

CURATE

Curriculum
Reviews
and
Ratings by
Teachers

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HELLO AND WELCOME

TO A CURATE REPORT!

The CURriculum RATings by TEachers (CURATE) project supports the Department's Curriculum Matters: IMplement MA initiative to strengthen curriculum in Massachusetts through educator access to high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL) to support skillful use. The initiative is rooted in the following theory of action:

- *If* LEAs and prep providers have the information and support they need to give in-service and pre-service teachers the tools to access, evaluate, adopt, and implement high-quality, standards-aligned, culturally responsive curricular materials
- *and if* sustainable and collaborative professional learning structures help in-service and pre-service teachers use those materials to orchestrate student learning experiences skillfully
- *then* teacher and student experiences, and ultimately student outcomes, will improve.

Through the CURATE project, the Department convenes Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence of alignment and quality of comprehensive core curricular materials. The CURATE report reflects the panel's deliberations and consensus ratings; it is provided as a resource to support local education agencies to make informed local decisions about curricula, as part of a robust, inclusive, and equity-centered curriculum review and selection process with input from diverse stakeholders, including families (see IMplement MA Guide: Phases 1 and 2).

High-quality instructional materials are aligned to the Massachusetts content, practice, and language development standards; are culturally responsive; and exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills, instructional practices, and understandings. They also are accessible to all students, including students with disabilities, students working above and below grade level, English learners, and students of other diverse identity markers. Ultimately, to actualize the Educational Vision for Massachusetts and cultivate deeper learning for students, HQIM should

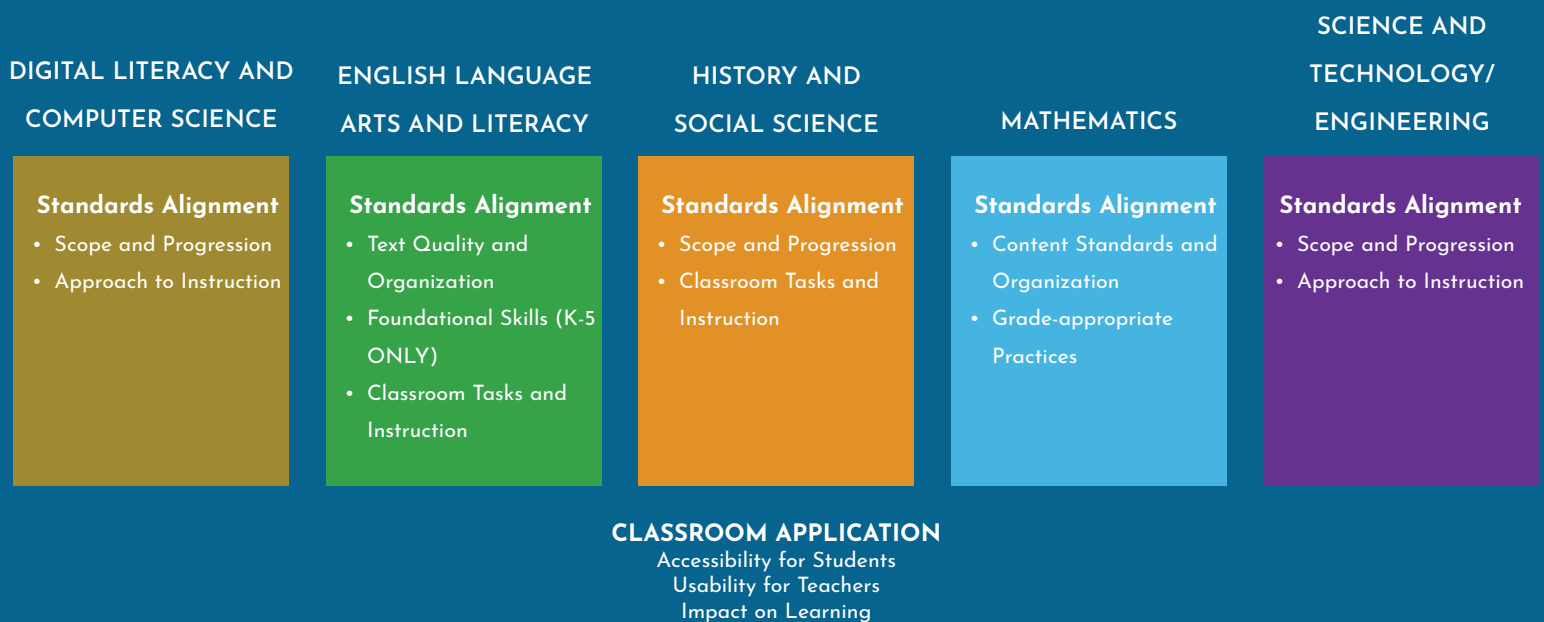
strongly support teachers in their everyday work to be inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining.

Although CURATE-reviewed curricular products may be found to meet DESE's definition of "high quality," it does not mean the curricular product is perfect (see "CURATE Ratings Key"). CURATE evaluates the instructional design and content of the materials but does not and is not intended to measure required curriculum-based professional learning and other supportive school/district systems and structures that impact implementation quality. The power within high-quality instructional materials is amplified by effective educators who are supported to develop the curriculum literacy to facilitate learning experiences that enable all learners to excel at grade level and beyond.

