Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher establishes appropriate instructional framework.	
	Approaching	Effective
Effective Classroom Management ▸ **LE5:** Classroom resources and space reflect and promote students and their learning **Standards-Based Goals** ▸ **I1:** Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales	Teacher frequently articulates content and language objectives. • Teacher articulates clear learning objectives for lessons and discusses purposes behind them. • Learning objectives are posted and evaluated at end of lessons.	Teacher articulates content and language objectives. • Teacher articulates and enhances clear learning objectives for lessons based on big ideas and students' needs both for content and academic language and discusses purposes behind them. • Learning objectives are posted, lessons and activities are designed to teach to those objectives, and objectives are evaluated at end of lessons.
High-Impact Instructional Moves ▸ **I4:** Uses questioning effectively **Differentiation** ▸ **I7:** Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs	Teacher incorporates instructional foci designed with the end in mind. • Teacher explains end-of-unit assessments to students. • Embedded assessments are the starting point. • Teaching and learning strategies are a cornerstone of instructional foci designed and embedded in learning activities. • Activities are purposeful.	Teacher incorporates instructional foci designed with the end in mind. • Teacher explains end-of-unit assessments with activities scaffolded to teach needed skills and knowledge. • Embedded assessments are the starting point. • Teaching and learning strategies are a cornerstone of instructional foci designed and embedded in learning activities. • Purposeful learning activities are relevant.
Masterful Content Knowledge ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards **Academic Language Development** ▸ **I9:** Ensures content is accessible for ELLs ▸ **I10:** Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language	Teacher begins with unit overviews, essential questions, learning goals, and academic vocabulary. • Teacher connects students to what they will learn in the units. • Teacher poses questions for students to answer during their study of the units. • Teacher previews academic vocabulary for in-depth study during the units. • Teacher provides purpose statements for each activity.	Teacher begins with unit overviews, essential questions, learning goals, and academic vocabulary. • Teacher connects students to what they will learn in the units. • Teacher poses thought-provoking questions for students to answer during their study of the units. • Teacher previews, supports, and enhances academic vocabulary for in-depth study during the units. • Teacher provides purpose statements for each activity and has taxonomy of skills well developed for each activity.

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher establishes literacy-rich classroom environment.	
	Approaching	**Effective**
Positive Classroom Culture and Climate ▸ **LE3:** Motivates students to learn, take academic risks, and demonstrate classroom leadership **Effective Classroom Management** ▸ **LE5:** Classroom resources and space reflect and promote students and their learning ▸ **LE6:** Manages student groups, transitions, and resources effectively **Masterful Content Knowledge** ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards	Classroom Library • All students have SpringBoard student books and course novels. • Students can access a variety of books and reading materials representing various topics of interest, genres, and authors. • Books are effectively sorted and labeled in a way students understand, and students can easily access appropriately leveled books.	Classroom Library • All students have SpringBoard student books and course novels. • Students can access a wide collection of culturally diverse books that represent various topics of interest, authors, genres, reading levels, and/or lexiles. • High-interest, lower reading level books for independent reading are available in ELA-E classrooms where some students are transitioning to English. • Books are effectively sorted and labeled so students can explain, maintain, and use library independently. Books are arranged attractively and invitingly. • Students regularly take home books and other reading materials.
	Classroom Arrangement • Classroom has appropriate space identified for whole group gatherings. • Classroom arrangement reflects mix of teacher- and student-directed interactions.	Classroom Arrangement • Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings (i.e., whole group, small groups, partners, independent work). • Classroom arrangement emphasizes student interactions. • Teacher encourages productive, accountable talk by having areas and times for students to work together.
	Classroom Displays • Daily agendas are posted. • Teacher and students occasionally refer to class-developed anchor charts and rubrics that are posted or accessible. • Some charts contain pictures to support ELLs. • Student work examples are displayed on walls.	Classroom Displays • Daily agendas, content objectives, and language objectives are posted. • Anchor charts reflect current instructional focus areas, procedures, and expectations. Students can explain how to use charts and displays that reflect current teaching and learning. • Current student work examples are displayed on walls. Regularly changing displays reflecting ongoing learning. • Word walls are being developed with students throughout the year to build academic and literary language. Pictures or other visuals accompany displayed information to support ELLs. • Rubrics or attribute charts, created with students, provide clear student work expectations and include visuals to support ELLs.
	Materials and Tools • Student notebooks include work samples and notes. • Students set reading goals for upcoming units and can explain plans to meet those goals.	Materials and Tools • Student notebooks include content vocabulary, grammar and usage, literary terminology, word connections, work samples, and class notes. • Students set reading goals (e.g., variety of genres, volume of reading, use of fix-up strategies) and can explain plans to meet those goals based on their end-of-unit reflections.

