In October 2018 the South Carolina Department of Education convened a panel of experts to review item data on the SC READY ELA assessment for grades 3-5. The panel looked at items with a high percentage of students answering correctly and items with a low percentage of students answering correctly. The discussions of that panel yielded the following recommendations.

The panel recognizes the hard work of South Carolina educators and offers the following suggestions for ways to improve student success. Teachers on this year’s panel felt that last year’s suggestions were still extremely relevant and that teachers should be reminded to look at last year’s Data Review Report (2017). The panel offers these suggestions as an addendum to those from last year.

Reading Literary Text and Informational Text
The panel recognizes that students in grades 3-5 show an improvement in reading and analyzing literary text.

The panel recommends that students be exposed to a variety of literary text types as mentioned in the South Carolina College- and- Career- Ready Standards for English Language Arts. “By the end of fifth grade, students read four major types of literary texts in print and multimedia formats: fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama.” For a more complete list, visit https://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/file/programs-services/59/documents/ELA2015SCCCRStandards.pdf.

The panel also recommends that students be exposed to a variety of informational texts in print and multimedia formats of the following types: “essays, historical documents, informational trade books, textbooks, news and feature articles, magazine articles, advertisements, encyclopedia entries, reviews, journals, and speeches… directions, maps, time lines, graphs, tables, charts, schedules, recipes, and photos embedded in informational texts.”

The Fundamentals of Reading
The panel suggests that teachers purposely employ The Fundamentals of Reading in their reading instruction. These are located in the SCCCRS for ELA and are, in part, listed below:

- Employ comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading using schema, questioning, visualizing, drawing inferences, determining importance, summarizing, and synthesizing.
- Use metacognition to monitor meaning and adjust strategies while reading.
- Notice and analyze the styles and techniques authors use to help readers construct meaning.

Reading and Writing Stamina
The panel suggests that teachers use the gradual release model to help students build their reading stamina. The members recommend that teachers incorporate a balance of reading and writing workshop, and integrate reading and writing into other content areas. In addition, they recommend the use of read alouds to help build vocabulary and improve upon precise language.
**Standards RL.5 and RI.5**

Standard 5 for both literary and informational texts were identified as an area of concern by the panel. At each grade level, the panel noticed that students struggle to determine meaning by asking literal and inferential questions of text. To help students improve this skill, the panel recommends an instructional focus on conferring with students during reading and allowing students to ask and answer questions during reading. The panel suggests that teachers revisit the *Fundamentals of Reading* (SCCRRS).

| RL.5/ RI.5 Determine meaning and develop logical interpretations by making predictions, inferring, drawing conclusions, analyzing, synthesizing, providing evidence, and investigating multiple interpretations. | In grade 3, students should be able to make inferences and cite explicit evidence to support their conclusions. Students in grade 3 need instructional support in learning how to “ask and answer inferential questions…” In grades 4-5, students begin to analyze meaning both in the text and beyond the text. |

Sample items 3 and 9 in the Grade 3 Sample ELA Items document (https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-information/quick-links-for-teachers/2018-sample-release-items-for-scpass-sc-ready-and-eoe/) provide examples of inferential questions for literary and informational texts.

**Intent of the Standards**

The panel recommends that teachers intentionally focus on the intent of standards such as RL.11. Below is a vertical articulation of RL.11.

| Grade 3 | 11.1 Explain the differences between first and third person points of view. 11.2 Compare and contrast the reader’s point of view to that of the narrator or a character. | In grade 3, students should be going beyond identifying pronouns to determine point of view. The grade-level indicator asks that students explain the differences between the two points of view and compare and contrast the reader’s point of view to that of a narrator or character. In grade 4, students should be able to determine how the author’s choice of point of view influences the text. In grade 5, this continues with students being able to explain how the author’s choice of point of view impacts various aspects of the text. |
| Grade 4 | 11.1 Compare and contrast first and third person points of view; determine how an author’s choice of point of view influences the content and meaning. |  |
| Grade 5 | 11.1 Explain how the author’s choice of the point of view of a narrator or character impacts content, meaning, and how events are described. |  |

Sample item 8 in the Grade 5 Sample ELA Items document (https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-information/quick-links-for-teachers/2018-sample-release-items-for-scpass-sc-ready-and-eoe/) provides an example of how the author’s choice of point of view impacts how the events in the text are described.
Author’s Craft

During their review, the panel noticed that students in grades 3-5 need more instructional focus on the Language, Craft, and Structure Standards. The panel recommends that instruction go beyond identifying the types of structures and features of text and focus more on the how and why of these standards, specifically answering questions such as “Why did the author do this?” “Why did the author choose to organize a text in a certain way?” “How does the text work?”