Local educational agencies should review CURATE reports and use the information therein to investigate the extent to which the specific product will well serve and strongly support students and teachers based on the local education agency's local assets, needs, and equity priorities.

CURATE REVIEWS AND REPORTS

Each CURATE panel uses a content-specific rubric for their review of evidence of alignment and quality, coherent with the [MA Curriculum Frameworks](#) and [Standards of Effective Teaching Practice](#). The content rubric guides each panel's review in two domains: Standards Alignment (specific to each content rubric) and Classroom Application (consistent across all content rubrics).



Standards Alignment: Materials eligible for a CURATE review have met a minimum threshold for alignment to national college and career-ready standards, which overlap with the Massachusetts standards, with a few MA differences in emphasis and priorities. These differences or priorities are captured in the relevant CURATE content rubric indicators (e.g., authentic application of grade-level language standards in ELA/Literacy, student academic discourse in mathematics, and affirming and valuing diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives in all content areas).

Panel Review Guiding Question: *What are the strengths and areas for growth in the materials when considering the extent to which they meet expectations for alignment to Massachusetts college- and career-ready content, practice, and English language development standards?*

Classroom Application: This domain pertains to how well the materials support diverse learners (e.g., students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students working above and below grade level, and students of other diverse identity markers) and the teachers (new and experienced) tasked with doing so (see MA Teaching Standards I and II). Schools/Districts in the process of investigating which available high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) would best serve and strongly support students and teachers based on their local equity priorities, assets, and needs should use the information in this domain as a starting place for identifying distinctions among standards-aligned products.

Panel Review Guiding Question: *What are the strengths and areas for growth in the materials when considering the extent to which they meet Massachusetts expectations for well serving and strongly supporting accessibility for diverse learners and usability for busy teachers?*

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practice: What sets CURATE apart is that reviews have always been rooted in Massachusetts equity priorities (diversity in representation, accessibility, inclusion), particularly for students from historically underserved groups and communities, coherent with the Educational Vision. Embedded throughout each content rubric in both domains are indicators and guidance that inform educators' consideration for diverse learners served in schools/districts across Massachusetts. A summary of findings about the extent to which the reviewed product (through design, approach, texts, tasks, practices, guidance, and resources) support teachers in their everyday work to provide grade-appropriate instruction that is inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining will be included with reports published during SY24-25 and beyond.

Panel Review Guiding Question: *To what extent do the materials meet expectations for alignment to Massachusetts college and career-ready content standards AND support inclusive and culturally & linguistically sustaining practice?*

CURATE RATINGS KEY



MEETS EXPECTATIONS: Most or all evidence indicates high quality; little to none indicates low quality. Materials may not be perfect, but Massachusetts teachers and students would be **well served and strongly supported** by them.



PARTIALLY MEETS EXPECTATIONS: Some evidence indicates high quality, while some indicates low quality. Teachers in Massachusetts would **benefit from having these materials** but need to supplement or adapt them substantively to serve their students well.



DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS: Little to no evidence indicates high quality; most or all evidence indicates low quality. Materials **would not substantively help** Massachusetts teachers and students meet the state's expectations for teaching and learning.



NOT APPLICABLE (N/A): Materials are *without* foundational skills and will need to be *paired with* a strong foundational skills resource to address all components of the core literacy block (see [Mass Literacy](#)). This rating is provided only to ELA/Literacy K-5 Foundational Skills, when applicable.



NOT RATED: Narrative information is provided.

FULL REPORT IMAGINE LEARNING EL EDUCATION 2020 _____

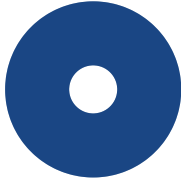
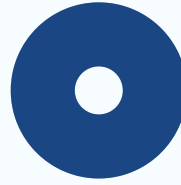
EL Education Language Arts is a digital and print resource for Grades K-8. Please see the [Imagine Learning](#) website and the publisher-provided information later in this report for product specifications. Grades reviewed: 6-8



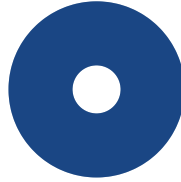
“Students are encouraged to dive into the curriculum through usage of learned strategies. The strategies and anchor charts encourage students to think critically about concepts.”

Massachusetts educator

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

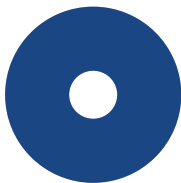
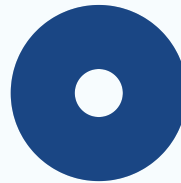


**TEXT QUALITY AND
ORGANIZATION**

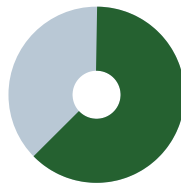


**CLASSROOM TASKS
AND INSTRUCTION**

CLASSROOM APPLICATION



**ACCESSIBILITY FOR
STUDENTS**



**USABILITY FOR
TEACHERS**



**IMPACT ON
LEARNING**

ALIGNMENT TO MASSACHUSETTS STANDARDS AND SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE AND CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY SUSTAINING PRACTICE

