The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects (CCSS ELA & Literacy) require significant shifts in classroom instruction to help all students meet the demands of these rigorous college and career-ready standards. Tools for Teachers is designed to help educators make these shifts so students have access to rich, complex text and to instruction that helps them improve their ability to read and write independently and proficiently.

The Tools for Teachers series of professional learning modules are open educational resources designed to meet the needs of teachers, schools, and districts working to make the key instructional shifts in the CCSS ELA & Literacy a reality for teachers and students. All Tools for Teachers resources can be downloaded from the Aspen Digital Resource Library at

www.AspenDRL.org
Tools for Teachers is a five-part professional learning series that takes educators through a step-by-step process of understanding the key shifts in the CCSS ELA & Literacy and offers practical tools and resources that support teachers in making these shifts and providing all students access to complex text and to rich, CCSS-aligned instruction in reading and writing. The Tools for Teachers series includes:

**Part 1: Text Complexity.** Educators studying this module will...
- Review the major elements of text complexity in the context of the CCSS ELA & Literacy.
- Learn how to employ a structured process for evaluating text complexity and choosing complex texts for instruction.
- Understand the importance of providing access to all learners, regardless of ability, to complex texts and rich instruction aligned to them.

**Part 2: Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions.** Educators studying this module will...
- Learn about the reading strategy called “close reading” and using “text-dependent questions” as a means of teaching complex text.
- Learn how to employ a structured process to create text-dependent questions at the word/phrase, sentence, and paragraph/passage levels.
- Learn how to employ a structured process to evaluate and revise existing reading comprehension questions in current curriculum.

**Part 3: Designing Close Reading Instruction.** Educators studying this module will...
- Learn how to support rigorous CCSS-aligned reading instruction with close reading exemplars that embody key shifts in the CCSS.
- Learn about the importance of a systematic focus on academic vocabulary within CCSS-aligned instruction.
- Explore methods for delivering effective close reading instruction that cultivates students’ interest in the text, responsibility for leading discussions and performing analysis, and the confidence and stamina necessary for gradual release to independence and proficiency.

**NEW! Part 4: Engaging in Academic Writing.** Educators studying this module will...
- Understand the implications of the CCSS’ Key Design Considerations for writing instruction and research in all grades and across the curriculum.
- Explore the three types of academic writing required by the CCSS: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative.
- Explore the role of evidence in the CCSS for writing.
- URL: [http://www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/CategoryList?categoryId=285](http://www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/CategoryList?categoryId=285)

**NEW! Part 5: Using Evaluation to Support Mastery in Academic Writing.** Educators studying this module will...
- Understand what the CCSS say about mastery and its implications for teaching and learning.
- Explore the nature of rich tasks and how they can facilitate meaningful demonstrations of students’ knowledge and academic writing skills.
- Evaluate a student writing sample using a CCSS-aligned rubric to determine progress toward mastery of grade-level writing standards.
- URL: [http://www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/CategoryList?categoryId=297](http://www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/CategoryList?categoryId=297)