

TOON INTO READING!™

COMICS AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are organized around the categories (strands):

READING	RL—Reading Literature/RI—Reading Informational Text/RF—Reading Foundational Skills
WRITING	W—Writing
SPEAKING and LISTENING	SL—Speaking and Listening
LANGUAGE	L—Language

Individual grade-specific standards can be identified by the strand, grade level, and standard number. The designation **RL.2.3**, for example, stands for **Reading Literature, Grade 2, Standard 3**.

TEACHING WITH TOON BOOKS

Young readers love comics. In one of the most exciting new trends in education, teachers are using TOON Books, high-quality comics designed specifically for elementary classrooms, to further their students' progress along the CCSS. Comics are excellent teaching tools: young readers are naturally drawn to the detail in the pictures, which makes them want to read the words. Emerging readers and so-called 'reluctant' readers are enchanted by a strong visual narrative and instantly feel at ease with comics' inviting format. TOON Books provide many opportunities for students to make inferences from illustrations, integrate information from text and pictures, acquire new vocabulary supported by the pictures, and recognize the basic elements of the comics format. After reading, students participate in TOON activities like creative writing, reader's theater, and storytelling. With the pedagogical underpinnings presented here, teachers have found it easy to engage young minds in the pleasure of reading. In the words of TOON Advisor, Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Art Spiegelman: "Comics are a gateway drug to literacy."

THE TOON LEVELS

	LEVEL 1	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">FIRST COMICS FOR BRAND-NEW READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200–300 EASY SIGHT WORDS • SHORT SENTENCES • OFTEN ONE CHARACTER • SINGLE TIME FRAME OR THEME • 1–2 PANELS PER PAGE
	LEVEL 2	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">EASY-TO-READ COMICS FOR EMERGING READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300–600 WORDS • SHORT SENTENCES AND REPETITION • STORY ARC WITH FEW CHARACTERS IN A SMALL WORLD • 1–4 PANELS PER PAGE
	LEVEL 3	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">CHAPTER-BOOK COMICS FOR ADVANCED BEGINNERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800–1000+ WORDS IN LONG SENTENCES • LONG STORY DIVIDED INTO CHAPTERS • BROAD WORLD AS WELL AS SHIFTS IN TIME AND PLACE • READER NEEDS TO MAKE CONNECTIONS AND SPECULATE

TOON LEVELS AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS

While the CCS Standards apply to all literature and non-fiction books, comics' unique blend of words and pictures and the TOON Books' unique use of controlled vocabulary means that they lend themselves extremely well to teaching along all the standards. The following standards stand out as particularly excellent examples of comics' fit with the CCSS:

		READING	WRITING	LISTENING & SPEAKING	LANGUAGE
LEVEL 1	Kindergarten	RL.K.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 RI.K.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	W.K.1, W.K.2, W.K.3	SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.5, SL.K.6	L.K.4, L.K.5
	Grade 1	RL.1.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 RI.1.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	W.1.2, W.1.3, W.1.7	SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.4, SL.1.5	L.1.4, L.1.5
LEVEL 2	Grade 2	RL.2.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 RI.2.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	W.2.3	SL.2.1, SL.2.2, SL.2.4	L.2.4, L.2.5
	Grade 3	RL.3.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 RI.3.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	W.3.3	SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.4	L.3.4, L.3.5

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL/RI—READING STANDARDS FOR TOON GRAPHIC NOVELS

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

	RL.1/RI.1	RL.2/RI.2	RL.3/RI.3
3	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	Recount stories from diverse cultures; determine the central message and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. / Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.	Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. / Describe the relationship between a series of events or steps in technical procedures.
4	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences.	Determine a theme from details in the text; summarize the text. / Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details. / Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

	RL.4/RI.4	RL.5/RI.5	RL.6/RI.6
3	Determine the meaning of words and phrases, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. / Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.	Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections. / Use text features and search tools to locate information efficiently.	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters. / Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.
4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology. / Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases.	Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose. / Describe the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.	Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated. / Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

	RL.7/RI.7	RI.8	RL.9/RI.9
3	Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story. / Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.	Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text.	Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written. / Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.
4	Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text. / Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.	Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.	Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics and patterns of events in stories from different cultures. / Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY

	RL.10/RI.10
3	By the end of the year, read and comprehend texts at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
4	By the end of the year, read and comprehend texts in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy SL—SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARDS AND W—WRITING STANDARDS FOR TOON GRAPHIC NOVELS

COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

	SL.1	SL.2	SL.3
3	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.
4	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	Paraphrase a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

	SL.4	SL.5	SL.6
3	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.	Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.	Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.
4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.	Add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.	Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English and situations where informal discourse is appropriate; use formal English when appropriate.

TEXT TYPES AND PURPOSES

	W.1	W.2	W.3	W.4
3	Write opinion pieces.	Write informative/explanatory texts.	Write narratives using effective technique, descriptive details, and event sequences.	Produce writing with appropriate development and organization.
4	Write opinion pieces.	Write informative/explanatory texts.	Write narratives using effective technique, descriptive details, and event sequences.	Produce writing with appropriate development and organization.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WRITING

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

	W.5	W.6	W.7	W.8	W.9	W.10
3	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	Use technology to produce and publish writing.	Conduct short research projects.	Recall information or gather information; take and sort brief notes.		Write routinely over extended and shorter time frames.
4	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.	Use technology to produce and publish writing.	Conduct short research projects.	Recall information or gather information; take and sort brief notes.	Draw evidence from texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Write routinely over extended and shorter time frames.