<i>Standard...</i>	<i>The materials include/ provide...</i>	<i>Teachers will need to augment materials with integrity to include/provide...</i>
MA-Specific ELA/Literacy Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent sets and sequences of grade-appropriate texts that help students build knowledge systematically • Questions, tasks, and assignments that are engaging, text-based, and require literary or other textual analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of authentic writing opportunities and explicit instruction for grammar and writing skills • Consistent representation of diverse identities, backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives
Students with Disabilities (SWDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated methods to access learning, opportunities for collaboration, repeated routines and structures for classroom tasks, and varied means of demonstrating learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional time or flexible pacing for students to complete lesson tasks • Texts that include differentiated formats, large print, Braille, or specialized fonts to increase accessibility of materials • Scaffolded writing and language instruction for students with disabilities
English Learners (ELs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and caregiver letters translated into multiple languages to foster collaboration with English learners' families • Resources for English learners that include research-based strategies to support learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and objectives aligned to English language development standards since materials do not state alignments • Sentence starters, guiding questions, and conversation tips for English learners to reference to deepen learning

Standard...	The materials include/ provide...	Teachers will need to augment materials with integrity to include/provide...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for English learners to build content-specific knowledge and engage in purposeful writing, including reflective, informative, and argumentative tasks • Scaffolds to help English learners understand content and lesson objectives to support meaningful engagement with the material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language acquisition opportunities for English learners working below grade level
Students Working Above or Below Grade Level	<p>Working Above Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research opportunities for students who complete tasks ahead of time <p>Working Below Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher instructions for providing targeted support for most learners • Informal and formal assessments, allowing for varied ways for demonstrating learning, to measure learning 	<p>Working Above Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional, challenging opportunities and enrichment activities for students advancing beyond the curricular pace • Options to extend learning since materials do not include explicit guidance for teachers <p>Working Below Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible pacing to ensure sufficient time is allocated for students working below grade level to complete tasks

Standard...	The materials include/ provide...	Teachers will need to augment materials with integrity to include/provide...
Diverse Representation & Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions representative of diverse backgrounds • Racial and ethnic identities presented in varied texts • Prompts for students to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identities to broaden the scope of inclusion • Consistent opportunities to integrate diverse experiences Activities that empower student voice and agency, allowing students to lead discussions and share personal insight

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR GROWTH

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Text Quality and Organization



Imagine Learning *EL Education 6-8* offers grade-appropriate, complex texts that engage students with diverse perspectives, social justice themes, and historical events. Texts span a wide range of genres, with a strong emphasis on literary nonfiction and a 70/30 balance of informational to literary texts. While the materials offer rich, coherent sequences for building knowledge, there is a lack of representation from certain cultural groups, such as LGBTQ+ and Latino/Hispanic voices. Teachers may need to supplement fictional texts and broaden the range of perspectives to ensure inclusivity.

Strengths

- Texts exhibit grade-appropriate complexity and are worthy of students' attention. Each unit contains anchor and supplementary texts that are relevant to students' lives, present diverse perspectives, and introduce a variety of social justice concepts and important events from history. In Grade 6, Module 4, *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly features a high-interest story chronicling the lives of four African American women as they experience the Civil Rights era, the Space Race, the Cold War, and the movement for gender equality. In Grade 7, Module 3, Unit 3, texts include poems by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay that are rich with figurative language, historical context, and layered themes of resilience and identity. Throughout units, anchor texts and accompanying texts provide a thought-provoking story with rich language and challenging text structure (EdReports, 1A).
- Materials include texts of varying genres and types of complexity. Text genres include fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, dramatic plays, myths, poetry, biography, literary nonfiction, nonfiction, science, social studies, and other types of informational texts. In Grade 7, Module 1, students read the following genres: a realistic fiction novel, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park; informational text, "The Lost Boys of Sudan"; children's literature *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* by Jeanette Winter; and *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* by Mary Luana Williams (EdReports, 1B).
- Materials include texts representing various cultures and perspectives. In Grade 6, Module 2, the anchor text *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* presents the story of a young Malawi boy with agency who solves a problem in his community. In Grade 7, Module 3, the anchor text *One Last Word: Wisdom from*

the Harlem Renaissance by Nikki Grimes makes connections between historical Harlem Renaissance poems and modern poetic voices and artwork.

- Materials include coherent sets and sequences of texts that help students build knowledge systematically. In Grade 8, Module 3, students begin with the anchor text *Maus* by American cartoonist Art Spiegelman, which provides an allegorical take on the events of the Holocaust. Additional first-hand and research-based texts offer a wider perspective on the Holocaust. Materials include personal testimony, poetry, articles, and scholarly research to broaden students' perspectives. Students use the wide range of provided materials to complete the final assessments of that module, which involves generating a fictional narrative interview and creating a graphic panel depicting an upstander from that period. In Grade 6, Module 3, students learn about American Indian boarding schools through the anchor text *Two Roads* by Joseph Bruchac and other supporting texts to encourage a deeper understanding of the topic. By the end of the module, students demonstrate their knowledge by creating an audio museum (EdReports, 2A).

