The MA ELA/Literacy standards are important because they ask students to:

- Read complex, grade-level texts and develop a wide vocabulary.
- Speak and write in many different ways: arguments, explanations and narratives.
- Support their ideas with evidence from authoritative sources.

The underlying philosophy of the standards is that families and teachers develop students’ literacy together.

Here are the broad categories of the standards:

- Reading Literary and Informational Texts
- Foundational Skills in Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language: Vocabulary and Conventions of Standard English
- Literacy in History, Social Studies, Science, and Technical subjects
Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Standards

The chart below shows how research, one kind of writing emphasized in the standards, progresses from grade 3 through grade 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 3</th>
<th>Grades 5</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grades 9-10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.</td>
<td>Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge about several aspects of a topic.</td>
<td>Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.</td>
<td>Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem. Narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject demonstrating knowledge of the subject under investigation.</td>
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Each year's work builds upon the previous year of learning to lead to readiness for college and careers.

The standards present a vision of the literate person of the 21st century who:

- Demonstrates independence
- Builds strong content knowledge
- Responds to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose and discipline
- Comprehends as well as critiques
- Values evidence
- Uses technology and digital media strategically and capably
- Understands other perspectives and cultures

Using the new standards, these are the kinds of experiences your children will have in their classes.

- Pre-kindergarten: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners during daily routines and play and continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.
  
  For example, children begin to learn that “having a conversation” means listening, making a connection to what was said, and commenting upon it. Working with a partner they practice answering yes/no questions, then progress to two or three exchanges about a classroom activity or routine, or discuss a book like Eric Carle’s The Very Hungry Caterpillar, a book about trying delicious new fruits and vegetables.

- Grade 2: Write opinion pieces that introduce the topic or book, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
  
  For example, second graders try out several different kinds of computer games and simulations for math, geography, art, music, or science. They write an opinion about which of the games is most effective in keeping their interest and teaching them something important and make a recommendation that the game be added to software on the school’s computers.
Grade 7: Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same time period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

For example, seventh graders read Mark Twain’s classic novel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and primary sources from the 19th century. Based on these resources, they draw conclusions about how Twain used observation and imagination in creating his portrait of growing up in a small town in America before the Civil War.

Grade 9-10: Translate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text into visual form (e.g., a table or a chart) and translate information expressed visually or mathematically (e.g., in an equation) into words.

For example, tenth graders in a technology/engineering class go through the design process to develop a new smartphone app for their high school sports teams. They make a chart to compare the costs and benefits of custom versus mass production based on qualities of the desired product, the cost of each unit to produce, the number of units needed. They translate the information in the chart into an argument, supported by quantitative evidence, in order to gain funding for their product.

Grades 11-12: Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, use of evidence, and rhetoric.

For example, students studying drama read a play such as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* or Sophocles’ *Antigone*. In pairs, students choose a significant section of dialogue and perform it for the class. They analyze and discuss what the lines reveal about the characters, and why the piece of dialogue they have chosen is important to the meaning of the play.