AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

STANDARDS FOR THE

21st-CENTURY LEARNER

COMMON BELIEFS

Reading is a window to the world.

Reading is a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. The degree to which students can read and understand text in all formats (e.g., picture, video, print) and all contexts is a key indicator of success in school and in life. As a lifelong learning skill, reading goes beyond decoding and comprehension to interpretation and development of new understandings.

Inquiry provides a framework for learning.

To become independent learners, students must gain not only the skills but also the disposition to use those skills, along with an understanding of their own responsibilities and self-assessment strategies. Combined, these four elements build a learner who can thrive in a complex information environment.

Ethical behavior in the use of information must be taught.

In this increasingly global world of information, students must be taught to seek diverse perspectives, gather and use information ethically, and use social tools responsibly and safely.

Technology skills are crucial for future employment needs.

Today's students need to develop information skills that will enable them to use technology as an important tool for learning, both now and in the future.

Equitable access is a key component for education.

All children deserve equitable access to books and reading, to information, and to information technology in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

The definition of information literacy has become more complex as resources and technologies have changed.

Information literacy has progressed from the simple definition of using reference resources to find information. Multiple literacies, including digital, visual, textual, and technological, have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century.

The continuing expansion of information demands that all individuals acquire the thinking skills that will enable them to learn on their own.

The amount of information available to our learners necessitates that each individual acquire the skills to select, evaluate, and use information appropriately and effectively.

Learning has a social context.

Learning is enhanced by opportunities to share and learn with others. Students need to develop skills in sharing knowledge and learning with others, both in face-to-face situations and through technology.

School libraries are essential to the development of learning skills.

School libraries provide equitable physical and intellectual access to the resources and tools required for learning in a warm, stimulating, and safe environment. School librarians collaborate with others to provide instruction, learning strategies, and practice in using the essential learning skills needed in the 21st century.

LEARNERS USE SKILLS, RESOURCES, & TOOLS TO:

1. Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.
2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.
3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.
4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

1 Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.

1.1 Skills

1.1.1 Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real-world connection for using this process in own life.

1.1.2 Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning.

1.1.3 Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding.

1.1.4 Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.

1.1.5 Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.

1.1.6 Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.

1.1.7 Make sense of information gathered from diverse sources by identifying misconceptions, main and supporting ideas, conflicting information, and point of view or bias.

1.1.8 Demonstrate mastery of technology tools for accessing information and pursuing inquiry.

1.1.9 Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.

1.2 Dispositions in Action

1.2.1 Display initiative and engagement by posing questions and investigating the answers beyond the collection of superficial facts.

1.2.2 Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information.

1.2.3 Demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats.

1.2.4 Maintain a critical stance by questioning the validity and accuracy of all information.

1.2.5 Demonstrate adaptability by changing the inquiry focus, questions, resources, or strategies when necessary to achieve success.

1.2.6 Display emotional resilience by persisting in information searching despite challenges.

1.2.7 Display persistence by continuing to pursue information to gain a broad perspective.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Respect copyright/intellectual property rights of creators and producers.

1.3.2 Seek divergent perspectives during information gathering and assessment.

1.3.3 Follow ethical and legal guidelines in gathering and using information.

1.3.4 Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community.

1.3.5 Use information technology responsibly.

1.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

1.4.1 Monitor own information-seeking processes for effectiveness and progress, and adapt as necessary.

1.4.2 Use interaction with and feedback from teachers and peers to guide own inquiry process.

1.4.3 Monitor gathered information, and assess for gaps or weaknesses.

1.4.4 Seek appropriate help when it is needed.

2 Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.

2.1 Skills

2.1.1 Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical-thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.

2.1.2 Organize knowledge so that it is useful.

2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real-world situations, and further investigations.

2.1.4 Use technology and other information tools to analyze and organize information.

2.1.5 Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.

2.1.6 Use the writing process, media and visual literacy, and technology skills to create products that express new understandings.

