ELA/Literacy Vignettes Table of Contents

K ELA-Literacy Vignette..............................................................Page 1
Third Grade ELA-Literacy Vignette............................................Page 7
Fourth Grade ELA-Literacy Vignette.................................Page 14
Seventh Grade ELA-Literacy Vignette.........................Page 22
Ninth – Tenth Grade ELA-Literacy Vignette..........Page 29
ELA/Literacy and ELD in Action in Kindergarten

The research-based implications for ELA/Literacy and ELD instruction have been outlined previously in the transitional kindergarten through grade one Overview of the Span and in Chapter 2. In the following section, detailed examples illustrate how the principles and practices discussed in the preceding sections look in California classrooms. The examples provided are not intended to present the only approaches to teaching and learning. Rather, they are intended to provide concrete illustrations of how teachers might enact the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards in integrated ways that support deep learning for all students.

Both the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards acknowledge the importance of oral language development and frequent exposure to complex texts in the earliest grades. Because young children’s listening comprehension generally outpaces their ability to read independently, teacher read alouds are of critical importance. When teachers read aloud sophisticated literary and informational texts, they expose children to rich language (including vocabulary and complex grammatical structures), new ideas, and content knowledge the children may not be able to access on their own through independent reading. Rich read aloud experiences using complex texts in English are especially critical for EL children, who may not have these experiences at home. In alternative bilingual programs, teacher read alouds in both languages of instruction are important for biliteracy development.

When planning lessons, teachers should enact the principles and practices discussed in this chapter and throughout this framework. Lesson planning should incorporate the cultural, linguistic, and background experiences students bring to the classroom, the assessed needs of students, and look ahead to year-end and unit goals. The framing questions in Figure 3.26 provide a tool for planning that teachers may find valuable.
Figure 3.26. Framing Questions for Lesson Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing Questions for All Students</th>
<th>Add for English Learners</th>
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</thead>
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<td>• What are the learning targets for this lesson, and what should students be able to do at the end of the lesson?</td>
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<td>• Which clusters of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy does this lesson address?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What background knowledge, skills, and experiences do my students have related to this lesson?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• What types of scaffolding, accommodations, or modifications will individual students need to effectively engage in the lesson tasks?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will my students and I monitor learning during and after the lesson, and how will that inform instruction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ELA/Literacy and ELD Vignettes**

The following vignettes illustrate how a teacher might implement the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards using the framing questions and additional considerations for teacher read alouds provided earlier. The first, Vignette 3.3, presents a glimpse into an instructional unit and a closer look at parts of an ELA/literacy lesson where the CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards are used in tandem. The second, Vignette 3.4, presents a designated ELD lesson that builds into and from the ELA lesson in order to support EL children in their steady development of everyday and academic English.
ELA/Literacy Vignette

In Vignette 3.3, the teacher uses a five-day planning template to guide him in building his students’ abilities to make meaning, develop language, and express themselves effectively.

Vignette 3.3 ELA/Literacy Instruction in Kindergarten: Interactive Storybook Read Aloud

Background:

Mr. Nguyen reads aloud to his students daily during ELA instruction. He intentionally selects storybooks that have an engaging and fun plot because they promote extended discussions. The books he selects are also filled with general academic vocabulary and other rich language, which ensures that his thirty kindergarteners, half of them ELs, are immersed in rich language. Most of the EL children in Mr. Nguyen’s class are at the Expanding level of English language proficiency. However, three are new to the U.S. and are at the early Emerging level. Three of his students have moderate intellectual disabilities, and Mr. Nguyen works closely with the school specialist to ensure he is attending to their socio-emotional and cognitive learning needs.

When he reads aloud complex literary texts, Mr. Nguyen incorporates specific instructional strategies so that his students develop enthusiasm about the stories, listening comprehension skills, and sophisticated language. He also looks up specific words and phrases in his EL students’ primary languages so that he can use them strategically to scaffold their comprehension of the English texts.

Lesson Context:

Mr. Nguyen and his teaching colleagues collaboratively plan their read aloud lessons, as well as the designated ELD lessons that build into and from the read alouds. They’ve just planned a five-day series of lessons for the story Wolf by Becky Bloom and Pasal Biet. The teachers will read the story to their students three times over three consecutive days. Each time they read the story aloud, they’ll model good reading behaviors, draw attention to vocabulary, and prompt students to discuss comprehension questions (at first mostly literal and increasingly inferential as the week progresses). In the last two days of the lesson series, the teachers will guide their students to retell the story, first orally and then in writing. The team’s planning map for the week is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactive Storybook Reading 5-day Planning Template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book title and author:</strong> The problem (in child-friendly language): General academic vocabulary in the story: Selected words to teach more in depth later (~5):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places in the story to model making inferences: Vocabulary to explain (E), act out (A) or show in the illustration (S): Places to stop for think-pair-</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ELA/ELD Framework was adopted by the California State Board of Education on July 9, 2014. The ELA/ELD Framework has not been edited for publication. © 2014 by the California Department of Education.
### Days 4-5

**Guided (with the teacher) or independent (in pairs or groups):**

- Oral retelling of the original story
- Written retelling of the original story
- Alternate version of the original story

At the end of the week, Mr. Nguyen will ask the students to work in pairs and compose and illustrate either a retelling of the original story or an alternate version of the story (e.g., with different characters, alternate ending). The learning target and cluster of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards Mr. Nguyen is focusing on today, the first day of the lesson series, are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning Target:</strong></th>
<th>The students will discuss text-dependent questions about a story they listen to. They'll practice being good conversation partners.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy:</strong></td>
<td><strong>RL.K.1</strong> – With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text; <strong>RL.K.7</strong> – With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts); <strong>SL.K.1</strong> – Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners, follow agreed-upon rules, and continue a conversation through multiple exchanges; <strong>SL.K.2</strong> – Confirm understanding of a text read aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CA ELD Standards (Expanding):</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELD.PI.K.1</strong> – Contribute to class, group, and partner discussions by listening attentively, following turn-taking rules, and asking and answering questions; <strong>ELD.PI.K.3</strong> – Offer opinions in conversations using an expanded set of learned phrases (e.g., I think/don't think X. I agree with X.), as well as open responses, in order to gain and/or hold the floor. <strong>ELD.PI.K.5</strong> – Demonstrate active listening to read-alouds and oral presentations by asking and answering questions with oral sentence frames and occasional prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson Excerpt:**

On the first day, Mr. Nguyen invites his students to the carpet to listen to the story. He briefly *previews what the problem of the story is* since this is often challenging for students to perceive on their own.

Mr. Nguyen: Today, you're going to meet a hungry wolf. At first, he wants to eat some farm animals – a cow, a pig, and a duck. But the farm animals are much more interested in reading their books, so they *ignore* him. That means they don't pay attention to him at all. He doesn't like that, and he tries to get them to pay attention to him.

As Mr. Nguyen reads the story, his students are all very engaged, in large part because the story is so well written, but also because Mr. Nguyen models enthusiasm and intonation, and he acts out the voices of the interesting characters when there’s dialogue. He frequently invites the children to read along with him some particularly engaging passages. For example when the pig explains to the Wolf that the farm is for educated animals, Mr. Nguyen invites the children to say the dialogue together.

Mr. Nguyen: "Educated animals ... Educated animals!" the Wolf repeated to himself.' Let’s all repeat that together, and let’s say it like the Wolf would.
Mr. Nguyen also models how to make inferences at strategic points in the story by thinking aloud. Thinking aloud also allows Mr. Nguyen to expose the children to general academic vocabulary that the students may want to use when they discuss the text later.

Mr. Nguyen: I’m thinking that the reason the animals aren’t paying attention to the wolf is because they’re so engrossed, or interested in their books. Even though he’s leaping and howling at them, they’re more interested in reading. I think they must love to read and that they’re probably reading really good books!

At one or two strategic points throughout the story, Mr. Nguyen stops and asks his students to think about a text-dependent question he poses and then prompts the students to share their ideas with a partner. His students engage in “think-pair-share” frequently, and they quickly turn to their designated partner to discuss their ideas.

Mr. Nguyen: “You’ve got a long way to go.” That means, “you have a lot of work to do.” Why do you think the duck told the Wolf, “You’ve got a long way to go?”

Mr. Nguyen points to the illustration in the book, which shows the wolf laboriously reading his book out loud, the pig annoyed and glaring at him, and the other animals ignoring him. He’s found that adding this level of visual support helps his students with learning disabilities and his ELs at the early Emerging level to comprehend better and be more actively engaged in the partner discussion. It also helps all of the children describe the relationship between illustrations and text in stories. After Mr. Nguyen poses the question, he is quiet for several seconds so his students can think.

Mr. Nguyen: Now that you have an idea, you can use this sentence frame when you share it with your partner. Listen to me first, and then we'll say it together: “Maybe the animals think that _____.” Remember to help your partner, add on to what your partner says, or to ask a question, if you need to. Don’t stop your conversation until I call you back.

The children take turns sharing their ideas with their partners, and Mr. Nguyen listens carefully. He has intentionally placed his ELs at the early Emerging levels next to friends who speak the same primary language, and he encourages them to communicate in their primary language when they need to. He also encourages them to use gestures (e.g., nodding) and simple phrases (e.g., I think ... Can you say that again?) in order to participate actively in the conversations.

Alicia: Maybe the animals think that, think that … the wolf …

Sam: (Nodding in encouragement and waiting.)

Alicia: Maybe the wolf is …

Sam: Maybe the animals think that …

Alicia: (Nodding) Maybe the animals think that they don’t like him. Your turn.

Sam: I can add on to you because maybe the animals think that he don’t read good.

Alicia: Yeah. They read good. They only like to read.

Sam: And the wolf, he don’t read good like them.

Mr. Nguyen: (Signaling for students to face him.) I heard some great ideas. I heard someone say that maybe the animals think that the Wolf doesn’t read very well, and that’s why they told him he has a long way to go. Here (pointing to the text) it says that the animals just kept on reading. It seems like they weren’t even interested in hearing him read. It looks like that’s what’s happening in the illustration, too. Maybe that’s what the pig means when he says “you’ve got a long way to go.” Maybe they think Wolf needs to practice reading a lot more, or that he has to practice reading for a lot longer before he can read as well as they do.