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher develops student independence and sense of community.	
	A p p r o a c h i n g	E f f e c t i v e
Positive Classroom Culture and Climate ▸ **LE2:** Fosters supportive and respectful learning environment among students ▸ **LE3:** Motivates students to learn, take academic risks, and demonstrate classroom leadership **Effective Classroom Management** ▸ **LE4:** Implements high, clear expectations for student behavior and appropriately responds to misbehavior ▸ **LE6:** Manages student groups, transitions, and resources effectively	Rituals and routines are established, and students: • Manage their behavior with some teacher support. • Know what is expected during work time. • Refer to goals while reading and writing. • Transition from one activity to another with teacher support. • Maintain resources respectfully. • Work well with partners and in groups for short periods. • Move around the room to locate resources during a time teacher determines. • Problem solve to minimize behavior issues.	Rituals and routines are firmly established, and students routinely: • Understand the "why" behind rituals and routines and take responsibility to maintain them. • Stay on task and manage their behavior independently. • Use charts and artifacts individually to support their learning. • Transition from one activity to another efficiently, independently, and respectfully. • Know what to do during work time and when they finish activities. • Maintain resources respectfully. • Work well with partners and in small reading groups, listening and responding appropriately. • Move around the room without disruption to locate resources and confer with partners. • Problem solve to minimize behavior issues and encourage respect for others' learning.
Masterful Content Knowledge ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards **21st Century Skills** ▸ **I11:** Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving ▸ **I12:** Fosters communication and collaboration among students	Teacher uses collaborative strategies. • Teacher encourages students to engage in academic discourse and reflection. • Teacher encourages students to articulate their thoughts and ideas, providing sense of relevance. • Teacher encourages participation and active engagement with English language arts concepts. • Teacher establishes collaborative groups. • Teacher explicitly teaches students learning strategies that enhance sense of independence.	Teacher uses collaborative strategies. • Teacher encourages students to engage in academic discourse and reflection. • Teacher encourages students to articulate their thoughts and ideas, providing sense of relevance to and engagement in the learning process. • Teacher encourages participation and active engagement with English language arts concepts that stretch and inspire student thinking. • Teacher establishes collaborative groups where students explore their own and others' ideas about what they are studying. • Teacher explicitly teaches students learning strategies that enhance sense of independence and mastery so, as they develop confidence in their ability to succeed as readers and writers, they begin to take ownership of their learning in new and exciting ways.

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher provides effective whole group instruction in mini-lessons.	
	Approaching	Effective
Standards-Based Goals ▸ **I1:** Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▸ **I2:** Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps ▸ **I3:** Supports student success with rigorous tasks **High-Impact Instructional Moves** ▸ **I4:** Uses questioning effectively ▸ **I5:** Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons ▸ **I6:** Uses technology and digital resources appropriately to enhance student learning **Differentiation** ▸ **I7:** Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs	Daily related mini-lessons are part of coordinated instructional focus, as determined by standards and assessed student needs. • Teacher determines what students must know to perform well on end-of-unit assessments. • Teacher scaffolds instruction to deliver standards-based instruction. • Instructional design builds to mastery. • Teaching and learning strategies are a cornerstone of instructional foci designed and embedded in learning activities. • Instruction demands reflective and metacognitive approach to teaching and learning. • Learning activities are relevant, rigorous, and student-centered. • Differentiated instructional opportunities are built carefully on scaffolded instruction.	Daily related mini-lessons are part of coordinated instructional focus, as determined by standards and assessed student needs. • Teacher determines what students must know to perform well on end-of-unit assessments. • Teacher scaffolds instruction to deliver standards-based instruction. • Instructional design builds to mastery and successful achievement of complex skills. • Teaching and learning strategies are a cornerstone of instructional foci designed and embedded in learning activities to encourage optimal teaching and learning. • Instruction demands reflective and metacognitive approach to teaching and learning. • Learning activities are relevant, rigorous, student-centered, engaging, interactive, and collaborative to develop students' skills in evaluating, analyzing, and communicating effectively. • Differentiated instructional opportunities are built carefully on scaffolded instruction leading toward mastery of skills addressed in Embedded Assessments in units of instruction.
Masterful Content Knowledge ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards **Academic Language Development** ▸ **I9:** Ensures content is accessible for ELLs ▸ **I10:** Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language	Mini-lessons are typically 15–20 minutes long and usually include: • Connections to previous learning. • Clear learning targets. • Variety of learning materials—such as text, film, and oral performances—embedded into student activities. • Scaffolded student learning through step-by-step activities.	Typically 15- to 20-minutes long, mini-lessons always include: • Connections to previous learning. • Clear learning targets. • Variety of learning materials—such as text, film, and oral performances—embedded into student activities. • Scaffolded student learning through step-by-step activities. • Integration of learning and teaching strategies throughout mini-lessons to meet diverse learning needs.
	Mini-lessons may address: • Reading strategies to improve reading skills. • Writing opportunities to reinforce skills.	Mini-lessons address: • Intentional reading strategies to acquire and improve reading skills. • Deep reading and discussion of meanings to reinforce skills and language development. • Extensive and varied writing opportunities to reinforce skills.

