



## Claims and Facts about Common Core\*

Successful removal of the Common Core State Standards requires parents, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to have facts about what the standards are and what they are not. The following Claims and Facts address Common Core myths about the development, intent, content, and implementation of the standards.

---

### Claims and Facts About Content and Quality: General

---

**Common Core Claim:** The standards are designed to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college, career, and life. This will result in moving even the best state standards to the next level. The standards were informed by the best in the country, the highest international standards, and evidence and expertise about educational outcomes. States with college-readiness standards will eliminate post-secondary remedial work.

**Common Core Claim:** Standards from top-performing countries played a significant role in the development of the math and English language arts/literacy standards. The college- and career-ready standards documents provide an appendix listing the evidence that was consulted in drafting the standards, including the international standards that were consulted in the development process.

**Common Core Claim:** The standards recognize that both content and skills are important. The English language arts standards require certain content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are made at the state and local levels. In addition to content coverage, the standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The mathematics standards lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real-world issues and challenges. They prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

**Fact:** Adopting common standards means bringing all states' standards down to a mediocre common denominator. This means that states with high standards are actually taking a step backwards by adopting the Common Core. Common Core addresses remediation at the college level by demanding college credit for college-level remedial courses, rather than preparing high school students for authentic college-level work.

**Fact:** The Common Core State Standards are not internationally benchmarked, and no study in a Common Core appendix shows that they are.

**Fact:** Common Core focuses chiefly on skills in English language arts and dictates specific, sometimes experimental, pedagogical practices in mathematics and English language arts. While the standards do not provide a clear definition of college and career readiness, the lead mathematics standards-writer has indicated that students passing its mathematics college-readiness test will be ready for community and non-selective colleges.

\*Source of inspiration: <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts/>

---

## Claims and Facts About Content and Quality: Math

---

**Common Core Claim:** The standards accommodate and prepare students for Algebra 1 in 8th grade by including the prerequisites for this course in grades K-7. Students who master the K-7 material will be able to take Algebra 1 in 8th grade. At the same time, grade 8 standards also include rigorous algebra and will transition students effectively into a full Algebra 1 course in grade 9.

**Common Core Claim:** The mathematical progressions in the Common Core State Standards are coherent and based on evidence. Part of the problem with having different sets of state standards in mathematics is that different states cover different topics at different grade levels. Coming to a consensus guarantees that, from the viewpoint of any given state, topics will move up or down in the grade level sequence. What is important to keep in mind is that the progression in the Common Core State Standards is mathematically coherent and leads to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

**Fact:** The standards do not enable students to complete Algebra I in the 8th grade. Common Core explicitly places Algebra I in grade 9. Grade 8 in Common Core mathematics is a useless placeholder.

**Fact:** Key mathematics topics appear in the wrong grade or are missing in Common Core. As the lead mathematics standards-writer acknowledged in 2010, Common Core does not prepare students for STEM or selective colleges. Having different standards in different states that cover topics at different grade levels does not seem to hurt Australia or Canada, or other top-performing countries that have significantly varying progressions across provinces.

---

## Claims and Facts About Content and Quality: English Language Arts/Literacy

---

**Common Core Claim:** The standards include sample texts that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for the grade level and compatible with the learning demands set out in the standards. The exemplars of high-quality texts at each grade level provide a rich set of possibilities and have been very well received. This provides a reference point for teachers when selecting their texts, along with the flexibility to make their own decisions about what texts to use.

**Common Core Claim:** With the ELA standards, English teachers will still teach their students literature as well as literary nonfiction. However, because college and career readiness overwhelmingly focuses on complex texts outside of literature, these standards also ensure students are being prepared to read, write, and research across the curriculum, including in history and science. These goals can be achieved by ensuring that teachers in other disciplines are also focusing on reading and writing to build knowledge within their subject areas.

**Common Core Claim:** The Common Core requires certain critical content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are made at the state and local levels. The standards require that a portion of what is read in high school should be informational text, yet the bulk of this portion will be accounted for in non-ELA disciplines that do not frequently use fictional texts. This means that stories, drama, poetry, and other literature

**Fact:** The standards are mostly vague descriptions of skills. The document does not contain a recommended title or author list. The standards rarely contain examples of specific texts to give teachers a reference point for grade level difficulty.

**Fact:** English teachers will teach literary texts for about 50% of their reading instructional time and "informational" selections from science and social studies for the other 50% at all grade levels. It is not possible for most secondary teachers in other subjects to teach reading and writing in addition to the content of these subjects.

