

Element: Title/Theme (Topic)**Operating Concepts and Principles:**

- Topics/Themes should be age-appropriate
- Integrate ELA standards as well as content area standards
- Topic/Theme should be studied for a sustained period of time
- Topic/Theme should be expanded and developed in subsequent grades to deepening understanding of topics

Examples (Do's and Don'ts):***Do***

- Choose topics that will integrate the ELA standards as well as meet standards in Science, Social Studies, and technology studies
- Choose topics that infuse Catholic identity throughout the timeframe
- Choose topics that will include a wide variety of resources such as literature, informational text, multi-media, reference books, and websites.
- Choose a topic that can be studied for a sustainable time

Don't

- Choose a topic that will be narrow in focus and short in time.
- Choose a topic from one source (Reading text, Social Studies or Science text or Religion text)

Design Tips:

- Consider topics of interest to students inviting them to help identify topics.
- Review topics in grade appropriate texts such as Reading, Science, and Social Studies basals as well as Catholic Social Teaching Guidelines
- Select current issues that affect students today

Criteria for Success:

- Students are able to see the connection across curriculum areas and the essentials question
- Topic integrates standards and Catholic identity

Additional Resources:

- Basal Reading Program
- Religion Text
- Common Core State Standards Curriculum Maps
- Catholic Social Teachings Guidelines

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COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Staying on Topic Within a Grade and Across Grades:
How to Build Knowledge Systematically in English Language Arts K-5

Building knowledge systematically in English language arts is like giving children various pieces of a puzzle in each grade that, over time, will form one big picture. At a curricular or instructional level, texts—within and across grade levels—need to be selected around topics or themes that systematically develop the knowledge base of students. Within a grade level, there should be an adequate number of titles on a single topic that would allow children to study that topic for a sustained period. The knowledge children have learned about particular topics in early grade levels should then be expanded and developed in subsequent grade levels to ensure an increasingly deeper understanding of these topics. Children in the upper elementary grades will generally be expected to read these texts independently and reflect on them in writing. However, children in the early grades (particularly K-2) should participate in rich, structured conversations with an adult in response to the written texts that are read aloud, orally comparing and contrasting as well as analyzing and synthesizing, in the manner called for by the *Standards*.

Preparation for reading complex informational texts should begin at the very earliest elementary school grades. What follows is one example that uses domain-specific nonfiction titles across grade levels to illustrate how curriculum designers and classroom teachers can infuse the English language arts block with rich, age-appropriate content knowledge and vocabulary in history/social studies, science, and the arts. Having students listen to informational read-alouds in the early grades helps lay the necessary foundation for students' reading and understanding of increasingly complex texts on their own in subsequent grades.

Exemplar Texts on a Topic Across Grades	K	1	2-3	4-5
<p>The Human Body</p> <p>Students can begin learning about the human body starting in Kindergarten and then review and extend their learning during each subsequent grade.</p> <p>Taking care of your body: Overview (hygiene, diet, exercise, rest)</p> <p><i>My Amazing Body: A First Look at Health & Fitness</i> by Pat Thomas (2007)</p> <p><i>Get Up and Go!</i> by Nancy Carlson (2008)</p> <p><i>Go Wash Up</i> by Doering Tourville (2008)</p> <p><i>Sleep</i> by Paul Showers (1997)</p> <p><i>Fuel the Body</i> by Doering Tourville (2008)</p>	<p>The five senses and associated body parts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>My Five Senses</i> by Ailiki (1989) <i>Hearing</i> by Maria Rius (1985) <i>Sight</i> by Maria Rius (1985) <i>Smell</i> by Maria Rius (1985) <i>Taste</i> by Maria Rius (1985) <i>Touch</i> by Maria Rius (1985) 	<p>Introduction to the systems of the human body and associated body parts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Under Your Skin: Your Amazing Body</i> by Mick Manning (2007) <i>Me and My Amazing Body</i> by Joan Sweeney (1999) <i>The Human Body</i> by Gallimard Jeunesse (2007) <i>The Busy Body Book</i> by Lizzy Rockwell (2008) <i>First Encyclopedia of the Human Body</i> by Fiona Chandler (2004) <p>Taking care of your body: Germs, diseases, and preventing illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Germs Make Me Sick</i> by Marilyn Berger (1995) <i>Tiny Life on Your Body</i> by Christine Taylor-Butler (2005) <i>Germ Stories</i> by Arthur Komberg (2007) <i>All About Scabs</i> by Genchiro Yagu (1998) 	<p>Digestive and excretory systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What Happens to a Hamburger</i> by Paul Showers (1985) <i>The Digestive System</i> by Christine Taylor-Butler (2008) <i>The Digestive System</i> by Rebecca L. Johnson (2006) <i>The Digestive System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007) <p>Taking care of your body: Healthy eating and nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Good Enough to Eat</i> by Lizzy Rockwell (1999) <i>Showdown at the Food Pyramid</i> by Rex Bamon (2004) <p>Muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Mighty Muscular and Skeletal Systems</i> Crabtree Publishing (2009) <i>Muscles</i> by Seymour Simon (1998) <i>Bones</i> by Seymour Simon (1998) <i>The Astounding Nervous System</i> Crabtree Publishing (2009) <i>The Nervous System</i> by Joelle Riley (2004) 	<p>Circulatory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Heart</i> by Seymour Simon (2006) <i>The Heart and Circulation</i> by Carol Ballard (2005) <i>The Circulatory System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007) <i>The Amazing Circulatory System</i> by John Burstein (2009) <p>Respiratory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Lungs</i> by Seymour Simon (2007) <i>The Respiratory System</i> by Susan Glass (2004) <i>The Respiratory System</i> by Kristin Petrie (2007) <i>The Remarkable Respiratory System</i> by John Burstein (2009) <p>Endocrine system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Endocrine System</i> by Rebecca Olien (2006) <i>The Existing Endocrine System</i> by John Burstein (2009)