

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

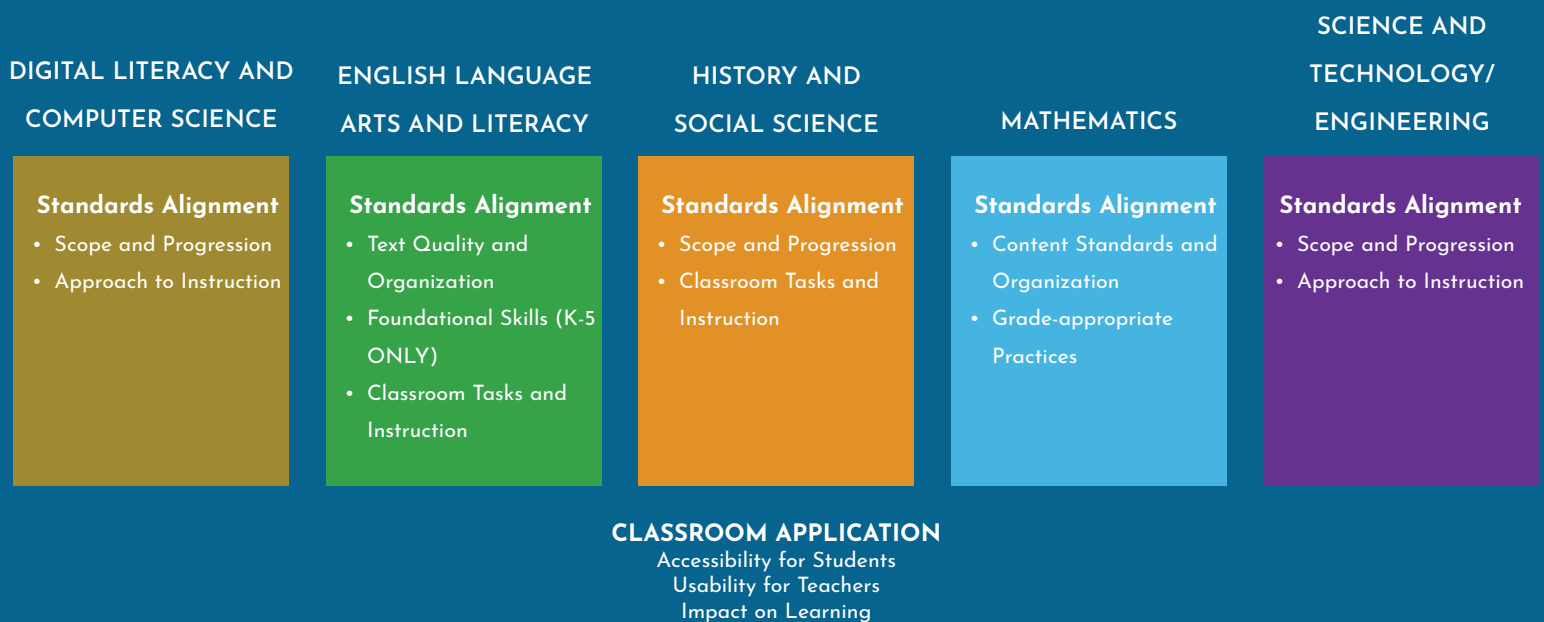
strongly support teachers in their everyday work to be inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining.

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: AMPLIFY CKLA 2022 _____

Amplify CKLA (2022) is a digital and print resource for Grades PreK-5. Please see the [Amplify website](#) and the publisher-provided information later in this report for product specifications. Grades reviewed: K-5

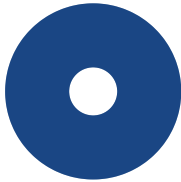


“The decodable stories have had a positive impact on students’ reading fluency since we implemented this program. The stories in the Knowledge units provide entertainment or information that students enjoy.”

