**Level:** B2-C1

**Lesson:** The Common Core State Standards in American Education

**Language Focus:** Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Re-phrasing, Speaking.

**Text Source:** <https://youtu.be/5s0rRk9sER0>

**Warm Up: Teacher-Student Talk**

* What’s the difference between education and politeness?
* Do they necessarily come together?
* Do you think your former education provided you with all of the necessary skills that you are currently implementing in your professional life?

**1. Vocabulary: Before you watch the video!**

**1.1. Phrases**

* **Like it or not** (conjunctive phrase derived from *Whether you like it or not*): although the situation may be unpleasant, it has to be faced.

**Example from the text:** *Like it or not, life is full of measuring sticks.*

* **more importantly** (adv. phrase): in a way that it is important to note

**Example from the text:** *And more importantly, each standard makes sure all students are learning what they need to know.*

* **thus** + -ing form (adv. phrase): therefore, as a result

**Example from the text:** *States have been setting different standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, thus making it too hard to know if our kids are really doing well enough overall.*

* **when to comes to** (noun or -ing verb form): in regards to; considering some particular person, thing, or action.

**Example from the text:** *We’d like to think that our education system does that, but when it comes to learning what they really need to be successful after graduation.*

**1.2. Verbs & Verb Phrases**

* **step up** (verb ph. of step): come forward for a particular purpose. [**Spanish equivalent:** *dar un paso adelante*]

**Example from the text:** *Each step is a skill your child needs to learn before stepping up to the next one.*

* **slip up** (verb ph. of slip): to make a small mistake, often as a result of not thinking carefully.

**Example from the text:** We need more focus on the skills or they can slip up.

* **turn out:** prove to be the case. [**Spanish equivalent:** *resultar*]

**Example from the text:** *It turns out the answer to both of these questions is “no”.*

* **fall behind:** fail to keep up with one's competitors or to meet a commitment [**Spanish equivalent:** *quedarse atrás*]

**Example from the text:** *They can slip up and fall behind.*

* **match up against (something):** coincide, be the same if compared to

**Example from the text:** *They match up against international standards, too.*

* **rock an A** (slang): used when speaking of something that was done very well.

**Example from the text:** A boy in Seattle who’s rocking an A in English literature could be getting a C on his Chicago friend’s staircase.

* **head:** move in a specified direction. [**Spanish equivalent:** *dirigirse a*]

**Example from the text:** *Each standard creates a stop along the way as your child heads towards high school graduation*

**1.3. Nouns & Noun Phrases**

* **sea-change:** a profound or notable transformation.

**Example from the text:** *They’re like a total sea-change in education.*

* **benchmarks:** a point of reference against which things may be compared or assessed.

**Example from the text:** *They are consistent, strong, clear benchmarks for English language arts, and math.*

**2. Lesson Text: Listening Comprehension**

**1.1. General Comprehension**

**Question:** What is the purpose of this informative text?

**1.2. Specific Comprehension**

**Directions:** Watch the video again and answer the questions below.

**a)** What are the common core state standards (CCSS) about?

**b)** What was American education like before the CCSS?

**c)** What benefits will the CCSS bring about?

**3. Pronunciation Practice (10 mins)**

**Directions:** Under your teacher’s supervision, practice reading the video transcript outload in chunks (item “a” to “l”). Pay closer attention to the pronunciation of words and phrases highlighted in red. They can be more challenging for you. Also, notice that -in order aid your reading- blended sounds between words have been underlined as flapped sounds have been highlighted in blue.

a) Like it or not, life is full of measuring sticks. How smart we are, how fast we are, how well we can… you know, compete! But up until now, it’s been pretty hard to tell how well kids are competing in school and how well they are gonna do when they get out of school.

b) We’d like to think that our education system does that, but when it comes to learning what they really need to be successful after graduation.

c) Is a girl in your neighborhood being taught as much as her friend over in the next one? Is a graduating senior in, say… St. Louis as prepared to get a job as the graduate in Shanghai? Well, it turns out the answer to both of these questions is “no”.

d) Because for years, states have been setting different standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, thus making it too hard to know if our kids are really doing well enough overall and if they can really compete for jobs someday.

e) What we really need are clear goals. That’s where the Common Core States Standards come in. They’re like a total sea-change in education: consistent, strong, clear benchmarks for English language arts, and math.