Throughout the story, Mr. Nguyen pauses when he comes to general academic vocabulary that his students may not know or only partially understand. He acts out some of the words (e.g., peered, budge), points to illustrations in the text for others (emerging), and briefly explains others (educated, ignored, satisfied, impressed).
Mr. Nguyen: “You have improved,” remarked the pig. When you improve, that means you get better at doing something.

At the end of the story, Mr. Nguyen asks a final question to stretch his students’ analytical thinking.

Mr. Nguyen: Why do you think the other animals want Wolf to keep reading to him now?

Over the next two days, when he reads the story aloud again, Mr. Nguyen continues to model good reading behaviors, focus on vocabulary and other rich language (e.g., his eyes were playing tricks on him), and provide lots of opportunities for the children to discuss their comprehension of the text. By the third time Mr. Nguyen reads the book aloud, the children are able to discuss more analytical questions in extended ways. For example, after discussing the text for two days, on the third day, the children have a more nuanced understanding of why the animals ignored the Wolf and can explain their ideas more precisely (e.g., because he was acting in an “uneducated” way and couldn’t read like them). They are also able to answer the questions “What do you think the Wolf learned by the end of the story? How do you know?” with a greater amount of evidence from the text, including how the Wolf’s behavior and appearance changed throughout the story.

Throughout the week, Mr. Nguyen keeps notes on what his students are saying and doing. The log has sections for groups of students (e.g., students having difficulty with listening comprehension, students with special needs, EL children) so that he can support them strategically. On the fourth day, Mr. Nguyen guides the children in an oral retelling of the story. On the fifth day, he engages the children in a “joint reconstruction of text,” where he guides them to retell the story as he writes it on a document reader, scaffolding their use of sophisticated language and supporting them to extend and refine their ideas as they reconstruct the story together.

Teacher Reflection and Next Steps:

At the end of the week, Mr. Nguyen reviews the notes in his observation log. He notices that during the think-pair-share discussions on the first read, his ELs at the early Emerging level of English language proficiency struggled to communicate in English, and two used their primary language to share ideas for a couple of the questions. However, by the third read, all three spoke more confidently, using short phrases in English and the sentence frames he provided. He makes a note to ask his teaching colleagues for ideas about supporting these students to participate more actively in English on the first read. At the same time, he’s pleased that they listened actively during the first read and that after hearing the story repeatedly, they were able to communicate their ideas in English. Returning to his notes, Mr. Nguyen is also pleased to see that the three children with moderate intellectual disabilities were engaged during all three read alouds, and he attributes this to the scaffolding and structure he provided.

Mr. Nguyen sends home an information sheet—provided in English and in the primary language of the EL children—with ideas for parents to interact with their children when reading aloud to them at home.

Sources: Lesson adapted from Beck and McKeown (2007), McGee and Schickedanz (2007), Ota and Spycher (2011)

Resources

Web sites:

- Colorín Colorado has read aloud tips for parents (http://www.colorincolorado.org/guides/readingtips/) in eleven languages (http://www.colorincolorado.org).
- D.E.A.R. (drop everything and read) with families short video (https://www.teachingchannel.org/)

Recommended reading:

ELA/Literacy and ELD in Action in Grade Three

The research-based implications for ELA/Literacy and ELD instruction have been outlined above in the grades two and three grade span section and also in Chapters 1 and 2. In the following section, detailed examples illustrate how the principles and practices discussed in the preceding sections look in California classrooms. The examples provided are not intended to present the only approaches to teaching and learning. Rather, they are intended to provide concrete illustrations of how teachers might enact the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards in integrated ways that support deep learning for all students. These examples are intended to promote collegial conversations about instructional practice and foundational principles that inform pedagogy.

Both the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards acknowledge the importance of reading both literary and informational complex texts carefully, intentionally, and thoughtfully to derive meaning. Accordingly, teachers should select challenging texts that are worth reading and rereading, analyze the texts ahead of time in order to determine critical areas of focus and potentially challenging concepts and language, and plan a sequence of lessons that builds students’ abilities to read the text—and others—with increasing independence. Analyzing texts prior to using them for instruction is critical for supporting all learners to interact meaningfully with the texts and for providing appropriate types and levels of scaffolding.

During instruction, teachers should model how to read text closely by thinking aloud about their reading strategies while they read. Teachers should also provide guided practice for students to read complex texts, with appropriate levels of scaffolding. Importantly, especially for ELs and in fact for all students, teachers should focus on meaning making but also draw attention to language, including the ways in which different text types are structured and the particular language resources used in these texts to convey and organize meaning. Examples of specific language resources are text connectives (e.g., for example, however), which create cohesion; long noun phrases (e.g., a chemical that is in the air, the man with the gigantic smile plastered across his face), which expand and enrich the meaning of sentences; and complex grammatical structures using academic vocabulary (e.g., Instead of charging into the
forest, the wolf decided to patiently await the arrival of his meal), which create relationships between ideas and convey meanings in precise ways. Providing students with opportunities to discuss the language of the complex texts they are reading enhances their comprehension of the texts while also developing their language awareness. An added benefit of language analysis is that it provides students with models for using language that they can adopt and adapt for their own writing and speaking.

Student reading of informational texts in content areas (e.g., science, social studies, the visual and performing arts) is essential for full language and literacy development as the content, text organization and structure, vocabulary, and even the types of grammatical structures used in texts varies by content area. Closely reading informational texts in science, for example, and the collaborative conversations that accompany these readings help students think about science concepts in new ways as they are simultaneously learning the language of science. The science informational texts students read should be embedded in rich science instruction, as students’ engagement with science practices and concepts through science instruction enhance their ability to interact meaningfully with science informational texts. Conversely, students’ careful readings of science informational texts expand their understandings of science content and practices.

When planning lessons, teachers should enact the principles and practices discussed in this chapter and throughout this framework. Lesson planning should look forward to year-end and unit goals, respond to students’ needs, and incorporate the framing questions in Figure 4.31.

Figure 4.31. Framing Questions for Lesson Planning

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California’s ELA/ELD Framework  
THIRD GRADE

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<th>Which clusters of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy does this lesson address?</th>
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**ELA and ELD Vignettes**

The following two vignettes (more detailed than snapshots) illustrate how a teacher might implement the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards using the framing questions for planning and considerations for close reading provided above.

The integrated ELA/science vignette, Vignette 4.3 is an example of appropriate instruction for all CA classrooms, and additional attention is provided for using the CA ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards in tandem for EL children. Vignette 4.4 presents a designated ELD lesson that builds into and from the integrated ELA/science lesson in order to support EL students in their steady development of academic English. This vignette focuses on closer analysis of the language of the texts students are reading in ELA/science.

**ELA/Literacy Vignette**

Vignette 4.3 presents a glimpse into an instructional unit and a closer look at a reading lesson during integrated ELA and science instruction. In this vignette, the focus of instruction is collaborative summarizing, which supports students’ ability to read their informational texts more closely. While “summarizing the text” is a fourth grade CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy standard (RI.4.2), third grade students can learn to summarize smaller chunks of text (e.g., 1-2 paragraphs). This supports them to identify key details
and words in the passage that help them to determine the main idea of the passage, or what the passage is mostly about, which is an important reading comprehension skill.

Vignette 4.3 Integrated ELA and Science Instruction in Grade Three:
Collaborative Summarizing with Informational Texts

**Background:** In science, Mr. Franklin has been teaching his third graders about plants and interdependent relationships in ecosystems. He’s been reading aloud and teaching his students to independently read complex literary and informational texts on the topic in both science and ELA. His class of thirty-three students, located in an urban neighborhood with families from upper middle class and working class families is quite diverse linguistically, culturally, and ethnically. Fifteen of his students are ELs with several different home languages. Most of Mr. Franklin’s EL students have been at the school since kindergarten and most are at an early Bridging level of English language proficiency in most areas. A few of his ELs are at the expanding level of English language proficiency. Five of Mr. Franklin’s students have been identified as having mild learning disabilities. Because of the diversity of needs in his classroom, Mr. Franklin looks for teaching approaches that will meet many of the learning needs of most of his students.

**Lesson Context:** Mr. Franklin and his third grade teaching team meet weekly to plan lessons, discuss student work and assessment results, and read articles to refine their practice. Lately, Mr. Franklin and his colleagues have noticed that when their students approach complex informational texts, many of them give up as soon as the language in the texts starts to become challenging. The teachers work together to plan a series of lessons focusing intensively on teaching their students how to read complex informational texts more closely. Using the resources in their staff professional library, they decide to teach their students a comprehension strategy called “collaborative summarizing.” They plan a series of lessons to teach the process of the strategy incrementally over the next week and, if the strategy seems useful, they plan to incorporate it into their instruction two to three times per week, as recommended in the resources they find. They agree to check back with one another the following week to compare their observation notes on how their students responded to the instruction. Based on his collaborative planning with his colleagues, the learning target and clusters of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards for Mr. Franklin’s lesson the next day are the following:

**Learning Target:** The students will collaboratively summarize the main idea of sections of an informational text about plants, using precise words and details.

**Primary CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy Addressed:**
RI.3.2 - Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea; SL.3.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions …

**Primary CA ELD Standards Addressed (Expanding level shown):**
ELD.PI.3.1 - Contribute to class, group, and partner discussions … ; ELD.PI.3.6 - Describe ideas, phenomena (e.g., how cows digest food), and text elements (e.g., main idea, characters, events) in greater detail … with moderate support; ELD.PI.10b - Paraphrase texts and recount experiences using complete sentences and key words from notes or graphic organizers; ELD.PI.3.7 - Condense clauses in a growing number of ways … to create precise and detailed sentences.

**Lesson Excerpt:** During ELA instruction the following day, Mr. Franklin introduces collaborative summarizing and explains to his students how to use the approach. He tells them he knows that sometimes the informational texts they read can feel challenging, but that this strategy will give them a way of tackling the texts so that they understand them better.
Mr. Franklin: When I’m reading a tough informational text, every once in awhile I have to stop and summarize what I just read to make sure I’m understanding the text. When you summarize what you’ve been reading, you put it into your own words. You say what the section is mostly about, and not all the little details. Summarizing helps you figure out the main idea of what you just read. This is a really powerful comprehension strategy that you can use when you’re reading on your own, and I’m not there to help you. Today, we’re going to practice using this strategy. You like reading with a partner right? Well, today, you’re going to get to read a short part of a text on plants with a partner, and you’re going to work together to practice summarizing. You’re going to collaboratively summarize the text.

