

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards are fundamental descriptions of reading, writing, and math skills that focus on the ability to think independently. Here are two examples of these descriptions:

- 3rd grade math: Tell and write time to the nearest minute and measure time intervals in minutes. Solve word problems involving addition and subtraction of time intervals in minutes.
- 5th grade reading: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text

Why do we need standards?

Louisiana has had standards for years. Standards ensure that at each grade level students learn the minimum skills necessary to be ready for the next grade and ultimately for college or a professional career. Because more than forty states have adopted these standards, the Common Core State Standards allow Louisiana families to see how students perform compared to students across the U.S.

Why did Louisiana adopt these standards?

Louisiana students are just as capable as any other group of students across our country or in the world, but they are lagging behind their peers. Louisiana students rank 44th and 46th amongst states in English language arts and math, respectively. We must level the playing field for our kids so they can compete in our ever changing global economy. The Common Core State Standards hold students across the country to the same high bar and allow Louisiana students to see how they perform compared to students across America. Instead of teaching students shortcuts and measuring their learning with bubble tests, these standards require independent thinking to solve problems- much like the demands of the American workforce..

Who created these standards?

States, not the federal government, led the creation of these standards. Governors and local leaders asked educators, content experts, university professors, and business leaders from across the nation, including many individuals from Louisiana, to help develop the Common Core State Standards.

Are these standards research based?

Yes, *the* Common Core State Standards were developed based on a large and growing body of evidence. The writers of the standards used scholarly research; surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs; assessment data identifying college-and career-ready performance; and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations.

In English language arts, the standards build on the foundation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks in reading and writing, which also draw on extensive scholarly research and evidence. In mathematics, the standards draw on conclusions from studies of high-performing countries such as Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

Are these standards more rigorous than previous Louisiana standards?

Yes, these standards are more rigorous than those previously used in Louisiana. Before adopting these standards, Louisiana students were learning material that was sometimes even a full year behind several high-performing states. The table below illustrates one reading concept as it was represented in the old standards compared to how it is represented in the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standard asks students to engage in independent thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting and analyzing characters.

Grade 4 – English Language Arts	
Louisiana Grade Level Expectations	Common Core State Standards
<p>Reading and Responding, Standard 1</p> <p>5. Identify a variety of story elements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of setting on character • multiple conflicts • first- and third-person points of view • development of theme (ELA-1-E4) 	<p><i>Literature: Key Ideas and Details</i></p> <p>2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.</p> <p>3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).</p> <p><i>Literature: Craft and Structure</i></p> <p>6. Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.</p>

When did Louisiana adopt these standards and who was a part of the process?

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) voted to adopt the Common Core State Standards in 2010. The Board sought input from local education groups, and the 10 groups listed below all endorsed the adoption of the standards. Each of these groups called on its membership to provide input on the content and adoption of the standards. BESE also received public comment from families and community members across our state.

Louisiana School Boards Association	Louisiana Superintendents
Louisiana Association of Educators	Louisiana Council of Teachers of English
Louisiana Federation of Teachers	Louisiana Association of Teachers of Mathematics
Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana	English Standards Review Committee
Louisiana Association of Principals	Math Standards Review Committee

When will Louisiana teachers start teaching the Common Core State Standards?

Louisiana educators are already instructing students based on the new standards, and teachers have been preparing for the new standards for several years. This year's [LEAP and iLEAP assessments](#) are fully aligned to the new expectations and are not aligned to the old LEAP standards. As a result, Louisiana teachers are already teaching to this new level of rigor and are making choices to adjust their instruction in ways that fit their students' needs.

Are standards and curriculum the same thing?

No, standards are the basic descriptors of what students are expected to learn at each grade level. A curriculum is how the standards are taught. A curriculum includes the set of textbooks, worksheets, workbooks and other materials a teacher uses to teach the standards. In Louisiana, while the state provides guidance, districts choose curriculum. The state does not mandate any specific curriculum.

Does the state dictate what textbooks teachers use and what they teach every day?

No. School districts decide what textbooks to use and what is taught every day. Local authorities have the ability to choose the curriculum which is what guides teachers on their daily instruction. As part of choosing their curricula, districts choose which textbooks to use in their schools.

What does math teaching look like when teachers use the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards require students to find real and exact answers to problems. In addition to finding the exact answer, students are expected to be able to explain why that answer is correct. Often students learn shortcuts to math problems. They often are then not able to apply these same shortcuts to more complex, real world problems. The new standards develop the ability to think independently rather than relying on shortcuts. Click [here](#) to see a video of what classroom teaching looks like using the Common Core State Standards for math.

What does English language arts instruction look like?

The Common Core State Standards require students to:

- a. Read increasingly difficult books and articles, including fiction and non-fiction
- b. Research, analyze, and present ideas

- c. Develop arguments grounded in evidence and communicate them in writing

This means students don't just memorize facts and answer multiple choice questions on bubble tests; instead, they are asked to read and write starting in elementary school all the way through high school. Click [here](#) to see a video of what classroom teaching looks like using the Common Core State Standards for English language arts.

Does my child's personal information, like test scores or social security numbers, go into a national database because of Louisiana's participation in Common Core?

No, there is not and will not be a national database created to store personal student information. Louisiana is committed to protecting the privacy of students, and all personal student information is protected by Louisiana and federal law. School districts, for many years, have kept basic data —home address, academic transcript information, historical test performance, and special education needs – on each of their students in order to ensure they are best serving students. Districts will continue to collect and store these basic pieces of information just as they always have.

Will standardized tests in Louisiana be more expensive because of the Common Core?

No, any changes in the tests students will take will cost the state approximately the **same amount** as the current set of tests. The state currently spends approximately \$30 per student for standardized testing, and this amount will not increase.

Will fewer students "pass" the new standardized tests?

No. Currently, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides the standard for how we score the LEAP. The NAEP also provides the standard for how the new assessment, PARCC, will be scored. Thus, the percentage of students scoring at Louisiana's "passing" level should be similar to the percentage of students "passing" PARCC.

Which Louisiana groups support the Common Core State Standards today?

Groups across Louisiana support the shift to more rigorous standards including the Council for A Better Louisiana (CABL), Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI), ExxonMobil, Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance and many more. Visit the Department's website for a more comprehensive list.