

GRADE 8 | MODULE 1

TEACHER GUIDE

Paths to College and Career

English Language Arts

Reading Closely and Writing to Learn

- Inside Out & Back Again
- The Vietnam Wars

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can be downloaded at:

<http://www.pathstocollegeandcareer.com/trbdownload>

Grade 8 | Module 1

➤ Teacher Guide

Paths to College and Career

English Language Arts

Reading Closely and Writing to Learn

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A division of Public Consulting Group (PCG), PCG Education provides instructional and management services and technologies to schools, school districts, and state education agencies across the United States and internationally. We apply more than 30 years of management consulting expertise and extensive real-world experience as teachers and leaders to strengthen clients' instructional practice and organizational leadership, enabling student success.

As educators engage with rigorous standards for college and career readiness, PCG Education partners with practitioners at all stages of implementation. We work with clients to build programs, practices, and processes that align with the standards. Our team of experts develops and delivers standards-based instructional resources, professional development, and technical assistance that meet the needs of all learners.

In response to a wide range of needs, PCG Education's solutions leverage one or more areas of expertise, including College and Career Readiness, MTSS/RTI, Special Programs and Diverse Learners, School and District Improvement, and Strategic Planning. PCG's technologies expedite this work by giving educators the means to gather, manage, and analyze data, including student performance information, and by facilitating blended learning approaches to professional development.

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WHAT IS *PATHS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER*?

Paths to College and Career is a comprehensive English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum that meets the rigorous requirements and instructional shifts of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). *Paths to College and Career* (for grades 6–8) deeply engages middle-level students in authentic experiences while building their literacy skills and expanding their knowledge of the world around them as they grow toward college and career readiness. *Paths to College and Career* supports teachers' understanding of CCSS-aligned instruction that challenges and engages all students as they read, discuss, and write about complex texts.

Materials and Resources

- **Curriculum maps** that provide a bird's eye view of standards, learning targets, core texts, and assessments across the year, both within each grade and across grades 6–8
- **Detailed plans** for curriculum modules, units, and lessons, with teacher instructional notes and student supports
- **Authentic literary and informational texts** at appropriate grade-level complexity work together to build students' knowledge
- **Supplementary resources** including protocols and practices, graphic organizers, and supports for students with a variety of learning needs

- **Flexibility**, encouraging teacher adaptation and student choice

Intentional Learning Progressions

- **Engaging topics**, and sequencing within topics, that draw students deeply into rigorous reading, writing, and thinking
- Deliberate **year long instructional processes** that develop students' ability to read closely, analyze texts, and synthesize information across multiple texts
- Scaffolded **assignments** that help all students develop skill in evidence-based writing, including argument, explanation, and narrative
- **Regular, consistent writing** for many purposes, both informal and more formal, incorporating the writing process
- **Classroom protocols** that foster rich evidence-based discussions, research, and writing based on evidence from text
- **Academic vocabulary** development that builds students' ability to understand sophisticated words and complex language structures
- **Active learning** that encourages students' confidence in their ability to achieve at high levels

Assessment That Informs Instruction

- Daily and ongoing formative assessment opportunities
- Student self-assessment and feedback
- Mid-unit and end-of-unit assessments

- Curriculum-embedded performance tasks for each module in which students synthesize their work to demonstrate their deep learning of skills and content
- CCSS-based rubrics and models of expected student performances

Paths to College and Career provides a complete middle-level ELA curriculum, fully aligned with the Common Core standards and instructional shifts and designed to meet the needs of all students.

Why Do We Need a New and More Rigorous Curriculum?

College and Career anchor standards (CCR) establish literacy expectations for students as they graduate from high school and prepare to enter college or career paths. Grade-specific standards define end-of-year expectations and learning progressions that enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school.

The CCSS provide a vision for college- and career-ready students who can

- Independently comprehend and evaluate complex texts
- Construct effective arguments and convey complex information
- Actively listen to, comprehend, and question a speaker
- Engage in productive dialogue
- Demonstrate command of standard English and use a wide-ranging vocabulary

- Be self-directed learners and know how to locate information from a variety of sources
- Build knowledge by engaging with works of quality and substance, reading purposefully, and listening attentively
- Refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Be engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners
- Cite specific evidence, connecting it through reasoning to their claim, when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text or when making their own point
- Use technology and digital media strategically and capably
- Understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with people of other backgrounds
- Learn about a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews by reading great classic and contemporary works of literature

Achieving these high expectations and rigorous goals requires that curriculum and instruction support teachers in preparing students for college and career.

