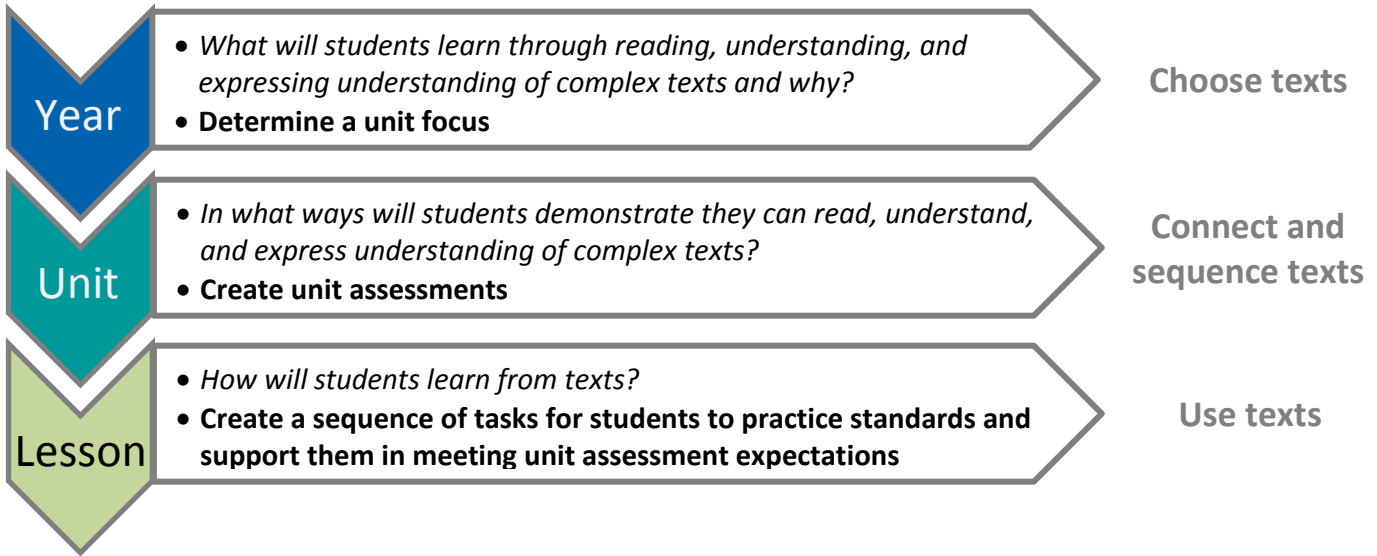


What makes a strong English language arts (ELA) curriculum?

Students must read, understand, and express understanding of complex texts on a regular basis. This will help them meet grade-level ELA standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. **Organizing a curriculum, like the [ELA guidebooks](#), around a series of text sets can provide students with opportunities to meet the ELA goal.**



What is a text set?

A text set is a set of texts around a similar topic, theme, or idea. Strong text sets share common vocabulary, which helps bolster students’ vocabulary knowledge through repeated readings. Strong text sets also provide students with repeated readings about similar ideas, which allow them to build knowledge. Review the following text set: How are the texts connected? What will students learn? Are there any other texts could be substituted in this set?

Strong Text Set, Grade 7
<p>Anchor: A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens (Literary, non-leveled or adapted version)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Gift of the Magi,” O. Henry (Literary) • “The Treasure of Lemon Brown,” Walter Dean Myers (Literary) • “History of Christmas,” BBC (Informational) • “Charles Dickens: Six Things He Gave the Modern World,” Alex Hudson (<i>BBC News</i>) (Informational) • Original Manuscript of A Christmas Carol with Dickens’ revisions, <i>New York Times</i> (Informational) • A Christmas Carol, dir. Brian Desmond Hurst (2012) (Film) • A Christmas Carol, dir. Chuck Jones (1971) (Film) • “Do Experiences or Material Goods Make Us Happier?” (<i>ScienceDaily</i>) (Informational) • “Study: Experiences Make Us Happier Than Possessions,” Elizabeth Landau (<i>CNNHealth.com</i>) (Informational)

Where can I find texts to include in my classroom?

Teachers may choose to use all the texts in a set, or, based on student interest or text availability, teachers may choose to substitute texts in a set. A master list of all texts included in the ELA guidebooks is available [here](#).

How do I create a text set?

The process described below is a suggestion and can be adapted in collaboration with colleagues.

Identify grade-level content and anchor texts that explore that content.

1. Consider what [students need to be ready for life after K-12](#) to determine what they should learn in grades K-12.
For example:
 - Learn about universal themes, other cultures and perspectives (e.g., RL.2.9, RI.5.6, or RL.9-10.6)
 - Read common texts, authors, and genres, such as myths or Shakespeare (e.g., RL.4.9, RL.6.9, RI.11-12.9)
 - Learn about historical events and time periods, popular science, music and art (e.g., RI.1.9, RI.3.3, or RI.8.9)
2. Determine the unit focus for several units in each grade and develop a progression of content across grade levels.
Unit focus examples:
 - Explore a concept or theme
 - Understand different perspectives about an idea or event
 - Learn more in depth about a topic from science, social studies, or the arts
 - Explore a writing style or format, such as an author study or genre study (i.e., mysteries, memoirs)
3. Select an anchor text for each unit focus and that meets many of the following criteria:¹
 - Students will be interested in the text or it allows for them to build reading stamina and perseverance.
 - The content of the text is age-appropriate.
 - The text is written by a published author and/or is high quality and contains accurate information.
 - The text is appropriately [complex](#) for the intended grade-level.
 - The text is available for classroom use (e.g., is found in a textbook anthology or online or can be purchased).
 - Sets seek to maintain a balance of literary and informational texts across the year.

Determine related texts that support student understanding of the content and anchor texts.

4. Select texts that relate to the anchor text based on the unit focus.
5. Include variety and balance in text formats (i.e., print, media, visual, etc.) and lengths (poems, short stories/articles, novels) across the units.
6. Include texts that are within the [grade-level text complexity range](#) (or above for reading aloud).²

Sequence the texts sets across the year.

7. Determine the order of the text sets. Focus on ordering them to build student knowledge and increase the text complexity of texts³ being read over the year.
8. Work with teachers across grade levels to ensure knowledge and text complexity is built between grades.
9. Each set represents one unit. Depending on the grade and the set, units can range from 3-9 weeks.

¹ Selected texts may not meet all the listed criteria, but texts worth in depth study are likely to meet most criteria.

² For struggling and advanced readers, support them during small-group instruction with related texts below the band to support reading growth and above the band for extension.

³ The complexity of texts should grow within and across the grade levels. While some students are able to understand main idea in a basic text, the same does not necessarily hold true with a complex text. Students need to engage repeatedly with multiple standards with different texts.