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ABSTRACT

Intended to encourage the development of textbooks and related materials that are both worthy of being read and readable, this paper presents standards for high quality reading instruction materials for kindergarten through grade 8. Approved by the California State Board of Education, the standards are based on the premises that better reading materials will be characterized by a systematic presentation of high quality literary works, will be research based, and will demonstrate the point of view that acquisition of reading skills is not an end in itself, but the means for connecting the student to the wide world of reading. The major portion of the paper presents a set of student text standards covering content, style, structure, language development, vocabulary development, comprehension, decoding, evaluation, technological applications, and extended reading experiences. The remainder of the paper presents standards for student study materials, followed by those for teacher manuals. (HTH)

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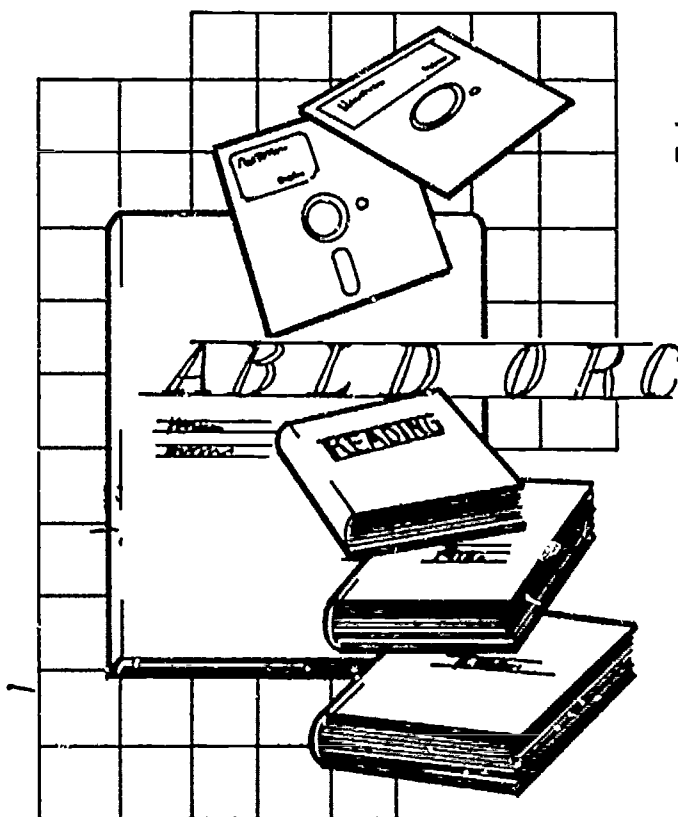
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# STANDARDS FOR READING TEXTBOOKS

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**Approved by the  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
June 8, 1984**

**California State Department of Education  
Bill Honig - Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Sacramento 1984**

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READING TEXTBOOK STANDARDS, KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 8

*Approved by the State Board of Education, June 8, 1984*

"Individuals who can read with understanding hold the key to all of the stored knowledge of civilization. They are able to enter a limitless arena of thought, imagination, exploration and enjoyment; to stop and reflect on what is read, leading to more intensive critical thinking about a given subject; to organize ideas from many sources and to fulfill personal needs and interests."\*

Our democracy depends on citizens who are acquainted with the ideals of this nation through reading important literary works, who can read with understanding, and think critically about what they read. California students deserve a powerful and effective reading program, one which encourages our children to view reading as an essential, desirable, pleasurable, and attainable activity. As a first step toward building such a reading program, this document proposes standards to guide the development of better reading materials -- student texts, student study materials, and teacher manuals.

Why do we begin with these materials? Research tells us that over 90% of the time spent on reading instruction in elementary classrooms focuses on commercially developed basal reading programs. Thus, the contents of textbooks and related instructional materials is crucial: Basal textbook programs strongly influence what teachers do and say when they teach reading, and what students use when they practice reading. Improving these commercially developed programs is essential if we are to advance the literacy of our student population.

Better textbook programs must be accompanied by a comprehensive program of staff development. Training teachers in the selection and effective use of instructional

\* Reading Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

materials -- once we have high quality texts from which to choose -- will help shape classrooms where students and teachers approach reading instruction with eagerness and high expectations.

The following standards are based on the premises that better reading materials will be characterized by a systematic presentation of quality literary works; will be research based; and will demonstrate the point of view that the acquisition of reading skills is not an end in itself, but the means for connecting the student to the wide world of reading. These standards aim to encourage the development of textbooks and related materials that are worthy of being read and readable.

A. TOTAL READING PROGRAM. These standards apply to all components of the reading program -- student texts, student study materials, and teacher manuals -- with special emphasis given to the inclusion of high quality selections in the student text. A concerted effort should be made to ensure that the content in each component of the reading program is coordinated with the other program components.

