

SpringBoard English Language Arts Grade 9-12, 2018 Edition

SpringBoard's Response to EdReports Common Core Program Review

Program Description

SpringBoard® is a different kind of instructional program for grades 6–12 in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Developed by teachers for teachers, SpringBoard was built around a simple core belief: if you give teachers the best materials, more engaging methods, and ongoing professional support, then student success will surely follow. The 2018 Edition of SpringBoard is a research-based, comprehensive instructional program developed by the College Board specifically to meet state standards and to prepare students for AP, SAT, and college-level work. SpringBoard integrates high-quality instructional materials with formative and summative assessments, along with top-notch professional development and coaching services. SpringBoard is designed to prepare and encourage all students to succeed in college and careers.

SpringBoard English Language Arts, Grades 9–12 is a carefully-scaffolded, sequenced program that develops English language arts skills and content knowledge in all students. Organized around performance-based embedded assessments that are the foundation of an instructional pathway that integrates reading, writing, language, and speaking & listening, SpringBoard provides a clear road map forward that helps students take ownership of and accountability for their own learning. The program is built on the same rigorous strategies and skills found in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and SAT: critical thinking, problem solving, and deep contextual understanding. SpringBoard makes rigorous standards accessible to all students and helps to prepare them for success throughout high school and in postsecondary opportunities.

SpringBoard, unlike any other published English language arts program, has been written by teachers for teachers and has been built from the ground up using the Understanding by Design model of curriculum design to prepare students for the rigor of not only the standards, but the expectations of AP and SAT. All students work with challenging texts, and tasks are deliberately and purposefully aligned to standards-based performance tasks that measure students' learning in relation to grade-level standards. In addition to the program materials, teachers and students have access to additional supports in reading, writing, and vocabulary development through our partnerships with Zinc Learning Labs and Turnitin Revision Assistant.

In an effort to support our ongoing constructive cycle of reviewing, revising, and refreshing our program, SpringBoard has submitted the 2018 National Edition of SpringBoard ELA for grades 9-12 for review and evaluation. We see this review not only as information provided information to the general public, potential and existing customers, but also as part of that constructive cycle to meet the needs of the ever-expanding body of students, teachers, and administrators who use SpringBoard.

Gateway One: Text Quality and Alignment to the Standards

We, at SpringBoard, appreciate that in all grades, EdReports recognizes that SpringBoard consistently and **fully meets expectations** in **Gateway 1, indicators a–f**, by recognizing the quality and complexity of SpringBoard texts that represent a wide range of text types and genres; that are engaging for the student and more importantly, worthy of careful reading; and that support increasing literacy skills over the course of the school year. And further, SpringBoard meets expectations in Gateway 1, indicators g-n, for text dependent/specific tasks, questions that build to a culminating activity, frequent opportunities and protocols to engage students in speaking and listening, on-demand and process writing, opportunities to address different text types of writing, evidence-based writing, and sequenced and embedded language instruction.

Despite the fact that reviewers remarked that SpringBoard “provides a variety of opportunities for students to write in the modes of argument, explanation, and narrative writing assignments connected to texts”, **indicator 11** raises concerns that the distribution of writing does not meet with the expectations set forth by NAEP’s distribution of Communicative Purposes. The comments mention that the volume of argumentative tasks does not adhere to the Common Core suggested volume for secondary students. Comments about this indicator have been closely analyzed, and we feel this is an issue of focus. In addition to writing in various modes throughout the year, we have devoted one unit in every grade level specifically to reading and analyzing arguments with the approach that students will be able to make claims, use evidence to support their claims, and use rhetorical devices to make their writing more organized and more persuasive. They use the vehicle of explanatory writing, one with which they are more comfortable and experienced, to write about argument. This carefully-scaffolded approach allows students to more deeply understand the elements of an argument before applying what they’ve learned to their own writing.

For grades 9 and 10, we have designed a series of prompts and activities to guide students through an analysis of an argument in preparation for their own writing. They learn to break down models by closely examining the rhetorical tools the author uses, the evidence used to support the claims, and the reasoning built around those claims. In grades 11 and 12, we have an additional approach that allows students to read an unseen passage and then create a piece of writing analyzing that writing in a single class period. This approach is designed to give them more practice with the demands of SAT writing and other performance-based assessments. At every grade level we offer Close Reading Workshops which include a focus on argument and Writing Workshops which provide direct instruction in writing an argument through a model text and co-construction. This additional support allows teachers to make strategic decisions based on the needs of their students.

Beyond volume of argument, the review suggests there are few supports for teachers or students to monitor progress. We want to emphasize that SpringBoard teachers are expected to, and are given support to, actively guide student reading, writing, and understanding of text; this guidance, as well as the formative assessment tools such as Writing to Sources writing prompts, Text-Dependent questions, double-entry journals, graphic organizers, and analytical strategies such as SOAPStone take students beyond the surface level and give teachers ample opportunities to monitor students’ work and help them build independence in critical thinking and analysis. Writing Prompts within the activities outline expectations that directly correlate to the elements of the rubrics for

our Embedded Assessments, making writing tasks meaningful and correlated. SpringBoard’s explicit reading protocol gives special attention to a second reading which always entails written answers to questions of a higher order, typical of the kind of text-dependent questioning outlined in the Common Core reading strands and standards. This provides teachers with the opportunity to assess not only understanding of a text, but also shorter, on-demand writing tasks. The teacher edition provides support around how students should perform and important “look-fors” in their student responses. Finally, we provide additional support in identifying expectations and progress for English Language Learners and specific suggestions to differentiate for all learners in the classroom.

Gateway Two: Building Knowledge with Texts, Vocabulary, and Tasks.

Once again, it is heartening to know that EdReports evaluators recognize the strength and depth of the SpringBoard writing program as shown in the comments and examples for **ALL Indicators of Gateway 2**. Springboard **fully meets the expectations** for building knowledge with texts, vocabulary, and tasks; for increasing writing skills over the course of school year; for providing focused short- and long-term research projects; and for designing an independent reading program that includes student choice and accountability. The review consistently commends strong writing, research, and grammar components as well as the robust independent reading program.

Gateway Three: Instructional Supports and Usability Indicators

We are pleased to know that the thoughtfully-designed instructional supports and lesson design are recognized by EdReports evaluators as supporting high-quality instruction. As an instructional program designed to give all students access to the rigor of the standards and achieve success throughout high school and beyond, this is especially important feedback. The SpringBoard program **fully meets expectations in Gateway 3, indicators a-r**. While criterion **3s-3v** do not receive a score, we appreciate the constructive feedback to help us further develop our use of technology to enhance student learning.

Indicator 3s addresses compatibility of web-based materials and access through multiple platforms as partially meeting expectations due to an error message when accessing on an Android device. We wish to clarify that SpringBoard Digital is accessible on Android devices. While we are constantly working to improve our digital platform to meet the needs of our users, we are not at this time accessible on mobile phones. Our digital platform is otherwise able to be used on mobile devices other than phones, regardless of platform or operating system.

In response to **3u.i**, which partially meets expectations, SpringBoard Digital is WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant, offering support for a wide-range of assistive technologies such as screen readers and annotation tools. Performed audio readings are also available for all text selections and a wide variety of vocabulary throughout the program to those with hearing disabilities, while also supporting language learners. As mentioned in the comments, teachers are able to edit questions and use alternative texts to meet the needs of their students.

In summary, SpringBoard English Language Arts provides students with the high-quality materials needed to foster a dynamic learning experience and ensure academic success. SpringBoard promotes greater participation and encourages students to take more responsibility for what they learn. They understand why the skills they're developing matter. As they do, they're more on track to meet AP[®] and SAT[®] standards and be prepared for college and careers.