

SREB

SREB Readiness Courses  
*Transitioning to college and careers*

# Literacy Ready

Ready for reading in all disciplines  
Version 2

Southern  
Regional  
Education  
Board

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## Introduction

# SREB Readiness Courses

In 2011, SREB formed a regional partnership of states and experts to develop two readiness courses, one in mathematics and one in disciplinary literacy. The courses were designed to help under-prepared students reach their state’s college- and career-readiness benchmarks before high school graduation.

These courses will serve any state that wishes to use them. Because they are built around national standards for College and Career Readiness, every state can easily use and adapt them to meet the agreed-upon needs of students.

The Readiness Courses are designed to assist students who are assessed as “unready” for postsecondary education—meaning they do not reach the state’s college- and career-readiness benchmarks on either the ACT, SAT, PARCC, Smarter Balanced or other assessment—to become prepared and reach those benchmarks.

These courses are best suited for the middle range of students, not those who can succeed in Advanced Placement courses or who are severely behind. The courses are built with rigor, innovative instructional strategies, and a concentration on contextual learning that departs from procedural memorization and focuses on engaging the students in a real-world context. They provide literacy strategies that allow students to read and comprehend all manner of texts and genres in every core discipline, practical application of writing skills and numeracy skills not yet fully understood in the typical high school math class. In short, these courses target students with weaknesses and college-ready skill gaps and re-educate them in new ways to ensure they are prepared for postsecondary-level pursuits.

The two SREB Readiness Courses — Literacy Ready and Math Ready — are available free of charge to any state, district, school or teacher who wishes to download them from the SREB website, after a simple registration process. SREB encourages states to provide this curriculum on their websites as well. The full courses and additional resources, including informational publications, policy briefs, state information and slide presentations, are also available on the website at [SREB.org/Ready](http://SREB.org/Ready).

## SREB Readiness Courses on iTunes U

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Additional course materials are now available for an online, facilitated class or a hybrid classroom environment. Please view the SREB Literacy Ready units on iTunes U by downloading the iTunes U app on your tablet or smartphone, or going to [www.itunes.com/sreb](http://www.itunes.com/sreb) on your laptop or computer.

## Literacy Ready: Ready for reading in all disciplines

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The SREB Readiness Course titled Literacy Ready is an innovative, dynamic course built to help students master the literacy skills needed for three core subject areas — English, social science and science. Literacy Ready consists of six units: two in history,

## Literacy Ready: Ready for reading in all disciplines

two in English and two in science. Content of the discipline is at the forefront of the curriculum: while the disciplinary literacy skills are emphasized through reading and writing assignments based on the content. The Lessons, Activities and Assignments conform to the framework prescribed by the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC). Units are focused on truly understanding how to read and interpret texts in the discipline on a college level. They are designed to be used as steppingstones, with the first module in each subject less rigorous and demanding than the last.

### English

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Both units are designed to address the following essential question: “How is the exponential increase of information that we process in all forms of media affecting the way we live?”

#### **Unit 1: Informational Anchor Text**

The first unit engages students in reading informational text from Nicholas Carr’s *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, as well as a number of related supplemental texts. Students practice the following reading skills with an English disciplinary focus: literary epistemology; reading for argument, claim and evidence; reading for rhetorical strategies and patterns; and reading for internal and external connections. The unit conclusion engages students in collecting evidence for a stance-based synthesis essay on a topic drawn from the central text. Students use feedback received from peers and from the teacher to revise their syntheses and submit a synthesis essay.

#### **Unit 2: Literary Anchor Text**

The second unit moves into literary study, using *Ubik* by Philip K. Dick as the central text. In this unit, students read the central text and a variety of related supplemental texts. They practice the following reading skills with an English disciplinary focus: literary epistemology, close reading; inference, interpretation of rhetorical strategies and patterns; and reading for internal and external connections. The unit conclusion involves students in collecting and presenting evidence for a literary argument essay on one of three topics related to the central text. With a draft of the literary argument in hand, students participate in a debate related to a common question drawn from the theme of the novel.

