



## Myths and Facts

The following material is adapted from the Common Core State Standards website ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)), the Data Quality Campaign, the Alliance for Excellent Education, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

**Find Out More:**

- [www.all4ed.org/files/CommonCore101.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/CommonCore101.pdf)
- <http://www.highercorestandards.org/myth-vs-fact/>
- [www.corestandards.org/resources/myths-vs-facts](http://www.corestandards.org/resources/myths-vs-facts)

Misconception	Reality
The Common Core effort will establish federal and mandatory standards for American K-12 schools.	State-level policymakers have the discretion to either join or withdraw from participation.
States' former standards are sufficient for today's students.	According to analysis by ACT, three-fourths of students entering college "were not adequately prepared academically for first year college courses."
Common Core State Standards are no better than former state standards.	A Thomas B. Fordham Institute study showed that Common Core State Standards are superior to standards currently in use in 39 states in math and 37 states in English. For 33 states (Illinois being one of them), the new standards are superior in both math and reading.
Adopting common standards will bring all states' standards down to the lowest common denominator.	The standards build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college and their careers. This will result in moving even the best state standards to the next level. In fact, since this work began, there has been an explicit agreement that no state would lower its standards. The Common Core State Standards were informed by the best in the country, the highest international standards, and evidence and expertise about educational outcomes. We need college- and career-ready standards because even in high-performing states students are graduating and passing all the required tests and still require remediation in their postsecondary work.
State tests aren't broken. The Common Core should not try to fix them.	A 2009 study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found no state had reading proficiency standards as rigorous as those on the highly respected and internationally benchmarked NAEP 4 <sup>th</sup> grade exam. Worse still, a large number of states had reading proficiency standards that would qualify their students as functionally illiterate on NAEP.
Common Core State Standards dictate what texts teachers will use for instruction.	Common Core State Standards define what students need to know, they do not define what teachers should teach or how students should learn. That decision is left to each state.



<b>Misconceptions</b>	<b>Reality</b>
Common Core State Standards dictate curriculum.	The standards are not a curriculum. They are clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.
Previous state standards sufficiently provide students with the English Language Arts skills they will need to succeed.	Today, the most popular forms of writing in high school are based on a student's experiences and opinions. Students spend a lot of time sharing what they think and feel. Common Core State Standards shift the focus from developing a response based on feeling to developing a response based on an objective analysis of evidence. Employers are most likely to hire someone based on their ability to clearly convey complex information, draw conclusions and make recommendations based on facts, not feelings.
Previous state standards sufficiently provide students with the math skills they will need.	Massachusetts' student's rank 1st in the US in math. Hong Kong's students rank first in the world. The best in our country do not come CLOSE to matching the best in the world. 87% of the questions on the Hong Kong test require a higher level of thinking compared to just 6% of questions on the Massachusetts test. These figures express how woefully behind we are. Common Core State Standards focus on more in-depth knowledge of foundational and crucial concepts for more advanced mathematics, rather than an expansive, but shallow, knowledge of many concepts.
The federal government will use Common Core State Standards to usurp control from states.	The Common Core State Standards are the result of state leadership. Illinois recognized the need for more rigorous standards, led the development, and will retain full authority for implementing the standards in Illinois.
The federal government is using the Common Core to collect data about individual students.	Common Core does NOT require the collection of any data about students; it is simply a set of grade-level expectations for students. Further, the federal government is prohibited by law from collecting any personally identifiable data (i.e., name, place and date of birth, SSN, or any other information that could be used to distinguish an individual's identity) about individual students. Therefore, the federal government does NOT have access to student-level data that states collect.

