

Alignment with the Common Core State Standards and the California English-Language Standards

The activities in the California Young Reader Medal Resource Guide are included with the expectation that they will aid in the acceleration and maintenance of all learners' proficiency in language arts, as well as encourage the development of students who enjoy reading.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a result of a multi-year effort by educators across the United States to create graduating high school seniors who are college and career ready. The focus of the CCSS is to create thinkers, and the core principles behind the CCSS are simple. One of the basics, and one that fits perfectly within the CYRM program, is that careful reading is the beginning of disciplined thinking. Across all subject areas, the CCSS are much shorter than many of the state standards that educators previously used to guide their instruction. Further, the new standards are progressive, asking students to gradually improve their skills as they move through school. Under the Common Core, there are four broad areas in the English Language Arts section of the CCSS relating to literacy: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. In the area of Reading, the standards are further divided into the subsections relating to Literature, Informational Text, and Foundational Skills. The CYRM committee members have looked at all of these literacy standards when designing the Resource Guide for specific books. Some of the activities that align with the CCSS include the following:

- Have students compare and contrast two or more characters from the CYRM nominated book, either in partners or individually.
- Ask students to write a persuasive essay stating why one character is the most noble, more evil, most important, most giving (or whatever fits one of the main themes of the CYRM nominated book). Make sure students include quotations and page references.
- Have students rewrite a chapter of a CYRM nominated book from the viewpoint of a different character.
- Have students conduct short research projects that use several sources to build their knowledge about a time, person, or event mentioned in the CYRM nominated book.

For a more extensive list of activities based on the CCSS that can be used for any book, click the link in the CYRM website entitled "Common Core."

In addition to looking at the CCSS, the members of the CYRM committee have used the existing California English-Language Arts Content Standards K-12 as guideposts in selecting the activities in this Resource Guide. However, true alignment resides within the school, library, or classroom in which this resource is used. Individuals delivering the varied activities know the children with whom they work and should select the standard that is most appropriate for their students. The following English-Language Arts Content Standards correspond to the many activities in this resource. Unless otherwise indicated, the standards span all grade levels.

Reading Comprehension 2.0

Students read (or are read to) and understand grade level appropriate material.

Literary Response and Analysis 3.0

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature.

Writing Application 2.0

Beginning in first grade, students are expected to create compositions based on their understanding of varied genres and their characteristics.

Listening and Speaking Strategies 1.0

The standards are scaffolded from the kindergarten student who is asked to listen and respond and demonstrate an understanding of an oral presentation, to the senior in high school who is expected to formulate adroit judgments about oral communications. Students deliver presentations using gestures, tone, and vocabulary appropriate for their grade level, purpose, and audience.

Speaking Applications 2.0

Students are expected to verbally respond to literature, from a simple retelling of a story to a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works.

Supporting Oral Language Development

Skills in reading and writing have their roots in oral language. Long before children are able to read and write independently, they must be given numerous opportunities to develop strong language skills. These skills will develop most readily in situations where children must use language to express their understanding of interesting and challenging material and share their pleasure in stories. Being asked to talk about what they have heard or read will stretch their oral language skills as they attempt to deal with more interesting or demanding language and ideas.

In addition to using the “Hooks” found in the Resource Guide, ask students to respond to open-ended questions including:

- What was your favorite part of the story and why?
- Why do you think a character in the story behaved in that way?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What do you think you might have done when...?

Encourage students to respond verbally to literature in a variety of ways such as

- Acting out parts of stories with dialogue borrowed from the text (readers' theater)
- Summarizing or retelling the story
- Borrowing characters, patterns, and themes for their writing
- Comparing what happens in books with their own experiences
- Understanding why characters behave as they do

Picture Books Are For Everyone

In 2000, the CYRM Committee developed a fifth category, Picture Books for Older Readers, to encourage using picture books at all age levels.

Picture books pull in readers of all ages as they...

- Rekindle joy and delight in books and reading
- Introduce complex ideas at a comfortable reading level
- Develop visual literacy and art appreciation
- Evoke strong personal response through dramatic impact
- Provide a no-risk way to discuss personal and aesthetic values
- Foster cross-age and cross-curricular activities
- Make visual and verbal connections for a wide variety of readers
- Produce fast results by being compact, concrete, and comfortable
- Excite readers by the beauty of their words and illustrations

Read picture books aloud regularly for all ages and at all grade levels, choosing books with strong appeal, including titles with a dramatic story, convincing characters, humor, natural dialogue and powerful visuals. Picture books should be readily available at all grade levels for read alouds and reading individually.