

A quick guide for observing classroom content and practice

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

Read About It

1. Stories
2. Drama
3. Poems
4. Nonfiction

Think About It

5. Research
6. Analysis
7. Reflection

Talk About It

8. Presentation
9. Collaboration

Write About It

10. Arguments
11. Explanations
12. Narratives

In a **grade 7 ELA class**, you should observe the teacher integrating the grade level ELA standards and students engaging in a variety of the following standards and practices:

Students engage independently with grade-level literary and informational texts, focusing on:

- Key Ideas and Details:** objective summary, development of theme or central ideas, interaction among elements (e.g., between setting and plot, between individuals and events), quoting or paraphrasing of text where appropriate, multiple pieces of textual evidence for claims about explicit and implicit meanings
- Craft and Structure:** relationship of parts to the whole and of structure to meaning, different points of view, impact of specific word choices, literary elements—including mood, tone, and symbolism
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** comparing written text to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, comparing fictional and historical accounts of events

Students engage daily in higher-order reasoning, both orally and in writing, especially by:

- Synthesizing:** drawing on multiple sources of information in multiple formats to answer a research question and to generate focused questions for further research
- Analyzing:** understanding how different purposes lead authors or speakers to emphasize different information when addressing the same topic, assessing credibility of sources
- Evaluating:** assessing arguments with attention to soundness of reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of evidence

Students attend closely to language use in their own work and others', focusing on:

- Meanings:** strategies (e.g., consulting resources, analyzing roots) for understanding words and phrases in context, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
- Conventions:** commas to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., "a fascinating, enjoyable movie"), placement of phrases and clauses within sentences

Students interact frequently, purposefully, and effectively with diverse others, engaging in:

- Discussion:** being prepared, following rules, defining individual roles, monitoring progress toward goals, asking and answering questions, acknowledging other viewpoints and defending or adjusting own stance in response
- Presentation:** coherent claims or findings, emphasis on salient points, eye contact, volume, pronunciation, use of appropriate vocabulary, integration of multimedia elements, consideration of specific audience
- Collaboration:** revising and editing work with help from peers and adults, using Internet and current Web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing (e.g., linking to sources), paraphrasing without plagiarizing

Students engage in writing within a range of time frames for a variety of audiences, producing:

- Arguments:** claims with acknowledgement of opposing claims, logical reasoning, relevant evidence, accurate and credible sources
- Explanations:** well-chosen details and quotations, domain-specific vocabulary, useful text features and multimedia elements
- Narratives:** clear point of view, sensory details, appropriate narrative sequence, literary techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing), literary elements, figurative language
- All writing:** clear and appropriate beginning and end, logical and cohesive structure, varied and effective transitions, precise and concise language, style appropriate to audience and purpose

ELA What to Look For The example below features three Indicators from the [Standards of Effective Practice](#). These Indicators are just a sampling from the full set of Standards and were chosen because they create a sequence: the educator plans a lesson that sets clear and high **expectations**, the educator then delivers high quality instruction, and finally the educator uses a variety of **assessments** to see if students understand the material or if re-teaching is necessary. This example highlights teacher and student behaviors aligned to the three Indicators that you can expect to see in a rigorous 7th grade ELA classroom.

Expectations
(Standard II, Indicator D) Plans and implements lessons that set clear and high expectations and also make knowledge accessible for all students.

What is the teacher doing?

- Selecting developmentally appropriate complex texts (e.g., texts from unfamiliar perspectives)
- Asking students for evidence (e.g., quotations) to support their claims
- Highlighting when an author uses figurative, connotative, or technical language purposefully

What are the students doing?

- Identifying a lesson's standards or objectives and how they connect to unit goals
- Engaging with appropriate complex texts (e.g., texts from unfamiliar perspectives)
- Using rich academic language when speaking and writing

Instruction
(Standard II, Indicator A) Uses instructional practices that reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work; engage all students; and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.

What is the teacher doing?

- Designing lessons that integrate standards and strands
- Sharing conflict resolution strategies for working together with students
- Highlighting when students draw explicitly upon class content during discussions with peers

What are the students doing?

- Drawing explicitly upon content they have learned in class in conversations with peers
- Analyzing how a specific section of a text relates to the whole
- Reading a variety of complex texts to advance academic learning

Assessment
(Standard I, Indicator B) Uses a variety of informal and formal methods of assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding to develop differentiated and enhanced learning experiences and improve future instruction.

What is the teacher doing?

- Conducting frequent checks for student understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly
- Using scaffolding as needed and providing multiple opportunities for students to practice new linguistic patterns, features, and vocabulary
- Providing exemplars of work (e.g. mentor texts, student work)

What are the students doing?

- Reflecting on how they are progressing toward goals
- Demonstrating learning in multiple ways (e.g., exit slips, classroom discussion)
- Engaging in challenging learning tasks regardless of learning needs (e.g., linguistic background, disability, academic gifts)
- Engaging in meaningful writing in response to text