Areas for Growth

- Teachers will need to supplement materials in Grades 7 and 8 to expose students to a variety of fictional texts. In Grade 8, Module 2, "Food Choices," the majority of texts are informational; teachers will need to source and include additional materials to expose students to a variety of genres.
- Materials across grade levels include limited texts representing various cultures and perspectives. In Grade 8, Module 1, "Latin American Folktales," the material is largely focused on Mexican heritage, excluding the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Additionally, given the absence of LGBTQ+ voices and perspectives throughout the curriculum, teachers will need to augment materials to ensure a broad and diverse group of cultures and perspectives are presented. Grade 8, Module 2, "Food Choices" primarily features white authors, requiring supplementation to ensure diverse voices are represented.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Classroom Tasks and Instruction



Materials provide structured discussions aligned with grade-level speaking and listening standards. Students have opportunities to read a diverse set of texts that offer a variety in both in-class and independent reading. Teachers will need to augment materials to connect grammar and language instruction to prior learning. Additionally, students with disabilities and English learners would benefit from additional peer conversations and vocabulary practice.

Strengths

- Materials provide for structured discussions that address grade-level speaking and listening standards. In Grade 8, Module 1, students review a discussion anchor chart before participating in a text-based Socratic seminar to discuss a question about Latin American Folklore. In Grade 6, Module 4, students read two chapters of *Hidden Figures* and utilize a “Turn and Talk” protocol to predict what the next chapter will be about, as well as a Think-Pair-Share protocol to discuss the main ideas of that section.
- Most questions, tasks, and assignments are text-based, work to support knowledge building of a topic or concept and require literary or other textual analysis. Embedded explicit and inferential questions prompt students to use textual evidence to support their inferences. Tasks and questions guide students to gather insight, knowledge, and evidence from the texts, rather than rely on personal experience and prior knowledge. Teacher materials, particularly the student workbook and supplemental resources, provide for the planning and implementation of the text-based questions and tasks, and include examples of student responses and additional prompts to aid those who may need support. In Grade 6, Module 1, Lesson 4, students compare and contrast themes from Greek myths and *The Lightning Thief*. Following a close reading of the text, students complete a graphic organizer, choose two themes from a list, and then compare how each text conveys the theme using evidence. (EdReports, 1F).
- Materials address grade-level language standards through both explicit instruction and authentic application. In Grade 7, Module 2, students work through explicit vocabulary analysis practice by breaking down unfamiliar words—such as “intravenously”—into smaller, more manageable parts to better understand the meaning. Students then learn key definitions of essential vocabulary and use context clues and dictionaries to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Every module includes a vocabulary log for students to record definitions and examine contextualization for academic and domain-specific words.

- Some materials include a wide range of authentic writing and explicit instruction in writing skills and strategies. In Grade 8, Module 2, students receive explicit instruction to develop an argumentative essay in which they practice writing an introduction, identifying and drafting claims and counterclaims, and writing a conclusion to drive home key points. In Grade 6, Module 2, students write a problem-solution essay about how “design thinking” is used to solve a critical problem. Students use The Painted Essay template to examine a model problem-solution essay. The template asks students to color-code parts of the essay depending on purpose. Materials include an informative writing checklist and an anchor chart. Lessons include instruction on organizing an introduction with adequate context, composing proof paragraphs with facts, quotations, transitions, and accurate sourcing, and writing a conclusion that relates to the facts presented (EdReports, 2E).
- Materials have students engage in a range and volume of in-class and independent reading. In Grade 7, Module 2, the anchor text *Patient Zero* and several accompanying articles introduce students to a variety of perspectives on social epidemics. Students have opportunities to read a diverse set of texts that offer a variety of ideas and arguments as well as a culminating research task designed to foster an independent exploration of materials. Materials include a suggested reading list for students at a variety of Lexiles beyond the anchor and core texts for students to engage in independent reading, including informational and relevant literary books. For example, in Module 3, which centers on Voices of the Holocaust, suggested independent reading includes *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak and *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust* by Doreen Rappaport (EdReports, 1E).

Areas for Growth

- Strategies to support English learners (MLs) are not integrated within individual lessons. Teachers must consult an “Additional Materials” section to access resources to support MLs. Massachusetts teachers will need to augment materials to address English language development standards.
- Materials lack a clear progression of grammar and language skills. Teachers will need to augment materials to connect grammar instruction to prior learning. Materials rarely facilitate collaboration amongst students to work together to clarify unknown vocabulary. Students with disabilities and English learners would benefit from peer conversations and additional practice for learning new vocabulary and writing tasks. Additional augmentation is required to provide sufficient instruction on grammar and conventions. In Grade 7, Module 4 there is a conventions checklist for speaking which references phrases, clauses, and the correction of misplaced and dangling modifiers, but there are no materials for teacher-led lessons or direct instruction.
- Some units lack detailed, robust instruction for writing composition. In Grade 7, Module 1, students are asked to write an objective summary of a chapter from *A Long Walk to Water*. Instructions for this assignment lack detail on how to effectively compose longer essays. Materials do not include

instructions for students who may need additional support to write topic sentences, embed evidence, and provide sufficient reasoning. Teachers will need to augment certain units to provide students with further opportunities and instruction to practice writing composition.

