

The Map as Art Teaching Resource

Ages: 5+ (Pre-K–Grade 12)

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Mixed media like toothpicks, a pile of clothes, pipe cleaners, random household objects

Duration: 1 hour (includes two activities)

Essential questions:

- What is a map?
- What is a landscape?
- How are two-dimensional and three-dimensional maps similar? How are they different? How do they affect your understanding of a region or location?
- What are some connections we can make between maps and works of art?
- What are some connections between artists and cartographers?
- What is mixed media?

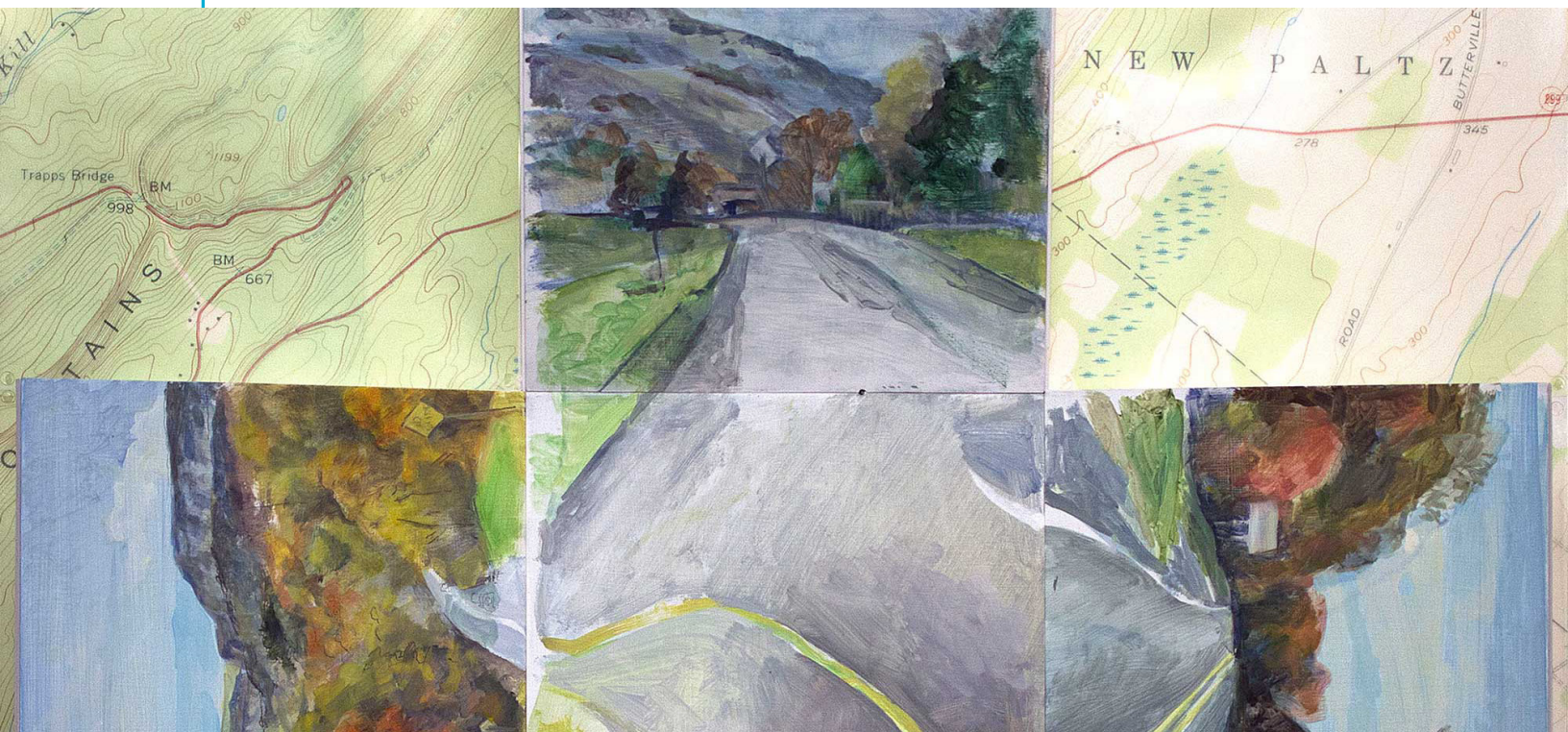


Image: Marcia Clark (American, b. 1938). *Butterville Road Intersection* (detail), 2011. Mixed media. Gift of the artist, 2018 (2018.03).

