

Common Core State Standards

Myth vs. Fact

Myth: The standards are a creation of the federal government that will take control of curriculum away from states and local schools.

Fact: The federal government had no role in the development of the Common Core State Standards and will not have a role in their implementation. The initiative was a state-led effort and adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory.

Myth: These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

Fact: The standards are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

Myth: The Standards tell teachers what to teach.

Fact: The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. That's why these standards will establish what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the expectations described in the standards.

Myth: The federal government will take over ownership of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Fact: The federal government will not govern the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The initiative was and will remain a state-led effort. The state officials who created the standards are committed to developing a long-term governance structure with leadership from governors, state school officers, and other state policymakers.

Myth: The federal government made states adopt Common Core State Standards by threatening to withhold federal education dollars.

Fact: The federal government provided incentives through the optional Race to the Top program for states to adopt bold education reforms, including higher standards, but each state voluntarily made the decision to adopt Common Core and followed its own specific constitutional, legislative or administrative processes to do so. A state's decision to adopt Common Core played a very minor role in the Race to the Top competitive scoring process (making up just 8 percent of an individual state's score under the federal application).

Myth: Adopting common standards will bring all states' standards down to the lowest common denominator.



Fact: The standards are designed to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college and their careers. This will result in moving even the best state standards to the next level. In fact, since this work began, there has been an explicit agreement that no state would lower its standards. The standards were informed by the best in the country, the highest international standards, and evidence and expertise about educational outcomes. We need college and career ready standards because even in high-performing states – students are graduating and passing all the required tests and still require remediation in their postsecondary work.

Myth: No teachers were involved in writing the standards.

Fact: The Common Core State Standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. In addition, there were many state experts that came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together.

Myth: The Standards are not based on research or evidence.

Fact: The standards have made careful use of a large and growing body of evidence, which includes scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations.

Myth: Common Core State Standards include controversial science and history curricula.

Fact: The standards encompass only English Language Arts and mathematics, focusing on improving needed critical-thinking and analytic skills. State and local officials will continue to make important curriculum decisions when it comes to teaching history or science.

Myth: English teachers will be asked to teach science and social studies reading materials.

Fact: With the Common Core English language arts standards, English teachers will still teach their students literature as well as literary nonfiction. However, because college and career readiness overwhelmingly focuses on complex texts outside of literature, the standards also ensure students are being prepared to read, write and research in other subjects, including history and science. These goals can be achieved by ensuring that teachers in other disciplines are also focusing on reading and writing to build knowledge within their subject areas and academic vocabulary.

Myth: The reading assigned in the English standards is half informational texts instead of great American and English literature. The result is that the standards are very political.

Fact: Common Core State Standards continue to provide a heavy focus – at least 50 percent – on the reading and comprehension of great American and English literature classics such as “The Grapes of Wrath,” “To Kill a Mockingbird” and “Pride and Prejudice.”

Students will be required to read more informational texts, but which texts are read is left up to the teacher, just as it is today.