2.2 Dispositions in Action

2.2.1 Demonstrate flexibility in the use of resources by adapting information strategies to each specific resource and by seeking additional resources when clear conclusions cannot be drawn.

2.2.2 Use both divergent and convergent thinking to formulate alternative conclusions and test them against the evidence.

2.2.3 Employ a critical stance in drawing conclusions by demonstrating that the pattern of evidence leads to a decision or conclusion.

2.2.4 Demonstrate personal productivity by completing products to express learning.

2.3 Responsibilities

2.3.1 Connect understanding to the real world.

2.3.2 Consider diverse and global perspectives in drawing conclusions.

2.3.3 Use valid information and reasoned conclusions to make ethical decisions.

2.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

2.4.1 Determine how to act on information (accept, reject, modify).

2.4.2 Reflect on systematic process, and assess for completeness of investigation.

2.4.3 Recognize new knowledge and understanding.

2.4.4 Develop directions for future investigations.

3 Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.

3.1 Skills

3.1.1 Conclude an inquiry-based research process by sharing new understandings and reflecting on the learning.

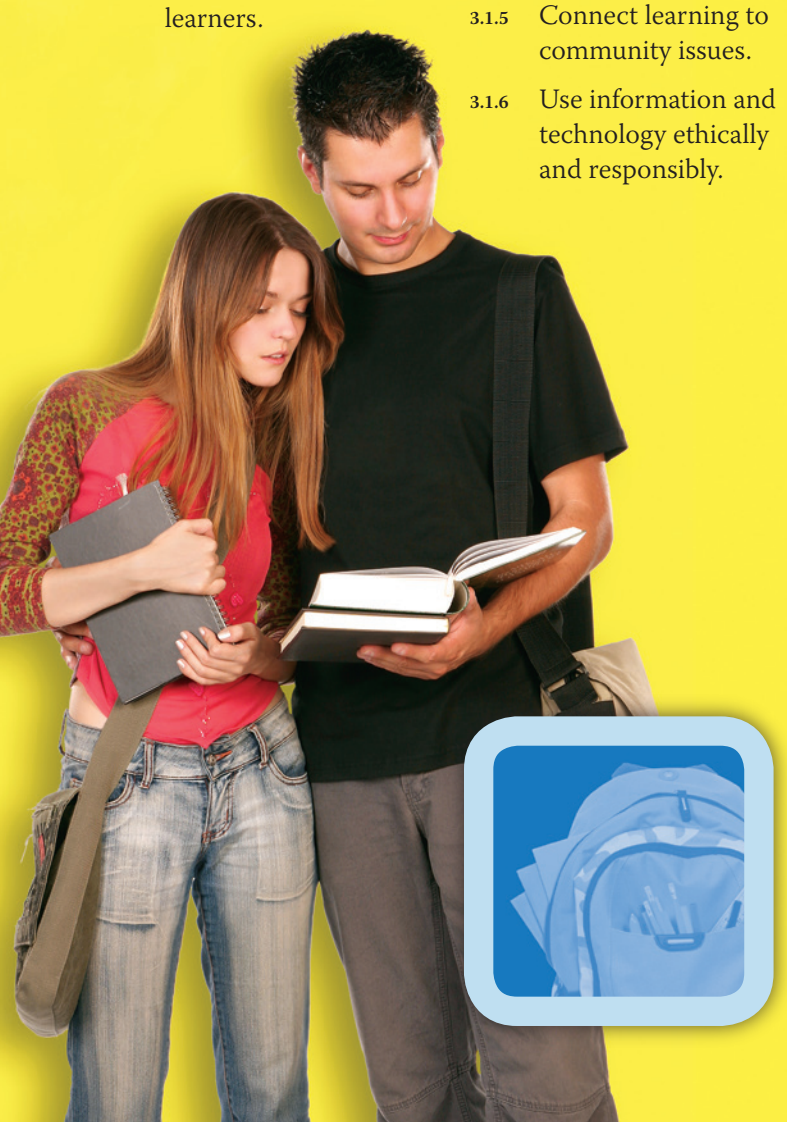
3.1.2 Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners.