The Standards in Action: The Instructional Shifts and *Paths to College and Career*

The Common Core State Standards for ELA & Literacy set clear, high expectations for what students in each grade need to know as they grow toward college and career

readiness. These rigorous expectations require shifts in the content and nature of instruction so that students will achieve the standards. *Paths to College and Career* embodies these instructional shifts.

Shift 1: Building Knowledge through Content-Rich Nonfiction

In college and career, most required reading is nonfiction and informational text. Students need to understand the structure of text and be able to learn independently through text.

- Expanding beyond fiction, students read a true **balance of literary and informational texts**.
- Through carefully selected text sets, students **build knowledge** about the world (domains/content areas) through interactions with **text** rather than through teacher talk or activities.

How does *Paths to College and Career* help teachers and students meet Shift 1?

All modules in *Paths to College and Career* pair literature with rich informational text (including primary source documents and literary nonfiction). Authentic reading materials include full-length books, excerpts, articles, and other texts. In addition, each unit includes a set of sequenced, coherent progressions of learning experiences that build knowledge and understanding of major concepts related to real-world issues and concerns. Students engage in significant topics as they read high-quality literature and fiction. They build expertise on topics and share that expertise with others.

Shift 2: Reading, Writing, and Speaking Grounded in Evidence from Text

The ability to locate and use evidence is a strong indicator of success in college and career. Too often, questions and tasks ask students to answer from their own experience, rather than requiring them to respond with evidence from text. The CCSS expects that most questions and tasks require students to read the text—and to identify what is directly stated and what is inferred. In the classroom, reading, writing, and speaking all emphasize the use of evidence.

- Students engage in **rich and rigorous evidence-based conversation** about text.
- Writing **uses evidence from sources** to inform or make an argument.

How does *Paths to College and Career* help teachers and students meet Shift 2?

Each module of the *Paths to College and Career* curriculum focuses on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high-quality texts. *Paths to College and Career* supports teachers with careful and deliberate sequences of text-dependent questions and tasks that ensure students return to the text for answers. Students use evidence, becoming skilled at asking and answering important text-dependent questions as they read. The curriculum also emphasizes writing from sources and research, matching the emphasis placed on these activities in the CCSS for a variety of purposes. Over the course of the academic year, students regularly write evidence-based informative/explanatory texts as they engage in text analysis. Writing instruction in *Paths to College and Career* frames writing as a recursive and iterative process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and rewriting. Building the research skills outlined in the CCSS, students learn how to conduct effective, inquiry-based research. Through

reading and analysis, students identify topics of interest, formulate questions for searches, assess sources, craft inquiry-based research questions, engage in research and writing, and, finally, analyze and synthesize their research in formal writing pieces.

Paths to College and Career regularly incorporates student discussion in order for students to process orally what they have read and what they will write or have already written in response to a text. Discussions take various forms, some more formal or structured than others. Discussions are student driven and share a common focus on evidence-based claims. Students engage with one another, rather than with the teacher, as they pose questions, build shared knowledge, and support each other. To facilitate classwide engagement, students work in pairs or small groups prior to whole-class discussion. These pair or small-group discussions allow students the space and time to collaboratively build evidence-based understandings of text(s) and share their ideas and understandings.

Students engage in peer-supported and independent research projects of varying lengths and on a range of topics. Using the text as the basis for forming claims and making inferences, students write in multiple contexts. End-of-module performance tasks require students to use textual evidence in authentic contexts.

Shift 3: Complex Text and Its Academic Vocabulary

There has existed a huge gap between the complexity of texts students read and the complexity of texts they need to be able to read to meet college and career expectations. The new standards have raised the overall level of text complexity, with clear expectations for independence at each grade level. One of the greatest factors in text complexity is the academic vocabulary that is more often