Mr. Franklin shows the students a chart with the steps of the strategy and explains them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Summarizing Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Find “who” or “what” is most important in the section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Find out what the “who” or “what” are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Use the most important words to summarize the section in 15 words or fewer. (It can be more than one sentence.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using a document reader to project the text for the students, Mr. Franklin first models, by thinking aloud, how to apply the strategy with the first short section (two paragraphs) of a text on plants, one that the class has already read. He reads the paragraphs once as the students read chorally with him. Then, he goes back into the paragraph and models how to do step one. He circles the words that tell “who” or “what” is most important in the paragraphs, talking through the process as he does so that students know what he is thinking. He then models step two. Once he has many words circled, he models how to decide which words are the most important by thinking aloud about the meaning of the passage. Then, he puts the words together to create a concise summary of the passage. He writes out multiple versions of the short sentence, crossing out words here and adding other words there, thinking aloud all the while, until he settles on a sentence he’s satisfied with. Then, he rereads the paragraph to make sure his fifteen-word statement is an accurate summary of the passage.

After he models once, he repeats the process with the next passage, and this time, he invites the students to tell him which words to circle. Once he’s guided the students through steps one and two and feels confident that the students understand the task, he asks the students to work in partners to create a collaborative summary, using the words they’ve chosen to circle. He walks around the room to observe students and gauge how they are taking up the strategy as they negotiate with one another and create their summaries. The passage the students summarize together is provided below.

**What is Photosynthesis?**

Since they stay in one place and can’t move around to find food, plants don’t eat the same way that animals do. Photosynthesis is how plants eat. They use this process to make their own food, and they can make their food anywhere as long as they have three things. The three things are carbon dioxide, water, and light. Carbon dioxide is a chemical that is in the air. It’s normal that carbon dioxide is in the air. Every time you breathe in, you breathe in a bunch of chemicals from the air, including oxygen and carbon dioxide. Plants breathe, too, and they breathe in the carbon dioxide.

Plants also drink, and they use their roots to suck water up from the soil. They also need light to live. Leaves are made up of a bunch of tiny cells. Inside the cells are tiny little things called chloroplasts. Chloroplasts are what makes leaves green, and they are also what takes the carbon dioxide, the water, and the light, and turns them into sugar and oxygen. The sugar is then used by the plants for food. This whole process is called photosynthesis.

Melanie and Rafael are working together to summarize the text. They’ve circled many words, including photosynthesis, eat, process, carbon dioxide, water, light, chemical, air, breathe, leaves, chloroplasts, sugar, oxygen, plants, and food. Now they must work together to discuss what’s most important to include...
in their summary. Mr. Franklin listens in on their discussion.

Melanie: We could say, “Plants make their own food, and they use carbon dioxide and water and light …”

Rafael: And air, they need air, too. So, we could say, “Plants make their own food, and they need carbon dioxide, water, light, and then they make their food with it, and it’s called photosynthesis.” Wait, that’s too many words.

Melanie: Yeah, and I think … I think the carbon dioxide … Isn’t that a chemical that’s in the air? So maybe we don’t need to use the word air.

Rafael: (Rereading the text with Melanie). Yeah, you’re right. Okay, so let’s cross out air. What about chloroplasts? What are those again?

Melanie and Rafael reread the passage multiple times as they collaboratively construct their summary, making sure that the words they’re using are absolutely essential. They discuss how to put the words together - in as few words as possible - so that it conveys the core meanings of the passage. As they discuss and write, they rearrange the order of the words, expand their ideas with adjectives and prepositional phrases, such as in the leaves, and condense their ideas by using as few precise words as possible.

Rafael: Okay, so we could say, “Plants make their own food, and they use carbon dioxide, water, and light to do it. The chloroplasts in the leaves turn all that into sugar, and it’s food. It’s photosynthesis.”

Melanie: That’s way too many words. Maybe we can combine some of the ideas. How about, “Plants make their own food with the chloroplasts in their leaves …”

Rafael: In their cells. Here, it says that the chloroplasts are in their cells.

Melanie: Yeah, in their cells. So we could say that, and then say that they use the chloroplasts to make the food, right? They use it to make sugar and oxygen, and the sugar turns into food.

Rafael: Yeah, but I think that’s still going to be too many words. How about … (Looks at the second sentence in the text.) Here! Here is says "Photosynthesis is ..." How about if we start with that?

Melanie: “Photosynthesis is when plants make their own food using carbon dioxide, water, and light.” That’s fourteen words!

Rafael: Do we need “chloroplasts?”

Melanie: I think this is what the passage is mostly about.

Rafael: Me, too.

Mr. Franklin checks the summary statements of each set of partners and provides support to those who need it. Some students are so focused on the “game” part of the task that they forget to go back to the text to verify that their summaries accurately represent the most salient ideas in the passage, so he redirects them to do so. Students who finish are able to move to the next section and repeat the process. Once the allotted time for the task is up, Mr. Franklin asks the partners to share their summaries with another set of partners and compare notes. Then, he asks for volunteers to share their summary statements with the whole class. Mr. Franklin sees that some of his students are still not quite understanding the process, so as the rest of the class works independently (in partners) on the next
section, he pulls these students to his teaching table to provide additional modeling and guided practice. This way, he is able to make sure that all students become completely comfortable with the strategy.

**Teacher Reflection and Next Steps:** Over the next several days, the students practice using “collaborative summarizing” as they read sections of their science informational texts. The following week, Mr. Franklin will introduce another layer of the strategy, which is for the students to work in heterogeneous groups of four. In order to ensure equitable participation in the task, he’ll teach them to assume designated responsibilities, which will be posted in the room on a chart for students to refer to. The students will take turns assuming different responsibilities each time they engage in the task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Collaborative Summarizing Responsibilities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitator:</strong> Guides the group in the process. Makes sure everyone is participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scribe:</strong> Takes the official, most legible notes that anyone can use for reporting out (everyone else must take their own notes, too).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time-keeper:</strong> Keeps an eye on the time and moves the group along so it doesn’t run out of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encourager:</strong> Gives specific praise to group members. Encourages members to assist one another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following week during collaborative planning time, Mr. Franklin debriefs with his team. The teachers note how impressed they are with how much the students are discussing the content of the passages by focusing on the language they’ll use to summarize them. Mr. Franklin shares that a few of his students are still not quite understanding the strategy, even after his modeling, guided practice, and small group teacher supported instruction. The teachers decide to model for each of their classes how to engage in the task. They think their students will enjoy watching their teachers pretend to be third graders, and they also feel that this type of “fish bowl” modeling will help reinforce the strategy for all students and provide the appropriate level of additional scaffolding that the students who still find the strategy challenging need.

Sources: Lesson adapted from Klingner, Vaughn, and Schumm (1998); Shanahan et al. (2010)

**Resources**

Web Sites:
- Readingrockets.org has ideas for Using Collaborative Strategic Reading ([http://www.readingrockets.org/article/103](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/103)).
- CSR Colorado provides resources for using Collaborative Strategic Reading ([http://www.csrcolorado.org/en/](http://www.csrcolorado.org/en/)).

Recommended Reading:

ELA/Literacy and ELD in Action in Grade Four

The research-based implications for ELA/Literacy and ELD instruction have been outlined above, in the grades four and five grade span section, and in Chapter 2. In the following section, detailed examples illustrate how the principles and practices discussed in the preceding sections look in California classrooms. The examples provided are not intended to present the only approaches to teaching and learning. Rather, they are intended to provide concrete illustrations of how teachers might enact the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy, the CA ELD Standards, and other content standards in integrated ways that support deep learning for all students.

Both the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards acknowledge the importance of conducting research to build deep knowledge of a topic and writing to convey this growing knowledge. For example, W.4.7 states that students conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic; and ELD.PI.4.10a (Br) states that students write longer and more detailed literary and informational texts collaboratively and independently using appropriate text organization and growing understanding of register. In integrated ELA and Social Studies, conducting research and writing about what is learned involves both engaging in research practices and learning to use language in particular ways—interpreting information through wide and careful reading on a topic, discussing different aspects of the topic both informally and more formally, writing about what has been learned to explain, describe, or persuade.

Accordingly, teachers should prepare an artfully integrated sequence of lessons that scaffolds students’ abilities to discuss their ideas, analyze and evaluate what they read or hear in order to develop a discerning eye for evidence, and produce oral and written language that represents their growing understandings while at the same time stretches them to use the linguistic resources that are typical of and highly valued in history informational texts. Teachers should select texts appropriate for research tasks that are interesting and engaging, and they should also provide opportunities for students to select texts, web-based resources, and other media sources for research projects on their own as these foster a sense of self-efficacy in students and also build their capacity to be self-reliant. In addition to using print texts, students should use
multimedia resources (e.g., the internet, digital media, photographs) and interact with one another collaboratively.

Teachers should ensure that the texts used represent a variety of cultures and that the cultures of their students are accurately and respectfully depicted. All students need to see themselves positively reflected in the texts they are reading, and they need to see role models to aspire to. They also need to learn to value and respect the cultures of their fellow students, as well as those of children like them from cultures outside the classroom. (For more guidance on culturally and linguistically relevant instruction, see Chapters 2 and 9).

In addition to ensuring that their students interact in meaningful ways— with one another, with content knowledge, and through literacy tasks—and that they learn to value diversity, teachers should analyze the texts students will use ahead of time and identify their language demands. This analysis by teachers before instruction includes examining the sophistication of the ideas or content of the text, students' prior knowledge of the content, and the complexity of the vocabulary, sentences, and organization of the text. Teachers should anticipate the kind of language they wish to observe their students using in discussions and in writing and prepare opportunities for students to use this language meaningfully. Teachers should use and discuss “mentor texts,” that is, the kinds of texts that they would like for students to be able to eventually write on their own, so that students have language models to aspire to, and they should provide concrete methods for students to read their texts analytically, with appropriate levels of scaffolding in order to ensure success.

