

Flaws
in Common Core’s English Language Arts and Literacy Standards
Presented at National Principals Leadership Institute (NPLI)
Sandra Stotsky
July 13, 2014

I. Missing Standards

1. No standard on the history of the English language.
 2. No standard on British literature aside from Shakespeare.
 3. No standard on authors from the ancient world
 4. No standard on selected pieces from the Bible as literature so that students can learn about its influence on English and American literature.
-

II. Overall Deficits

1. Stress on writing, not reading
2. Stress on reading informational texts, not complex literary texts
3. Reduction in opportunities to develop critical thinking
4. Reduction in literary study in the K-12 English class to 9 of 19 reading standards
5. No list of recommended authors, literary movements, literary periods
6. Poorly written standards

III. Murky, badly written standards, not fewer, clearer, deeper

For example, a literature standard for grades 9/10 asks students to: “determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.”

This poorly constructed and self-contradictory sentence is a jumble of at least three different activities: determining a theme, analyzing its development, and summarizing a complete text.

IV. Literacy standards for history

1. *Inappropriate exemplars for informational reading in high school history classes.* See Appendix B
2. *Inappropriate literacy strategies for the study of history: a non-historical approach to the study of historical texts.* The study of history requires, among other things, the use of skills like contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. These skills differ from those used in literary analysis.