

# BEYOND THE LESSON: DISCUSSION GUIDE

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY

### INTRODUCTION

The Beyond the Lesson Discussion Guide is designed for the post-observation conversation using the Instructional Practice Guide ([achievethecore.org/instructional-practice](https://achievethecore.org/instructional-practice)) or any other observation rubric. The questions put the content of the lesson in the context of the broader instructional plan for the unit or year. The conversation should first reflect on the evidence collected during the observation to consider what worked, what could improve, and what resources are available to support improvement. If any parts of the Lesson Planning Tool ([achievethecore.org/lesson-planning-tool](https://achievethecore.org/lesson-planning-tool)) were used in preparing for the lesson, refer to that information during the discussion. After discussing the observed lesson, use the “Beyond the Lesson” questions to help clearly delineate what practices are in place, what has already occurred, and what opportunities might exist in another lesson, further in the unit, or over the course of the year to incorporate the Shifts into the classroom.

1. **Why was this text selected for today’s lesson? Is this text one of a sequence of texts designed to build knowledge? Please explain.** For more information refer to page 33 of the Standards.
2. **What content knowledge are students expected to gain from reading this sequence of resources?** For sample resources refer to [achievethecore.org/text-set-project](https://achievethecore.org/text-set-project)
3. **Beyond this lesson, what steps have been taken to ensure that students are reading a range and volume of literary and informational texts as recommended by the CCSS? (Remember, Grades K–5 focus on 50% Literary and 50% Informational, while Grades 6–12 focus on 30% Literary and 70% Informational.)** For more information refer to page 5 of the Standards.
4. **What steps have been taken to ensure students are given frequent opportunities to read independently and engage with a high volume of texts? How are students held accountable for reading independently?** For sample resources refer to [achievethecore.org/text-set-project](https://achievethecore.org/text-set-project)
5. **Beyond this lesson, what steps have been taken to ensure all students are reading texts of increasing complexity with increasing independence over the course of the year?** For sample resources refer to [achievethecore.org/text-set-project](https://achievethecore.org/text-set-project)
6. **How are students monitored as they progress toward being able to read and comprehend grade-level literary and informational texts independently and proficiently?** For more information refer to page 5 of the Standards.
7. **How are all students supported in working with grade-level text? What scaffolds are provided for students who are reading below grade level? What opportunities are provided for students who are reading above grade level to engage more deeply with grade-level or above-grade-level texts?**
8. **How are students increasingly taking charge of speaking & listening, language, and writing tasks expected by the grade-level standards?**
9. **Beyond this lesson, what steps have been taken to ensure that student writing tasks reflect the range of tasks recommended by the CCSS? (Remember, CCSS recommends 30% argument, 35% explanatory or informational, and 35% narrative.)** For more information refer to page 5 of the Standards.
10. **What steps have been taken to ensure students regularly conduct both short and more sustained research projects?** For sample resources refer to [achievethecore.org/text-set-project](https://achievethecore.org/text-set-project)

### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: IMPORTANT TO CREATING A LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the discussion between observer and teacher, be aware that the following environmental factors may also provide useful information. The classroom library organization supports the following:

- Reading a wide range of text genres and resources at varying levels of complexity (poetry, fiction, bibliographies, informational texts, videos, etc.)
- Building knowledge about a range of topics (history, social studies, science, technical subjects, arts, music, etc.)
- Integrating authentic response options for students (book reviews, recorded reading, writing, discussions, etc.)