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR GROWTH

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Accessibility for Students



Materials provide strategies for students with disabilities, English learners, and those working above or below grade level to access content and demonstrate learning. Lessons across the materials include structured tools for collaboration, language support, and varied assessments. While some materials offer tasks that respect different cultural identities, teachers will need to supplement materials to represent Indigenous cultures and affirm diverse identities.

Strengths

- Materials provide for varied means of accessing content, helping teachers meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities and those working above or below grade level. Throughout all grades, materials consistently provide varied approaches in reading, writing, listening, and speaking for students working at all levels. Additionally, the curriculum offers support for accessing grade-level content and skill acquisition. Lesson-specific materials are provided for independent and collaborative work, and all units consistently provide resources for students with disabilities and those working below grade level. In Grade 8, Module 1, students engage in a lesson on writing a compelling conclusion, which includes a partner discussion, peer review, and a “Learning Target Reflection,” where students can indicate whether they feel they have successfully met the lesson objectives or if they require additional support. This indication allows students to receive assistance prior to completing the task and allows for multiple entry points for students to be successful. In Grade 6, Module 1 the “Opportunities to Extend Learning” section states that some students may not require the level of scaffolding provided, allowing teachers to make decisions about scaffolds on an individual student level. Teachers are encouraged to prompt students toward deeper levels of understanding and increased rigor by referencing Levels 3 and 4 of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge framework.
- Materials provide for varied means of demonstrating learning, helping teachers meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities and those working above or below grade level. In Grade 8, Module 1, Unit 3, Lesson 4, note catchers include sentence frames to support English learners and students with disabilities, while open-ended note-taking spaces are provided for students working above grade level. Similarly, in Grade 7, Module 3, Unit 2, Lesson 1, students are given the flexibility to choose to analyze between three to five images during an entrance ticket activity, offering flexibility to accommodate

diverse learning needs. Materials also encourage experiential and collaborative learning. For example, the “optional” component in Grade 7, Module 2, suggests meeting with professionals who have firsthand experience with medical and social epidemics, enabling students to connect academic concepts to real-world applications. In Grade 8, Module 4, Unit 3, Lessons 5-11, students demonstrate learning through collaborative discussions as part of a mid-unit assessment and create a presentation for an end-of-unit assessment focused on activism. Materials include varied tasks that allow students with alternative ways to demonstrate learning beyond traditional in-depth written analyses. In Grade 7, Module 3, students analyze *The Sculptor* and are given multiple ways to demonstrate their understanding. Students are asked to identify and explain essential ideas as they’re presented in the poem, sketch drawings of key lines and phrases, and select key words to indicate what they observed.

- Materials help teachers ensure that students at various levels of English proficiency have access to grade-level content, cognitively demanding tasks, and opportunities to develop academic language in English. In Grade 7, Unit 1, Lesson 6, materials include illustrations to aid students in understanding the complex text *A Long Walk to Water*. Throughout the materials, “Language Dives” are included to assist MLs in understanding the meaning of texts. In Grade 7, Module 2, Unit 2, Lesson 12, students complete the “Language Dive” by dragging, dropping, and rearranging portions of sentences to reconstruct full sentences to answer the lesson’s guiding question. Materials include a variety of suggestions for teachers to support students at various levels of English proficiency. In Grade 8, Module 1, Unit 1, Lesson 4, materials suggest sharing graphic representations of aliens, monsters, and ghosts to help students understand the meaning of “supernatural.” The materials also include additional support, such as having triads of students work together on one text-dependent question and sharing out to the class, rather than completing all of the questions independently (EdReports, 3Q).
- Some materials include questions and tasks that affirm and value diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives. In Grade 8, Unit 3, Lesson 6, students honor upstanders of the Holocaust by analyzing graphic panels that convey sympathy for the experiences of European Jews. Students examine how artists use inference and narrative techniques to bring moments from non-fiction text to life in graphic panels. Students then apply their learning to create their own panels. Materials elevate diverse backgrounds and perspectives to deepen learning. In Grade 7, Unit 2, Lesson 3, students explore various social and medical epidemics through a variety of articles, podcasts, and discussions, to engage with a wide range of experiences, voices, and cultures.

Areas for Growth

- Materials do not consistently offer multiple means of representation. Teachers may need to supplement with instructional strategies that cultivate understanding and respect across languages and dialects, address biases in the use of language, connect prior knowledge to new learning, and cultivate multiple ways of knowing and making meaning to ensure the diverse needs of students are met so they may

access the curriculum.

- Resources to ensure that students at various levels of English proficiency have access to grade-level content, such as the *Guide to Supporting English Language Learners* in the drop-down menu, are not clearly labeled for easy access within lessons.
- Teachers will need to augment materials to affirm and value diverse identities. In Grade 6, Module 3, *American Indian Boarding Schools*, materials focus on the trauma experienced by Native Americans and fail to acknowledge the richness of Indigenous cultures. In Grade 7, Module 2, Units 2 and 3, diverse voices are presented, such as the character of “Pop,” who after a lifetime of identifying as White, learns that he is of Creek Indian descent. However, materials do little to affirm the value of these diverse identities.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Usability for Teachers



Lessons advance student learning with clear purpose and include engaging tasks. The outlined pacing offers limited opportunities for suggested grouping, accommodations, or extension activities to meet the diverse needs of all students, including English learners. While materials support teachers with routines, assessments, and rubrics, they offer limited options and exemplars for students working above or below grade level. Included informal and formal assessments measure learning, but guidance on adjusting instruction based on assessment results is limited. Teachers will need to augment materials to create lessons that are inclusive of students' racial, ethnic, and gender identities.