**Fact:** The standards de-emphasize the study of fiction/literature. Over 50% of the reading standards in the English language arts at each grade level is for informational or nonfiction reading.

account for the majority of reading that students will do in their ELA classes. In addition to content coverage, the standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

---

## Claims and Facts About Process

---

**Common Core Claim:** The Common Core drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. In addition, many state experts came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together.

**Common Core Claim:** The standards have made careful use of a large and growing body of evidence. The evidence base includes scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations.

In English language arts, the standards build on the firm foundation of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) frameworks in reading and writing, which draw on extensive scholarly research and evidence.

In mathematics, the standards draw on conclusions from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and other studies of high-performing countries that found the traditional U.S. mathematics curriculum needed to become substantially more coherent and focused in order to improve student achievement, addressing the problem of a curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep.”

**Fact:** No teachers were involved in writing the standards. No teachers have claimed responsibility for any of the ELA standards. The entire development process was non-transparent; there are no public records showing comments and suggestions received, or any actions taken or changes made.

**Fact:** The standards are not based on research or evidence. The curriculum study of high-performing countries on TIMSS covered only grade 1 to grade 8. The NAEP frameworks for assessing mathematics, reading, and writing are not for curriculum in English language arts. The reading document explicitly indicates this.

---

## Claims and Facts About Implementation

---

**Common Core Claim:** Teachers know best about what works in the classroom. That is why these standards establish what students need to learn but do not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

**Common Core Claim:** Decisions on how to implement the standards are made at the state and local levels. As such, states and localities are taking different approaches to implementing the standards and providing their teachers with the supports they need to help students successfully reach the standards.

**Common Core Claim:** The Common Core is a state-led effort that is not part of No Child Left Behind or any other federal initiative. The federal government played no role in the development of the Common Core. State adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory. States began the work to create clear, consistent standards before

**Fact:** The standards tell teachers what kinds of texts to teach in English language arts—i.e., how to organize their classroom curricula—and in mathematics how to approach teaching geometry, for example.

**Fact:** Teachers are being left to implement the standards with little support or guidance. That is why they are asking for a moratorium on Common Core in many states.

**Fact:** The standards are being implemented through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and newer federal programs, signifying that the federal government will be leading them. Flexibility waivers from NCLB, granted by the federal government to over 40 states, effectively require states to use Common Core standards.

the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which provided funding for the Race to the Top grant program. It also began before the Elementary and Secondary Education Act blueprint was released, because this work is being driven by the needs of the states, not the federal government.

**Common Core Claim:** Recognizing the strength of having high standards for all students, the federal government gave competitive advantage to Race to the Top applicants that demonstrated that they had or planned to adopt college- and career-ready standards for all students. The program did not specify the Common Core or prevent states from creating their own, separate college- and career-ready standards. States and territories voluntarily chose to adopt the Common Core to prepare their students for college, career, and life. Many states that were not chosen for Race to the Top grants continue to implement the Common Core.

**Common Core Claim:** The Common Core is *not* a curriculum. It is a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

**Common Core Claim:** The federal government will not govern the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core was and will remain a state-led effort. The NGA Center and CCSSO are committed to developing a long-term governance structure with leadership from governors, chief state school officers, and other state policymakers to ensure the quality of the Common Core and that teachers and principals have a strong voice in the future of the standards. States and local school districts will drive implementation of the Common Core.

**Common Core Claim:** There are no data collection requirements for states adopting the standards. Implementing the Common Core State Standards does not require data collection. The means of assessing students and the use of the data that result from those assessments are up to the discretion of each state and are separate from the Common Core.

**Fact:** Most states committed to the Common Core State Standards as part of the Race to the Top grant application. In return, they were supposed to be given evidence of international benchmarking for these standards. However, they have not been given the names of these countries or crosswalks showing comparisons of standards at each grade level.

**Fact:** These standards are intended to lead to a national curriculum for our schools. Bill Gates has said so explicitly. Further, the standards contain explicit guidelines for the amount of time to be allotted to informational reading, use an experimental approach to teaching Euclidean geometry, and expect all students in a class to be taught to the same set of standards for the entire academic year. No acceleration is encouraged or desired.

**Fact:** The Common Core State Standards initiative has never been state-led, and states are not finding it easy to withdraw from the commitments made by their state boards of education, governors, and commissioners of education. In addition, plans are already being made to eliminate local school boards in favor of regional school boards controlled by the federal government. The federal government will monitor what states do through its waiver-granting process and the Common Core-based assessments developed by the federally-funded assessment consortia. No mechanism exists for revising Common Core's standards.

**Fact:** The assessments based on the Common Core State Standards are intended to result in a national database on all students. While the standards do not in themselves require data collection, data are to be collected as part of administering the Common Core assessments, and the consortia are legally obligated to transfer individual student-level data to the federal government.