1. Content: Materials will contain a balance of fiction and non-fiction selections that engage students in:
  - our rich, diverse literary heritage, which connects them to political, social, and ethical issues central to our society
  - classical and contemporary works of literary merit that exemplify the best of language usage
  - examples of major literary forms -- essays, speeches, poetry, and drama -- to help students expand their understanding and appreciation
  - a variety of expository writing, including pieces from all subject areas and practical applications introduced early in the reading program and expanded in grades 4 and above

- significant themes that broaden awareness of students' own and other societies
  - works in which they encounter values such as truth, justice, and compassion through interesting stories and memorable characters
  - works that encourage the acquisition and application of world knowledge
  - works that stimulate enjoyment of and an active response to reading
2. Style and Structure: Materials will be well written, demonstrating the following characteristics:
- adequate length to ensure continuous, unfragmented discourse
  - sophistication of style and tone appropriate to student's level
  - clarity of purpose and comprehensible structure designed to achieve the stated goals
  - coherence -- including subheadings, labels, boxed or otherwise highlighted cues and summaries -- to help readers understand the purpose and the logical order of ideas introduced in each section
  - continuity and consistency in method of presentation
3. Language Development: The program will emphasize the total language experience by offering specific techniques and activities for interrelating listening, speaking, reading, and writing -- before, during, and after reading.
4. Vocabulary Development: The program will stress the development of vocabulary and acquisition of concepts as both a requisite to and an outcome of reading and writing experiences through varied opportunities for:
- understanding and interrelating new concepts before, during, and after reading.
  - applying vocabulary in multiple contexts over an extended period of time
  - participating in meaningful, interesting word study
  - developing proficiency in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words

5. Comprehension: The reading program will stress comprehension by including activities and questions that:
- link personal experiences and prior knowledge to content before, during, and after reading the text selection
  - help students adopt and evaluate strategies for various reading purposes
  - stimulate the development of higher level thinking such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation through activities that extend content and meaning
6. Decoding: Beginning reading instruction will provide for the continuous and systematic development of decoding within the framework of reading for meaning, with decreasing emphasis at the upper levels. Intensive decoding instruction at the upper levels will be remedial only -- with opportunities to:
- encounter words that contain the phonic and structural analysis elements being taught in the program as well as the sight words contained in the program
  - practice reading so as to achieve appropriate levels of speed and fluency for different kinds of text
7. Evaluation: The evaluation and assessment component of the reading program will provide methods for:
- assigning instructionally appropriate textbooks to individual students
  - diagnosing specific strengths and needs
  - assessing the application of skills and strategies to a variety of reading contexts
  - assessing the reading process in its separate facets (such as decoding, comprehension, and vocabulary development) and evaluating the reading process holistically (such as summarizing and responding to literature)

- evaluating students' ability to monitor and adapt their reading strategies, depending on the purpose and context
- evaluating fluency of silent and oral reading for a variety of purposes
- allowing continuous management of progress
- correlating test items to content in student texts and lessons in teacher manuals
- offering positive reinforcement of student progress
- identifying attitudes and interests

8. Technological Applications: The reading program will provide appropriate applications of technology including:

- support technology for reading, writing, and using language
- techniques for critical assessment of media
- information retrieval and enrichment using multimedia resources

9. Extensions: The reading program will provide for extended reading experiences -- reading beyond the text -- by:

- developing a personal reading program for each student
- demonstrating the importance of reading in today's society
- providing opportunities for research using source materials such as encyclopedias, magazines, and library books
- providing opportunities for the development of study skills and strategies
- encouraging reading library, trade books, and other materials for personal pleasure and sharing with others
- modeling reading by presenting selections and illustrations that portray readers in a variety of realistic situations
- including a broad spectrum of print styles

B. STUDENT STUDY MATERIALS. Student study materials will be carefully coordinated with the student texts and teacher manuals and will be designed to provide for meaningful practice and for a variety of experiences with reading including:

- creative, thoughtful extension of concepts and skills beyond one-word responses
- extensive practice with more difficult skills being introduced while providing for individual differences
- writing activities that require the development of complete sentences leading to longer compositions
- ongoing reinforcement of knowledge and skills
- opportunities for application of knowledge and skills, in particular the use of study skills
- enrichment activities and extended experiences with reading
- opportunities for students to work independently and in small groups without teacher direction

C. TEACHER MANUALS. Teacher manuals will be carefully coordinated with the student texts and student study materials and will be designed to:

- emphasize teaching rather than testing, with explicit instructional procedures for the development of language appreciation and skill development
- reflect a consistent model of effective teaching
- provide a variety of teaching strategies
- emphasize reading for comprehension by including higher level questions for students with suggestions for skillful questioning strategies; explicit recommendations for teaching comprehension elements such as word knowledge, relationships between words and ideas, and reasoning; teaching directives presented in a sequence that leads to increasing student responsibility for and independence in applying skills and strategies; and skill activities that are directly related to the content of the student text.



- recommend resources and additional readings in library and trade books
- provide foundation activities for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and other students with special needs emphasizing oral language, vocabulary development, graphic stimulation, and other effective techniques
- provide suggestions for transition of LEP students into the basal readers
- show consistency with the overall philosophy and research base used to develop the program