Strengths

- Lessons and tasks advance student learning with clear purpose. In Grade 7, Module 2, Unit 3, students develop skills in reading, writing, and speaking through the engaging task of creating a podcast about epidemics. A structured and coherent sequence of activities build upon each other to deepen student understanding while providing clear progression and meaning. Students are asked to create a hook to grab the listener's attention, include a variety of voices, and speak in a charismatic tone. Other podcast elements include interviews, rich description, use of transition words, the incorporation of music, and deliberate pacing. In Grade 8, the Teacher Edition provides an overview of standards addressed in each module to communicate a clear intended purpose of each lesson. Additionally, each lesson contains an agenda along with lesson sections that include an Opening, Work Time, Closing, and Assessment (EdReports, 3C).
- Materials support teachers with suggested classroom routines and structures (e.g., grouping strategies). The Grade 7, Module 2, Mid-Unit 3 Assessment illustrates a step-by-step approach: it begins with comprehension questions to check students' understanding, moves into analysis questions that require deeper thinking, and concludes with a research task where students must find and evaluate a source. This assessment format is a routine commonly found throughout lessons in the unit. In Grade 6, Module 1, Unit 1, Lesson 13, students use a Think-Pair-Share to answer a question about Chapter 11 of *The Lightning Thief*. Once students discuss the answer with a partner, they move to an abbreviated Socratic seminar where the teacher invites small groups to discuss the prompt in front of the class (EdReports 3P).
- Overall, the curriculum may be implemented within a typical school year provided teachers are able to select and prioritize specific lessons and activities. Most materials include reasonable pacing within

lessons. In Grade 7, Module 3, Unit 1, Lesson 3, students spend 5 minutes on an opener and entrance ticket, 30 minutes on work time, and 10 minutes for closing. Additionally, there is some flexibility for teachers to decide to skip tasks or adjust the timing of activities.

- Materials include informal and formal assessments that help teachers measure learning and adjust instruction. Each module includes six formal assessments and a culminating performance task for students to demonstrate learning. In Grade 8, Module 4, Unit 1, mid-unit and end-of-unit assessments provide teachers with summative data to measure student progress at key points. Additionally, informal assessments—such as note-catchers, turn-and-talks, anchor charts, and language dives—help educators determine and respond to students’ learning to support successful completion of summative tasks. In Grade 7, Module 4, Unit 1, Lesson 7, students watch a video before analyzing techniques and arguments in the video to demonstrate their understanding of plastic pollution covered in the first half of the unit. At the end of the unit, students write an objective summary, analyze central ideas, and discuss the author’s purpose in the text *Trash Vortex* to demonstrate knowledge of how plastic pollution affects humans, animals, and the environment. In Grade 8, Module 3, Unit 3, students complete a draft of a narrative essay that incorporates a fictional profile, interview questions, and “explosive moments” to craft a compelling story.
- Materials include select rubrics and exemplars to help teachers set clear and high expectations for students working at grade level. In Grade 8, Module 1, Unit 2, students engage in narrative writing using a rubric to ensure their narratives contain all essential components. In Lesson 10, students revisit and revise their drafts to practice specific skills they are expected to demonstrate according to the rubric. Students are prompted to adjust narrative pacing as the rubric emphasizes sequencing events and using transitional words to indicate timing. In Grade 6, Module 3, a “Speaking and Listening Informal Checklist” is used to evaluate collaborative discussions, presentation of knowledge and ideas, listening comprehension, and conventions.
- Materials include guidance and resources designed specifically to build teachers’ knowledge. Lesson narratives offer explicit instruction for teachers to deliver lessons effectively. Materials include resources designed to build teachers’ capacity for addressing diverse student needs. In Grade 8, Module 4, Unit 1, Lesson 5, the lesson narrative outlines guidance on repeated routines and strategies for differentiation for students working above grade level. Additionally, the *Support for Students with Diverse Learning Needs* resource helps teachers differentiate for students operating above or below grade level. Materials also provide teachers with detailed protocols to manage group work, whole-class discussions, and small-group activities. Resources like the *Guide to Supporting English Language Learners*, which offers further reading to enhance pedagogical content knowledge, and the *Culturally Responsive Education Toolbox*, which contains guiding questions, glossaries, and links for further reading, are linked directly within the units for teachers to access. In Grade 6, Module 3, the Teacher Edition highlights sensitive topics such as racism, xenophobia, and internment, linking to expert resources—including a virtual tour of the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC—to deepen teachers’ understanding.