Part 1: Introduction

Traditionally, a **map** is a visual representation of an area that uses symbols to highlight spatial relationships between elements and features such as locations, landmarks, and geological forms. The primary function of a map is as a **navigational** tool—a means for figuring out how to get from one place to another. Maps include **data**, or information, drawn from what a **cartographer** has observed about a place through exploration or over time.

Maps and art have always been closely connected. Maps themselves often include works of art in their composition—in the symbols used to represent **geographic features** or buildings; in the design of a **compass rose**; through their color choice and use of descriptive labels. **Landscape art** by **Hudson River School** artists provides viewers past and present with a perspective of place that enhances their understanding of natural features and unique characteristics of the Hudson River region.



Image: George Burnham (American, 1847–1926). *Central Yonkers* (detail), 1858. Oil on canvas. Gift of Miss Harriet McDonald and the Heirs of Robert Parkhill Getty, 1941 (41.102b).

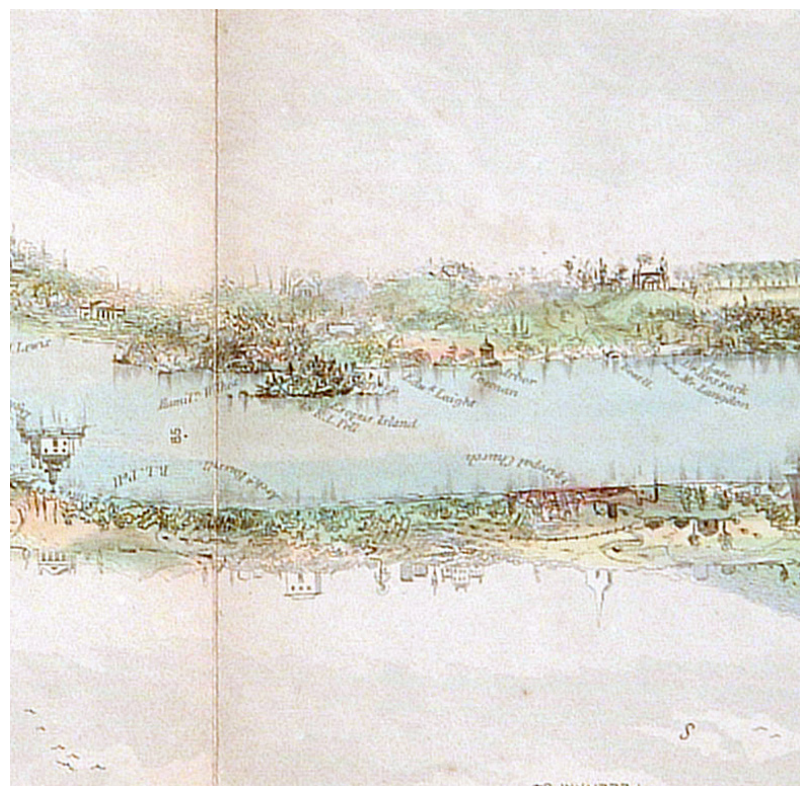
Compare

Panoramic or pictorial maps use detailed drawings as symbols of specific places within a region. Artists inspired by the historical significance and influence of maps have used the form as a way to rewrite a story or question an established historical narrative.

Observe [*Map of the Frenglish Kingdom of Novum Eboracum \(New York\) \(We All Got To Have a Place We Call Home\)*](#), 2015, by Frohawk Two Feathers. The artist created this work of map art as part of a series in which he reimagines and chronicles an alternative colonial history of the Hudson Valley. This alternative history recognizes fictitious people of color and makes them players in global conflict loosely based on real events.

Compare the [*Map of the Frenglish Kingdom*](#) to a section of the Wade & Croome [*Panorama of the Hudson River from New York to Waterford*](#), published in 1847. Read the description about this panorama. You can also zoom in on a section of the map via [Google Arts & Culture](#).

- What do you notice about each work?
- What more can you find?



Left: Frohawk Two Feathers (American, b. 1976). *Map of the Frenglish Kingdom of Novum Eboracum (New York) (We All Got To Have a Place We Call Home)* (detail), 1847. Acrylic, ink, graphite, tea, and coffee on paper. Museum Purchase, 2015 (2015.10). Right: Wade & Croome. *Panorama of the Hudson River from New York to Waterford* (detail), 1847. Cloth binding, printed paper. Gift of Mr. Michael Papantonio, 1969 (69.18).