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher individualizes student instruction during small groups and conferences.	
	A p p r o a c h i n g	E f f e c t i v e
Standards-Based Goals ▸ **I1:** Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▸ **I2:** Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps ▸ **I3:** Supports student success with rigorous tasks **High-Impact Instructional Moves** ▸ **I4:** Uses questioning effectively ▸ **I5:** Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons ▸ **I6:** Uses technology and digital resources appropriately to enhance student learning	Conferences and Ongoing Assessments • Teacher collects and records information about student attitudes and interests as readers, comprehension and ability to self-monitor, reading strategies, and skills. • Teacher talks with students in authentic conversations. • Teacher reinforces students' use of strategies and identifies one or two teaching points for focus. • Teacher teaches to teaching points by providing guided practice. • Teacher works with students to write specific, important reading and/or writing goals that move students forward to mastery of skills and knowledge. • Teacher connects teaching points to mini-lessons.	Conferences and Ongoing Assessments • Teacher collects and records information about student attitudes and interests as readers, comprehension and ability to self-monitor, reading strategies, and skills. • Teacher talks with students in authentic conversations. • Teacher reinforces students' use of strategies and identifies one or two teaching points for focus, considering previous observations and conferences. • Teacher teaches to teaching points by demonstrating, providing guided practice, and supporting independent efforts. • Teacher works with students to write specific, important reading and/or writing goals that move students forward to mastery of skills and knowledge. • Teacher monitors student progress toward meeting goals during subsequent conferences and sets new goals with students. • Teacher connects teaching points to mini-lessons. • Teacher encourages students to reflect on selves as readers and writers.
Differentiation ▸ **I7:** Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs **Masterful Content Knowledge** ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards **Academic Language Development** ▸ **I9:** Ensures content is accessible for ELLs ▸ **I10:** Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language	Collaborative Small Groups • Teacher groups students flexibly, using instructional reading and language levels and sometimes strategies and skills, as determined by ongoing assessments. • Teacher occasionally regroups students. Small instructional groups focus on: • Listening and speaking skills through group discussions. • Reading skills through group discussions. • Writing skills through varied paired writing opportunities. • Media literacy skills through group analyses of media influences. • Texts based on students' instructional and language levels.	Collaborative Small Groups • Teacher groups students flexibly, using instructional reading and language levels and analyzing strategies and skills, as determined by ongoing assessments (e.g., reading conferences, class observations, student interests). • Teacher reflects on student needs and regroups accordingly. Small instructional groups focus on: • Listening and speaking skills through group discussions and paired student activities. • Reading skills through group discussions and language development. • Writing skills through varied paired writing opportunities. • Media literacy skills through group analyses of media influences and evaluation of media biases through small group discussions. • Texts based on students' instructional, interests, and language levels, based on known words, strategies, skills, and concepts.

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher personalizes instruction to meet all students' needs during Writing Workshop.	
	Approaching	Effective
Standards-Based Goals ▸ **I1:** Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▸ **I2:** Provides descriptive feedback to students on achievement and next steps ▸ **I3:** Supports student success with rigorous tasks **High-Impact Instructional Moves** ▸ **I4:** Uses questioning effectively ▸ **I5:** Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons ▸ **I6:** Uses technology and digital resources appropriately to enhance student learning **Differentiation** ▸ **I7:** Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs **Masterful Content Knowledge** ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards **Academic Language Development** ▸ **I9:** Ensures content is accessible for ELLs ▸ **I10:** Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language	Teacher routinely implements Writing Workshop components, including: • Integrating all aspects of writing process. • Providing multiple opportunities to practice and master stages. • Guiding students through writing process.	Teacher routinely implements Writing Workshop components, including: • Integrating all aspects of writing process. • Providing multiple opportunities to practice and master stages. • Providing opportunities for additional instruction and practice through sequence of activities designed to provide direct writing instruction in writing process and specific writing genres. • Guiding students through writing three separate texts: one that is co-constructed as a class with direct teacher guidance, one that is peer-constructed, and one written independently.
	Teacher provides classroom environment where: • Students participate in a writing community in which they actively engage in writing process. • Productive, accountable talk is evident as students work with writing partners. • Students refer to a variety of class-developed resources when writing, including anchor charts, rubrics, word walls, and editing checklists. • Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings.	Teacher provides classroom environment where: • Students participate in a writing community in which they actively engage in writing process and support classmates' efforts. • Productive, accountable talk is evident as students work with writing partners and in response groups to improve their writing. • Students refer to a variety of class-developed resources when writing, including anchor charts, rubrics, word walls, and editing checklists. Teacher and students often refer to relevant, easy-to-read displays during discussions. • Students can easily access writing examples from different genres by published authors and students. • Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings.

