

# Common Core Myths and Truths

**Myth Number 1:** The Common Core Standards tell teachers what to teach and how to teach it, overriding states' rights by institutionalizing a national curriculum.

**The Truth:** The Common Core Standards are not the curriculum; they describe the skills students need to learn at each grade level and can be taught using a school's local curriculum. The Common Core Standards do not determine which books must be read or what learning methods must be used. They do provide the critical standards from which teachers can determine what to teach, how to design their lesson plans, and best determine how children should learn the material.

**Myth Number 2:** The Common Core Standards include required reading and will eliminate the study of classic literature.

**The Truth:** Appendix B of English Language Arts Standards gives examples of stories, books, poems, plays, and nonfiction materials the Standards' authors found to be of high quality and the appropriate level of text complexity for each grade level. But these examples aren't requirements or even a suggested reading list; teachers are free to choose different or additional substantive, rigorous texts. While it is true that the Standards place more emphasis on reading "informational texts," it isn't intended to replace the classic literature. For example, Shakespearean plays and sonnets are cited in the Standards.

**Myth Number 3:** Existing State Standards are more rigorous than the Common Core State Standards.

**The Truth:** The Common Core Standards are more rigorous than the vast majority of state standards in the U.S. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute conducted a study comparing the rigor of previous state standards to the Common Core and found that the Common Core Standards were superior to the standards in 39 states for math and 37 states for English. The Common Core State Standards are similar to Massachusetts' standards, a state that has led national achievement for more than 10 years.

*Reference: Dennis Pierce, School Improvement Network*