Importantly, especially for ELs, and in fact for all students, teachers should explicitly draw attention to the text structure and organization and to particular language resources (e.g., vocabulary, grammatical structures, cohesive devices) in the informational and literary texts used in the curricular unit. History informational texts contain an abundance of general academic vocabulary (e.g., development, establish), as well as domain-specific terms (e.g., revolution, civil rights), which students need to understand in order to make sense of the meanings in the texts. In addition, history texts use language in ways that may be unfamiliar to students (e.g., establishing time relationships as in At the beginning of the last century…, After a long and difficult
Teachers can help their students to notice these types of language features and many others that are used in their history/social studies texts. Through carefully designed instruction, they can build their students’ awareness of how language is used to make meaning in history/social studies, thereby developing their students’ ability to understand the language of complex informational texts and at the same time their understanding of the critical meanings in the texts (Schleppegrell 2013). This awareness about how English works in different text types also helps students expand their bank of language resources, which they can draw upon as they produce their own writing.

When planning lessons, teachers should enact the principles and practices discussed in this chapter and throughout this framework. Lesson planning should look forward to year-end and unit goals, be based on students’ needs, and incorporate the framing questions in Figure 5.17.

Figure 5.17. Framing Questions for Lesson Planning

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<tr>
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<th>Add for English Learners</th>
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</thead>
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<td>• What are the English language proficiency levels of my students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the learning targets for this lesson, and what should students be able to do at the end of the lesson?</td>
<td>• Which CA ELD Standards amplify the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy at students’ English language proficiency levels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which clusters of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy does this lesson address?</td>
<td>• What language might be new for students and/or present challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What background knowledge, skills, and experiences do my students have related to this lesson?</td>
<td>• How will students interact in meaningful ways and learn about how English works in collaborative, interpretive, and/or productive modes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How complex are the texts and tasks that I will use?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will students make meaning, express themselves effectively, develop language, and learn content? How will they apply or learn foundational skills?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What types of scaffolding, accommodations, or modifications will individual students need to effectively engage in the lesson tasks?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will my students and I monitor learning during and after the lesson, and how will that inform instruction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ELA/Literacy and ELD Vignettes

The following two vignettes illustrate how a teacher might implement the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards using the framing questions and additional considerations discussed above. The first, Vignette 5.1, presents a glimpse into an instructional unit and a closer look at a lesson during integrated ELA and Social Studies instruction. In this vignette, the focus of instruction is conducting research and writing research reports (biographies). The integrated ELA/social studies vignette is an example of appropriate instruction for all California classrooms, and additional suggestions are provided for using the CA ELD Standards for EL students (integrated ELD). Vignette 5.2 presents designated ELD that builds into and from the integrated ELA/social studies lesson in order to support EL students in their steady development of academic English. This vignette focuses on developing general academic vocabulary students need to know well in order to understand their social studies texts and for writing their biography research reports.

ELA/Literacy Vignette

Vignette 5.1 Integrated ELA and Social Studies Instruction in Grade Four: Writing Biographies

Background:

Mrs. Patel’s class of thirty-two fourth graders write many different text types during the course of the school year. Currently, they are in the middle of a unit on writing biographies from research. At Mrs. Patel’s school, the K-5 teachers have developed a multi-grade scope and sequence for literary nonfiction writing by focusing on simple recounts of personal experiences in TK-1, moving into autobiographies in grades 2-3, and then developing students’ research and writing skills further in grades 4-5 by focusing on biographies. In the fifth grade, the students write biographies of community members they interview, but fourth graders write biographies on famous Californians who made a positive contribution to society through their efforts to expand Americans’ civil rights (e.g., Dolores Huerta, Fred Korematsu, Edmund G. “Pat” Brown, Mary Ellen Pleasant, Cesar Chavez, Ed Roberts, Jackie Robinson, and Harvey Milk).

The school is diverse with multiple cultures and languages represented (in Mrs. Patel’s class, twelve different primary languages are represented), and students with disabilities are included in all instruction. The fourth grade teachers intentionally select biographies that reflect this diversity. Among the teachers’ main purposes for conducting this biography unit is to discuss with their students various complexities of life in different historical contexts and how the historical figures dealt with these complexities in courageous ways that not only benefited society but were also personally rewarding. Seven of Mrs. Patel’s students are ELs at the late Expanding or early Bridging level of English language proficiency, and five students are former ELs and in their first year of reclassification.

Lesson Context:
At this point in the “Biographies” unit, Mrs. Patel’s students are researching a California historical figure of their choice. Ultimately, each student will individually write a biography on the person they selected and provide an oral presentation based on what they wrote. They research their person in small research groups where they read books or articles and view multimedia about them; discuss the findings they’ve recorded in their notes; and work together to draft, edit, and revise their biographies and oral presentations. Texts are provided in both English and in the primary languages of students (when available) because Mrs. Patel knows that the knowledge students gain from reading in their primary language can be transferred to English and that their biliteracy is strengthened when they are encouraged to read in both languages.

Before she began the unit, Mrs. Patel asked her students to read a short biography and then write a biography of the person they read about. This “cold write” gave her a sense of her students’ understanding of the text type and helped focus her instruction on areas that the students needed to develop. She discovered that while the students had some good writing skills, they did not have a good sense of how to structure a biography or what type of information or language to include in them. Instead, most students’ writing was grouped into a short paragraph and included mostly what they liked about the person, along with a few loosely strung together events and facts.

Over the course of the unit, Mrs. Patel reads aloud several biographies on different historical figures in order to provide modeling for how good biographies are written. She provides a supportive bridge between learning about historical figures and writing biographies independently by explicitly teaching her students how to write biographies. She focuses on the purpose of biographies of famous people, which is to tell about the important events and accomplishments in a person’s life and reveal why the person is significant. She also focuses on how writers make choices about vocabulary, grammatical structures, and text organization and structure to express their ideas effectively.

Mrs. Patel deconstructs biographies with her students so that the class can examine their structure and organization, discuss grammatical structures that are used to create relationships between or expand ideas, and draw attention to vocabulary that precisely conveys ideas about the person and events. All of this attention to the “mentor texts” she reads aloud to the class or that students read in small reading groups provides modeling for writing that students may want to incorporate into their own biographies. This week, Mrs. Patel is reading aloud and guiding her students to read several short biographies on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Yesterday, the class analyzed, or deconstructed, one of these biographies, and as they did, Mrs. Patel modeled how to record notes from the biography using a structured template, which is provided below.

### Biography Deconstruction Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Title:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong> (tells where and when the person lived)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where and when the person was born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What things were like before the person’s accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sequence of Events</strong> (tells what happened in the person’s life in order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early life, growing up (family, school, hobbies, accomplishments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Later life (family, jobs, accomplishments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How they died or where they are now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong> (tells why this person was significant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why people remember the person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The impact this person had on California and the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How they improved the rights and privileges of Americans through their actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How their actions exemplified the principles outlined in the American Declaration of Independence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson Excerpts:

In today’s lesson, Mrs. Patel is guiding her students to jointly construct a short biography on Dr. King using the notes the class generated in the Biography Deconstruction Template template (which the class completed the previous day), their knowledge from reading or listening to texts and viewing short videos on Dr. King, and any other relevant background knowledge they bring to the task from previous experiences inside and outside of school. The learning target and clusters of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards in focus for today’s lesson are the following:

Learning Target: The students will collaboratively write a short biography to describe the life accomplishments, and significance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., using precise vocabulary, powerful sentences, and appropriate text organization.

CCSS for ELA/Literacy: W.4.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences; W.4.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing (including multiple-paragraph texts) in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; W.4.7 – Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic; RI.4.3 – Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

CA ELD Standards (Expanding): ELD.PI.4.1 – Contribute to class, group, and partner discussions, including sustained dialogue, by following turn-taking rules, asking relevant questions, affirming others, and adding relevant information; ELD.PI.4.10a – Write longer literary and informational texts (e.g., an explanatory text on how flashlights work) collaboratively (e.g., joint construction of texts with an adult or with peers) … ; ELD.PI.4.12a – Use a growing number of general academic and domain-specific words, synonyms, and antonyms to create precision and shades of meaning while speaking and writing; ELD.PII.6 – Combine clauses in an increasing variety of ways to make connections between and join ideas in sentences …

The joint, or collaborative, construction of the short biography on Dr. King provides Mrs. Patel’s students with an opportunity to apply the content knowledge and language skills they’re learning in the biography unit in a scaffolded way. Mrs. Patel’s role is to guide her students thinking and stretch their language use as she encourages them to tell her what to write or revise in the short biography. She uses the document reader so that all students can see the text as it develops. At strategic points throughout the discussion, she poses the following types of questions:

• What information should we include in the first stage to orient the reader?
• Which events should we write first? What goes next?
• How can we show when this event happened?
• Is there a way we can expand this idea to add more detail about when or where or how the event happened?
• Is there a way we can combine these two ideas to show that one event caused the other event to happen?
• Would that information go in the orientation, events, or evaluation stage?
• What word did we learn yesterday that would make this idea more precise?
• How can we write that he was a hero without using the word “hero?” What words could we use to show what we think of Dr. King?

For example, after writing the “orientation” stage together, and when the class is in the sequence of events stage, Mrs. Patel asks the students to refer to the notes they generated. She asks
Emily: One of Dr. King’s accomplishments was that he went to jail in (looks at the notes template) Birmingham, Alabama.

Mrs. Patel: Okay, can you say more about why you and your partner think that was one of Dr. King’s accomplishments?

Emily: Well, he went to jail, but he didn’t hurt anyone. He was nonviolent.

Awat: And, he was nonviolent on purpose. He wanted people to pay attention to what was happening, to the racism that was happening there, but he didn’t want to use violence to show them that. He wanted peace. But he still wanted things to change.

Mrs. Patel: So, how can we put these great ideas together in writing? Let’s start with what you said, “One of Dr. King’s accomplishments was ____.” (Writes this on the document reader.)

Awat: I think we can say, “One of Dr. King’s accomplishments was that he was nonviolent and he went to jail to show people the racism needed to change.”

Matthew: We could say, “One of Dr. King’s accomplishments was that he was nonviolent, and he wanted people to see the racism in Birmingham, so he went to jail. He was protesting, so they arrested him.”

Mrs. Patel: I like all of these ideas, and you’re using so many important words to add precision and connect the ideas. I think we’re getting close. There’s a word that I think might fit really well here, and it’s a word we wrote on our chart yesterday. It’s the word “force.” It sounds like you’re saying that Dr. King wanted to force people to do something, or at least to think something.