Areas for Growth

- The outlined pacing for some units offers limited opportunities for suggested grouping, accommodations or extension activities. Teachers will need to substantively abridge materials or strictly adhere to suggested timings to complete all the materials in accordance with the outlined pacing. Across all grades, there is limited flexibility to accommodate unforeseen schedule changes and limited guidance on how teachers should prioritize lessons. In Grade 6, Module 3, Unit 1, Lesson 4, Slide 12, students are given two minutes to read a sentence and answer two questions about the overall takeaway of the sentence, the connotations of a specific verb, comparative constructions and the author's point of view before re-reading for updated comprehension of the sentence. Materials for this module lacked flexibility for students to complete select tasks to demonstrate understanding.
- Teachers will need to augment materials to take appropriate next steps based on formal assessment data as materials do not explicitly support teachers in reteaching or providing intervention for students based on formal assessment results.
- Teachers will need to augment materials to provide exemplars and non-exemplars of student work to ensure students have a clear understanding of expectations.
- Materials to help teachers recognize and address their own cultural biases are limited. Teachers will need to augment the materials to create lessons that are inclusive and responsive to the diverse identities of their students—encompassing racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Impact on Learning _____



The curriculum demonstrates alignment to research-based practices.

WHAT THE PUBLISHER SAYS

We asked publishers for information on diverse representation in their materials, professional learning for MA educators, and product specifications. See what Imagine Learning had to say about *EL Education 6-8 Language Arts* (2020).

DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

Describe how you ensure that students of diverse races, ethnicities, nationalities, socioeconomic classes, family experiences, linguistic backgrounds, abilities, cultures, religions, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, and other social identity markers see themselves fully reflected, respected, and valued in your curriculum. Describe also how your curriculum challenges existing narratives about historically marginalized and historically centered or normed cultures, including challenges rooted in systemic oppression.

Imagine Learning and EL Education believe that education can act as an agent of social justice and cultural change by actively increasing the diversity of stories and realities to which students have access. The materials value diversity of voice and authorship as much as diversity of genre and topic. Authentic texts are used to teach content and develop literacy skills. Many texts focus on issues of the past that are still pertinent today, including gender roles, working conditions, the refugee experience, and access to schooling and education around the world. The representation of diverse characters ensures students see themselves in the texts they read. Self-recognition prompts students to consider the habits of character they have learned and how they are (or are not) demonstrated by the characters in the texts. While reading module texts, students are asked to make connections to their own lives and to share these connections with others if they so choose, to show students that what they bring is of value. There is a heavy emphasis on the habits of ethical people, including respect and empathy, and students are frequently reminded of these habits, particularly when being asked to share personal reflections or connecting learning.

EL Education's curriculum design teams include teachers from diverse settings, who ensure the topics and guiding questions are relevant to all students.

Cultural Diversity through the School-Home Connection

Imagine Learning and EL Education highly value the school-home connection, which is reflected through the curriculum in the following ways:

- Students are encouraged to discuss a module's guiding questions and big ideas with families and to share those reflections in the classroom.
- Teachers are provided with resources that can be shared with families to support their understanding of what student will be working on in class.

- Module and unit overview materials include suggestions for how to include family members in the classroom community.
- Lessons offer frequent opportunities for students to share vocabulary translations in home languages to speak with others in home languages, to support students in thinking through their ideas and highlight the value and importance of cultural diversity.

Cultural Diversity in Texts

Throughout the modules, students read high-quality literacy and informational texts by diverse authors featuring diverse time periods and characters. While the texts highlight diverse cultures and perspectives from around the world, they are relevant and have meaning for all students. The selection of texts and resources is intentional, to ensure as many students as possible see their background and cultural experiences reflected in the readings. As students read module texts, the materials prompt them to make connections to their own lives and share these connections with others if they so choose.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Describe any professional learning opportunities (materials or experiences, publisher-provided or otherwise) available for Massachusetts educators that are designed to support skillful implementation of your curriculum. If there are professional learning opportunities available specifically to support skillful use of the materials with English learners, students with disabilities, students working above or below grade level, and/or students of other diverse identity markers, please include this information.

Student achievement in all forms depends on access to, and effective implementation of, high-quality, rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum supported by robust professional development. Imagine Learning provides that curriculum combined with powerful, content-based professional learning. School systems play a central role in creating the conditions for teachers to become experts at teaching the curriculum and adapting instruction to meet the needs of their students.

The Company's approach to professional learning is grounded in respect for teachers and school leaders as creative agents in their classrooms and schools. Every person in the system is a leader of his/her learning and benefits from the learning of others.

- **Professional learning is active:** Educators benefit from professional learning that models the same engagement strategies and instructional techniques used in the curriculum. These professional learning experiences provide educators with a reliable model for how active learning looks, sounds, and feels.
- **Professional learning is collaborative:** Educators engage in an ongoing collaborative cycle of learn, plan, do, reflect. Working with peers accelerates and deepens learning, and professional learning opportunities promote this collaboration for educators throughout the system.
- **Professional learning is self-directed:** Educators grapple with deep questions of practice grounded in their work. Strategic planning, data analysis, new learning opportunities, and coaching cycles ignite self-directed inquiries, with educators learning in response to real-time emerging needs.
- **Professional learning honors diverse learning styles:** Educators benefit from a variety of professional learning modes, which honors the diversity of ways adults learn and grow as professionals.

