Power Standards: Meeting Standards with the Samantha Smith Challenge

By Dr. Nancy Doda
Read Dr. Doda's Bio Here

Participation in the Samantha Smith Challenge (SSC) can yield many rich educational benefits for students, teachers and community. In particular, students participating in the SSC develop a broad range of sensibilities, aptitudes and understandings that reflect traditional academic standards, 21st century learning outcomes, and social, emotional and civic dispositions. As students become immersed in real world issues that are complex and multidisciplinary, they are called to draw upon a wide array of content knowledge, to utilize diverse academic and social skills, and to develop social and emotional dispositions often associated with civic-and social learning. The nature of learning that emerges from the SSC empowers young adolescents as they identify and investigate unresolved issues or problems in their communities.

The SSC Power Standards are drawn from the following:

- Common Core State Standards
- CASEL's social and emotional literacy standards
- 21st Century Learning Standards

Below you will find the related standards drawn from each model with a brief explanation of the model and the standards.

The Common Core represents the set of dominant academic standards to be addressed by teachers in all academic and technical subjects. In particular, these standards emphasize what the CC standards writers call "career and college readiness" standards (CCR), focusing on literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening across all subject areas.

The Samantha Smith Challenge engages students in many activities that tie directly to the most significant literacy standards found in the CCSS. Listed below are the 8th grade CCR standards that link most directly with the kind of tasks students will be performing while engaged in the SSC.

CCR- Reading Standards Informational Text, Grade 8

· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.7
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.8
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.9
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.10

Key Ideas and Details:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2
Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3
Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
Craft and Structure:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5

Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.7

Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.9

Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CCR Speaking & Listening Standards, Anchor

·   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
·   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2
·   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3
·   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4
·   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5
·   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

CCR-Writing Standards, Grade 8

· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9
· CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.A

Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.B

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.A

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.C
Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.D
Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.E
Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5
With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 8 here.)
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7
Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8
Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9.A
Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new").
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9.B
Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced").
Range of Writing:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
> a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
> b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
> c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
> d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
> e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
> a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
> b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
> c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
> d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
> e. Establish and maintain a formal style.
> f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

> a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
>
> b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
>
> c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
>
> d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
>
> e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies

CASEL has identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies. CASEL believes that success in all aspects of life is directly linked to social and emotional literacy. They believe that deliberate attention to these competencies improves student academic and social performance and overall well being. The definitions of the five competency clusters for students are:

Self-awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

Self-management: The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Relationship skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

Responsible decision making: The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

The 21ˢᵗ Century Learning Standards

P21's Framework for 21st Century Learning was developed with input from teachers, education experts, and business leaders to define and illustrate the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in work, life and citizenship, as well as the support systems necessary for 21st century learning outcomes. It has been used by thousands of educators and hundreds of schools in the U.S. and abroad to put 21st century skills at the center of learning.

In general, these standards emphasize career, college and life readiness and overlap with but extend beyond the CCSS.

1. *Content Knowledge:*
Advocates of the 21ˢᵗ century learning framework, believe schools must move beyond a focus on basic competency to promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century interdisciplinary themes into curriculum:

· Global awareness
· Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy
· Civic literacy
· Health literacy
· Environmental literacy

2. *Learning and Innovation Skills:*
Learning and innovation skills are recognized as the skills that separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21st century, and those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.

· Creativity and Innovation
· Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
· Communication and Collaboration

3. *Information, Media and Technology Skills*:
Students live in a technology and media-suffused environment with: 1) access to an abundance of information, 2) rapid changes in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to create, evaluate, and effectively utilize information, media, and technology.

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT Literacy

4. *Life and Career Skills:*

Today's life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills including:

- Flexibility & Adaptability
- Initiative & Self Direction
- Social & Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity & Accountability
- Leadership & Responsibility