f) Here is how it works. You can think of kindergarten through 12th grade like a giant staircase; each step is a skill your child needs to learn before stepping up to the next one; but right now, too many kids aren’t really confident with like… “2+2” before they have to move on to “2x2”.

g) We need more focus on the skills that help them move up the stair or they can slip up and fall behind. And there’s another problem. What if everyone’s stairs were made a different height? Well, here we go again, they are.

h) So, a boy in Seattle who’s rocking an A in English literature could be getting a C on his Chicago friend’s staircase, oops! We need to create consistent steps in education, too.

i) So; first, each standard creates a landing on the staircase, a stop along the way as your child heads towards high school graduation. Each stop is a chance for every parent and teacher to focus on the skills the students are supposed to know at that step, no matter the zip code, language or race.

j) And more importantly: each standard makes sure all students are learning what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond. Because something like counting to a hundred, leads to understanding dollars and cents, which eventually leads to understanding how to manage a budget.

k) Secondly, the standards are consistent from school to school and they match up against international standards, too. Now we know how we’re doing compared to just about everyone.

l) So; even though local communities will still design their own curriculum with the same rules, everybody can compete on the same kind of staircase, but standards aren’t learning. That’s why we need teachers, parents and students to help make that happen by working together to help kids meet these standards.

m) The world is getting more and more competitive every day, but now when our kids get to the top of the staircase, they can have way more options away: their life goes from there. Clear goals, confident, well-prepared students: that’s the Common Core State Standards.

**4. Vocabulary Practice**

**4.1.** **Say it another way**

**Directions:** Say the highlighted words or phrases some other way. Note that there may be more than one possibility in each case.

a) For years, states have been setting different standards for what students should know.

**Possible Answer:** *For a long time*, states have been *establishing* different *patterns* for what students should know.

b) They’re like a total sea-change in education.

c) Consistent, strong, clear benchmarks for English language arts, and math.

d) Here is how it works.

e) You can think of kindergarten through 12th grade like a giant staircase.

f) Too many kids aren’t really confident with “2+2” before they have to move on to “2x2”.

g) We need more focus on the skills that help them move up the stair.

h) They can slip up and fall behind.

i) Each standard creates a landing on the staircase, a stop along the way as your child heads towards high school graduation.

j) Each stop is a chance for every parent and teacher to focus on the skills the students are supposed to know at that step.

k) Because something like counting to a hundred, leads to understanding dollars and cents, which eventually leads to understanding how to manage a budget.

l) Secondly, the standards match up against international standards, too.

m) Even though local communities will still design their own curriculum with the same rules, everybody can compete on the same kind of staircase.

n) Now when our kids get to the top of the staircase, they can have way more options away.

o) Their life goes from there.

**4.2. Word Families**

**Directions:** Identify which part of speech is the word highlighted in red. Then, complete the chart with familywordsin each case. The first example has been already done for you.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sentences** | **VERB** | **NOUN** | **ADJECTIVE** |
| a) Like Iit or not, life is full of measuring sticks.  | *measure* | *measurement* | **x** |
| b) Everybody can compete on the same staircase.  |  |  |  |
| c) We’d like to think that our education system does that. |  |  |  |
| d) Is a graduating senior in St. Louis as prepared to get a job as the graduate in Shanghai?  |  |  |  |
| e) We need more focus on the skills that help them move up the stair.  |  |  |  |
| f)Each standard creates a landing on the staircase. |  |  |  |
| g)Now we know how we’re doing compared to just about everyone.  |  |  |  |
| h) Clear goals, confident, well-prepared students: that’s the Common Core State Standards. |  |  |  |

**5. Speaking: Monologue** (Topic: Education Matters)

**Directions:** *Answer the following questions in the form of a brief monologue. They may serve as a speaking guide, but feel free to add any other point of view in terms of education.*

* Learning commonly happens through processes of listening, observing, hands-on practice and/or experimentation. In your case, how do you prefer to learn?
* How does education impact our families and communities? In other words, why is education important?
* From your experience, how is education different from one place/country to another?
* Had you heard about the Common Core Standards in American education? Do you agree?
* What would you change or improve the education system in your country?
* If you were a teacher, how would you teach? What would be the center of your teaching?
* How far do you want to go with your education?
* How do you intend to you use your education in the future? Tell us about it!