	Teacher provides gradual release of responsibility through sequence of activities, including:
	
	• Co-constructed writing with direct teacher guidance exploring genre elements from pre-planning through revision using anchor texts.
	   • Clearly identified purposes and audiences
	   • Inquiry and choice in writing
	   • Modeled writing process
	   • Genre elements (e.g., short stories, poems, reflective essays, personal narratives, scripts, expository, procedure, persuasive, literature responses, research writing)
	   • Mentor text studies
	• Independent writing following modeled and guided pre-planning through revision.
		Teacher provides gradual release of responsibility through sequence of activities, including:
		
		• Co-constructed writing with direct teacher guidance exploring genre elements from pre-planning through revision using anchor texts.
		   • Clearly identified purposes and audiences
		   • Inquiry and choice in writing
		   • Modeled writing process
		   • Genre elements (e.g., short stories, poems, reflective essays, personal narratives, scripts, expository, procedure, persuasive, literature responses, research writing)
		   • Mentor text studies
		• Peer-constructed writing following modeled pre-planning through revision.
		• Independent writing following modeled and guided pre-planning through revision.

Best Practices in Grades 6–12 English Language Arts Instruction

Framework Expectations and Indicators	Teacher provides pathway to advanced placement/college readiness.	
	A p p r o a c h i n g	E f f e c t i v e
Positive Classroom Culture and Climate ▸ **LE3:** Motivates students to learn, take academic risks, and demonstrate classroom leadership **Standards-Based Goals** ▸ **I1:** Clearly communicates learning objectives for lessons, connecting to larger rationales ▸ **I3:** Supports student success with rigorous tasks	Teacher carefully articulates instructional pathway that enables students to access, practice, and master skills necessary to meet standards, emphasizing: • Higher-order thinking skills and behaviors demanded of college-level work. • Analyses with pre-AP and AP reading strategies. • Exposure to challenging texts. • Writing tasks in persuasion, argumentation, literary analysis, and synthesis to build capacity to write effectively in these rhetorical modes.	Teacher carefully articulates instructional pathway that enables students to access, practice, and master skills necessary to meet standards, emphasizing: • Higher-order thinking skills and behaviors demanded of college-level work. • Close analyses with pre-AP and AP reading strategies, leading to ability to independently analyze any new texts. • Exposure to increasingly challenging texts, both canonical and contemporary, fiction and nonfiction. • Challenging complex writing tasks in persuasion, argumentation, literary analysis, and synthesis to build capacity to write effectively in these rhetorical modes.
High-Impact Instructional Moves ▸ **I4:** Uses questioning effectively ▸ **I5:** Checks for understanding in varied ways throughout lessons **Differentiation** ▸ **I7:** Is proactive in planning for and addressing all students' needs **Masterful Content Knowledge** ▸ **I8:** Demonstrates deep knowledge of content area and relevant standards **Academic Language Development** ▸ **I9:** Ensures content is accessible for ELLs ▸ **I10:** Promotes students' active and appropriate use of academic language **21st Century Skills** ▸ **I11:** Provides opportunities for creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and problem solving	Teacher provides pre-AP/AP connections, including: • Close reading texts to determine literary elements. • Understanding strong relationships among authors' purposes, use of literary and stylistic devices, and desired effects. • Writing with attention to textual evidence and choosing organizational patterns. • Identifying and writing rhetorical appeals. • Writing to interpret, evaluate, and negotiate differing critical perspectives in literature.	Teacher provides pre-AP/AP connections, including: • Close reading texts to determine literary elements. • Understanding strong relationships among authors' purposes, use of literary and stylistic devices, and desired effects. • Gleaning and synthesizing information from a variety of texts to respond to AP prompts. • Writing with attention to textual evidence and choosing organizational patterns. • Identifying and writing rhetorical appeals. • Writing in response to synthesis prompts such as ones used on AP language exam. • Writing to interpret, evaluate, and negotiate differing critical perspectives in literature.