

A quick guide for observing classroom content and practice

Working with appropriate **complex texts**, students should:

Read About It

1. Literature
2. Informational Text
3. Foundational Skills

Think About It

4. Higher-Order Reasoning

Talk About It

5. Comprehension/ Collaboration
6. Presentation

Write About It

7. Opinion
8. Informative
9. Narrative

During a **1st grade ELA instructional block**, you should observe the teacher integrating the grade level ELA standards and students engaging in a variety of the following standards and practices:

Students engage daily with complex literature and informational texts::

- Key Ideas and Details:** ask and answer questions, retell stories, central message or lesson; description of characters, settings, and main events; main topic; connection between two individuals, events, ideas, and pieces of information
- Craft and Structure:** words and phrases that suggest feelings and appeal to senses, unknown words and phrases, characteristics of common types of stories, narrator at different points in a text, identity characteristics of common types of stories, use of text features to locate information, information provided by pictures versus words in text
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** illustrations and words to describe characters, setting, events or key ideas; reasons to support author’s ideas; basic similarities and differences between 2 texts on same topic

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

- Print Concepts:** features of print/sentence (first word, capitalization, ending punctuation)
- Phonological Awareness:** long versus short vowel sounds in spoken, single-syllable words, orally blending of phonemes (including consonant blends), phoneme isolation, and segmentation of spoken single-syllable words into phonemes
- Phonics and Word Recognition:** word analysis, including decoding of words with common consonant digraphs, final –e, common vowel team, one and two syllables, inflectional endings, and irregularly spelled words; knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound
- Fluency:** accurate/fluent reading to support comprehension, rereading as necessary

Students engage daily in higher-order reasoning:

- Ask and answer** questions to gather additional information/clarify what is not understood
- Compare and contrast** adventures and experiences of characters in stories, and basic similarities and differences between two texts on same topic
- Demonstrate understanding** of word relationships and nuances in word meanings with guidance and support (sorting, categorization of words by 1+ key attributes, real-life connections between words and their use, and shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner)
- Participate** in shared research and writing projects

Students engage daily in collaborative work:

- Comprehension and Collaboration:** conversations using rules for discussions, building on others’ talk, asking for clarification, describe key text/media details aloud, ask and answer questions to clarify what speaker says
- Presentation:** clear description of people, places, things, and events using relevant details, choose and use appropriate vocabulary, addition of drawings or visual displays to descriptions when appropriate, use of complete sentences, command of standard English grammar, usage, and its conventions

Students engage daily in writing (using standard English grammar, conventions):

- Opinion:** topic or name of book, related opinion and reasons, closure
- Informative/Explanatory:** topic, related facts, closure
- Narrative:** a recount of two or more sequenced events (what happened) using temporal words where appropriate, closure; use rhyming words in poems





ELA What to Look For The example below features three Indicators from the [CT Common Core of Teaching](#). These Indicators are just a sampling from the full set of Standards and were chosen because they create a sequence: the educator plans a lesson that sets clear and high **expectations**, the educator then delivers high quality instruction, and finally the educator uses a variety of **assessments** to see if students understand the material or if re-teaching is necessary. This example highlights teacher and student behaviors aligned to the three Indicators that you can expect to see in a rigorous 1st grade ELA classroom.

Domain 1	Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning
<p>What is the teacher doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clearly communicating the learning objectives for the lesson orally and visually in student-friendly terms •Creating culturally responsive lessons that engage and sustain student attention •Focusing attention on newly learned language (e.g. linguistic complexity, conventions, and vocabulary) 	<p>What are the students doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Engaging with (e.g., listening to the teacher read) developmentally appropriate complex texts •Providing a reason for their opinions •Identifying when an author chooses words that suggest a feeling

Connections to Theory and/ or Research

Domain 2	Planning for Active Learning
<p>What is the teacher doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Designing lessons that integrate standards and strands •Helping students understand characteristics of different types of text •Grouping students based on data and adjusting grouping as needed (using both homogenous and heterogeneous grouping) 	<p>What are the students doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Working cooperatively on a shared activity •Responding to one another's ideas •Listening and reading to comprehend complex texts

Domain 3	Instruction for Active Learning
<p>What is the teacher doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Providing concrete strategies to respond to feedback •Using multiple formative approaches to assess student learning (e.g., conferences, responses during read-aloud) •Conducting frequent checks for student understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly 	<p>What are the students doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Engaging in challenging learning tasks regardless of learning needs (e.g., linguistic background, disability, academic gifts) •Engaging in meaningful drawing and/or writing in response to text •Using exemplars to inform their work

*This document is based on the CT Core Standards Classroom "Look Fors" and the MA Curriculum Observation Guide