About Expeditionary Learning

Expeditionary Learning is a network of practitioners, comprised of 4,000 teachers in 165 schools in 30 states, serving over 45,000 students. We have been working with schools and teachers for 20 years to create classrooms where students are pushed and supported to do more than they think they can.

The Common Core standards and instructional shifts are extensions of the approach we have used with our schools since our inception. We have always viewed every teacher—regardless of subject area, grade or specialization—as a teacher of readers, writers, and content. We have worked in close collaboration with Student Achievement Partners (SAP) and with input from teachers across the country to create a Common Core literacy curriculum that engages and challenges students and supports teachers in making the transition to Common Core instruction.

Our Approach

As fellow educators, we recognize the challenge of delivering rigorous instructional experiences to students of all reading levels and needs. Our curriculum is written at a level of detail that helps teachers envision and implement key instructional routines and adopt strategies that allow all types of learners, including special education students and ELLs, to access the material.

The curriculum is designed as a tool for professional learning, not as a script, and can be adapted for teachers at all stages of their practice. It can be used as an exemplar for veteran teachers and coaches or as a template for effective instruction with new teachers.

Our Professional Development Packages

Our curriculum is supported by professional development that engages teachers and leaders in the same deep reading, thinking, and writing that they will expect of their students. EL immerses educators in the interesting topics that they will ultimately teach to their students and provides them with supports like videos and toolkits.

Expeditionary Learning offers a variety of professional development options, ranging from state and district support, to school-level implementation assistance customized to teachers’ needs. Please contact EL at commoncoresuccess@elschools.org for more information.

Expeditionary Learning’s curriculum for Grades 3-8 in English and Language Arts (ELA) combines standards-aligned content with effective instructional practice, bringing together the “what” and the “how” of the Common Core standards.

In our curriculum...

• Students get excited about learning through great books, compelling topics and ownership of their own learning.
• Teachers get a vision of the instructional practices that support a Common Core-aligned classroom and the tools to create it.

What makes our curriculum different?

1. It’s written by teachers for teachers.
   We’ve put 20 years of our experience as classroom educators into this curriculum to engage teachers and students in active learning every day.

2. It’s comprehensive.
   Our curriculum covers 160 days of instruction across a school year, developed down to the daily lesson level with embedded assessments.

3. It’s a tool for professional learning.
   The curriculum is designed to get teachers, literacy specialists and school leaders talking about the instructional routines that support Common Core-aligned classrooms.

4. It’s already in use.
   Teachers are using the curriculum in their classrooms and providing us with feedback that we incorporate to make it stronger and more user-friendly.

5. It’s free and available online.
   Commissioned by New York State using Race to the Top funds, our curriculum is an open educational resource that can be accessed by any teacher in the country on EngageNY.org.

To download the Expeditionary Learning curriculum, visit http://engageny.org/english-language-arts
To learn more or to discuss implementation support, contact us at commoncoresuccess@elschools.org or 212.239.4455
The Curriculum: How it works

Four 8-week modules, with 3 units in each, comprise a full year’s curriculum.

Each module progresses in a standard sequence: Building Background Knowledge (Unit 1), Extended Reading and Research (Unit 2), and Extended Writing (Unit 3).

Modules are linked by “big ideas” and “guiding questions” that speak to both the standards and the content.

Each module is anchored by one or more books—not textbooks or anthologies—that have been carefully chosen to take the guesswork out of selecting texts.

All students read the same increasingly complex texts, and teachers are given lesson-specific strategies for meeting all students’ needs.

Each module has 7 assessments – 3 mid-unit, 3 end-of-unit and one culminating performance task that always involves writing from evidence.

Science and Social Studies content reinforces literacy strategies across the disciplines.

The curriculum contains…

- Curriculum plan
- Standards-aligned curriculum map
- Formative and summative assessments and end-of-unit performance task
- Teacher-facing materials and student consumables

Supported by…

- Central texts from various publishers
- Recommendations for optional texts at multiple Lexile levels
- Embedded, authentic informational texts

Plus these online supports.

- Classroom videos of CCSS-aligned instructional practices
- An archive of exemplary student work from all grade levels
- Teacher toolkits providing instructional strategies for literacy across the disciplines

The Learning Path for Students and Teachers

When teachers use these materials, they are being coached to address the standards in ways that engage students.

Students…
- Get “hooked” on what they are going to learn.
- Learn and practice collaborative structures and protocols to use throughout the module.
- Discover the purpose for learning new skills that build towards the standards.
- Become experts on a compelling topic and texts.
- Gain academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
- Deepen their capacity to read for and write and speak with evidence.
- Write from sources about topics they understand deeply.
- Develop a vision of a Common Core-aligned classroom.
- Communication with parents, administrators, teaching partners, and student support teams about effective strategies and students’ performance.
- Develop a classroom community focused on quality work.
- Use revision techniques that lead to student engagement and quality work.
- Develop expertise in the Common Core's instructional shifts.
- Provide focused yet differentiated support to ensure that all students make progress.
- Reflect on new skills in planning and preparation, instruction and classroom management.

Teachers…
- Launch a learning experience with a clear roadmap of the texts, lessons, and assessments that lie ahead.
- Establish classroom routines that lead to productivity and engagement.
- Develop a vision of a Common Core-aligned classroom.
- Use assessment results to monitor students’ progress and make thoughtful decisions about differentiation.
- Develop a classroom community focused on quality work.
- Use revision techniques that lead to student engagement and quality work.
- Provide focused yet differentiated support to ensure that all students make progress.