

English Language Arts & Literacy

To become ready for college and career, high school students learn to evaluate intricate arguments and surmount the challenges posed by complex written materials independently and confidently. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students expand their literary and cultural knowledge and better understand references and images. They also develop the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality, first drafts of writing under tight deadlines. And they are able to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts if needed. High school students master the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English and resolve usage issues by consulting style and usage guides. By writing and participating in a variety of conversations, they assert and defend claims and show what they know about a subject using appropriate examples and evidence.

A Sample of the Work Your Child Will Be Doing To Become Ready for College and Career

READING

- Understanding more from and making fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of evidence to support an analysis
- Making more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within a book, essay, or article
- Evaluating arguments and specific claims; assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is sufficient; and as appropriate, detecting inconsistencies and ambiguities
- Analyzing the meaning of foundational U.S. documents (the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights)

WRITING

- Making an argument that is logical, well-reasoned, and supported by evidence
- Writing a literary analysis, report, or summary that develops a central idea and a coherent focus and is well supported with relevant examples, facts, and details
- Conducting several research projects that address different aspects of the same topic, using more complex books, articles, and other sources

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- Responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesizing comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; and resolving contradictions when possible
- Sharing research, findings, and evidence clearly and concisely
- Making strategic use of digital media (e.g., animations, video, websites, podcasts) to enhance understanding of findings and to add interest

LANGUAGE

- Determining or clarifying the meaning of words and phrases, choosing flexibly from multiple strategies, such as using context, Greek and Latin roots (e.g., *bene* as in *benefactor* or *benevolent*), patterns of words (*conceive*, *conception*, *conceivable*), and consulting specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses)
- Interpreting figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyzing their role in the written materials

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In high school, these include:

- Focusing, reading deliberately and slowly, and rereading (when necessary) complex fiction and nonfiction materials
- Becoming skilled at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately
- Asserting and defending claims, conveying what he or she understands about what he or she has read and researched
- Speaking clearly and appropriately, listening attentively when discussing findings and evidence, and building on others' good ideas while expressing his or her own ideas persuasively
- Learning to see individual words as part of a network of other words — e.g., words that have similar literal meanings but different connotations (e.g., *bullheaded*, *willful*, *firm*, *persistent*, *resolute*)

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



Talking to
Your Child's
Teacher