Emily: Oh, I know! He wanted to force people to pay attention to the racism that was happening in Birmingham. But he wanted to do it by protesting nonviolently so that the changes that had to happen could be peaceful.

Mrs. Patel continues to stretch her students’ thinking and language in this way, and after a lively discussion, much supportive prompting from Mrs. Patel, and much revising and refining of the text, the passage the class generates is the following:

One of Dr. King’s accomplishments was going to jail in Birmingham to force people to pay attention to the racial discrimination that was happening there. He was arrested for protesting, and he protested nonviolently on purpose so that changes could happen peacefully. When he was in jail, he wrote a letter telling people they should break laws that are unjust, but he said they should do it peacefully. People saw that he was using his words and not violence, so they decided to help him in the struggle for civil rights.

Mrs. Patel guides her students to complete the short biography together as a class in this way – using important and precise vocabulary and helping them to structure their sentences - until they have a jointly constructed text they are satisfied with. She posts the biography in the classroom so it can serve as a model, or mentor text, for students to refer to as they write their own biographies. By facilitating the shared writing of a short biography in this way, Mrs. Patel has strategically supported her students to develop deeper understandings of important historical events. She has also guided them to use their growing knowledge of language to convey their understandings in ways they may not yet have been able to do on their own.

When they write their biographies, Mrs. Patel notices that some of her students, particularly her ELs at the Expanding level of English language proficiency, make some grammatical and vocabulary approximations (e.g., using some general academic vocabulary incorrectly or writing
fragments). She intentionally does not correct every misunderstanding. Instead, she is selective about her feedback as she knows that this is a normal part of second language development as her EL students stretch themselves with new writing tasks where they interact with increasingly complex topics using increasingly complex language. She recognizes that focusing too much on their grammatical or vocabulary approximations will divert their attention from the important knowledge of writing and writing skills she’s teaching them, so she is strategic and focuses primarily on the areas of writing she’s emphasized in instruction (e.g., purpose, audience, content ideas, text organization and structure, select grammatical structures and vocabulary). In addition, as they edit and revise their drafts in their research groups, she supports the students to refine their own writing and to help one another to do so by using a checklist that prompts them attend to these same areas, as well as conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling).

Teacher Reflection and Next Steps:

At the end of the unit, when Mrs. Patel meets with her fourth grade colleagues to examine their students’ biographies, they use a language analysis framework for writing that focuses on biography writing and which is based on the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards (see Chapter 8 for an example). They also compare the pre-writing “cold write” students did with their final writing projects. They find that, over the course of the unit, most students grew in their ability to organize their texts in stages (orientation, sequence of events, evaluation) and to use many of the language features taught during the unit (general academic vocabulary, complex sentences, words and phrases that create cohesion throughout the text), all of which has helped the students convey their understandings about the person they researched. This analysis helps the teachers focus on critical areas that individual students need to continue to develop, as well as how to refine their teaching in the future.

For the other culminating project, oral presentations based on the written reports, the students dress as the historical figure they researched, use relevant props and media, and invite their parents and families to view the presentation. This way, all of the students learn a little more about various historical figures the class researched, and they have many exciting ideas about history to discuss with their families.

Lesson adapted from Pavlak (2013), Rose and Acevedo (2006), and Spycher (2007)

Resources

Web sites:
- The California History-Social Science Project (http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/) has many resources, lesson plans, and programs for teaching history and the related social sciences.
- Teachinghistory.org (http://teachinghistory.org/) has many ideas and resources for teaching about history.

Recommended reading:
ELA/Literacy and ELD in Action in Grade Seven

Both the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards acknowledge the importance of reading complex texts closely and thoughtfully to derive meaning. In addition, reading texts multiple times can reveal layered meanings that may not present themselves during a single reading. In order to support their students to comprehend specific complex texts, as well as to support their abilities to read closely in general, teachers should prepare close reading lessons carefully and purposefully before teaching. Teachers should select challenging and interesting texts that are worth spending the time on reading and rereading. Teachers should read the texts ahead of time in order to determine why the might be challenging for all students and for particular students (including ELs and students with disabilities), and plan a sequence of lessons that build students’ abilities to read the text with increasing understanding and independence. This requires teachers to analyze the cognitive and linguistic demands of the texts, including the sophistication of the ideas or content of the text, students’ prior knowledge of the content, and the complexity of the vocabulary, sentences, and organization of the text, not to mention the purpose for reading particular texts.

During instruction, teachers should model how to read texts closely by thinking aloud, highlighting the comprehension questions they ask themselves as they read and the language, as well as ideas that stand out to them. Teachers should provide concrete methods for students to read more analytically and guide them to frequently read complex texts using these methods with appropriate levels of scaffolding. Seventh graders need many opportunities to read a wide variety of complex texts and to discuss the texts they read.

Importantly, for English learners, teachers should explicitly draw attention to text structure and organization and to particular elements of language (e.g., text connectives, long noun phrases, types of verbs, and verb tenses) in the complex texts that helped the author convey particular meanings. Examples of specific elements of language are using text connectives to create cohesion (e.g., for example, suddenly, in the end); long noun phrases to expand and enrich the meaning of sentences (e.g., “The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder.” [NGA/CCSSO 2010a: Appendix B, 91]); and complex sentences which
combine ideas and convey meaning in specific ways (e.g., “Because both Patrick and Catherine O’Leary worked, they were able to put a large addition on their cottage despite a lot size of just 25 by 100 feet.” [NGA/CCSSO 2010a: Appendix B, 94]).

Providing English learners with opportunities to discuss the language of the complex texts they are reading enhances their comprehension of the texts while also developing their awareness of how language is used to make meaning.

Lesson planning should look ahead to year-end and unit goals and incorporate the framing questions in Figure 6.22.

Figure 6.22 Framing Questions for Lesson Planning

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</table>
ELA/Literacy and ELD Vignettes

The vignettes that follow are intended to provide concrete illustrations of how to implement some of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards so that teachers can discuss the examples and use them as they collaboratively plan lessons, extend their learning, and refine their practice.

ELA/Literacy Vignette

Vignette 6.3 illustrates how a teacher might implement the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards during ELA instruction where close reading is the focus of instruction. Vignette 6.4 provides an example of how designated ELD can build from and into the types of lessons outlined in the ELA vignette.

Vignette 6.3  English Language Arts Instruction in Seventh Grade

“You Are What You Eat:” Close Reading of an Informational Text

Background

Mrs. Massimo is an English language arts (ELA) teacher and is part of an interdisciplinary team that also includes social studies, science, and math teachers. The team plans lessons together in order to address a variety of genres of literature and informational texts throughout the year, which relate to themes. For the “You Are What You Eat” thematic unit on food, nutrition, and agribusiness, Mrs. Massimo is having her seventh grade students read The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat (Young Reader’s Edition) by Michael Pollan. This nonfiction text examines how food is produced in the United States today and what alternatives to those production methods are available. Mrs. Massimo’s seventh grade English class has 32 students, including 2 students with mild learning disabilities, ten English learners at the Expanding level of English language proficiency (most of whom have been in the United States since the primary grades of elementary school), and two English learners at the Emerging level of English language proficiency who have been in U.S. schools for just over a year.

Mrs. Massimo and her team know that middle school is a critical time to prepare students for the increasingly complex texts they will encounter across the disciplines as they progress through secondary schooling. They make strategic decisions about how to address academic literacy in their instruction, and they use the CA ELD Standards to ensure they are attending to the language learning needs of their English learners.

Lesson Context

This lesson occurs in the second week of the unit. Mrs. Massimo has shown students a documentary about processed foods, and the class has engaged in lively discussions about the types of foods they like and/or should be eating to be healthy. In this lesson, she continues to build students’ content knowledge of food and nutrition by focusing on the modern farming industry. She guides them to closely read a short passage from the text by Michael Pollan and facilitates a class discussion about it, prompting them to cite evidence from the text to support their ideas.
Learning Targets: The students will unpack the meanings in a short text about agribusiness and engage in collaborative conversations about the text.

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.7.1 - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text; RI.7.3 - Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events); RI.7.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone; SL.7.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CA ELD Standards (Expanding): ELD.PI.7.1 – Contribute to class, group, and partner discussions; ELD.PI.7.6a – Explain ideas, phenomena, processes, and text relationships based on close reading of a variety of grade-level texts … with moderate support; ELD.PI.7.6c – Use knowledge of morphology, context, reference materials, and visual cues to determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words on familiar and new topics.

Lesson Excerpts

First, Mrs. Massimo activates her students’ background knowledge by reading a short passage aloud as all students follow along with their own copies of the text. The passage is related to what students will read and also contains many of the same words they will encounter (e.g., agribusiness, fertilizer, chemicals, yield). This way, Mrs. Massimo intentionally provides her students with modeling of how intonation and prosody for the text sound, as well as how to pronounce unfamiliar words. She also models the use of different types of comprehension strategies, including pointing out general academic and domain-specific vocabulary that is key to understanding the text, asking herself clarifying questions as she reads or stopping to summarize what she’s read every so often (i.e., thinking aloud her metacognitive processes).

Next, Mrs. Massimo asks the students to read the next passage independently and to consider some text-dependent questions as they do. She asks them to jot down their responses to the questions, as well as any questions they have about the text and any unfamiliar vocabulary they encounter, in their reading journals. (Previously, Mrs. Massimo has met separately with the two English learners at the Emerging level to ensure they understand the meaning of the questions, as well as to preview the content knowledge embedded in the text they will read.) The questions she asks the students to think about as they read the text for the first time are the following:

- What is this text mostly about?
- What are some key events or details that help us understand what the text is mostly about?
- What are some words necessary for discussing the ideas?

Excerpt from the text (Chapter 3, From Farm to Factory)

It may seem that I’ve given corn too much credit. After all, corn is just a plant. How could a plant take over our food chain and push out almost every other species? Well, it had some help—from the U.S. Government.

At the heart of the industrial food chain are huge businesses, agribusinesses. The same businesses that create new seeds provide farmers with the tools and fertilizer they need to grow lots of corn. Agribusinesses also need cheap corn from which they make processed food and hundreds of other products. To get the corn flowing and keep
it flowing, agribusiness depends on government regulations and taxpayer money.

The government started seriously helping corn back in 1947. That was when a huge weapons plant in Muscle Shoals, Alabama switched over to making chemical fertilizer. How can a weapons plant make fertilizer? Because ammonium nitrate, the main ingredient in explosives, happens to be an excellent source of nitrogen. And nitrogen is one of the main ingredients in fertilizer.