3.1.3 Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively.

3.1.4 Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.

3.1.5 Connect learning to community issues.

3.1.6 Use information and technology ethically and responsibly.



3.2 Dispositions in Action

3.2.1 Demonstrate leadership and confidence by presenting ideas to others in both formal and informal situations.

3.2.2 Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas during group discussions.

3.2.3 Demonstrate teamwork by working productively with others.

3.3 Responsibilities

3.3.1 Solicit and respect diverse perspectives while searching for information, collaborating with others, and participating as a member of the community.

3.3.2 Respect the differing interests and experiences of others, and seek a variety of viewpoints.

3.3.3 Use knowledge and information skills and dispositions to engage in public conversation and debate around issues of common concern.

3.3.4 Create products that apply to authentic, real-world contexts.

3.3.5 Contribute to the exchange of ideas within and beyond the learning community.

3.3.6 Use information and knowledge in the service of democratic values.

3.3.7 Respect the principles of intellectual freedom.

3.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

3.4.1 Assess the processes by which learning was achieved in order to revise strategies and learn more effectively in the future.

3.4.2 Assess the quality and effectiveness of the learning product.

3.4.3 Assess own ability to work with others in a group setting by evaluating varied roles, leadership, and demonstrations of respect for other viewpoints.

4 Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

4.1 Skills

4.1.1 Read, view, and listen for pleasure and personal growth.

4.1.2 Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.

4.1.3 Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.

4.1.4 Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.

4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience.

4.1.6 Organize personal knowledge in a way that can be called upon easily.

4.1.7 Use social networks and information tools to gather and share information.

4.1.8 Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.

4.2 Dispositions in Action

4.2.1 Display curiosity by pursuing interests through multiple resources.

4.2.2 Demonstrate motivation by seeking information to answer personal questions and interests, trying a variety of formats and genres, and displaying a willingness to go beyond academic requirements.

4.2.3 Maintain openness to new ideas by considering divergent opinions, changing opinions or conclusions when evidence supports the change, and seeking information about new ideas encountered through academic or personal experiences.

4.2.4 Show an appreciation for literature by electing to read for pleasure and expressing an interest in various literary genres.

4.3 Responsibilities

4.3.1 Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.

4.3.2 Recognize that resources are created for a variety of purposes.

4.3.3 Seek opportunities for pursuing personal and aesthetic growth.

4.3.4 Practice safe and ethical behaviors in personal electronic communication and interaction.

4.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

4.4.1 Identify own areas of interest.

4.4.2 Recognize the limits of own personal knowledge.

4.4.3 Recognize how to focus efforts in personal learning.

4.4.4 Interpret new information based on cultural and social context.

4.4.5 Develop personal criteria for gauging how effectively own ideas are expressed.

4.4.6 Evaluate own ability to select resources that are engaging and appropriate for personal interests and needs.

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21st CENTURY LEARNERS

Skills

Key abilities needed for understanding, learning, thinking, and mastering subjects.

key question

Does the student have the right proficiencies to explore a topic or subject further?

Dispositions in Action

Ongoing beliefs and attitudes that guide thinking and intellectual behavior that can be measured through actions taken.

key question

Is the student disposed to higher-level thinking and actively engaged in critical thinking to gain and share knowledge?

Responsibilities

Common behaviors used by independent learners in researching, investigating, and problem solving.

key question

Is the student aware that the foundational traits for 21st-century learning require self-accountability that extends beyond skills and dispositions?

Self-Assessment Strategies

Reflections on one's own learning to determine that the skills, dispositions, and responsibilities are effective.

key question

Can the student recognize personal strengths and weaknesses over time and become a stronger, more independent learner?