### Science (biology)

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Each unit has a different theme associated with science. The first unit evaluates science claims in health and nutrition, while the second requires students to dig further to understand DNA structure and the future of biotechnology.

#### **Unit 1: Nutrition**

In this unit, students are introduced to disciplinary literacy in the sciences. Students learn strategies for reading multiple types of text, including science textbooks, research articles and news articles. They also learn a variety of ways to write about science—from personal reflection to the development of an informational brochure—and to comprehend science information in multiple representations, including animations, diagrams, charts and tables.

## **Unit 2: DNA and Biotechnology**

In this unit, students extend their understanding of reading and writing in the sciences as they read research articles and textbook material, take notes from lecture videos and make predictions using scientific models. The text material in this second science unit is more complex in both content and composition than the material in the first unit. Additionally, students are asked to write in more depth as they prepare and present an evidence-based scientific poster in a research symposium.

## **Social Science (U.S. history or government)**

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Units are unified by the topic “concepts of liberty and freedom.”

### **Unit 1: Civil Rights Movement**

The first unit focuses on the Civil Rights Movement and the changes that took place over the period of the 1960s. Students draw information from a textbook chapter, a film, a lecture, and a number of primary source documents as they learn to read history, to recognize implicit and explicit claims and evidence, to write a historical account and to form arguments in essay form.

### **Unit 2: U.S. Foreign Affairs**

The second unit focuses on U.S. involvement in foreign affairs: the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. In this unit, students read multiple texts as well, but more emphasis is placed on writing historical arguments based on their reading. The texts and sources in this unit are more complex than in the first with two larger, individual writing assignments.

## **Textbooks**

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Two books will need to be purchased in print or electronic form to teach the English units of this Literacy course. These books are available at online retailers such as Amazon, EBay, Barnes and Noble or on iTunes for less than \$15 each.

Carr, Nicholas. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. W.W. Norton & Co, 2010.

Dick, Phillip K. *Ubik*. Mariner Books, 2012.

Two texts are used for the science units and will need to be purchased in print or electronic form, or the class instructor will need to request permission to use a free copy from the publisher. For information on how to purchase electronic access to these two texts, please visit the download page at [SREB.org/Ready](http://SREB.org/Ready).

Belk, Colleen (2012). *Biology: Science for Life*. Chapter 3 and 4. 4th ed., Cummings, Benjamin., Pearson, January 4, 2012.  
ISBN 10: 0321767829 ISBN 13: 9780321767820.

Phelan, J (2009). *What is life? A Guide to Biology*. Chapter 5: DNA. 1st ed., WH Freeman, April 30, 2009.  
ISBN-10: 1429223189/ISBN-13: 978-1429223188.

A more economical, custom purchase option for Chapter Five of the Phelan text is now available! This is a custom eBook purchase through BFW eBooks with a year-long

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subscription for teacher or student access to the selected chapter. To purchase the select chapter (rather than the full book at cost) needed for this course, follow the directions below.

Custom Version Description: SREB Edition

Custom Version Number: 1039872

Student Price: \$21.50

- 1) Go to <http://ebooks.bfwpub.com/phelan.php>.
- 2) Select the option to “Purchase this eBook.”
- 3) Under Select the version of this eBook you’d like to purchase, click on “A custom version of the eBook.”
- 4) Enter the version number for your custom eBook (1039872).
- 5) Enter your school’s zip code.
- 6) Enter your name and email address. Then select a password and password hint. Keep a record of this information.
- 7) Leave your instructor’s email blank.
- 8) Confirm your email address.
- 9) Enter your credit card information.
- 10) Once you have purchased access, go back to step 1 and sign in with your email address and password to access the eBook chapter!

### Acknowledgements:

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SREB would like to thank many states, organizations and individuals for assisting with the development and production of the SREB Readiness Courses, including teams of educators from our partner states. For a full list or acknowledgements, see: <http://www.sreb.org/page/1687/people.html>.