After World War II, the government found itself with a tremendous surplus of ammonium nitrate. There was a debate about what the government should do with the leftover bomb material. One idea was to spray it on forests to help out the timber industry. But the scientists in the Department of Agriculture had a better idea: Spread the ammonium nitrate on farmland as fertilizer. And so the government helped launch the chemical fertilizer industry. (It also helped start the pesticide industry, since insect killers are based on poison gases developed for the war.)

Chemical fertilizer was needed to grow hybrid corn because it is a very hungry crop. The richest acre of Iowa soil could never feed thirty thousand hungry corn plants year after year without added fertilizer. Though hybrids were introduced in the thirties, it wasn’t until farmers started using chemical fertilizers in the 1950s that corn yields really exploded.

After students read the text independently, Mrs. Massimo asks them to discuss their notes in triads for five minutes and to come to a consensus on their responses to the questions. This gives them an opportunity to collaboratively unpack the meanings in the text before she narrows in on the key ideas she wants them to focus on next. Mrs. Massimo groups the students into triads, making sure students can work well together and complement each other’s strengths and areas for growth (e.g., a student who has an expansive vocabulary paired with one student who is a good facilitator and another who has a deep interest in science). She also ensures that the two English learners at the Emerging level are each in a triad with a language broker, that is, another student who can support their understanding by using their primary language.

After their small group discussion, Mrs. Massimo pulls all groups together for a whole group discussion. She has prepared some text-dependent questions to facilitate the discussion, which she asks as follow up questions as the groups share out their responses:

- What is agribusiness?
- How did the U.S. government help launch the chemical fertilization industry?
- Why are chemical fertilizers so important and necessary to agribusiness?

As students share out, she charts their responses on the document reader.

Julissa: Our group said this text is mostly about the big businesses that make processed food. They used the chemicals from the weapons factory to make fertilizers for the farms.

Mrs. Massimo: I see. And what word was used in the text to refer to those big businesses that grow food?

Julissa: (Looking at her notes.) Agribusinesses?

Mrs. Massimo: (Writes agribusiness on the board.) Yes, let’s make sure everyone writes that down in their notes. That term is critical for understanding the meanings in the text we’re reading. Based on your understandings, how should we define agribusinesses?

Mrs. Massimo guides the class to define the term in their own words, prompting them to refer to their notes and to go back into the text to achieve a precise definition. Here is what the class generates:

**Agribusinesses:** Huge companies that do big farming as their business. They sell the seeds, tools, and fertilizer to farmers, and they also make processed foods.
Mrs. Massimo continues to facilitate the conversation, prompting the students to provide details about the text, using evidence they cited while reading independently and in their collaborative conversations. She also clarifies any vocabulary that was confusing and that the students were unable to define in their small group discussions. She anticipated certain words that might be unfamiliar to students (bolded words in the text excerpt) and has prepared short explanations for them, which she provides to students.

When students’ responses are incomplete or not detailed enough, she prompts them to elaborate.

Mrs. Massimo: Why are chemical fertilizers so important and necessary to agribusiness?
Sandra: They help the food grow.
Mrs. Massimo: Can you say more about that?
Sandra: It has something in it that the crops need to grow. Nitra- (looks at her text) nitrogen. It was in all the ammonium nitrate they had at the weapons factory. And nitrogen helps the plants to grow. So they had all this ammonium nitrate, and they made it into chemical fertilizer, and that helped the corn—the hybrid corn— grow more.

Mrs. Massimo: Okay, so why was it so important for the agribusinesses to have this chemical fertilizer and for the hybrid corn to grow?
Sandra: Because they need a lot of cheap corn to make processed foods.

Most of the meanings of words in this text can be determined from careful reading of the context. As a review during the discussion of the text-dependent questions, Mrs. Massimo reviews how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues. For example, she shows the students the following sentences from the text and explains that the definition of a challenging word can be embedded within the sentence (in an appositive phrase set off by commas), or in a sentence following the challenging word, for example: Because ammonium nitrate, the main ingredient in explosives, happens to be an excellent source of nitrogen. And nitrogen is one of the main ingredients in fertilizer.

Mrs. Massimo also points out that the connector because introduces a dependent clause—that is, a clause that should be combined with a complete sentence—yet here the clause stands alone as a fragment.

Mrs. Massimo: Why do you think the author chose to do this? Take a look at the text and briefly talk with your group. (Waits for 30 seconds.)
Tom: The sentence that comes before it is a question, “How can a weapons plant make fertilizer?” so he’s just answering his question.

Mrs. Massimo: Is that the style we usually see in an academic text we’re reading?
Tom: No, it seems like he’s trying to make it seem like he’s having a conversation with us, like he’s being more informal.

Mrs. Massimo: Yes, in everyday conversation, responding to a question and starting with because is natural. This passage is helping to define unfamiliar terms and concepts by using a more conversational style. That leaves us with an incomplete sentence, but Pollan is making this choice deliberately. He’s really thinking about the audience when he chooses to write like that. He wants to connect with them in a more conversational tone. When you’re having a conversation, and even when you write sometimes, you can also make that choice. But you also need to consider your audience and remember that usually, when you’re writing for school, you need to use complete sentences.
### Next Steps

After the lesson, Mrs. Massimo again pulls aside her two English learners at the Emerging level to ensure they understood the critical points of the text. She reviews their notes in their journal and has a brief discussion with them, clarifying as needed and reinforcing the meanings of some of the vocabulary used that day.

Later on in the unit, Mrs. Massimo will guide the students to write arguments about topics related to the “You Are What You Eat” theme. As they write, the students will use a rubric to ensure that their arguments support their claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence, maintain a formal style, and use appropriate text structure and organization.

**Source:**

Lesson adapted from the close reading lesson for grade seven at achievethecore.org and the CA ELD Standards, Chapter Five.

### Resources

The original lessons and complete reading text are available at:


Achieve the Core has other CCSS-aligned lessons at each grade level as well as student work samples: www.achievethecore.org
ELA/Literacy and ELD Vignettes

The ELA/literacy and ELD vignettes that follow are intended to provide concrete illustrations of ways to implement some of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards in tandem. These examples are useful for extending teachers' learning: supporting their discussions about pedagogy, providing ideas for collaborative lesson planning, and showing models for reflecting on current practice.

**ELA/Literacy Vignette**

Vignette 7.1 illustrates how a teacher might implement the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards in tandem during ELA/literacy instruction (where ELD is integrated into instruction using the CA ELD Standards) in grade ten. Students consider the history and impact of European colonization in Africa by reading and interacting with primary source material and the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

| Vignette 7.1: Literacy Instruction in Grade Ten  
Examining Diverse Perspectives in World Literature |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Background:</strong></td>
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This year at John Muir high school, the tenth grade world literature teacher, Ms. Alemi, and the tenth grade world history teacher, Ms. Cruz, have decided to collaborate and align their major units of instruction so that their students see the connections between the content taught in each discipline. They have noticed that a number of the reading selections and novels for the tenth grade World Literature class would support students’ understandings of the historical concepts and time periods addressed in Ms. Cruz’s world history course. Before the school year begins, they meet to collaborate. They first determine where their curriculum already intersects and then begin planning interdisciplinary units that align the content and literacy tasks in the two courses.

One of their tasks is to ensure that the novels, poems, short stories, and other texts the students read in Ms. Alemi’s English class are related to and reinforce the ideas taught in Ms. Cruz’s history class. They read the texts they will use in the interdisciplinary units ahead of time, analyzing them for their themes, connections to one another, and linguistic challenges, particularly for their students who are learning English as an additional language. About 30% of the students in their classes are ELs, most at the late Expanding and early Bridging levels of English language proficiency. As the two teachers begin to implement the units, they meet frequently after school to reflect on successes and challenges and to make refinements based on their observations of student conversations and writing tasks.

Ms. Alemi and Ms. Cruz want to support their students to understand that an author’s perspective is historically and culturally positioned (e.g., Afrocentric versus Eurocentric perspectives). Their aim is not to criticize traditional literary or informational texts but instead to support students to problematize texts because they must learn to critically analyze the messages they encounter in texts as they prepare for college and careers and responsible and engaged citizenship. The teachers also want their students to learn how authors leverage literary strategies, linguistic resources, and particular rhetorical devices to present their ideas, tell their own stories, and write or rewrite history through literary and informational texts.

**Lesson Context:**

Ms. Cruz’s tenth grade world history class is beginning a unit on the era of New Imperialism that took place roughly from the 1830’s until the beginning of World War I in 1914. During this period, European powers, the United States, and later Japan sought to build large overseas empires through colonial expansion. She uses the assigned history textbook as the main source for informational and background text for the unit. However, she also has chosen a number of primary sources to use throughout the unit, which include images and cartoons, poems, first-hand accounts and speeches.
Ms. Cruz begins the world history unit with the primary source *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* written by Lord Frederick Lugard, the first British governor-general of Nigeria. The book exemplifies the major justifications that European powers gave for building their colonial empires throughout the world and explains the nature of the dual mandate, or that both the colonizer and the colonized benefit from colonial expansion. She provides the students with the background of the various justifications (economic, religious, social Darwinism, etc.) and students work together to pull quotes from the document that exemplify the particular justifications. Students read information in their textbooks and other sources that discuss the motivations that European powers had for colonizing other nations, including case studies of particular areas in Africa (and other countries later in the unit). The students will use the information gathered from primary sources, their textbook, as well as other readings participate in several mini-debates where they argue from the perspectives of either a pro-colonization view or anti-colonization view. At the end of the unit, the students will write a historical argument on imperialism. The primary investigative and debatable question for the world history part of the unit, along with the learning goals Ms. Cruz has for her students are the following:

**Big Question:** Did the benefits from European colonization outweigh the negative impacts on indigenous peoples and their countries?

**Learning Goals:**
- Students will analyze the motives and justifications for imperialism and their validity
- Students will understand the positive and negative impacts of imperialism upon indigenous people and their nations
- Students will be able to explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized
- Students will analyze and provide evidence to support whether the positive impacts of imperialism outweighed the negative impacts.

