

TE SUMMIT

A *New Story* for LOUISIANA EDUCATION



JUNE 10-12, 2025 | NEW ORLEANS, LA



**Connecting the ACT to
ELA Student Standards**



Connecting the ACT to ELA Student Standards

Session Objectives

1. **Bridge Standards:** Participants will explore connections between the ELA Louisiana Student Standards and ACT College and Career Readiness Standards to identify ways high school teachers can build support for students in preparation for ACT success.
2. **Apply Backward Design:** Participants will implement backward design principles that demonstrate how to pinpoint opportunities for aligning and integrating ACT standards within ELA HQIM tasks.
3. **Reflect on Transformation:** Participants will reflect on the potential of these instructional strategies to and plan to promote appropriate, intentional, critical thinking and transform student achievement represented in ACT performance.

Planning Companion

Content Analysis Tool

Steps to Success

Alignment Analysis

- **Examine the Culminating Task.**
 - Unpack the content standards required for mastery using the HS ELA Planning Companion.
- **Align the content standards to ACT College and Career Readiness Standards.**
 - Complete Content Alignment Analysis.
 - Consider aligned supplemental materials (Albert, Mastery Prep, etc.).
- **Connect the standards to specific lessons throughout the unit.**
 - Use Planning Companion in preparation for daily instruction.
 - Determine method of implementation:
 - Bell Ringers/Exit Tickets
 - Guiding/Discussion Questions
 - Aligned Learning Tasks
- **Self-evaluate Instruction with Louisiana Educator Rubric Indicators.**
 - Make necessary adjustments.

Culminating Task Prompt

How does Achebe develop and use a secondary character to convey a theme about multiple stories in *Things Fall Apart*?

Write a literary analysis in which you state your response and logically and sufficiently support your response with claims. Support your claims with relevant textual evidence, including direct quotations with parenthetical citations. Use correct and effective words, phrases, syntax, usage, and mechanics to clearly communicate your analysis.

Be sure to:

- Summarize the secondary character's experiences and motivations in the novel.
- Explain how the secondary character represents and/or expresses a similar or different perspective from Okonkwo and how the two character's interactions contribute to the events of the novel.
- Determine and analyze the development of a theme that is revealed through the story of the secondary character and the character's relationship to Okonkwo's story.

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards

ELA Standards

Reading Standards

ELA LSS Standards

Sample HS ELA Planning Companion - Things Fall Apart (grade 10)

Sample Text

From *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe:

"Obierika was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offense he had committed inadvertently? He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offense on the land and must be destroyed. And if the clan did not exact punishment for an offense against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. As the elders said, if one finger brought oil, it soiled the others."

NOTES:

We will answer questions about the relationships among the details in the first part of chapter eight from *Things Fall Apart* to deepen our understanding of Okonkwo.

Teaching Notes

15 min

Have students complete this activity as a class.
Direct students as a class to answer the question to analyze the relationships among the details and ideas of the text.

Prompt students to write their response.

If students need support during the activity:

- Ask guiding questions.
 - How does Okonkwo respond to Ikemefuna's death?
 - What is different about his private and public reactions?
 - What do Okonkwo's different reactions reveal about him? What words, phrases, or sentences reveal Okonkwo's character?
 - How are Okonkwo's perspective and Obierika's perspective different? How do their different perspectives influence their actions? How do their different perspectives reveal what each character believes about their culture and their role in the culture?
 - Why does Okonkwo wish Ezinma were a boy? What does this statement reveal about his beliefs?
 - How does Okonkwo's relationship with Unoka and his children influence Okonkwo's thoughts and actions?

Directions

Materials

With the class, answer the text-specific question about the first part of chapter eight from *Things Fall Apart*.

Question:

1. What do Okonkwo's reactions in chapter eight to Ikemefuna's death reveal about him?

Write your response in your learning log. Support your response with evidence from the text.

LSS: RL.9-10.3	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.	ACT CCR: REL 702	Analyze relationships among ideas, characters, or events to understand how they contribute to the text's meaning or purpose.
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How does Obierika's reaction to the events reveal his role as a secondary character in contrast to Okonkwo?

- A. Obierika accepts the customs without question, while Okonkwo often defies them.
- B. Obierika contemplates the morality of customs, offering a perspective that contrasts with Okonkwo's rigid adherence to them.
- C. Obierika shows leadership qualities, while Okonkwo is more of a follower.
- D. Obierika and Okonkwo both agree on the necessity of the clan's laws.

LSS: L.9-10.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	ACT CCR: PUN.302	Use appropriate punctuation in straightforward situations (e.g., simple items in a series).
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Identify the grammatical error in the following sentence from the text:

"When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity."

- A. Incorrect verb tense
- B. Incorrect punctuation
- C. Incorrect word usage
- D. No error

LSS: L.9-10.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.	ACT CCR: TOD.403	Use a word, phrase, or sentence to accomplish a straightforward purpose (e.g., conveying a feeling or attitude)
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What is the effect of the sentence ***"As the elders said, if one finger brought oil, it soiled the others"*** in the passage?

- A. It reinforces the idea that individual actions can have consequences for the entire community.
- B. It highlights Obierika's belief that the clan should prioritize fairness over tradition.
- C. It suggests that the goddess is merciful and only punishes those directly responsible for wrongdoing.
- D. It emphasizes the insignificance of personal beliefs when faced with the will of the gods.

Specific Teacher Practices That Support Students' ACT Success

To effectively prepare students for the ACT while aligning with Louisiana ELA Student Standards, teachers must implement intentional **instructional strategies, test-taking skill development, and targeted interventions**. Below are key teacher practices that support student success:

Deep Understanding of ACT Structure

✓ Teacher Practices:

- Explicitly teach the **structure of the ACT** (timed sections, number of questions, passage types, scoring system).
 - Model and practice **strategic pacing techniques** to help students manage time effectively (e.g., "**passage triage**" — prioritizing passages based on difficulty).
 - Provide **authentic ACT-style assessments** in a timed setting to build test endurance.
 - Teach students to analyze **test instructions and question stems quickly** to maximize efficiency.
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Identifying & Teaching ACT Question Types

✓ Teacher Practices:

- Break down the **common ACT question types** (e.g., main idea, author's purpose, inference, evidence-based support, vocabulary in context).
 - Teach **elimination strategies** for multiple-choice questions (e.g., identifying extreme language, recognizing distractors).
 - Provide **scaffolded practice** by introducing question types progressively (low-stakes practice → guided practice → independent timed drills).
 - Develop students' ability to recognize "**trap answers**" designed to mislead test-takers.
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Internalizing & Using High-Quality Instructional Materials

✓ Teacher Practices:

- Align **daily instructional materials** with ACT expectations (e.g., complex texts, argumentative essays, real-world nonfiction).

- Use **HQIM (High-Quality Instructional Materials)** that emphasize **text-dependent questions, evidence-based writing, and rhetorical analysis**.
 - Incorporate **multiple genres and interdisciplinary texts** (literary narratives, historical documents, science-based articles, charts, and graphs).
 - Expose students to **multiple-choice questions formatted exactly like the ACT** to reduce test anxiety.
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Teaching Close Reading & Annotation

✓ Teacher Practices:

- Model **active reading strategies** (e.g., skimming for key ideas, underlining transitional words, annotating main arguments).
 - Teach **text chunking** — breaking longer passages into sections to improve comprehension under time constraints.
 - Help students recognize **signal words** that indicate shifts in arguments or conclusions.
 - Provide guided instruction on how to **deconstruct complex syntax** (especially in ACT Reading & English sections).
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Reinforcing Evidence-Based Writing & Grammar Skills

✓ Teacher Practices:

- Teach students how to write **concise, direct responses** that mirror ACT writing expectations.
 - Provide **timed essay prompts** that reinforce clarity, logical organization, and argument development.
 - Explicitly teach **grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure rules** tested on the ACT English section.
 - Model **revision strategies** to help students improve sentence clarity and eliminate redundancy.
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Developing Test-Taking Mindset & Confidence

✓ Teacher Practices:

- Integrate **growth mindset strategies**, helping students view the ACT as a skill-building process rather than an obstacle.

- Conduct **self-assessments and goal-setting exercises**, allowing students to track progress over time.
 - Reinforce "**educated guessing**" strategies to improve odds when unsure of an answer.
 - Provide **realistic practice with increasing difficulty** to build test-taking confidence and reduce anxiety.
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Using Data to Inform Instruction & Differentiate Support

Teacher Practices:

- Analyze **ACT diagnostic tests and practice scores** to target individual weaknesses.
- Implement **small-group intervention sessions** focused on specific ACT skills.
- Provide **personalized test-prep plans** based on student performance trends.

Use **exit tickets and formative assessments** to check understanding of ACT-aligned skills after each lesson.

Indicators of Success for Louisiana Educator Rubric

Defining Effective Instruction

Activities and Materials

To ensure that **Activities and Materials** effectively support students in achieving ACT success while aligning with Louisiana ELA Student Standards, instruction must reflect rigorous, engaging, and standards-driven learning experiences.

Indicator of Success -

Instruction incorporates high-quality activities and materials that align ACT College and Career Readiness Standards with Louisiana ELA Student Standards to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and skill application.

What Effective Instruction Looks Like

- Students interact with **authentic, complex texts** that mirror ACT reading passages in structure, length, and complexity.
- Activities require students to **cite evidence** to support claims in alignment with ACT reading and writing expectations.
- Materials include **diverse, high-quality resources** (literary and informational texts, charts, graphs, primary sources) that develop **cross-disciplinary reading skills** assessed on the ACT.
- Teachers use **structured writing tasks** (CER — Claim, Evidence, Reasoning; timed argumentative or analytical essays) to reinforce ACT-aligned writing skills.
- **Graphic organizers, annotation guides, and ACT-style question stems to promote critical thinking and test readiness.**

What Effective Instruction Sounds Like

- Teachers explicitly connect **ACT question types** (e.g., main idea, author's purpose, vocabulary in context) to Louisiana ELA Student Standards.
- Students engage in **academic discourse**, using ACT-aligned language to justify answers, debate interpretations, and explain reasoning.
- Teachers provide **think-alouds and guided practice**, modeling how to deconstruct ACT-style questions and eliminate incorrect answer choices.
- Students articulate their thought processes when responding to ACT-style questions, demonstrating **metacognitive awareness and test-taking strategies.**
- Classroom discussions focus on **identifying textual evidence, analyzing arguments, and making inferences**, reinforcing high-level reading and reasoning skills.

Questioning

To ensure that **Questioning** effectively supports students in achieving ACT success while aligning with Louisiana ELA Student Standards, instruction must promote deep analysis, reasoning, and metacognitive thinking through intentional questioning strategies.

Indicator of Success

Teachers use purposeful questioning strategies that require students to analyze texts, justify responses with evidence, and engage in critical thinking aligned with both Louisiana ELA Student Standards and ACT College and Career Readiness Standards.

What Effective Instruction Looks Like

- Teachers **pose higher-order questions** that mirror ACT-style questions, requiring students to determine central ideas, analyze relationships between ideas, and evaluate arguments.
- Students consistently engage in **text-based discussions**, using evidence to justify their responses to ACT-aligned prompts.
- Teachers scaffold **open-ended, multi-step questions** that lead students to deeper comprehension rather than relying on recall-based questioning.
- Students generate their own **ACT-style questions**, demonstrating their ability to recognize question patterns and expectations.
- **Socratic seminars, debate protocols, and peer discussions** reinforce ACT-aligned questioning and reasoning skills.
- Teachers use **wait time and follow-up questioning** to push students toward greater depth in their responses, avoiding surface-level answers.

What Effective Instruction Sounds Like

- Teachers ask, **"What textual evidence supports your answer?"** to reinforce ACT reading and writing expectations.
- Students respond with **"The passage states..."**, **"According to the author..."**, or **"In paragraph X, the text suggests..."** to demonstrate text-based reasoning.
- Teachers use **probing questions** such as:
 - **"How does the author develop their argument in this passage?"**
 - **"What rhetorical strategies are used to strengthen the claim?"**
 - **"Which answer choice best summarizes the main idea, and why?"**
 - **"How does this sentence function within the larger context of the paragraph?"**
- Students articulate their reasoning using **ACT-relevant academic vocabulary** (e.g., **main idea, inference, claim, counterargument, author's purpose**).
- Teachers provide **corrective questioning**, prompting students to re-evaluate their reasoning when they select incorrect answers:

- **"What made you choose this answer?"**
- **"Can you eliminate an answer choice that doesn't fit? Why?"**
- **"What strategy can help you break down this question?"**

Teacher Content Knowledge

To ensure that **Teacher Knowledge of Content** effectively supports students in achieving ACT success while aligning with Louisiana ELA Student Standards, instruction must demonstrate a deep understanding of both the content and the skills assessed on the ACT. Teachers must effectively bridge Louisiana's standards with ACT expectations, ensuring students develop the analytical and reasoning skills required for college and career readiness.

Indicator of Success

✓ Teachers demonstrate expertise in both Louisiana ELA Student Standards and ACT College and Career Readiness Standards by explicitly connecting key content knowledge, skills, and strategies to ACT-style assessments and real-world applications.

What Effective Instruction Looks Like

- Teachers seamlessly integrate **ACT-aligned reading and writing skills** into daily instruction, ensuring students are **consistently exposed to the rigor of ACT assessments**.
- Instruction reflects a **deep understanding of text complexity**, including how text structure, word choice, and rhetorical devices affect meaning — key elements tested on the ACT.
- Teachers **anticipate and address common misconceptions** related to ACT question types (e.g., distinguishing between main idea vs. supporting details, inference vs. assumption).
- **Lesson pacing and scaffolding** reflect an awareness of ACT time constraints, helping students develop stamina and efficiency in reading and responding to passages.
- Teachers strategically **use formative assessments modeled after ACT passages** to measure student mastery of key reading and writing standards.
- Instruction includes **explicit modeling of test-taking strategies**, such as process of elimination, skimming efficiently for key ideas, and recognizing distractor answer choices.

What Effective Instruction Sounds Like

- Teachers provide **direct explanations of ACT question types** and how they align with Louisiana's ELA standards:
 - "This question requires you to identify the main idea — just like our standard on determining central themes in literature."
 - "On the ACT, vocabulary questions often ask about word meaning in context. Let's examine how context clues guide our understanding here."
- Teachers **use precise academic language** when explaining complex concepts:

- "Let's analyze the author's tone by identifying the connotative meaning of key words in this passage."
- "This transition serves as a logical bridge between ideas, just as the ACT tests your ability to evaluate organization within a passage."
- Teachers prompt students to **make connections** between content knowledge and test expectations:
 - "How does this rhetorical device enhance the author's argument, and why would an ACT question focus on this?"
 - "Which answer choice most effectively revises this sentence for clarity and conciseness, as the ACT expects?"
- Teachers provide **real-time feedback**, explaining both correct and incorrect responses using ACT-aligned reasoning:
 - "This answer is incorrect because it misinterprets the passage's key detail — on the ACT, distractors often include partial truths to mislead test-takers."

Teacher Knowledge of Students

To ensure that **Teacher Knowledge of Students** effectively supports ACT success while aligning with Louisiana ELA Student Standards, instruction must be intentionally designed to meet the diverse academic needs, learning styles, and test-taking challenges of students. Teachers must differentiate instruction, provide targeted support, and use data to guide their approach.

Indicator of Success

✓ Teachers leverage student performance data, learning profiles, and instructional strategies tailored to individual needs, ensuring that all students develop the skills and confidence necessary for success on the ACT and mastery of Louisiana ELA Student Standards.

What Effective Instruction Looks Like

- Teachers use **diagnostic and formative assessments** (previous ACT scores, practice tests, class performance data) to identify student strengths and areas for growth.
- Instruction is **differentiated based on student needs**, ensuring struggling learners receive scaffolds while advanced students engage in extension activities.
- Teachers incorporate **culturally relevant texts and real-world applications** to increase student engagement and comprehension.
- Small-group instruction and targeted interventions address specific **ACT challenges** (e.g., time management, comprehension of complex texts, analyzing multiple perspectives).
- Teachers implement **personalized ACT goal-setting**, encouraging students to track their progress and reflect on their growth.
- Accommodations and strategies are provided for **students with diverse learning needs**, including students with IEPs, 504 plans, and English Learners (ELs).

What Effective Instruction Sounds Like

- Teachers reference **student-specific data** to guide instruction:
 - "Based on your last ACT practice test, let's focus on improving how you analyze conflicting viewpoints in science-based passages."
 - "You've mastered identifying main ideas, so let's push toward synthesizing multiple texts — an advanced ACT skill."
- Teachers connect **student experiences and interests** to ACT concepts:
 - "This passage discusses teamwork in sports — think about how collaboration works in your own athletic experiences. How does that relate to the author's argument?"
 - "Many of you are interested in music. Let's analyze how this article about the evolution of jazz uses historical evidence to support its claims."

- Teachers provide **scaffolded support**, adjusting questioning and feedback based on individual student needs:
 - **"Let's break this passage into sections — what's the main idea of paragraph one?"**
 - **"Can you rephrase this answer in your own words before selecting the best choice?"**
- Teachers encourage **student reflection on progress and test-taking strategies**:
 - **"What strategy helped you eliminate incorrect answers on this practice test?"**
 - **"How did your pacing improve this time? What adjustments can we make?"**
- Teachers use **motivational and affirming language**, reinforcing growth mindset principles:
 - **"Your ability to analyze arguments has grown tremendously — let's fine-tune how you identify rhetorical strategies."**
 - **"Every practice test helps you build confidence. Trust your strategies, and keep pushing forward!"**

A LITTLE TWO-STEP (Brainstorm)

Domain: _____

ACT and LSS Alignment Looks Like:

ACT and LSS Alignment Sounds Like:

Potential Impact:

Potential Challenges:

Keep in Touch!



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