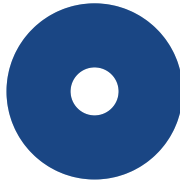
Massachusetts educator



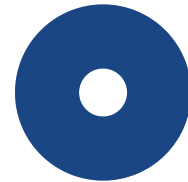
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT



**TEXT QUALITY AND
ORGANIZATION**



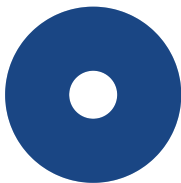
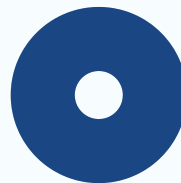
**FOUNDATIONAL
SKILLS**



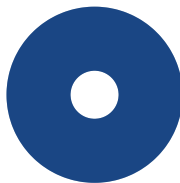
**CLASSROOM TASKS
AND INSTRUCTION**



CLASSROOM APPLICATION



**ACCESSIBILITY FOR
STUDENTS**



**USABILITY FOR
TEACHERS**



**IMPACT ON
LEARNING**

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

<i>MA Priorities</i>	<i>The materials include/ provide...</i>	<i>Teachers will need to augment materials with integrity to include/provide...</i>
MA-Specific ELA/ Literacy Content Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-building and vocabulary through complex texts across the year • Foundational skills instruction that includes the use of strong decodable text in K-2 and handwriting practice in Kindergarten • Explicit instruction for writing and a variety of ways for students to practice writing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts to include wider representation of abilities and family structures, and correction of historical inaccuracies • Reading opportunities in Grades 4 and 5 to include full-length novels • Pacing if using the <i>Writing Studio</i> supplemental resource within the allotted instructional time
Students with Disabilities (SWDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation in foundational skills instruction • Universal access points, video read alouds for repeated review, and multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning • Intervention supports, English Language Development (ELD) strategies, and fluency packets to address the specific needs of students with disabilities • Background knowledge development over time and explicit skills blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework and student-facing activity books with added scaffolds to support students' independent success • Exemplars to guide students' work • Additional time to process language, as materials rely heavily on worksheets and whole-group instruction • Specific steps or directions for teachers to address areas of improvement based on assessment results in Grades 4 and 5

MA Priorities	The materials include/ provide...	Teachers will need to augment materials with integrity to include/provide...
English Learners (ELs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Language Studio</i> supplemental resource aligned to WIDA 2020 standards with digital components that pre-teach content and provide multilingual glossaries • Differentiated support for MLs by proficiency level (e.g., bridging, emerging, extending) • Visual supports, such as slideshows with callout boxes, pictures, ASL responses • Clear vocabulary routines and cognates embedded throughout lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core materials that directly name alignment to WIDA 2020 standards within <i>Teacher Guides</i> • Scaffolds and callout boxes that are aligned to WIDA 2020 standards • Professional development to guide teachers in advancing MLs through language acquisition • More consistent structure and predictable routines to help MLs navigate lessons and build skills systematically
Students Working Above or Below Grade Level	<p>Working Above Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex core texts, additional readings, and guidance for teachers to extend learning to challenge students working above grade level • Additional readings and teacher guidance to provide students with the opportunity to explore topics in greater depth <p>Working Below Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention resources, including a fluency guide • Explicit pre-writing and pre-reading instruction and intentional pacing to build foundational skills for Grades K-2 	<p>Working Above Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent extensions and enrichment opportunities <p>Working Below Grade Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework and student-facing activity books with added scaffolds • Pacing to allow time for reteaching and review

MA Priorities	The materials include/ provide...	Teachers will need to augment materials with integrity to include/provide...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assessment and Remediation Guide</i> in Grades K-3 • <i>Decoding and Encoding Remediation Guide</i> in Grades 4 and 5 • Intervention toolkit to address gaps for students working below grade level • Resources to strengthen foundational skills in reading and fluency, including word chaining exercises and benchmark assessments • Scaffolds like visual aids, auditory supports, and digital tools 	
Diverse Representation & Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to a diverse range of perspectives, including varied linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More diversity in represented family structures, gender identities, and physical abilities to broaden the scope of inclusion and correct for historical inaccuracies • Background knowledge about global cultures • Tasks and questions that connect meaningfully to students' diverse identities • Challenges to existing narratives about historically marginalized and historically centered or normed cultures, including challenges rooted in systemic oppression • More diverse authors of color

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR GROWTH

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Text Quality and Organization



Materials include texts of varying genres and types of complexity that build students' knowledge systematically. Although materials include some variation in perspectives, teachers will need to supplement lessons with texts that represent diverse historical perspectives, abilities, family structures, and gender identities.

