

# Idaho Core Instructional Shifts: ELA/Literacy

The three main Instructional Shifts of the Idaho Core State Standards for ELA, Content-rich nonfiction; textual evidence; and text complexity, have been further divided to explain the qualities and characteristics of each shift.

3 Shifts: Student Achievement Partners  
[www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org)

**1: PK-5, Balancing Informational & Literary Texts:** Students read a true balance of **informational** and **literary** texts. Elementary school classrooms are, therefore, places where students **access the world – science, social studies, the arts and literature** – through text. At least 50% of what students read is **informational**.

**2: 6-12, Knowledge in the Disciplines:** **Content area teachers** outside of the ELA classroom **emphasize literacy experiences** in their planning and instruction. Students learn through **domain-specific texts** in **science and social studies** classrooms – rather than referring to the text, they are expected to learn from what they read.

**4: Text-based Answers:** Students have **rich and rigorous conversations** which are dependent on a common text. Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay **deeply connected to the text** on the page and that students develop habits for making **evidentiary arguments** both in conversation, as well as in writing to **assess comprehension of a text**.

**5: Writing from Sources:** Writing needs to **emphasize use of evidence** to **inform** or **make an argument** rather than the personal narrative and other forms of decontextualized prompts. While the narrative still has an important role, students develop skills through **written arguments** that **respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments** presented in the texts they read.

**3: Staircase of Complexity:** In order to prepare students for the **complexity of college and career ready texts**, each grade level requires a **“step” of growth on the “staircase”**. Students read the **central, grade appropriate text** around which instruction is centered. Teachers are **patient**, create **more time** and **space** in the curriculum for this **close and careful reading**, and provide appropriate and necessary **scaffolding** and **supports** so that it is possible for students

**6: Academic Vocabulary:** Students constantly **build** the **vocabulary** they need to **access grade level complex texts**. By focusing strategically on **comprehension of pivotal and commonly found words** (such as “discourse,” “generation,” “theory,” and “principled”) and less on esoteric literary terms (such as “onomatopoeia” or “homonym”), teachers **constantly build students’ ability to access more complex texts** across the content areas.

**1: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts**

**2: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text**

**3: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary**