



# REAL LEARNING FOR REAL LIFE

## WHAT IS COMMON CORE?

Common Core is a set of high learning standards in math and English language arts that are designed to better prepare K-12 students for success in college, work and life. The standards, which set learning expectations for students at every grade level, have been developed and voluntarily adopted by 46 states -- unprecedented cooperation in our nation's history.

Until now, every state has had different learning standards. Common Core fixes that and raises the bar for learning. This is a big change in the way students learn and one that will take time to see results, but it's an approach that will help Washington students compete for the quality jobs our state has to offer. It's real learning for real life.

### WASHINGTON SUPPORTS COMMON CORE STANDARDS

A January 2013 poll of 500 voters and 500 teachers in Washington showed 70% support common learning standards in math and English language arts.

## TOP 3 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMMON CORE

### CONSISTENT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Before Common Core, all 50 states had different sets of expectations for what students should know and be able to do in each grade. Common Core provides a consistent set of learning standards and expectations for all students, no matter where they live.



### CLEAR STANDARDS THAT FOCUS ON DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Common Core goes deeper into fewer topics and focuses on developing students' deeper understanding of key concepts. The standards build on one another, allowing students to apply the skills and knowledge they learned in the previous grade to real-life situations.

### BUILDING THE CRITICAL SKILLS STUDENTS NEED IN THE JOB MARKET

Right now, Washington has 25,000 unfilled jobs for highly-skilled workers -- and that number is projected to double by 2017. Common Core focuses on building and applying real-world skills students need to be ready for college and work -- so they can be more competitive in the new global economy.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Why is Common Core important to you and your child?

Common Core provides benchmarks, or standards, for teaching and learning at every grade level. The standards are consistent across states and match the standards used by top-performing nations. Consistent learning standards will help parents and teachers work together to make sure students have the opportunities they need to succeed in school and in life.

### Why has Washington adopted Common Core standards?

Washington adopted Common Core because these standards and the aligned teaching resources and tests will help students be better prepared for college and work. Currently in Washington:

- We have the 12th largest achievement gap in the U.S., and are one of only a few states where it continues to grow;
- Less than half of our students graduate ready for college (as measured by college-entrance exams); and
- By 2018, two out of every three jobs in Washington are projected to require a college degree or certificate.

### Will schools and teachers still have control over teaching materials and other local decisions?

Yes. The way in which the Common Core learning standards are taught is up to each of Washington's 295 school districts and more than 2,000 schools. Each school or district will continue to have the flexibility to select the teaching materials and resources that best meet the needs of its students.

### Who developed Common Core?

The development of Common Core began in 2009 by governors and state school chiefs from participating states. Hundreds of teachers, education researchers, mathematicians, and other experts across the country provided input and guidance and have collaborated in developing the learning standards. With Common Core, nearly every state is now working together and sharing resources to help our kids get ready for life after high school.

### If we're raising learning expectations, will the test be harder, too?

Initially, yes. But that's not because students will know less. It's because we'll be expecting more. Research shows that when you raise learning expectations, students will work harder to meet them. It may take some time for students to meet and exceed the standards, but most parents and teachers understand that a drop in test scores is temporary and that raising learning standards is important for our students' futures.

### Where can I learn more about Common Core in Washington?

Please visit [www.ReadyWA.org](http://www.ReadyWA.org). A large, diverse coalition of state and local education agencies, associations and advocacy organizations have had input on the materials and Website to help families and the public learn the facts about Common Core.

### COMMON CORE IN WASHINGTON TIMELINE

**2011:** Washington officially adopts Common Core

**2012:** State provides toolkits to teachers and schools to start implementing standards

**2013:** New tests in math and English language arts piloted in WA schools

**2013-14:** Common Core standards taught in every school

**2014-15:** Students take new tests aligned to Common Core



Supporting college- and career-ready learning standards

This project is supported by funding from **College Spark Washington**

