

# The Common Core State Standards: Considerations for Teachers of Deaf Students

**RS**  
Research  
Summarized

## What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative establishes national educational standards designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared for success in college, work, and life. The standards are designed to provide a unified understanding of student expectations for learning and assessments in English language arts and mathematics.

Prior to the Common Core, each state had its own standards, which resulted in great variability in content and focus across states. The new standards provide a foundation from which states can add tailored content to reflect their local educational priorities.

The Common Core is designed to emphasize knowledge and skills that are needed for success out in the real world, laying the foundation for career readiness. Master teachers will be key to the implementation of the Common Core within each school and district.

“The Common Core has created a common language for teachers. It has broadened our ability to share best practices across schools and across systems.”<sup>2</sup>

## How does the Common Core affect what deaf students are expected to learn?

**Increased emphasis on research and analytical skills.** More complex learning outcomes require complex language within the classroom. For all teachers and across all language modalities, instruction will need to include language fluency at a level that can encourage students to engage in new content and analyze it deeply. Creative engagement with language development is a foundational part of the learning environment, critical for analytical thinking skills.

**Increased emphasis on using language to convey meaning effectively.** “Currently, I’m using a more collaborative approach in my classroom with students,” a teacher of deaf students explained. “Deaf and hard-of-hearing students typically rely on their teacher for communication; they go back and forth with the teacher. Now, I’m trying to have the students discuss more among themselves and get information from each other. I’m trying to stay out of it more. The idea is that students will be able to use their resources and be responsible for where they get their information and finally be responsible for how to use their own language for that information.”<sup>3</sup>

**Increased emphasis on English grammar, usage, and mechanics.** An increased emphasis on English language outcomes may be a challenge for teachers of deaf learners. For example, many deaf learners are students who have not had a fully accessible language environment, such as deaf students who are English language learners.

**Increased emphasis on parent involvement.** Deaf learners who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or similar planning tool may see an increased focus on the content related to the Common Core. Schools will want to



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clearly identify how Deaf learners will attain the goals of the Common Core and share information and resources with parents to support that learning at home.

**Increased emphasis on career readiness.** The standards emphasize communication and critical thinking skills that are needed for successful transition into the workplace. Workplace outcomes for deaf individuals continue to improve and often depend on strong self-advocacy skills. Teachers of deaf learners can emphasize how to navigate the transition process into successful careers.

“The Common Core State Standards reflect the skills and knowledge students will need to succeed in college, career, and life.”<sup>1</sup>

## How does Common Core affect how deaf students participate in state tests?

**With a few exceptions, most states will participate in a consortia-developed state assessment.** Most states are aligned with either Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) or the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium for test development. Each consortium has developed its own tests for use with the Common Core.

**Many of the new assessments are computer-based tests.** Students will need to become familiar with new kinds of test items that are more interactive than traditional paper and pencil tests. These kinds of assessments may be more engaging than traditional assessments but will also include new test-taking skills.

**The new assessments also have “embedded universal accessibility systems,” features that everyone can have access to, even without an IEP.** Though the SBAC and PARCC vary in terms of features, both have English glossaries, highlighters, rulers and protractors, and spell checkers

**Deaf students can qualify for “embedded accommodations” with their IEP.** Embedded accommodations include directions and items in American Sign Language, closed captioning for English language arts listening items, and a scribe for constructed response items.

## Where can I learn more about the Common Core?

**Achieve the Core:**

[www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org)

This site has free resources designed to help educators understand and implement the Common Core State Standards. It includes classroom-based tools for creating complex texts, writing text-dependent questions, and curriculum planning for the year. Professional development resources for teachers include modules, videos, facilitator’s instructions, and hands-on activities.

**Tools for the Common Core Standards:**

<http://commoncoretools.me>

This site publishes updates and reports on projects and resources that are being developed to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics. It also features public forums for teachers.

### **Massive Open Online Courses for Educators (MOOC-ed):**

<https://place.fi.ncsu.edu>

This site includes free professional development and training modules, exposing teacher to technology-based learning strategies. It promotes interpretation of the Common Core through learning trajectories. Modules include Common Core resources and supplemental materials.

### **Common Core State Standard Initiative:**

[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

The official Common Core webpage features an interactive map with direct links to the official Common Core Standards website for each state.

### **The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC):**

[www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments)

SBAC is developing a system of assessments aligned to the Common Core in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 through 8 and 11. The system will use computer-testing technology to provide feedback and data for teachers.

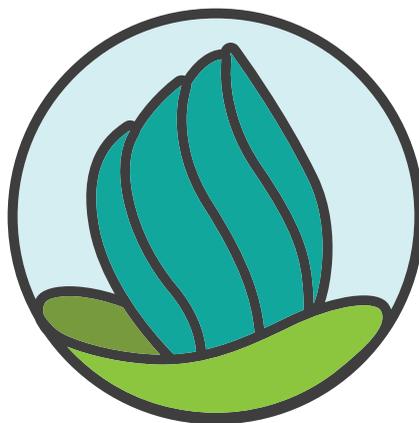
### **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC):**

[www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org)

Get the latest updates on the development of the PARCC K-12 assessments, which are specific to the Common Core.

## **References**

- <sup>1</sup> *About the Common Core State Standards*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>
- <sup>2</sup> Cain, A. J. (2013). Why a moratorium won't work: Putting the brakes on common-core stakes could stop the clock on progress. *Education Week*, 32(33), 28–29. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/06/05/33cain.h32.html>
- <sup>3</sup> Narr, R. F., Klein, S., & Schneiderman, E. (2013). Unpacking the common core standards with teachers of deaf/hard-of-hearing students. *InnovatED E-Magazine*. Retrieved from [www.csun.edu](http://www.csun.edu)



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Additional resources can be found at [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)