Strengths

- Texts exhibit grade-appropriate complexity and are worthy of students' attention. Materials vary in complexity within and across grades as students progress throughout the year. In Grade 2, materials begin with domains that include folktales—as a familiar genre for students—while later domains include more complicated and novel topics such as Greek myths (EdReports, 1D). Text complexity and Lexile increase throughout the year. In Kindergarten, *The Lion and the Mouse* (710L) appears in Knowledge Strand 1, *The Sense of Hearing* (910L) in Strand 2, and *The Season of Farming* (880L) in Strand 5, which includes complex sentences with embedded clauses. In Grades 4 and 5, materials include poems written by Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Pat Mora, Langston Hughes and Sherman Alexie, and poetry journals for students to record their reading reflections. Across grades, students are supported in reading above-level texts through visuals and read-alouds.
- Materials include texts of varying genres and types of complexity. Students engage with a range of texts that feature different levels of complexity in syntax and structure. In Grade 5, Unit 2, students learn about the Aztec and Inca civilizations through informational texts that follow a narrative structure. By Grade 5, Unit 8, students encounter more complex text structures, including flashbacks and blend mixed narrative and informational texts in the same reading. Materials include texts of a wide variety of genres. In Grade 1, students are exposed to nursery rhymes, fables, fairy tales, poems, stories, biographies, and informational texts. The *Text Complexity Guide* provides grade-specific balances of literary and informational texts, with Grade 4 maintaining a 50% balance between the two, and Grade 5 a 43% informational and 57% literary balance. In Grades 2 and 3, select units focus on literary texts, others on informational texts, and some units blend both around a central topic.
- Materials include some texts representing various cultures and perspectives. In Grade 4, Unit 6, Lesson

3, students read *The House on Mango Street* and learn about a Mexican American girl navigating life in a low-income Hispanic community in Chicago. In Grade 4, Unit 7, students learn about the American Revolution and read texts from the perspectives of enslaved persons, freed Blacks, and Indigenous Peoples. The unit includes poetry by Phyllis Wheatley and various viewpoints on the revolution. The *CKLA Trade Book List* also includes texts by diverse authors, showcasing a range of perspectives.

- Materials include coherent sets and sequences of texts that help students build knowledge systematically. All student reading materials and read-aloud selections are related by topic in each unit with academic and core vocabulary words identified and emphasized throughout (EdReports, 2A). In Grade 3, Unit 5, texts explore scientific concepts of light and sound, starting with light and shadows, then progressing to refraction, lenses, color, and sound, alongside profiles of relevant inventors. Similarly, in Grade 1, Knowledge Domain 6, students learn about the components and function of the solar system before delving into the history of space exploration, including NASA and the *Apollo* missions. The “Unit Overview” also connects content with prior learning that may be relevant to astronomy, such as Kindergarten lessons on seasons and weather.

Areas for Growth

- Materials lack texts that represent various genders, sexualities, family structures, and abilities. In Grade 1, Knowledge Domain 2, students learn about the human body, including the fundamental parts and functions of the five body systems, how to care for bodies, and foundational knowledge of healthy habits. Materials briefly mention that people are all different sizes and shapes but do not delve deeply into how people have different physical abilities. Materials do not include perspectives on unique abilities or overcoming challenges associated with having disabilities. Core materials do not highlight diverse perspectives to portray a well-rounded representation of perspectives. For instance, in Grade 3, Unit 10, materials lack texts from the perspectives of Indigenous populations to teach about colonization during Colonial America. Teachers will need to supplement materials with texts that represent a wide range of identities. In select instances, materials challenge traditional narratives. In Kindergarten, Knowledge Domain 9, Lessons 4 and 5, materials address the cruelty and enslavement of the Taínos and Indigenous peoples of Hispaniola. However, many historians question the accuracy of the depiction of their reception of Columbus as “friendly.” Similarly, in Lesson 9, Thanksgiving is portrayed as a celebratory feast, but historians debate whether this event occurred as described.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Foundational Skills



Materials include explicit instruction and regular practice in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and advanced phonics. Materials rely on general practices like “Pausing Points” and flash cards rather than specific, tailored strategies to meet the needs of multilingual learners (MLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). While fluency activities are included, they are often optional or presented in supplemental materials rather than integrated in core instruction.

Strengths

- Materials include explicit instruction and regular practice in phonological and phoneme awareness. Materials demonstrate a clear and research-based progression of skills and content. In Kindergarten, Skills Unit 1, students begin by counting sounds with their fingers and using instruments to explore sound differentiation. In Lesson 4, students use squares to represent the number of instrument sounds they hear. In Lesson 5, they transition from counting sounds to counting words in sentences. Throughout the unit, students count more words as sentences gradually increase in length. In Grade 2, select review activities in the beginning of the materials include chaining, as found in Unit 1, Lesson 3. In Unit 1, Lesson 11, students segment, blend, and then spell a variety of one- and two- syllable short vowel words (EdReports, 1O).
- Materials include explicit instruction and regular practice in phonics and advanced phonics. Phonics instruction offers a gradual release approach with active practice opportunities for students to transfer and apply learned phonics and advanced phonics skills. In Grade 1, Skills 2, Lesson 1, students are introduced to the “ee” sound through a sound discrimination task. Students first watch a brief video in which “ee” is written before repeating the sound associated with the letters and learning a key word accompanied by a visual. Next, students place a spelling card in their “Vowel Code Flip Book,” trace the spelling of “ee” on their desks, write the spelling in their “Activity Book,” and copy the spelling of three words that include the “ee” sound. Advanced phonics instruction is also included; in Grade 5, Unit 2, students study prefixes like il- and ir- alongside their Latin roots to strengthen morphology skills. Materials, questions, and tasks provided in Grade 1 include explicit instruction and regular practice to address the acquisition of print concepts, including alphabetic knowledge, directionality, and function (K-1), structures and features of text (1-2) (EdReports, 1P).
- Materials include frequent opportunities for students to practice and gain automatic word recognition

(Grades K-3) and for teachers to model fluency and for students to practice building fluency (Grades 1-5). Instructional opportunities are frequently built into the materials for students to practice and gain decoding automaticity and sight-based recognition of high-frequency words in Kindergarten. This includes reading fluency in oral reading, beginning in mid-Grade 1 and through Grade 2 (EdReports, 1Q). Materials support instruction in fluency that is both explicit and systematic. In Grade 1, Skills Unit 3, Lesson 1, decodable texts highlight irregular sight words to signal students to use alternative decoding strategies, and new words are introduced with their most common spellings before adding complexity.

- Lessons and activities allow for high-quality, daily differentiation of foundational skills, so all students achieve mastery of foundational skills. In Grade 3, Unit 7, Lesson 3, students practice writing words using spelling patterns and rules for words with the /j/ sound. Phonics instruction provides the following accommodation as an English Language Development support for emerging learners: “Read the sentence and provide a choice of three words to the student, i.e., ‘A stained and dirty kitchen sink is ___ than a clean one. Is the word germy, germier, or germly?’” Additionally, the *Assessment and Remediation Guide* in Grades K-3 and the *Decoding and Encoding Remediation Guide* in Grades 4 and 5 offer assessments and games for differentiation, allowing teachers to tailor word decks to each student’s skill level.