Visit the HRM Google Arts & Culture exhibition [Hudson River Art](#). Closely observe a selection of works that you find interesting. Next, open up [Google Maps](#) and search for “Hudson River,” experimenting with the results in satellite mode and observing regional differences along the course of the River.

- What do you notice about the works of art you chose to observe? What more can you find?
- What connections can you find between landforms or built environments in the artworks and Google Maps?

Explore

The art and science of **cartography** also makes use of materials and technologies beyond paper and pencil. Artist, architect, and environmental activist Maya Lin develops sculptural works depicting landscapes and regions by using **mixed media**, bringing attention to environmental vulnerability and human impact on the natural world. Visit Lin’s 2018 HRM exhibition [A River Is a Drawing](#), about the environmental and geographic history of the Hudson River and the ongoing effects of climate change.

- How did the artist “draw” the River?
- What materials did she use to do this? Why do you think she chose these materials and formats?
- What material is most surprising to you, and why?
- How is the experience of viewing these works of map art different from or similar to the experience you had with the works you observed earlier in this lesson?
- What questions do you have for the artist after observing these works? Why?

Part 2: Experiment With One-Point Perspective (Activity 1)

Inspiration: [*Butterfield Road Intersection*](#), 2011, by Marcia Clark

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- Optional: collage materials (mixed paper, old magazines, newspapers, flyers, etc.)

Introduction:

Artist Marcia Clark has been painting landscapes since the 1960s, when she was inspired by the paintings of Hudson River School founder [*Thomas Cole*](#), whose work urged her to look deeper. The many ways in which artists perceive and record their environments has been a subject of research and artistic exploration for Clark for more than thirty years. In her work *Butterfield Road Intersection*, Clark uses a **multi-dimensional** approach to illustrate a panoramic view of a road and intersection near her former home in New Paltz, New York. She envisions the intersection at the center of her work, and the different points of view seen from this space looking in different directions. In this activity, you will choose a space, place, or location you are in, see, or pass every day and use the same process Clark did in showing the location's surroundings using **one-point perspectives**.

Procedure:

1. Think about an everyday space or location that you are in or that you pass by or see on a regular basis. This can be an indoor space, like a specific room, or an outdoor space like Marcia Clark's intersection.
2. Brainstorm some notes about this space in writing. Does it have a formal name? What are its main features? What is the purpose of the space? Is it a manmade environment or natural environment? What is your personal relationship to the space?
3. Take one piece of paper, whatever size you have available. Fold the paper into thirds from its long side. Then, fold into thirds from the short side of the paper. You should end up with a paper that has nine different sections delineated by the folds you have made.

4. Your center section will be where you draw or render the location of your choice in as much detail as you like. Everything else you draw or render in the spaces surrounding this center will be what you see if you were standing at this center and rotating around.
5. Find your space or location on Google Maps, or use a handheld compass or smartphone to determine what you see looking from your chosen space out into cardinal directions—north, east, south, and west. With Google Maps, you can often use Street View to digitally visit this space if you cannot access it in person.
6. Rotate, or imagine rotating, north to east to south to west and back again. How does your view change as you move?
7. Record what you see from each perspective. Add as many details as possible.

Thought Extension (Grades 6–12):

As you create the visual perspectives from different directions, consider the following:

- Are you able to see ahead of you *and* behind you at any given time?
- How does seeing all views at the same time in your collective one-point perspective work change your experience of being in, or your memory of, your central location?

