

NATIONAL CORE ARTS THEATRE STANDARDS

Promoting quality arts education for all students

www.nationalartsstandards.org



NEW STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

In 2011, the leadership of the national arts education organizations met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the status of their disciplines in schools. Arts education, while robust and available for some students, was becoming increasingly unavailable to others. The attending organizations—including the Educational Theatre Association—responded by forming the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), a partnership of ten leading arts and education groups with a shared mission of creating new, high-quality standards that would deliver arts opportunities for all PreK-12 students.

THE PURPOSE AND GOAL OF STANDARDS

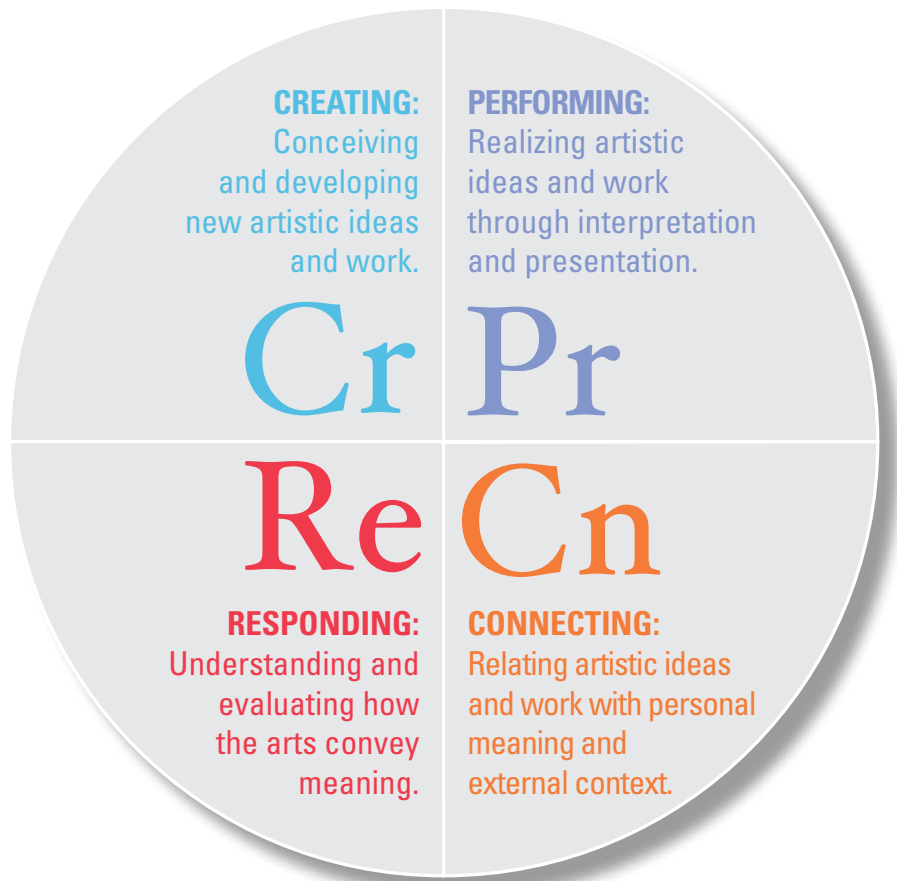
The National Core Arts Standards articulate the knowledge and skills that all students should know and know how to do and ensure that arts education is recognized as an essential academic subject that helps prepare students for college and career readiness. The standards are intended to serve a broad constituency of individuals and organizations with an interest and need for arts education: students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community at large.

A DEFINITION OF ARTISTIC LITERACY

A framework of anchor standards, philosophical foundations, lifelong learning goals, performance standards, essential questions, and enduring understandings define artistic literacy for all students. Artistically literate students:

- Use a variety of artistic media, symbols, and metaphors to communicate their own ideas and to respond to the artistic communications of others.
- Develop creative personal realization in at least one art form in which they continue active involvement as an adult.
- Cultivate culture, history, and other connections through diverse forms and genres of artwork.
- Find joy, inspiration, peace, intellectual stimulation, and meaning when they participate in the arts.
- Seek artistic experiences and support the arts in their communities.





