

A quick guide for observing classroom content and practice

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

Read About It

1. Stories
2. Drama
3. Nonfiction

Think About It

4. Research
5. Analysis
6. Reflection

Talk About It

7. Presentation
8. Collaboration

Write About It

9. Arguments
10. Explanations
11. Narratives

In a **grade 6 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:** textual evidence supporting analysis of what text explicitly states, draw inferences, theme or central idea and relationship to key details, summary distinct from personal opinion or judgments progression of plot in story, poem, or drama and how characters respond; quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate, textual evidence for claims about explicit and implicit meanings
- Craft and Structure:** how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, stanza, section, or text feature fits with text structure and contributes to theme, setting, or plot; how author develops point of view and purpose
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama or poem, to listening or viewing same text; comparing texts on similar themes or topics in different forms or genres, comparing different authors' presentations of same events

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

- Synthesizing:** integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of topic or issue; refocusing inquiry when appropriate
- Analyzing:** recognizing purpose behind text or speech, tracing arguments and claims, assessing credibility of sources
- Evaluating:** assessing arguments with attention to whether claims are supported by reasons and 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; word choice
- Conventions:** punctuation (e.g., commas, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements

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, paraphrasing and reflecting on others' ideas
- 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, appropriate vocabulary
- Collaboration:** revising and editing work, using current Web-based communication platforms and other technology to produce and publish writing (e.g., linking to sources), paraphrasing without plagiarizing and providing basic bibliographic information

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

- Arguments:** support claims, clear and relevant evidence, credible sources, concluding statement or section
- Explanations:** relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and quotations, appropriate transitions, text features, graphics, and multimedia; concluding statement or section
- Narratives:** establish narrator and/or characters, appropriate narrative sequence, figurative and sensory language, narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing); variety of transition words; conclusion
- All writing:** clear and appropriate beginning and end, logical and cohesive structure, varied and effective transitions, style appropriate to audience and purpose, three or more pages of typing in a single sitting

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 6th grade ELA classroom.

Expectations (Standard II, Indicator E)	Plans and implements lessons that set clear and high expectations and also make knowledge accessible for all students.					
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What is the teacher doing?</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What are the students doing?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communicating a lesson's objectives and their connections to unit essential questions and goals. •Creating culturally responsive lessons that engage and sustain student attention •Highlighting when an author uses figurative, connotative, or technical language purposefully </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Engaging with appropriate complex texts •Using rich academic language when speaking and writing (e.g., linguistic complexity, conventions, and vocabulary) •Making an argument giving reasons (e.g., citing evidence from a text) </td> </tr> </table>			What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communicating a lesson's objectives and their connections to unit essential questions and goals. •Creating culturally responsive lessons that engage and sustain student attention •Highlighting when an author uses figurative, connotative, or technical language purposefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Engaging with appropriate complex texts •Using rich academic language when speaking and writing (e.g., linguistic complexity, conventions, and vocabulary) •Making an argument giving reasons (e.g., citing evidence from a text)
What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communicating a lesson's objectives and their connections to unit essential questions and goals. •Creating culturally responsive lessons that engage and sustain student attention •Highlighting when an author uses figurative, connotative, or technical language purposefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Engaging with appropriate complex texts •Using rich academic language when speaking and writing (e.g., linguistic complexity, conventions, and vocabulary) •Making an argument giving reasons (e.g., citing evidence from a text) 					

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.					
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What is the teacher doing?</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What are the students doing?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highlighting when students draw explicitly upon class content during discussions with peers •Highlighting how a section of text relates to the whole •Grouping students based on data and adjusting grouping as needed (using both homogenous and heterogeneous grouping) </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Making connections between reading, writing, speaking and listening •Resolving conflicts with peers in order to working together effectively •Analyzing how a specific section of a text relates to the whole </td> </tr> </table>			What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highlighting when students draw explicitly upon class content during discussions with peers •Highlighting how a section of text relates to the whole •Grouping students based on data and adjusting grouping as needed (using both homogenous and heterogeneous grouping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Making connections between reading, writing, speaking and listening •Resolving conflicts with peers in order to working together effectively •Analyzing how a specific section of a text relates to the whole
What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highlighting when students draw explicitly upon class content during discussions with peers •Highlighting how a section of text relates to the whole •Grouping students based on data and adjusting grouping as needed (using both homogenous and heterogeneous grouping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Making connections between reading, writing, speaking and listening •Resolving conflicts with peers in order to working together effectively •Analyzing how a specific section of a text relates to the whole 					

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.					
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What is the teacher doing?</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">What are the students doing?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Using multiple formative approaches to assess student learning (e.g., exit slips, classroom discussion) •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 </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflecting on how they are progressing toward goals •Engaging in challenging learning tasks regardless of learning needs (e.g., linguistic background, disability, academic gifts) •Engaging in meaningful writing in response to text •Using exemplars to inform their work </td> </tr> </table>			What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Using multiple formative approaches to assess student learning (e.g., exit slips, classroom discussion) •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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflecting on how they are progressing toward goals •Engaging in challenging learning tasks regardless of learning needs (e.g., linguistic background, disability, academic gifts) •Engaging in meaningful writing in response to text •Using exemplars to inform their work
What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Using multiple formative approaches to assess student learning (e.g., exit slips, classroom discussion) •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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflecting on how they are progressing toward goals •Engaging in challenging learning tasks regardless of learning needs (e.g., linguistic background, disability, academic gifts) •Engaging in meaningful writing in response to text •Using exemplars to inform their work 					