TOOLS

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE GUIDE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY 3-12

The guide supports content-focused planning, reflection, and professional learning. This excerpt from the guide focuses on English language arts/literacy in grades 3-12. It focuses on the following components of this content area by detailing how they appear in instruction:

Complexity: Practice regularly with complex text and its academic language.

Evidence: Ground reading, writing, and speaking in evidence from text, both literary and informational.

Knowledge: Build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

For each observation, you should make note of what you see and hear. It may be helpful to supplement what you've recorded with further evidence from artifacts such as lesson plans, tasks, or student work. Although many indicators will be observable during the course of a lesson, there may be times when a lesson is appropriately focused on a smaller set of objectives or you observe only a portion of a lesson. In those cases, leave some of the tool blank. Whenever possible, share evidence you collected during the observation in a follow-up discussion.

Find the complete Instructional Practice Guide for math, English language arts, science, and history/social studies, along with free companion tools and resources at **achievethecore.org/instructional-practice.**

Name: Date: Observer name:

CORE ACTION 1   Focus each lesson on a high-quality text or multiple texts.

INDICATORS: Note evidence observed or gathered for each indicator.	RATING
A. A majority of the lesson is spent reading, writing, or speaking about text(s). Name of text:_____ Type of text(s) (circle): Informational / Literary / Other media or format	**Yes:** The lesson is focused on a text or multiple texts. **No:** There is no text under consideration in this lesson.
B. The anchor text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the grade and time in the school year. (Anchor texts are texts used as the centerpiece of instructional time, distinct from varied texts students might read on their own for a variety of purposes. Refer to **achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/text-complexity** for text complexity resources.) Quantitative measure(s) used: _____ Quantitative score(s):_____ Approximate grade band:_____ To approximate the grade band for the text, consider the quantitative measure or score, the qualitative features, and the related task.	**Yes:** The anchor text(s) are at or above both the qualitative and quantitative complexity expected for the grade and time in the school year. **No:** The anchor text(s) are below the qualitative or quantitative complexity expected for the grade and time in the school year. **N/A:** Anchor text not observed.
C. The text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought and provide meaningful information in the service of building knowledge.	**Yes:** The text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought or provide meaningful information in the service of building knowledge. **No:** The text(s) do not exhibit exceptional craft and thought or provide meaningful information in the service of building knowledge.

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Name:	Date:	Observer name:

CORE ACTION 2	Employ questions and tasks, both oral and written, that are text-specific and accurately address the analytical thinking required by the grade-level standards.

INDICATORS: Note evidence observed or gathered for each indicator. These actions may be viewed over the course of two to three class periods.	RATING
A. Questions and tasks address the text by attending to its particular qualitative features: its meaning/purpose or language, structure(s), or knowledge demands. ☐ NOT OBSERVED	4: Most questions and tasks attend to the qualitative features of the text to build understanding. 3: Many questions and tasks attend to the qualitative features of the text to build understanding. 2: Few questions and tasks attend to the qualitative features of the text to build understanding. 1: Questions and tasks do not attend to the qualitative features of the text to build understanding. N/A: There is no text present in the lesson.
B. Questions and tasks require students to use evidence from the text to demonstrate understanding and support their ideas about the text. These ideas are expressed through written and oral responses. ☐ NOT OBSERVED	4: Most questions and tasks require students to cite evidence from the text. 3: Many questions and tasks require students to cite evidence from the text. 2: Few questions and tasks require students to cite evidence from the text. 1: Questions and tasks can be answered without evidence from the text. N/A: There is no text present in the lesson.
C. Questions and tasks attend to the words (academic vocabulary), phrases, and sentences within the text. ☐ NOT OBSERVED	4: Vocabulary questions and tasks consistently focus students on the words, phrases, and sentences that matter most and how they are used in the text. 3: Vocabulary questions and tasks mostly focus students on the words that matter most and how they are used in the text. 2: Vocabulary questions and tasks rarely focus students on the words that matter most and how they are used in the text. 1: No questions and tasks focus students on the words that matter most and how they are used in the text. N/A: There is no text present in the lesson.
D. Questions and tasks are sequenced to build knowledge by guiding students to delve deeper into the text and graphics. ☐ NOT OBSERVED	4: Most questions and tasks are intentionally sequenced to support building knowledge. 3: Some questions and tasks are intentionally sequenced to support building knowledge. 2: Few questions and tasks are intentionally sequenced to support building knowledge. 1: Questions and tasks seem random and are not intentionally sequenced to support building knowledge. N/A: There is no text present in the lesson.

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Name:	Date:	Observer name:

CORE ACTION 3 — Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.

INDICATORS: Note evidence observed or gathered for each indicator or rating.	RATING

RATING SCALE
4: Teacher provides many opportunities, and most students take them.
3: Teacher provides many opportunities, and some students take them; or teacher provides some opportunities and most students take them.
2: Teacher provides some opportunities, and some students take them.
1: Teacher provides few or no opportunities, or few or very few students take the opportunities provided.

	RATING
A. The **teacher** poses questions and tasks for students to do the majority of the work: speaking/listening, reading, or writing. **Students** do the majority of the work of the lesson.	4 3 2 1 ❐ NOT OBSERVED
B. The **teacher** cultivates reasoning and meaning-making by allowing students to productively struggle. **Students** persevere through difficulty.	4 3 2 1 ❐ NOT OBSERVED
C. The **teacher** expects evidence and precision from students and probes students' answers accordingly. **Students** provide text evidence to support their ideas and display precision in their oral or written responses.	4 3 2 1 ❐ NOT OBSERVED
D. The **teacher** creates the conditions for student conversations where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking. **Students** talk and ask questions about each other's thinking to clarify or improve their understanding.	4 3 2 1 ❐ NOT OBSERVED
E. The **teacher** deliberately checks for understanding throughout the lesson and adapts the lesson according to student understanding. When appropriate, **students** refine written or oral responses.	4 3 2 1 ❐ NOT OBSERVED
F. When appropriate, the **teacher** explicitly attends to strengthening students' language and reading foundational skills. (The CCSS for Reading: Foundational Skills are applicable for grades 3-5 only.) **Students** demonstrate use of language conventions and decoding skills, activating such strategies as needed to read, write, and speak with grade-level fluency and skill.	4 3 2 1 ❐ NOT OBSERVED