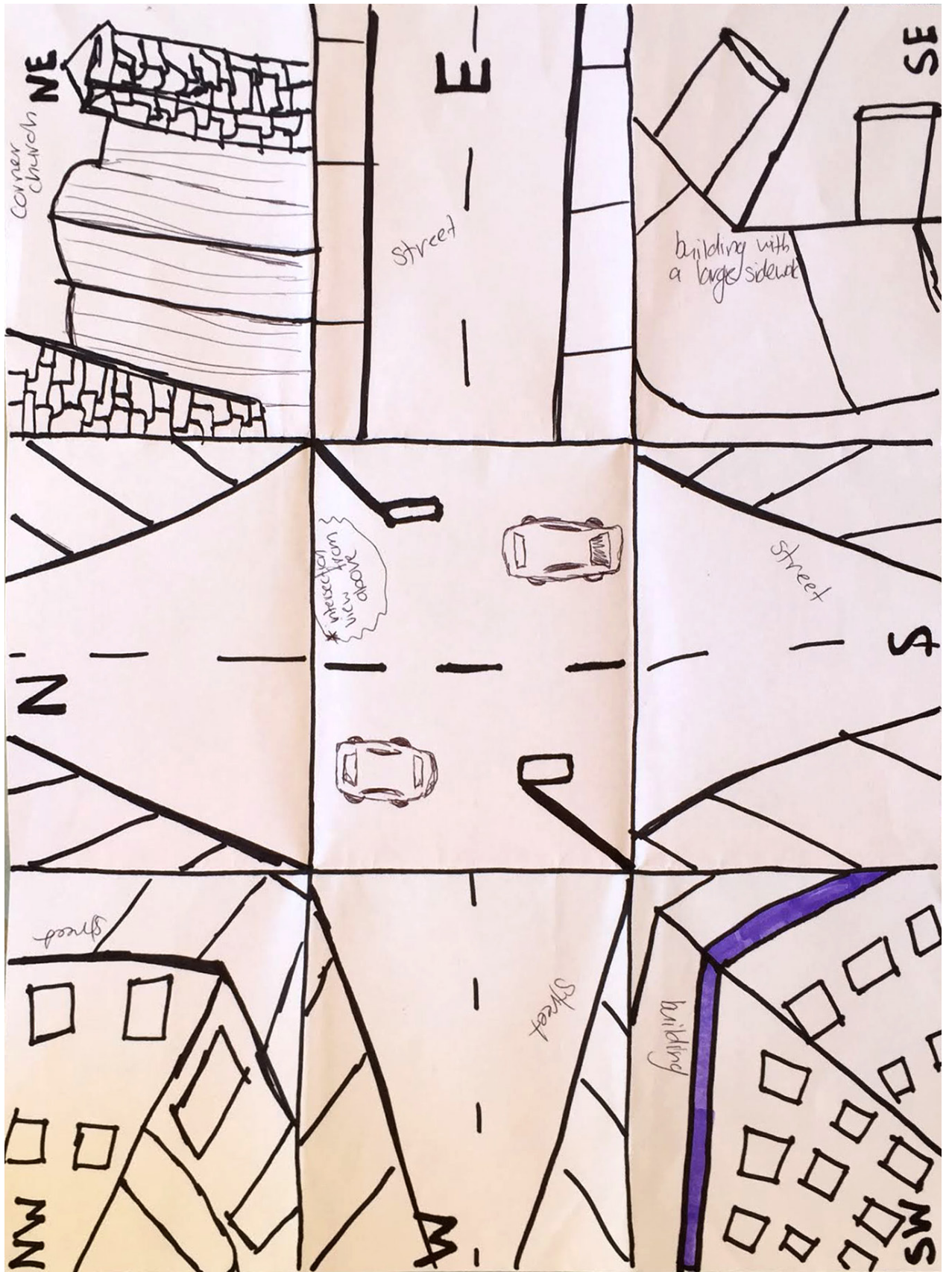
In traditional landscape art, an artist is creating a scene that is one moment in time, like a photographic snapshot of a place. Marcia Clark’s approach compresses several moments in and views over time into one work.

Clark is incorporating elements of **Cubism** into her work instead of a realistic, or literal, replication of the intersection and what can be seen from its central point. Cubism is an early twentieth-century style and movement in art, especially painting, in which perspective with a single viewpoint was abandoned and use was made of simple geometric shapes, interlocking planes, and, later, collage, in order to represent multiple viewpoints/ moments in time at once.

- How does Clark’s work and your own work in this activity relate to the definition of Cubism? Look at her piece and at your own perspectives-based artwork again.

Share your work:

Take a photo of your work and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome and #MapArt, and tag @HudsonRiverMuseum.



Part 3: Design Your Own Sculptural Survey (Activity 2)

Inspiration: [Maya Lin: A River Is a Drawing](#)

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials needed:

- Mixed media of your choice! This can be as simple as a pile of clothes, a collection of crayons or markers, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, sticks you have gathered outside, etc. Be creative and experiment. What objects or materials will provide three-dimensionality to your experimental map? What objects or materials might provide different textures or colors?
- Paper and pencil for sketching different versions of your work
- Space or a surface for laying out your medium (this is your site)

When choosing your materials, keep in mind that your map does not need to be permanent.