ARTISTIC PROCESSES

The theatre standards are articulated through the four artistic processes of Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting.

The processes reflect the fundamental ways that the brain and the body make art and define the link between art and the learner. Process component verbs within the artistic processes describe the actions artist-learners do to complete a task and serve as an organizing tool for each thread of sequential grade-by-grade standards. Teachers use the process components to help them form and apply standards-based learning through curriculum and authentic assessments. For example, in

Creating, third-grade students might be asked to *envision/conceptualize* “roles, imagined worlds, and improvised stories;” seventh-graders, to develop “mutual respect for self and others and their roles in

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preparing or devising drama/theatre work;” and proficient-level high school students, to rehearse “physical, vocal, and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant.”

ANCHOR STANDARDS

The standards are built on a foundation of eleven anchor standards that all arts disciplines have adopted. The anchors describe the general knowledge and skills that teachers expect students to demonstrate throughout their education in the arts. For example, when students are creating they “generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work,” or when they are responding, they “perceive and analyze artistic work.”



THE ANCHOR STANDARDS

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
3. Refine and complete artistic work.
4. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
5. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
11. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

GRADE-BY-GRADE PREK-12 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The theatre performance standards are grade-by-grade PreK-8, and include three levels in high school: proficient, accomplished, and advanced. Each sequence of the standards defines how students learn as they move through their PreK-12 arts education to an outcome of proficiency.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The standards' enduring understandings and essential questions focus on what are often called "big ideas." For example, one enduring understanding is, "Theatre artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning," and its companion essential question is, "How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?" In their

seminal text *Understanding by Design* (ASCD, 2005), Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins said "...[the big ideas and understandings] implicitly answer the question, Why is this topic worth studying?"

MODEL CORNERSTONE ASSESSMENTS

Model cornerstone assessments are provided within the arts standards at the benchmark grades of 2, 5, 8, and three high school levels (proficient, accomplished, advanced) to illustrate the type of evidence needed to show attainment of learning. The model cornerstone assessments are designed to reflect the artistic processes and link to the performance standards. As a cornerstone anchors a building, these assessments should anchor a curriculum around the most important things students should be able to do with acquired knowledge and skills.



WEB-BASED STANDARDS

The 2014 National Core Arts Standards are a web-based resource for teachers, students, parents, administrators, policy makers, and other education stakeholders. The website allows teachers to create customizable "handbooks" that help them imagine and build standards-based curriculum and assessments that reflect their teaching and the learning needs of their students. The virtual environment also serves as an archive for an evolving body of standards-based resources, including benchmarked student work, sample curriculum, assessments, research, and other instructional tools.

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The Educational Theatre Association's growing library of theatre-specific standards resources can be found at schooltheatre.org/standardsresources.

DRAMA PROCESSES AND THEATRE EXPERIENCES

The theatre standards are written with both drama processes and theatre products in mind. Drama processes encompass envisioned worlds and unscripted activities designed to engage students in a wide range of real and imagined issues; theatre includes the broader and more traditional conventions of the craft that have been developed over the centuries—scripted plays, acting, public performance, and stagecraft. To address *both* process and product in theatre, the PreK through grade 2 standards, acknowledging the early childhood need for supervision and unfettered play, employ the phraseology "dramatic play" and/or "guided drama experience." The grade 3 through high school standards (proficient, advanced, and accomplished) use the term "drama/theatre" to clarify the distinct but companion parts of theatre education.

CREATING THE THEATRE STANDARDS

The Core Arts Theatre Standards were created cooperatively by the Educational Theatre Association and the American Alliance for Theatre in Education and written by members of both organizations. Over the course of two years, twelve writers, chairs, and leadership came together to draft, refine, and complete 280 PreK-12 standards. The team:

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Americans for the Arts
American Alliance for Theatre and Education
Educational Theatre Association
The College Board
National Association for Music Education
National Art Education Association
National Dance Education Organization
State Education Agency for Directors of Arts Education
National Media Arts Representatives
Young Audiences



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