

## PA Core Standards Student Fact Sheet

### WHAT ARE THE PENNSYLVANIA CORE STANDARDS?

The State Board adopted Common Core Standards in July 2010. Since that time, the decision was made to craft a set of Pennsylvania (PA) Core Standards tailored to meet our state specific needs in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as for Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects. A group of Pennsylvania educators crafted the PA Core Standards, which mirror the academic rigor of the Common Core State Standards, are attainable for students, practicable for teachers and districts, and reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards.

In compliance with Chapter 4 (§4.11), Pennsylvania's Core Standards are a set of rigorous, high-quality academic expectations in English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics that all students should master by the end of each grade level. The PA Core Standards are robust and relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills our young people need to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.

### WHAT DO THE PA CORE STANDARDS MEAN FOR ME?

The PA Core Standards mean that you will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.

Your knowledge and skills will boost Pennsylvania's long-term economic competitiveness, because, as a student taught with a PA Core Standards aligned curriculum, you graduated from a high school with **real-world** skills needed to be successful in college and the workforce.

You will have gained a robust, high-quality education allowing you the opportunity of choice for a career in Pennsylvania, which draws on **local talent** to meet the needs of the continuously evolving workplace.

In your Language Arts classes, you will acquire skills such as:

- ⇒ Evidence-based understanding of texts
- ⇒ A grasp of increasingly complex texts
- ⇒ Speaking and listening abilities
- ⇒ Literacy in various content areas, including history, science and technical subjects

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In mathematics classes, you will learn how:

- ⇒ To make sense of problems
- ⇒ Persevere to solve problems
- ⇒ Use the appropriate tools to strategically solve problems
- ⇒ Reason abstractly
- ⇒ Reason quantitatively
- ⇒ Construct viable arguments
- ⇒ Critique the reasoning of others

### **WHY HAVE PA CORE STANDARDS?**

The PA Core Standards are robust and relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills necessary for success in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.

**Life requires more than one skill at a time.** A quick trip to the grocery store requires planning, reading, math facts, estimation, communication, and critical thinking to make the right purchases. The PA Core Standards require you to integrate your learning just as you do when you fill your shopping cart.

**English class is not the only place you need to read and write.** The PA Core includes standards for reading and writing in Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects designed to help you apply and develop reading and writing skills in all of your classes.

**Basic math is not enough.** The PA Core Standards for math emphasize conceptual understanding, not just computation, to make sure you are learning and absorbing the critical information you need to succeed as you move through school.

**You want to be ready for what comes next.** You have many choices after high school—work, college, career training, apprenticeship, and military service. The goal of the PA Core is to prepare you for all these opportunities so that you can make the decision that is right for you.

**Learning is a lifelong skill.** It is very likely that you will change careers more than once after you leave high school. PA Core will provide you will the

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knowledge and skills you need to take advantage of a wide range of career opportunities in the rapidly changing, 21st century workplace.

PA CORE STANDARDS SHIFTS	
ELA/LITERACY	MATHEMATICS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Building knowledge</b> through <b>content-rich nonfiction</b>.</li> <li>2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in <b>evidence from text</b>, both literary and informational text.</li> <li>3. Regular practice with <b>complex text</b> and its <b>academic language</b>.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Focus</b> strongly where the Standards focus.</li> <li>2. <b>Coherence: Think</b> across grades, and <b>link</b> to major topics within grades.</li> <li>3. <b>Rigor:</b> In major topics pursue <b>conceptual understanding</b>, procedural skill and <b>fluency</b>, and <b>application</b> with equal intensity.</li> </ol>

### IMPLEMENTING THE PA CORE STANDARDS:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education worked with state teachers and curriculum experts to develop a **model curriculum** that schools may **voluntarily** use if they wish. The PA Department of Education continues to provide educational resources through the Standards Aligned System ([www.pde.sas.org](http://www.pde.sas.org)). Information and resources related to PA Core Standards are located in the Standards, Assessment, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, and Materials & Resources section of the website. Currently, state assessments are being developed that align to the PA Core Standards. Because these standards are more rigorous than the previous state standards, Pennsylvania has the following implementation schedule for the PA Core Standards aligned assessments:

- Students in grades 3 – 8 will continue to be assessed using the current PSSA, which will include PA Core standard related questions ONLY if the PA Academic Standard and PA Core Standard are similar. In 2015, students in these grades will be assessed on the PA Core Standards.
- Pennsylvania has replaced the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA with end of course exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology. These exams are called Keystone Exams and are aligned to the PA Core Standards.
- Although Keystone Exams were given during the 2012-13 school year, it is not until the 2016-17 school year that students must score at least “proficient”

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on these exams in order to graduate. Pennsylvania has developed an alternative means for some students to demonstrate proficiency on the PA Core Standards, if needed.

- Pennsylvania has developed an online testing option that is available to schools for both the PSSA and Keystone Exams; however, completing the test online is not a requirement.

### **STUDENT RESOURCES**

[A Student's Guide to PA Core Standards \(PDF\)](#)

[PA Core Standards](#)

[PA Standards Aligned System](#)