Imagine Learning *EL Education* is a comprehensive language arts program that helps students develop the literacy skills they need to succeed in college, careers, and civic life. Our flexible professional development

offerings are designed to help educators launch with success and deepen their application and instructional practices with Imagine Learning *EL Education*.

Our team will partner with you to build a professional development plan based on your schedule and goals. Sessions are tailored to reach teacher and instructional leaders of varying needs throughout their implementation.

Required Platform Professional Development

Training on the platform orients participants with the curriculum resources on their site and develop an understanding of the unique unit features and functionality of the Imagine Learning platform. This session teaches participants how to navigate the Imagine Learning *EL Education* curriculum on their site and have time to explore key responses at their grade levels. Lesson customization tools and digital assessment functionality will also be demonstrated.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Describe what a school or district needs to implement your curriculum successfully, including instructional hours and technological infrastructure. Provide basic information about what products are associated with the curriculum (e.g., what texts a typical purchase includes and/or what tools and resources are openly available online).

Digital Access for Students, Teachers, and District Administrators

Imagine Learning's online platform **IL Classroom**, is the cornerstone of its solution. Digital curriculum editions are user-friendly, accessible, and comprehensive, giving educators the resources needed to launch the curriculum with confidence and fidelity. IL Classroom will work on any internet-enabled device, including, but not limited to, Windows and Apple desktop computers, laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, and smartphones. IL products are web-based and do not require any additional hardware or software to function properly.

Instructional Materials

In addition to student and teacher digital access, it is recommended to purchase the corresponding print materials. An overview of print materials can be found on this webpage and is summarized below:

6-8 Module lessons (60 minutes of daily instruction) explicitly teach and formally assess reading comprehension, writing, speaking and listening, and language.

- **Teacher Guides** provide the information needed to start planning. All teacher guide content is also available through the platform, organized to support planning and instruction.
- **Student Workbooks**
- Required Tradebooks and Recommended Tradebooks

Professional Development

At Imagine Learning, we believe it is essential to provide the highest level of service throughout the

life of an adoption. Our Professional Development (PD) offerings, synchronous (virtual and onsite), asynchronous, and job-embedded support teachers, coaches, and administrators in effectively implementing the program with integrity throughout their program adoption. We collaborate with districts and school leadership through every step of the implementation process. Costs will be finalized during the implementation planning phase.

Imagine Learning *EL Education* PD Sessions are tailored to reach teacher and instructional leaders of varying needs throughout their implementation. PD Sessions may be delivered in-person or virtual. Each PD session is focused on helping teachers deepen their understanding of the Imagine Learning *EL Education* curriculum and how it supports the needs of all students.

RESPONSE TO REPORT

The Imagine Learning *EL Education* Grades 6–8 curriculum is designed as a comprehensive, teacher-friendly resource supporting high-quality instruction and meaningful student learning. In addressing *Usability for Teachers*, the curriculum offers detailed daily lesson plans, explicit learning targets, and robust guidance for scaffolding and differentiation. These resources are accompanied by implementation supports, including pacing guidance, unit unpacking videos, and a clear progression of standards and skills. The curriculum’s digital platform is regularly updated to improve navigation and accessibility, ensuring educators can quickly locate resources and customize instruction to meet the needs of their students.

The structure of the curriculum is intentionally predictable, with a consistent lesson sequence building teacher confidence and instructional fluency over time. Collaboration structures, protocols, and routines are built into lessons to support instructional planning and promote a student-centered classroom environment. This intentional design enables teachers to focus their time on preparation and responsive teaching, rather than material creation.

In addressing the *Impact on Learning*, the curriculum prioritizes deep engagement with grade-level texts and tasks that build background knowledge, academic vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Lessons emphasize close reading, evidence-based writing, and academic discussion—skills foundational to long-term literacy achievement. The curriculum’s focus on real-world issues, diverse perspectives, and authentic performance tasks fosters student agency and relevance.

Data from districts implementing the curriculum indicate improvements in reading comprehension, student motivation, and equitable outcomes across student groups. These outcomes are a result of a coherent instructional model grounded in research, designed to empower all learners to achieve excellence.



Looking for more information?

Read the full [approved gateway review](#) or find a [Massachusetts district using this product](#).

This product prequalifies for a Departmental [Master Agreement](#) based upon its CURATE rating. Please contact DESE-CURATE@mass.gov for information about how to utilize the Master Agreement should one exist through the publisher completion of the negotiation or approval process.

Learn about the [CURATE process](#) and to see our call for publisher submissions on COMMBUYS, the official procurement record system for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

NOTE

LearnZillion, the publisher name included with the approved gateway review, is now Imagine Learning. *EL Education 6-8 Language Arts* is a digital and print open educational resource (OER). As an open educational resource, EL Education (the publisher) has certified partners, including Imagine Learning, who provide access to the materials through flexible digital formats and/or print resources, to meet diverse school and district needs. The content of the student and teacher materials are the same across certified providers and do not affect the indicators evaluated by the CURATE rubric in Standards Alignment. When considering Classroom Application in their evaluation and selection process for *EL Education Language Arts*, districts/schools should consider their local assets, needs, and equity priorities, and explore each certified provider website for product specifications and other information that might impact user experience during implementation of the adopted materials.