In grades 3-5, students are concentrating on the structures of specific genres of text, such as poetry, drama, and books. Students in grade 3 should have a working knowledge of chapters, scenes, and stanzas. In grade 4, students should begin exploring how these structures fit together and why an author chooses to structure a text in a specific way. In grade 5, students should begin comparing and contrasting the different types of text structures and how they contribute to the meaning of the text and impact the reader.

Sample item 10 in the Grade 4 Sample ELA Items document (https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-information/quick-links-for-teachers/2018-sample-release-items-for-scpass-sc-ready-and-eocep/) provides an example of asking a student how a “sentence fit[s] into the overall structure of the passage.”

In grade 3, students add to their vocabulary of types of text features. Teachers should refer to the K-2 grade-level indicators for a list of specific terms students should know when entering grade 3. Throughout grades 3-5, R1.8.2 asks that students use the text features to gain meaning about the text, which means instruction must move beyond identifying types of text features and begin focusing on the author’s purpose for using these text features.

Indicator 8.1 requires that students determine and explain how an author uses words and phrases. This requires that students go beyond identifying an author’s purpose of explaining, informing, and describing, and begin exploring the author’s purpose in selecting specific words and phrases. In addition to text features, grade 4.R1.8.1 asks that students begin looking at how the author uses specific words and phrases to shape meaning within text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.RI.11.1</td>
<td>“Identify… structures to locate information and gain meaning.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.RI.11.2</td>
<td>“Describe the structures an author uses to support specific points.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.RI.11.1</td>
<td>“Apply knowledge of text structures…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.RI.11.2</td>
<td>“Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.RI.11.1</td>
<td>“Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence… identifying which reasons and evidence support which points.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The standards for grades K-2 list specific informational text structures that students should learn within each grade level. Teachers of higher grades should refer to these standards for specific structures. In grade 4, students are expected to have a working knowledge of text structures and are expected to begin looking at the how and why an author uses text structures. In addition to structure, indicator 11.2 asks students to begin identifying how an author supports his or her claim (informational or argumentative) in a text. By the end of grade 5, students should be able to identify multiple examples of text structures and multiple examples of supporting evidence in multiple texts.


The Fundamentals of Writing
The panel suggests that teachers purposely employ *The Fundamentals of Writing* in their reading instruction. These are located in the SCCCRS for ELA and are, in part, listed below:

- Employ a recursive writing process that includes planning, drafting, revising, rewriting, publishing, and reflecting.
- Interact and collaborate with peers and adults to develop and strengthen writing.
- Monitor progress throughout the writing process and adjust strategies as needed for independence to collaboration within a writing community.
- Incorporate authors’ craft techniques observed from wide reading of anchor and mentor texts across disciplines to inform, explain, convince/argue, and entertain.

Text Dependent Analysis
The panel recommends that instruction of text dependent analysis not be solely focused on the task of writing, but on the process of reading and building into writing through the use of daily questions and conversations about the reading. The panel also suggests that teachers naturally incorporate the language of questioning into instruction and allow students opportunities to think and talk about reading before writing. Additionally, the panel recommends that teachers model the cognitive process of text dependent of analysis through the reading of the TDA prompt, breaking down the TDA prompt, reading the text with purpose, going back into the text to find...
evidence, and modeling writing the response with an intentional focus on the analysis of the
textual evidence. Finally, the panel cautions teachers to not force students into formulaic writing.

Test Taking Strategies
Based on student performance on multi-select items and evidence based selected response items,
the panel recommends that teachers provide students with more practice with these item types.
Specifically, the panel suggests that teachers model the cognitive process of answering these
types of items and incorporating these item types as part of their classroom-based assessments.
In addition, the panel recommends that students have more assessment opportunities with
questions that require students to differentiate between best and most likely. Students should also
be provided the opportunity to practice with the different item types and the online platform
through the Online Tools Training (OTT), which may be found at

To view sample SC READY ELA items, please visit https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-
information/quick-links-for-teachers/2018-sample-release-items-for-scpass-sc-ready-and-eocep/