

Promoting Volume of Reading to Build Knowledge (ELA Tool 7)

The third advance in College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards is “building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.” This is critically important for its power to accelerate student growth. It is developed through curriculum material and lesson planning in several ways:

Building knowledge through exposing students to high-quality informational text.

The CCR standards emphasize reading informational texts and are explicit about the importance of students being able to glean knowledge from what they read. Selecting texts for careful study from the content areas of history, social studies, technical subjects, and science (named in the CCR literacy standards) can promote this learning.

Offering additional readings on the same topic as the text from the lesson.

Staying with a topic to develop a line of inquiry or cross-curricular series of lessons allows learners to build knowledge, acquire vocabulary, and strengthen reading comprehension. Using texts that have overlapping information can help students connect what they know to new content. In addition, repetition is key to learning new academic vocabulary that is not learned in direct instruction.

Requiring students to read independently at their own level of proficiency.

Students need more practice than they get during class time to improve their reading ability. Reading independently is the most powerful way to increase both vocabulary and reading fluency. Instructors should encourage independent reading by providing recommendations for texts related to what is being studied in class or high-interest texts on general topics.

General tips on finding and selecting additional texts

- Consider materials that are available in print and digital formats.
- Book excerpts can serve as short texts.
- Primary documents, videos, graphics, charts, and photos can enhance your collection and engage your students.
- Consider the complexity, quality, and relevance of each suggested text or resource.

Resources for additional reading

Your program’s supplemental distance learning resource(s) can be an excellent source of additional texts. Many instructors use local or national news sources (newspaper, television, or radio) successfully. This can require some preparation. For example, you may need to provide scaffolding to help learners understand the structure or vocabulary in an article. It can be useful to look for articles with audio or video components.

Resource title	Free login required	Individual texts available at multiple levels	Indicated grade levels of texts (GL)	Read-aloud option	Comprehension questions included
Newsela.com	Yes	Yes	Yes (3-12)	Yes	Yes
CommonLit.org	Yes	No	Yes (3-12)	Yes	Yes
ReadWorks.org	Yes	Some	Yes (k-12)	Yes	Yes
Procon.org	No	No	No	No	No
History.com/topics	No	No	No	No	No
Sciencenewsforstudents.org	No	No	No (6-9)	No	No