Meanwhile, in world literature, Ms. Alemi’s students begin a unit on African literature by reading *Things Fall Apart*. Written in 1958 by Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, the novel takes place in eastern Nigeria at the end of the 19th century and deals with two stories: that of Okonkwo, a respected tribal leader and *strong man* who falls from grace in his Ibo village, and the clash of cultures and changes in values brought on by British colonialism. The story is conveyed through illustrating the life of Okonkwo and his family and the tragic consequences of his actions and events that are beyond his control. In interviews, Chinua Achebe said that he became a writer in order to tell the story from his and his people’s (the Ibo) own perspective. The novel was written in the English (the language of the British colonizers) and was, in large part, a response and counter-narrative to colonial texts, such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, which often portrayed Africans as savages or animals.

Ms. Alemi and Ms. Cruz selected the book because it expands their students’ knowledge of world literature and because the novel provides students with an opportunity to discover universal messages and themes through the lens of Ibo culture and linguistic and literary techniques that are central to that culture. The novel also supports the learning goals Ms. Cruz has for the students in world history. As the teachers research the novel, they learn that “One of the things that Achebe has always said, is that part of what he thought the task of the novel was, was to create a usable past. Trying to give people a richly textured picture of what happened, not a sort of monotone bad Europeans, noble Africans, but a complicated picture” (Princeton University Professor Anthony Appiah, cited on Annenberg Learning). The teachers feel that their students are capable of exploring these complex ideas.

Ms. Alemi will facilitate students' deep analytical reading of the novel, which will prepare them to read other texts more carefully and critically, including a novel they select from contemporary Nigerian literature. Over the course of the unit, Ms. Alemi will engage her students to “dig deep” into the novel, branch out to other texts, and harvest the knowledge they’ve gained by applying it to other texts. The interactive literacy tasks Ms. Alemi will implement in this unit include the following:

- **Digging Deep:** Together (as a whole class and in small groups), read and discuss the novel *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe and engage in the following tasks to understand the novel better:
• **Branching Out**: Together (as a whole class and in small groups), listen to and discuss oral and written texts related to *Things Fall Apart* in order to better understand the themes in the novel and the author’s perspective:

  - Talks by and interviews with Achebe and other Nigerian novelists (e.g., an interview with Chinua Achebe on the 50th anniversary of the novel [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june08-achebe_05-27/], Ted Talks by Komla Dumor [http://tedxeuston.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/komladumor-at-tedxueston-2013-telling.html] and Chimamanda Adichie [http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/We-should-all-be-feminists-Chim], other talks at TEDxEuston [http://tedxeduston/index.php/joomlaorg], which focuses on inspiring ideas about Africa) giving their perspectives on themes from the novel (e.g., masculinity and femininity, cultural conflict)
  - Short stories and essays related to the themes and cultural context of the novel (e.g., “The Albino,” by Adetokunbo Gbenga Abiola)
  - Hip-Hop lyrics (e.g., The Roots’ “Dear God 2.0” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32Qr5oKKP-M&noredirect=1], Tupac Shakur’s “Keep Ya Head Up” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfxWmdGJAB8], Emmanuel Jal’s “We Want Peace” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1ZEJWVSeEl&list=PL5689732C8CE51B9]) and spoken word performances (e.g., Suheir Hammad’s TedTalk “Poems of War, Peace, Women, Power” [http://www.ted.com/talks/suheir_hammad_poems_of_war_peace_women_power], Shane Koyczan’s “To this Day” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltun92DfnPY]) that address themes in the novel (e.g., gender roles, relationships, change, injustice)

• **Harvesting**: In small interest groups (formed by students who select the novel of their choice), engage in collaborative literacy projects:

  - **Read and discuss** one other Nigerian novel (e.g., *Graceland*, by Chris Abani; *Purple Hibiscus*, by Chimamanda Adichie), using structured protocols for careful reading and collaborative conversations
  - **Write** and refine a literary analysis of the chosen novel, using a class-generated framework of necessary elements (end of unit performance task)
  - **Create** an original media piece based on the written literary analysis exploring one of the themes in depth and creatively using excerpts and/or visuals reflecting images from the novel itself and from the unit in general (e.g., from the essays, short stories, talks, and lyrics) (end of unit performance task)

The learning target and cluster of standards for the first lessons in the world literature unit are provided below.

**Learning Target**: Students will explore author’s perspectives and cultural experiences reflected in a work of world literature and discuss how history can be revised through writing.

**CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy**: RL.9-10.1 – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text; RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text; RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme; RL.9-10.6 – Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from
Lesson Excerpts:

To leverage her students’ background knowledge from their history class and to contextualize the novel Things Fall Apart, Ms. Alemi shows a map of Africa and draws their attention to Nigeria (http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/things-fall-apart/explore/). She explains how the country’s borders were created as a result of new imperialism in Africa, which students have been learning about in their history class. She asks the students to briefly discuss at their tables what they recall from the discussion they had in his history class about Lord Lugard’s Dual Mandate, and she listens to their conversations to determine which ideas they currently grasp. She then shows them a brief video of a traditional Ibo ceremony from a contemporary dance troupe (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2TUWa2T0QI) and explains that the novel they will be reading is partly about the clash of cultures brought on by British colonialism in Nigeria, told through the story of one man from an Ibo village and through the lens of the Ibo people themselves.

Ms. Alemi: The author of Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe, used an African proverb to explain the danger of having one's story told only by others: “Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

She posts the proverb on the whiteboard and asks the students to discuss their ideas on its meanings with a partner. After the students share in pairs and a few students share out in the whole group, Ms. Alemi sets a purpose for reading:

Ms. Alemi: As we read this novel, from time to time, I'd like you to think about this proverb and ask yourselves in what ways Achebe's novel provides a different story or counter-narrative to the ways in which the European writers represented life in the traditional, pre-colonial culture of Achebe’s own people, the Ibo of Southeastern Nigeria. Achebe said that people who have been written about should also participate in telling their stories, and our task is not only to understand the story the novel tells, but also to decipher how Achebe provides his perspective and that of the Ibo people.

Ms. Alemi provides each of her students with a copy of the novel, a glossary of Ibo words they will encounter in the novel, and a note-taking guide, which they will use while reading to document important events in
the story, characters’ attitudes and behaviors, Ibo proverbs and folktales used to reinforce ideas, and illustrative quotes. For the first two chapters, Ms. Alemi reads aloud as students follow along. She stops at strategic points to explain ideas and terms, ask the students focus questions and give them a chance to discuss them with a partner, and guide them to take notes in their note-taking guides and on sticky notes, which they place directly in the book. At the end of each chapter, she refers students the following questions, which are posted on the students’ note-taking guide (with space for students to record their ideas) and on the board. She asks the students to discuss the questions with a partner and to use the notes they’ve written to find evidence in the text to support their ideas:

- **So far, what do we know about Okwonko and his family?**
- **What do we know about Umuofia and the Ibo people?**
- **What messages about the Ibo people do you think Achebe is trying to convey? How is he conveying these messages?**

She asks the students to refer to their “Scholarly Discourse Ideas” chart and to use some of the sentence starters or similar language as they converse. Part of the chart is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarly Discourse (some ideas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stating an opinion and citing evidence:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author creates the impression that ___ by ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the part of the text where it says ___, we can infer that ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This language indicates that ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On page ___, this language/event/behavior suggests that ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To build on or politely disagree with someone’s ideas:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I heard you say ___, and I haven’t thought about that before. However ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s an interesting observation, and I’d like to add to it: ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One thing we haven’t discussed is ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you considered this idea? ___.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the students have had several minutes to share their ideas in pairs, she asks them to compare their thoughts with the other pair at their table groups (each table group has four students) for a few more minutes. She then asks the table groups to collaboratively generate a short paragraph that concisely responds to the questions, using textual evidence. Each table group member must write the same paragraph in their reading journals. She gives the students several more minutes to generate and write their paragraphs, and then she randomly calls on a student from each table to verbally share out the statement their group generated while the students who are listening take notes on anything they hear that they didn’t have in their paragraphs. Ms. Alemi facilitates a whole group discussion where students can ask questions, clarify their thinking, and explore ideas.

**Katia:** Our group wrote that Okwonko was a (looking at her paragraph) fearsome warrior and also a, well, kind of a jerk. For example, on page fourteen, it says that he’s constantly nagging and beating his son. But when I was listening to what the other groups wrote, it made me think differently.

**Ms. Alemi:** Can you elaborate on that?

**Katia:** I mean, when someone said that maybe Okwonko was scared of being weak like his father, he went overboard and was extra “manly.” So, I think it makes it more complicated.

**Ms. Alemi:** What’s more complicated?

**Katia:** He is. Okwonko is more complicated because he’s not just an evil person. Maybe he was being so fierce because he was afraid of turning out like his father.

Over the next several days, Ms. Alemi engages the students in reading the rest of the novel in various ways. For example, one technique the students particularly enjoy is relay reading, where one student reads a few paragraphs and then passes the baton to another student to read, which ensures that all students are following along. Ms. Alemi steps in from time to time to ask the students comprehension questions and to answer their questions. The students can only be passed the baton once, but they know that at any point, she may ask them a question about a particular passage, which means they must be reading along silently in their own texts.
Digging Deeper:

At the end of each chapter, the table groups work together collaboratively, using their note-taking guides, reading journals, and the novel, to track particular aspects of the novel. For example, one thing they track is the sequence of events on a timeline, along with the major events that occur in Okonkwo’s life and in the Ibo village. The groups work together to identify these major events, and then the class decides what they will write on the google doc timeline (a different student serves as the scribe each day). An excerpt from the timeline, which shows some of the tragic events in Okonkwo’s story, is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things Fall Apart Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okonkwo is a strong man in an Ibo village, widely known and respected as a fearless warrior, a man of tradition with three wives and land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okonkwo joins in the group murder of his adoptive son, Ikemefuna, out of fear of seeming weak and cowardly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the students work together in their table groups, Ms. Alemi plays contemporary Nigerian or Nigerian-influenced music [e.g., WizKid](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAV4KID6E8), Antibalas ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIlgjOCxhLQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIlgjOCxhLQ)], which the students enjoy and which prompts them to explore the music and music videos of these artists on their own. When they track the themes of the novel, each table group is responsible for adding evidence that illustrates the theme, using a template on googledocs. The students each have a tablet where they can add the information to the googledoc as they work through the text, and they take turns entering the textual evidence (either by paraphrasing or using quotes), along with the page number. The terms they use for the themes changes as they progress through the unit and learn more about what the theme is really about. For example, they begin by calling a theme *language*, but as they progress into the novel, they rename it *language as a sign of cultural difference* and later add to that *and pride*. The template they use is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tracking Themes (include chapter and p. #)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Themes: The universal ideas explored in a literary text</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Struggle Between Change and Tradition</th>
<th>Gender (What it means to be a man or a woman)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language as a Sign of Cultural Difference</td>
<td>Family and Community (Collective existence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions and Customs</td>
<td>Fate and Free Will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ELA/ELD Framework was adopted by the California State Board of Education on July 9, 2014. The ELA/ELD Framework has not been edited for publication. © 2014 by the California Department of Education.
The students also track the motifs and symbols in the novel and, importantly, the Ibo proverbs and folktales that Achebe used at strategic points in the story, referring to evidence in the text. The table groups add descriptions, explanations, and text excerpts and refine their ideas using the google doc template provided below.