Introduction:

The works Maya Lin developed for her exhibition *A River Is a Drawing* were all focused on the same subject—the Hudson River—but were created using a range of mixed media. Lin used bamboo, grass seeds, metal pins, paint, encaustic, wire, and even marbles to create map-based works of art that highlight the course of the River (both the parts we can see and the geographic features that are underwater and extend far into the Atlantic Ocean). She made use of spaces in the Museum galleries and courtyard for her works, and the limits imposed by those spaces also influenced her choice of materials. For example, she could suspend the [Hudson Bight](#) from the ceiling into lower Museum galleries due to the open design of that area of the building, and the artwork itself is huge. Her [Concrete River](#) is much smaller in size and takes advantage of existing cracks in the concrete surface of the Museum’s overlook. Some of the pieces, like *Concrete River* or *Bamboo River*, are meant to be **ephemeral art** and will eventually change or fade away completely.

Site-specific works like Maya Lin’s are a fun challenge for artists to work through when creating an installation. Her map works also bring attention to threats to the environment due to climate change and human impact by creating similar maps or sets of data that show change over time. In this activity, be inspired by Lin’s creative use of materials in mapping the Hudson and choose an unexpected medium and work surface of your own to create a survey, or record, of land features and details of a region of your choice.

Procedure:

1. Begin by brainstorming a location you want to feature. Maybe this is your local park, your backyard or building courtyard, or a place to which you have traveled.
2. What details do you recall about this location?
3. Gather materials and begin to experiment with reconstructing this landscape. Choose a space on the floor or a table top to work. This site will determine the eventual shape and size of your work.
4. When you feel you have one version of a region or landscape you like, take a photo or make a sketch before you take it apart and do another version.
5. Repeat this process as often as you like.

Share your work:

Take a photo of your work and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome and #MapArt, and tag @HudsonRiverMuseum.



Part 4: Glossary & Further Resources

Artist: Any person who creates something.

Cartographer: Someone who makes maps.

Cartography: The science or practice of producing maps.

Compass rose: A figure that is included on maps that shows which way is north, east, south, west.

Cubism: An early twentieth-century style and movement in art, especially painting, in which perspective with a single viewpoint was abandoned and use was made of simple geometric shapes, interlocking planes, and collage.

Data: Information collected for reference or analysis.

Ephemeral art: A work of art that only occurs once or is intended to degrade over time and cannot be embodied in any lasting object to be shown in a museum or gallery.

Fictional: Imaginary; not real.

Geography / geographic feature: Related to the Earth and its atmosphere; the nature and related arrangement of places and physical features.

Hudson River School: An early to mid-nineteenth century group of artists and their work that focused on the beauty of the American landscape, in contrast to encroaching industrialization; often depicting areas of the Hudson River. Recognized as the first “school” of American Art.

Landscape: A visual feature of an area's land, its landforms, and how they interact with man-made features.

Landscape art: The creative reproduction of an area of land.

Map: A symbolic representation of relationships.

Mixed media: When more than one medium or material is used.

Multi-dimensional: Having many different parts or aspects.

Navigation: The process of figuring out one's position, planning, and following a route.

One-point perspective: A way of drawing where everything converges, or comes together, at one point in order to make something look three-dimensional.

Panorama / panoramic: A wide view of a space.

Perspective: Point-of-view.

Sculpture: The art of making a three-dimensional form.

Site-specific: Artwork created to exist in a specific space.

Survey: Record of land details or features.

Three-dimensional: Having, or appearing to have, length, width, and depth.

Topography: The features on a surface of land, or the representation of those features.

Two-dimensional: Lacking, or appearing to lack, depth; flat.

[Brain Pickings: The Map as Art](#)

[Marcia Clark](#)

[Maya Lin Studio](#)

[What Is Missing? A Global Mapping Project from Maya Lin Studio](#)

Part 5: Standards

Common Core Learning Standards

English Language Arts

Reading Informational Text:

Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-12.1

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-12.10

Foundational Reading Skills:

Print Concepts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K-1.1

Phonological Awareness: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K-1.2

Phonics and Word Recognition: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K-5.3

Fluency: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K-5.4

Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K-12.1-2

Research to Build and Present Knowledge: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K-12.7-9

Speaking and Listening:

Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K-12.1-3

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K-12.4-6

Language:

Conventions of Standard English: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K-12.1-2

Knowledge of Language: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K-12.3

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K-12.4-6

Science and Technical Subjects

Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.1-3

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-12.7-9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-12.10

New York State Learning Standards

The Mathematics, Science and Technology

Standard 3: Mathematics

Standard 4: Science

English Language Arts

Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

The Arts

Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 3: Geography