such as politicians, community activists, journalists, novelists, and musicians. Ideally, accomplished teachers' efforts for advocacy should encourage lifelong advocacy in their students. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Advocating for English Language Arts

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for English language arts because they realize the essential role that this discipline plays in the lives of their students, in the classrooms of other teachers, and in the world at large. Accomplished teachers promote the study of language arts in all its forms. Because sophisticated communication skills are vital for participating in a global society, teachers advocate for rich, rigorous, and relevant language arts subject matter.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students find new and rewarding ways to interact with the content. For example, teachers might help students find opportunities outside the classroom in which they can develop as readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and viewers. Teachers might encourage students to write for the school newspaper and the yearbook or to engage in poetry festivals and slams, digital storytelling festivals, drama, and debate.

When possible, accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for texts and forms of literacy that represent diverse subjects and cultures and that are produced by a broad array of individuals. Teachers may advocate for a specific curriculum or piece of literature in a department meeting, present innovative work at national conferences, or broadcast work through online sites. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers work to foster interdisciplinary learning. They expose their students to informational texts in the sciences and social studies in order to teach the skills essential to reading in different content areas and to expand overall reading comprehension ability. English language arts teachers also work with colleagues in other content areas to help students use reading, writing, producing, speaking, listening, and viewing to improve cross-curricular learning. Accomplished English language arts teachers might participate in other subject area meetings to advocate for the use of language arts skills in their curricula. For example, an accomplished teacher might explain how persuasive writing can provide a vehicle for engaging in deep thinking about scientific concepts: as students strive to support scientific hypotheses, they apply skills such as argumentation and exposition that they have acquired in English language arts. In math, students might analyze their dream houses, comparing their plans with budget estimates to better understand practical applications of the concept of area. In making written and oral comparisons between plans and budgets, students apply thinking, speaking, and viewing skills acquired in English language arts. (See [Standard XI—Collaboration](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for the resources necessary to support their curriculum. They do so by serving on budget committees, seeking out grants, serving on textbook adoption committees, participating in curriculum development committees, and forming partnerships with the business community. Because they are aware of guidelines and issues related to freedom of speech and the appropriateness of materials for particular audiences, accomplished teachers may engage in advocacy related to censorship. They may serve on media

committees or other committees that develop policies and procedures related to the removal of texts or the limiting of student access to various media. Not only are accomplished teachers aware of obvious censorship, but they are also conscious of more covert forms of censorship, such as search-engine filters that prevent access to broad categories of websites.

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for the content of their profession by modeling communications skills with students, parents, colleagues, and the community. They might serve as speakers for outside groups, explain English language arts content to the public, establish community book-discussion groups, or use electronic media for social outreach. Accomplished teachers build understanding of language arts and respect for the importance of language arts skills in many arenas.

Advocating for the Profession

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for their profession. In this area, as in all aspects of their advocacy work, their ultimate goal is to benefit their students. In the process of advocating for the profession, accomplished teachers create networks that improve practice, thereby improving student access to educational resources and learning. Accomplished English language arts teachers demonstrate a willingness to serve in leadership roles in professional organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of English, Learning Forward, the International Reading Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and other local, state, and national organizations. Accomplished teachers seek support for their profession from various stakeholders, such as the business community, policy makers, and community leaders at the local, state, and federal levels. When possible, accomplished teachers take more ownership of policy development related to education by serving on committees involved with this type of work, such as Department of Education Task Forces, the Chamber of Commerce, advisory councils, and state standards committees.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use the power of language to advance their profession. For example, they might work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. Teachers might meet with legislators and policy makers, write for professional journals, contribute articles for publication in the local paper, maintain websites, produce educational materials, sponsor and participate in book discussions or poetry groups (online or in person), or use electronic media in other ways to advance the profession. Accomplished teachers advocate for the responsible use of electronic media for the expression of ideas and opinions impacting the profession.

When possible and appropriate, accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for conditions that will optimize teaching and learning throughout the profession. Accomplished teachers seek support for teachers to engage in professional experiences, such as attending and presenting at professional development forums and national conferences and participating on state, national,

and international advisory boards. Accomplished teachers advance the profession through professional writing, including articles for professional journals, books, and research monographs, and they respond to competitive grant proposal requests to solicit funding for programs that support instruction. Accomplished teachers advocate for evidence-based practices to impact student learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers work to ensure the future of their profession. When possible, accomplished English language arts teachers recruit teacher candidates and assist them as they seek entry into the profession. Accomplished teachers also work to retain members of the profession through such activities as initiating contact with new teachers and mentoring and supporting colleagues. Accomplished teachers might seek opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in institutions of higher learning. An accomplished teacher might advocate for rigorous standards for preservice teachers or serve on an advisory panel in a school of education. Accomplished teachers may also advocate for their profession by serving as advisors for career-oriented student extracurricular activities.

Accomplished English language arts teachers advocate for recognition for outstanding teachers. They use their own practice, their work with colleagues, and their knowledge of current research to identify what accomplished teaching in the language arts looks like, and they also solicit student and parent input into the official recognition process. Accomplished teachers seek new roles for teachers as they shape the future of the profession and the schools in which they work. Accomplished teachers advocate for and participate in multiple paths to teaching excellence, including, but not limited to, advanced certification, graduate studies, independent research, and professional learning activities. Teachers advocate for a variety of high-quality professional learning opportunities to ensure that students will be guided by accomplished teachers.

Reflection

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on their effectiveness in advocacy. They monitor themselves to ensure that they are being true to their own convictions and serving the needs of their students. Teachers recognize that their skill in using English language arts affords a particular vantage point when it comes to advocacy. They understand ways in which their advocacy advances the profession, and they also recognize the ways in which complacency can hinder professional growth. Accomplished teachers make sure that their students are provided with the best opportunities for learning and that students learn to advocate for themselves. Accomplished teachers use reflection to ensure that when they engage in advocacy, they remain aware of the value of other viewpoints.

Accomplished English language arts teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their advocacy. They might consider the content of a given appeal, such as whether they used appropriate evidence and whether their proposed solutions addressed the pertinent problem. Teachers might also evaluate issues related to their approach,

such as their timing, whether they contacted the right persons, and whether their appeal was presented with the proper tone.

Accomplished English language arts teachers also reflect on their students' willingness and ability to advocate for themselves. For example, a teacher might notice that a student who has never before asked questions has recently started to stay after school to seek assistance. The teacher would then help the student become aware that this action is a form of self-advocacy and would encourage the student to continue to self-advocate in other forums. In another situation, a student might interrupt a classroom discussion to request a grade change. An accomplished teacher would most likely take the time to explain why this behavior is counterproductive and why making the request at a more appropriate time would be more effective form of self-advocacy.

Accomplished English language arts teachers critically examine their advocacy practices on a continual basis to build their knowledge and application of advocacy. Teachers might engage with their students to understand ways in which they can engender self-advocacy in their students. They might consult colleagues to learn from others' experiences. Teachers might reflect on how they advocate in education, business, and legal circles to learn more about advocacy and its practice in various contexts. Ideally, teacher reflection about advocacy advances student learning. As teachers gain more professional knowledge, they continue to hone their skills and gain an increased appreciation of the importance of advocacy for their students and their profession.

Standards Committees

Standards Committee, Third Edition

Doretha Allen, NBCT

Reading Teacher
Dallas Independent School District
Dallas, TX

Mark Conley—Co-Chair

Professor of Instruction and Curriculum
Leadership
University of Memphis
Memphis, TN

Carl Fratz

English Teacher
Penns Grove High School
Carneys Point, NJ

Antero Garcia

English Teacher
Freshman Preparatory Academy
Manual Arts High School
Los Angeles, CA

Yvette Gittens, NBCT

Language Arts Teacher
Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School
Miami, FL

Kristin Hamilton, NBCT—Co-Chair

English Teacher
Prince William County Public Schools
Haymarket, VA

Sandy Hayes, NBCT

English Teacher
Becker Middle School
Becker, MN

Lynne Murray, NBCT

English Language Arts Curriculum Specialist
Guilford County Schools
Greensboro, NC

Lynne Olmos, NBCT

English and Drama Teacher
Mossyrock School District
Mossyrock, WA

Jason Raymond, NBCT

English Teacher and Instructional Coach
Williamsburg Preparatory High School
New York, NY

Cheryl Redfield, NBCT

English Language Arts Teacher
Highland Junior High School
Gilbert, AZ

Robyn Seglem, NBCT

Assistant Professor of Secondary Content
Literacy
Illinois State University
Normal, IL

Emily Sims, NBCT

Adjunct Professor of Secondary Education
Jacksonville State University
Jacksonville, AL

Barbara Williams, NBCT

English Teacher and AVID Elective Teacher
Olathe Northwest High School
Olathe, KS

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Cora Lee Five

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The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is deeply grateful to all those who contributed their time, wisdom, and professional vision to *English Language Arts Standards, Third Edition*. Any field grows, shifts, and evolves over time. Standards, too, must remain dynamic and therefore are subject to revision. In 2011, NBPTS convened a fifth English Language Arts Standards Committee. This committee was charged with achieving both continuity and change, using the previous editions of the standards as the foundation for its work but modifying the standards to reflect best practices of the early twenty-first century. The English Language Arts Standards Committee exemplified the collegiality, expertise, and dedication to the improvement of student learning that are hallmarks of accomplished teachers. Special thanks go to committee co-chairs Kristin Hamilton, NBCT, and Mark Conley for their invaluable leadership in making the third edition a reality.

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