| Tracking Motifs and Symbols, Folktales & Proverbs  
|---|---|---|---
| **Motifs and Symbols:** | **Folktales:** | **Proverbs:** |
| Fire - Okonkwo’s nickname “Roaring Flame” (Ch. 17, p. 153): fierceness, masculinity, warrior | Vulture and the Sky (Ch. 7, p. 53-54) - Nwoye’s mother sang it to him - Gentle (women’s) story about rain | “if a child washed his hands, he could eat with kings” (Ch. 1, p. 8) - Okonkwo earned his place as a leader |

Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.” (p. 7)

About a third of the way into the novel, Okonkwo participates in the murder of his adoptive son, Ikemefuma. In order to support her students to write their own literary analyses, Ms. Alemi provides many opportunities for them to analyze and discuss the analyses others have written so that they can use them as models of writing. After the murder of Ikemefuna, Ms. Alemi asks her students to discuss the opinions of experts on the use of the literary device of “juxtaposition” to show the complexity of the character Okonkwo.

Excerpt from *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

On the death of Ikemefuna, Okonkwo’s adopted son

“Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper and so did his little children. Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man, but his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness…

As a man who cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away, he heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand, he heard Ikemefuna cry, “My father! They've killed me!” as he ran towards them. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down.”

Each small group discusses a different expert’s perspective. Some of the expert opinions are provided below:

| Juxtapositions: Okonkwo on the death of his adopted son |
|---|---|
| **Osonye Tess Onwueme (Playwright and Professor of Cultural Diversity and English, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire):** | **David Damrosch (Professor of Comparative Literature, Harvard University):** |
| "Okonkwo was always trying to prove to himself, or to the world outside him, and to his society, that he was not going to be a failure like his father. It's like he has an agenda to embody that masculine value that the Ibo man was respected for, to show those principles of manhood." | "Achebe's complex portrayal of Okonkwo is built up through juxtaposed scenes. The shocking episode of the killing of Ikemefuna is balanced, two chapters later, by the scene in which Okonkwo saves the life of his favorite daughter Ezinma, only surviving child of his wife Ekwefi." |
Chuck Mike (Theater Director and Associate Professor of Theater, University of Richmond):
"If you consistently believe that you have to 'be a man,' you don't handle your home affairs well. Rather than reason with his wives over matters where conflict evolves, Okonkwo beats them."

Kwame Anthony Appiah (Professor of Philosophy, Princeton University):
"Ikemefuna is interesting because he is the character through whom we learn that Okonkwo has the capacity for gentleness and love and that it's because of his obsession with not being seen to have that capacity that he does things that are manly but bad."

Adapted from Annenberg Learning (http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/things-fall-apart/read/look-closer.html)

Ms. Alemi’s uses a technique for structuring the collaborative conversations called “expert group jigsaw.” The students use a discussion grid which contains spaces for them to record notes on specific things, such as whether or not they agree with the expert’s statement, where there is evidence in the text to support the statement, and explanations of the textual evidence. She strategically groups students into groups of four or five students so that they can engage in a deep conversation about their expert opinion before they share their groups’ findings with others who read another opinion. Among the considerations she takes into account for grouping students are personal dynamics, academic and socio-emotional strengths and areas for growth, and English language proficiency (for ELs). The procedure she uses is provided below:

**Expert Group Jigsaw: Things Fall Apart Juxtapositions**

1. **Independent Reading:** Read your expert opinion and **independently** & take notes using the discussion grid (10 min.)
2. **Expert Group Discussion:** Talk within your **expert group** (the people who read the same expert opinion as you) (15 min.):
   - Share your notes
   - Listen and take notes while others share
   - Come to a consensus on (and write down) the textual evidence (at least three places in the novel that support the expert’s opinion) that you will share in your jigsaw groups
   - Discuss the expert’s opinion and the textual evidence to make sure you can explain it fully in your jigsaw groups
3. **Jigsaw Group Discussion:** Talk in **mixed jigsaw groups** (you plus other people who read different expert opinions than you) (20 min.):
   - Share the expert’s opinion and the textual evidence that supports/illustrates it
   - Listen to the other people as they share, and take notes
   - Discuss similarities and differences that emerged
   - Come to a consensus on (and write down) three big ideas from your conversation that you will share when you’re back in your expert groups
4. **Return to Expert Groups:** In your expert groups, discuss what you learned your jigsaw groups (10 min.)
   - Share what you learned in your jigsaw group
   - Listen as others share
   - Together, write a concise paragraph (or two) that sums up the juxtaposition.

As the groups engage in their conversations, Ms. Alemi circulates around the room to listen in and observe. One expert group, which includes two EL students at the late Expanding level of English language proficiency (Clara and Javier) is discussing Damrosch’s opinion.

Thomas: I think what Achebe is showing is that Okonkwo is making up for killing Ikemefuna when he
saves Ezinma’s life. I found that on pages 85 and 86, where it says that he went to get medicinal trees and shrubs, and then he made her sit over it so it, even though she was coughing and choking.

Clara: Yeah, that’s what a good parent does. And he really loved Ezinma because later, on page 108, he follows Chielo to the cave and tells Ekwe to go home. I think he was worried about her, about Ezinma.

Javier: I have something to add to what you said. I think I remember that later on, he’s remembering that he kept going back to the cave, like four times, because he was so scared that Chielo was going to do something bad.

Katie: Oh yeah! What page is that on? (The four students search in their texts.) Here, here it is. On page 112, it says that “he had felt very anxious but did not show it” and he waited a “manly interval” before he followed Chielo and Ezinma.

Javier: “It was only on his fourth trip that he had found Ekwe, and by then he had become gravely worried.” So, I think there are two parts where it shows he’s not just a murderer. He really cares about Ezinma. That’s kind of creepy because he killed his son so easily.

Ms. Alemi: Great observations, all of you. When you share in your jigsaw groups, you’ll need to be very clear about all of the textual evidence that supports the expert’s opinion. You’ve got some of it, but now it seems you need to find some evidence showing that Ikefuma’s murder is “balanced” by those other scenes. Remember that you’ll need to explain the expert’s opinion and then at least three pieces of evidence in the novel that support or illustrate the expert’s opinion, so you also need to find and discuss the scene with the murder, too.

Ms. Alemi has noticed that providing her students with these models of writing supports them in writing their own literary analysis. She has also found that providing scaffolding—through examining literary analyses, jointly constructing literary analyses, and providing her students with opportunities to collaboratively write literary analyses—results in higher quality writing. Ultimately, the students will write their analyses independently, but providing these levels of scaffolding, she has found, is necessary for them to learn how to write arguments of this type. Before the students select another novel to read, where they will engage in a variety of collaborative literacy tasks, Ms. Alemi guides them to write a brief analysis of Things Fall Apart.

Ms. Alemi: Now that we’ve had a chance to delve deeply into the novel and read what experts have written, we’re going to write a literary response together, or “jointly construct” part of what we might see in a longer literary analysis. In an interview with the Washington Post in 2008, Achebe said, "I want to sort of scream that Things Fall Apart is on the side of women...And that Okonkwo is paying the penalty for his treatment of women; that all his problems, all the things he did wrong, can be seen as offenses against the feminine." What do you think are Okonkwo’s offenses against women? Do you agree that his downfall was brought on by his attitude toward women and about manliness? Before we write the response together, I’d like you to brainstorm some ideas we can use in your table groups. Be sure to find textual evidence in your notes and in the novel.

**Next Steps:**

As the unit progresses and the students select a novel they’re interested in, analyze and discuss it, then collaboratively write a literary analysis of it and create a media piece based on their analyses, Ms. Alemi observes them closely to see where she needs to adjust instruction and/or provide more intensive scaffolding. For the written arguments, Ms. Alemi provides a template and checklist of required elements, and she meets with the groups at each stage of the writing process to ensure they have the appropriate level of support they need. For the media pieces, in addition to using textual excerpts, Ms. Alemi encourages her students to be creative and use some of the ideas and techniques they discussed over the course of the unit (including spoken word and storytelling), as well as imagery and music that will support the expression of their ideas. The class views the media pieces about the novels, and all of the novels are available in the classroom for students to read on their own after the unit concludes.

Over the course of the unit, during their collaborative planning sessions, Ms. Alemi and Ms. Cruz discuss how things are going in both classes so that they can continuously refine their lessons. The teachers agree that,
although their collaboration took a great deal of time and effort, their students showed incredible growth in their understandings of the content and in their abilities to discuss and express complex ideas. Importantly, they noticed that their students were highly engaged with the tasks and even asked to learn more about certain topics, which suggested to Ms. Alemi and Ms. Cruz that the teachers were attending to not only their academic and linguistic needs but also paying attention to their interests and the things that motivate them to learn.

**Sources:**

Annenberg Learner Invitation to World Literature: Things Fall Apart ([http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/things-fall-apart/explore/key-points.html](http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/things-fall-apart/explore/key-points.html))

National Endowment for the Humanities:
- A “New English” in Chinua Achebe’s “Things Fall Apart”: A Common Core Exemplar


**Resources:**

Brown University’s Tribute to Chinua Achebe ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ9qj8YUJRY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ9qj8YUJRY))


Literary Criticism about Chinua Achebe’s Work ([http://www.literaryhistory.com/20thC/Achebe.htm](http://www.literaryhistory.com/20thC/Achebe.htm))

TeachingHistory.org ([http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials](http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials))