

SAMPLE

# COMMON CORE BASICS

Building Essential Test Readiness Skills  
for High School Equivalency Exams

**Mc  
Graw  
Hill**  
Education

READING

# Contents

To the Student v  
Pretest 1  
Pretest Answer Key 9  
Pretest Evaluation Chart 10

## UNIT 1

### INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

#### CHAPTER 1 Functional Texts 12

- 1.1 Memos and Forms 14
  - 1.2 How-To and Instructions 22
  - 1.3 Websites 30
  - 1.4 Workplace Documents 38
  - 1.5 Graphic Documents 48
  - 1.6 Reference Texts 58
  - 1.7 Comparing Texts in Different Media 68
- Chapter 1 Review and Check Your Understanding 78  
Chapter 1 Essay Writing Practice 82

#### CHAPTER 2 Expository Texts 84

- 2.1 Textbooks and Other Educational Materials 86
  - 2.2 Magazine and Newspaper Articles 94
  - 2.3 Technical Texts 102
- Chapter 2 Review and Check Your Understanding 108  
Chapter 2 Essay Writing Practice 112

#### CHAPTER 3 Persuasive Texts 114

- 3.1 Ads 116
  - 3.2 Editorials 124
  - 3.3 Blogs 132
  - 3.4 Reviews and Commentaries 140
- Chapter 3 Review and Check Your Understanding 148  
Chapter 3 Essay Writing Practice 152

---

**UNIT 2****LITERARY TEXTS****CHAPTER 4 Literary Nonfiction**

154

- 4.1** Nonfiction Prose 156
- 4.2** Biography 164
- 4.3** Autobiography 172
- Chapter 4 Review and Check Your Understanding 180
- Chapter 4 Essay Writing Practice 184

---

**CHAPTER 5 Fiction**

186

- 5.1** Plot and Setting 188
- 5.2** Character 198
- 5.3** Point of View 206
- 5.4** Literal and Figurative Language 214
- 5.5** Theme 220
- 5.6** Text Structure 232
- Chapter 5 Review and Check Your Understanding 242
- Chapter 5 Essay Writing Practice 246
  
- Posttest 248
- Posttest Answer Key 261
- Posttest Evaluation Chart 263
- Answer Key 264
- Glossary 297
- Index 306
- Acknowledgments 315

# To the Student

*Common Core Basics: Building Essential Test Readiness Skills, Reading* will help you learn or strengthen the skills you need when you take any Common Core State Standards–aligned reading test. To answer some questions, you will need to focus on nonfiction documents such as instructions, memos, ads, editorials, magazines, and blogs. To answer other questions, you will need to concentrate on elements of fiction and of nonfiction prose such as biography.

Before beginning the lessons in this book, take the **Pretest**. This test will help you identify which skill areas you need to concentrate on most. Use the chart at the end of the Pretest to pinpoint the types of questions you have answered incorrectly and to determine in which skills you need to work on. You may decide to concentrate on specific areas of study or to work through the entire book. It is highly recommended that you do work through the whole book to build a strong foundation in the core areas in which you will be tested.

*Common Core Basics: Building Essential Test Readiness Skills, Reading* is divided into five chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Functional Texts** introduces you to memos, forms, workplace documents, instructions, websites, graphic documents, and reference texts.
- **Chapter 2: Expository Texts** shows you the features of textbooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and technical texts.
- **Chapter 3: Persuasive Texts** teaches you about the language used in ads, editorials, blogs, and reviews—all designed to change your opinion about an issue.
- **Chapter 4: Literary Nonfiction** provides practice reading nonfiction prose, biographies, and autobiographies.
- **Chapter 5: Fiction** describes the elements of fiction—plot, setting, characters, point of view, literal and figurative language, theme, and text structure.

In addition, *Common Core Basics: Building Essential Test Readiness Skills, Reading* has a number of features designed to familiarize you with standardized tests and to prepare you for test taking.

- The **Chapter Opener** provides an overview of the chapter content and a goal-setting activity.
- **Lesson Objectives** state what you will be able to accomplish after completing the lesson.
- **Vocabulary** critical for understanding lesson content is listed at the start of every lesson. All boldfaced words in the text can be found in the Glossary.
- The **Key Concept** summarizes the content that is the focus of the lesson.

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- In the lessons, **Core Skills** and **Reading Skill** are emphasized with direct instruction and practice in the context of the lesson. The Core Skills align to the Common Core State Standards.
  - In the lessons, the special features **21st Century Skills**, **Technology Connections**, **Workplace Connections**, and **Research It** will help you activate high-level thinking skills by using real-world application of these skills.
  - **Think about Reading** questions check your understanding of the content throughout the lesson.
  - **Write to Learn** activities provide you with a purpose for practicing your writing skills.
  - End-of-lesson **Vocabulary Review** checks your understanding of important lesson vocabulary, while the **Skill Review** checks your understanding of the content and skills presented in the lesson.
  - **Skill Practice** and **Writing Practice** exercises appear at the end of every lesson to help you apply your learning of content and skill fundamentals.
  - The end-of-chapter **Review** and **Essay Writing Practice** test your understanding of the chapter content and provide an opportunity to strengthen your writing skills.
  - **Check Your Understanding** charts allow you to check your knowledge of the skills you have practiced.
  - The **Answer Key** explains the answers for the questions in the book.
  - The **Glossary** and **Index** contain lists of key terms found throughout the book and make it easy to review important skills and concepts.

After you have worked through the book, take the **Posttest** to see how well you have learned the skills presented in this book.

Good luck with your studies! Keep in mind that knowing how to read and analyze various types of reading materials is a skill worth learning.



# LESSON 1.4

# Workplace Documents

## Lesson Objectives

### You will be able to

- Recognize the purpose of common workplace documents
- Explain and apply information from common workplace documents

## Skills

- **Core Skill:** Summarize Information
- **Reading Skill:** Determine Author's Purpose

## Vocabulary

agenda  
alternative  
design  
documents  
employee handbook  
identify  
structure  
summarize

**KEY CONCEPT:** Workplace documents are written papers (print or digital) used in offices, factories, and other places where people work. They include instructions or forms.

*At your job, you may have read and written many e-mails. Have you ever read job applications or instructions for how to do something? In the workplace, these types of documents are very common. It is important to understand the purpose of documents such as employee handbooks and agendas.*

## Workplace Documents

People encounter workplace documents almost daily, whether they are employed in a government office, a store, a factory, or a school.

**Documents** such as e-mails, **employee handbooks** (which explain company rules), **agendas** (which tell what will be discussed at meetings), and safety guidelines provide information needed on the job. The **design**, or appearance, of the documents should help the reader understand the information that is presented.

Some workplace documents are listed here. They fall into two groups: documents you might encounter on a daily basis and documents providing specific information about your job or your workplace.

Everyday Communication	Specific Workplace Documents
E-mail	Job announcement
Memo	Job description
Business letter	Job performance review form
Meeting agenda	Self-assessment form
Request form	Employee handbook
	Safety guidelines

It is important to **identify**, or recognize, the purpose of a workplace document and the audience it was written for.

Why was the document written? (What is its purpose?)

Who is supposed to read it? (Who is the audience?)

Once you know a document's purpose and audience, it is helpful to identify the **structure** of the document. In other words, how is information organized? Recognizing the structure of the document makes it easier to find the information you need. Bullet points, numbered steps, section heads, and charts or tables are commonly used to organize information in workplace documents.

## DETERMINE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

An author's purpose for writing a text **varies**, or changes, depending on what is being communicated. Authors generally write to entertain, to inform or teach, or to persuade or convince their readers.

It is important to figure out the purpose of any workplace document you read. Ask yourself: Who wrote the document? What information does it contain? What does the author want me to do after reading the document?

**Directions:** As you read each document, identify the author's purpose for writing the document.

To: Marketing team

From: Fernando Torres

Subject: Model IP300 product launch meeting

Marketing team,

Good morning! I just want to remind everyone about today's meeting. Let's gather at 2:00 in the conference room on the third floor. Please bring some fresh ideas for the upcoming launch of our new Model IP300!

Fernando Torres

Director, New Product Development

Marketing Meeting Agenda

Here is the agenda for today's 2:00 meeting.

1. Team Update: Shelly (10 min)
2. Results of Online Survey: Jermaine (10 min)
3. Introduction of IP300 New Product Launch: Fernando (20 min)
4. Brainstorming Session: all team members (30 min)
5. Discussion of Next Steps: Fernando (10 min)

Fernando Torres

Director, New Product Development

In a notebook, answer the following questions about each document. Who is the author? What is the author's purpose for writing? Who is the audience? What does the author want the audience to do after reading the document? **Compare** and **contrast** the documents. How are they similar? How are they different?

## TECHNOLOGY CONNECTION



### Online Workplace Documents

Workplace documents are increasingly available online or in digital form. In some cases, paper documents are being replaced by digital **alternatives**, or substitutes. Because e-mail is faster and more convenient than typing and mailing business letters, e-mail has replaced most typewritten letters.

Employers can e-mail their workers interactive documents, such as questionnaires. Employees read, fill out, and return these forms without ever handling a piece of paper.

In your notebook, compare and contrast reading text on paper with reading text on a computer screen. How are the experiences different? How are they similar? Explain why the workplace is more likely to use online documents than paper documents.

## Core Skill

### Summarize Information

When you **summarize** information from a text, you briefly state the text's main points. Summaries do not include personal opinions or information that was not part of the text. Writing a summary will help you understand and remember the text.

As you read, look for the main idea in each paragraph or section. Watch for places where the author has repeated certain ideas. When you have finished reading, you will be able to write a summary statement that answers this question: What does the author want you to understand and remember?

The process for summarizing information in workplace documents is the same as summarizing other nonfiction texts. As you read the job description on this page, think about the information in each section. What does the author want you to understand about this job? What are the most important parts of the job? Make a chart like the one below to record your summary.

Important Idea	Important Idea
Summary	

**Directions:** As you read this workplace document, think about its purpose and intended audience. Then answer the question below.

### Job Description: Administrative Assistant

**Job Purpose:** Provides office services by implementing administrative systems and monitoring, or keeping an eye on, administrative projects

**Job Duties:**

- Manages department schedule by maintaining, or keeping up-to-date, calendars for department supervisors
- Arranges meetings, teleconferences (telephone meetings), and travel
- Prepares department reports, e-mails, invoices, and other documents, using word processing or other computer software
- Opens and distributes, or hands out, incoming correspondence
- Handles incoming phone calls and receives departmental visitors
- Files department's documents
- Maintains office supplies, placing orders for supplies when necessary

**Skills/Qualifications:** Written and verbal communication skills; organization, scheduling, computer, and office management skills; professionalism

## THINK ABOUT READING



**Directions:** Review the job description above. What is the purpose of this document? Who is the audience? Answer these questions in the space provided.

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**Directions:** As you read this document, think about its purpose and consider how the document is used in the workplace.

### CONFERENCE ROOM RESERVATION REQUEST

**This form must be submitted  
at least 3 business days before the event date.**

#### General Information

Department

Event Date(s)

Contact person

Start Time

E-mail

End Time

Phone

Estimated Attendance

Fax

Equipment Required

Title of Event

#### Event Type

• Please check the word(s) that best describe your event.

- |                                    |                                                        |                                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Film/Movie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar   | <input type="checkbox"/> Webinar (online presentation) | <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reception |                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch      |
|                                    |                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner     |

**Submit**

#### Reading Skill

Determine Author's Purpose

The form on this page is a common type of workplace document. Think about the author's purpose for creating this form. The form requests information from its reader. Other forms that require you to fill in information include W-4 forms for payroll tax deductions and application forms for health insurance.

Many of these forms are available online. Often they are designed to be completed and returned through the Internet or by e-mail.

Compare and contrast online forms with the same forms printed on paper. Is one version more convenient than the other?

In a notebook, write about a time you filled in a form on paper. Do you think you could have provided the same information by using an online form? Why or why not? How is completing a paper form similar to and different from completing an online form?

### THINKING ABOUT READING



**Directions:** What is the purpose of the Conference Room Reservation Request document? How will using this document make work easier for company employees? Answer these questions in the space provided.

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## WRITE TO LEARN



Read the message on this page. Imagine that the person sending this e-mail is your supervisor. Write a response in which you answer each of her questions.

Set up your response so it looks like an e-mail message. Since you are the author of this document, think about your purpose for writing. Keep your audience (your supervisor) in mind and use appropriate language.

**Directions:** As you read this document, identify the author, audience, and purpose in the workplace. Doing this will help you answer the questions that follow.

From: Carolyn Smith <csmith@workplace.com>  
To: Brian Yamamoto <byamamoto@workplace.com>  
Cc:  
Subject: Board of Directors Meeting

2:42 p.m.

Brian,

Happy Monday! I hope you had a nice weekend.

We need to start thinking about next week's meeting with the Board of Directors. I'd like to schedule time today or tomorrow to sit down and talk about your presentation. We can brainstorm to come up with some ideas. Maybe we'll think of something amazing!

Do you think we'll need a computer for the meeting? Do you want to project anything on screen? Will you show a video? If so, we'll have to request the equipment so it's set up on time.

On an unrelated note, did you remember to complete your time sheet for last week? I need to approve it by the end of the day.

Thanks!

Carolyn

Carolyn Smith  
Director, Resources  
ABC Corporation  
123 Main St., New York, NY



## THINK ABOUT READING

**Directions:** Answer these questions about the e-mail from Carolyn Smith to Brian Yamamoto.

1. What is the purpose of this e-mail?
  - A. A supervisor wants to ask about an employee's weekend.
  - B. A supervisor is checking with an employee about an upcoming meeting.
  - C. An employee is checking with a supervisor about an upcoming meeting.
  - D. An employee is asking a supervisor a question about his time sheet.
2. What is the purpose of the questions that Carolyn asks in the third paragraph?
  - A. to remind Brian to fill out his time sheet
  - B. to find a time to set up a meeting
  - C. to convince Brian to include visual media
  - D. to help Brian plan ahead and prepare for the meeting
3. Which of the following best describes this workplace document?
  - A. everyday oral communication
  - B. official report of a workplace event
  - C. everyday written communication
  - D. technical document
4. Which details in the document identify the author? What is the author's relationship to the audience?

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## Vocabulary Review

**Directions:** Match each vocabulary word with its definition.

- |                            |                                                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ agenda            | A. text that explains a company's rules and workers' benefits |
| 2. _____ alternative       | B. to recognize something                                     |
| 3. _____ design            | C. list of subjects for discussion                            |
| 4. _____ document          | D. the look or appearance of an item                          |
| 5. _____ employee handbook | E. a text or piece of writing                                 |
| 6. _____ identify          | F. the form and organization of a text                        |
| 7. _____ structure         | G. a replacement of one thing for another                     |

## Skill Review

**Directions:** Read the documents below. Then answer the questions that follow.

Memorandum to all ABC Company Facilities

### **ABC Company Safety and Health Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to develop the highest possible standard of safety in all operations of ABC Company. Our management gives top priority to the prevention of occupational injury or illness.

It is our intention here at ABC Company to initiate and maintain comprehensive accident-prevention and safety-training programs. Employees are responsible for their health and safety and for the health and safety of their coworkers. By accepting mutual responsibility to operate safely, each of us contributes to the well-being of all employees.

Sincerely,

Shaundra Wright  
CEO  
ABC Company

### **ABC Company Safety Program Outline**

Safety Orientation: All new employees will be given a safety orientation, or introduction, so they will be familiar with our safety rules and accident-prevention program.

All employees must follow these basic safety rules:

- Never do anything that is unsafe. If a task is unsafe, report it to your supervisor. We will find a safer way to do that job.
- Do not remove or disable any safety device.
- Never operate equipment until you have been trained and authorized to use that equipment.
- Use your personal protective equipment when required.
- Obey all safety warning signs.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or using them at work is prohibited.
- Neither firearms nor explosives are allowed on company property.
- Running and fighting are prohibited.
- Clean up spills immediately. Replace all tools and supplies after use.
- If you are injured or become ill on the job, report this to your supervisor immediately.
- All supervisors must have first-aid training.

## Skill Review (continued)

1. What is the purpose of the first document? Who is the intended audience?

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2. Compare and contrast the two workplace documents. How are they similar? How are they different?

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3. Summarize each of the two documents. State the main points simply and clearly.

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4. How does the structure of each document help the audience understand the information presented?

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## Skill Practice

**Directions:** Read the following document. Then choose the one best answer to each question.

### Department of Public Safety Recruitment Announcement

Recruitment for	State Training Center
Classification	Personnel Clerk (contractual; no benefits)
Salary	\$13.50 per hour
Closing Date	Open until filled
Position Duties	This position will provide support to the Human Resources Department. The employee will perform a variety of clerical tasks to assist the department in efficiently providing human resources services for all employees.
Education	Graduation from an accredited high school or possession of a high school equivalency certificate
Experience	One year of general clerical or administrative support
Special Qualifications	Must have computer experience, including use of Microsoft Office, and must possess the following skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of business English, including accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation</li><li>• Knowledge of standard office procedures and use of equipment</li><li>• Ability to understand and <b>interpret</b>, or explain, personnel policies and rules</li><li>• Ability to prepare and maintain personnel records</li><li>• Ability to follow departmental procedures</li><li>• Ability to maintain confidentiality for all personnel-related activities</li><li>• Ability to communicate and maintain effective working relationships with employees, management, public officials, and the general public</li></ul>

## Skill Practice (continued)

1. Which of the following words are evidence that this job requires a certain level of schooling?
  - A. "The employee will perform a variety of clerical tasks"
  - B. "Graduation from an accredited high school"
  - C. "One year of general clerical or administrative support"
  - D. "Ability to maintain confidentiality"
  
2. What is the purpose of this document?
  - A. to describe workplace duties to an employee
  - B. to announce new responsibilities to employees
  - C. to search for a new employee
  - D. to inform employees about changing roles and expectations
  
3. According to the document, which of the following skills is required for this job?
  - A. advanced computer expertise
  - B. public speaking
  - C. a second language
  - D. organizational skills
  
4. Who is the intended audience of this document?
  - A. current employees of the Department of Public Safety
  - B. current supervisors for the Department of Public Safety
  - C. a future employee of the Department of Public Safety
  - D. a future supervisor for the Department of Public Safety

## Writing Practice

**Directions:** Choose a workplace document from the lesson or another workplace document you are familiar with. Write a summary of the document. Then write a paragraph in which you state the author's purpose for writing the document and explain what the audience is supposed to do after reading the document.

# COMMON CORE BASICS

Building Essential Test Readiness Skills  
for High School Equivalency Exams

**Common Core Basics** helps build the foundational skills necessary to succeed on high school equivalency exams and beyond. Common Core Basics includes Core Subject Modules in five areas:

**READING** | WRITING | MATHEMATICS | SCIENCE | SOCIAL STUDIES

Each Core Subject Module builds key skills, strategies, and content knowledge critical for Common Core-based high school equivalency exam success with

- Key CCSS concepts and objectives explicitly taught and reinforced
- Guidance for supporting higher order reasoning and thinking skills
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill instruction tied to workplace and real-life tasks
- Vocabulary instruction on Tier 2, Tier 3, and key test-taking words
- Constructed and extended response practice (Reading, Writing, and Social Studies)
- Inquiry-based learning opportunities (Math and Science)
- End-of-lesson and chapter assessments

ALSO AVAILABLE

## **PowerUP! Getting Started with Computers and Keyboarding**

This online program develops basic computer and keyboarding skills needed for online test taking, college classes, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace. With PowerUP!, students learn

- Basic computer navigation skills
- Digital essay writing skills and practice
- Computer-based testing skills and practice
- Typing mastery

[www.mheonline.com/CommonCoreBasics](http://www.mheonline.com/CommonCoreBasics)