Areas for Growth

- Teachers will need to supplement materials to provide consistent, explicit instruction and practice in phonological and phonemic awareness. While phonological and phonemic awareness skills are primarily introduced as a focused unit in Kindergarten, they are not consistently reinforced throughout the early grades, and opportunities for explicit development are limited beyond the first two units of Kindergarten.
- Explicit practice of advanced phonics skills and morphology instruction is inconsistent in Grades 3-5.
- While fluency activities are included, they are often optional or presented in supplemental materials, such as the “Intervention: Fluency Packet” for Grades 2 and 3, rather than integrated in core instruction. An overall progression of activities supporting fluency development (accuracy, rate, automaticity, prosody) is not consistently maintained throughout lessons, particularly in Grades 3-5. Teachers may need to supplement materials with additional fluency practice in Grades 3-5.
- Differentiation of lessons and activities for foundational skills entails broad suggestions rather than targeted instruction. Materials rely on general practices like “Pausing Points” and flash cards, rather than specific, tailored strategies to meet the needs of MLs and students with disabilities. The suggestion for teachers to use flash cards in Grade 1 for extra reading practice throughout the day is a generalized practice rather than a specific support to meet the needs of students. Teachers will need to differentiate materials in Grades 4 and 5 to support students working significantly below grade level.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Classroom Tasks and Instruction



Materials have students engage in a range and volume of in-class and independent reading in Grades K-2. Materials provide strong vocabulary support across all grades; however, additional supplementation for grammar instruction is needed for Grades 3-5. Most questions, tasks, and assignments require students to engage with and analyze texts. Materials include opportunities for students to practice authentic application of grade-level language standards. Teachers may need to supplement the volume of materials that students engage with for in-class and independent reading in Grades 3-5.

Strengths

- Materials provide for structured discussions that address grade-level speaking and listening standards. Materials provide students with tools for speaking and listening development. Discussion prompts and exercises, such as sentence stems and Think-Pair-Shares, are included throughout lessons to guide speaking and listening practice. In Grade 3, Unit 4, Lesson 9, students engage in a debate about Julius Caesar as they learn about the Roman Empire. Students begin by learning about Julius Caesar through a read-aloud story and engage in Think-Pair-Shares to analyze unit vocabulary and Caesar's role in the civil war. They then prepare for a debate by articulating their position, providing three supporting reasons, and anticipating counterarguments. Students are encouraged to use unit vocabulary—such as conqueror, dictator, resolve, siege, uncivilized, civil war, conspirator, defeat, and traitor—to articulate their points and engage meaningfully in the debate. Materials include recommended activities and detailed instructional strategies for teachers to support MLs at various proficiency levels in accessing discussion. In Grade 1, Knowledge Domain 2, Lesson 1, the teacher reads aloud the story *Everybody Has a Body*. The lesson incorporates both literal and inferential questions, along with scaffolding techniques tailored to the English proficiency levels of MLs. For students at the Entering and Emerging English language proficiency levels, Yes/No questions are suggested, while students at the Transitioning and Expanding proficiency levels are supported with sentence frames (e.g., “___ is inside my body”).
- Most questions, tasks, and assignments are text-based, work to support knowledge building of a topic or theme and require literary or other textual analysis. Knowledge is built in layers through repeated engagement with the same topic. Each unit is organized around a specific concept or topic, featuring both literary and informational texts. Most questions and activities are directly tied to anchor texts. In the Grade 3 “Novel Guide,” students respond to the following text-based questions after reading the novel *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say*: “Where was Stella born, and when did she move to Chicago? Who is Nick? What happens during the family’s “weekly appointments”? Who is Stella’s pet? What two things

did Stella’s teacher, Ms. Bell, say at school on Friday?” Students are required to use textual evidence or quotations to support their responses to questions. In Grade 4, assessments require students to apply the knowledge and vocabulary they developed throughout the unit. Each unit features a diverse range of text mediums. In Grade 4, Unit 3, students watch a video about the Harlem Renaissance. Additionally, each reader incorporates various artwork, maps, and other visual elements.

- Materials address grade-level language standards through both explicit instruction and authentic application. In Kindergarten, Knowledge Domain 3, Lesson 8, students explore the suffix *-ed* to signify past action. The suffix is briefly reviewed in the context of the vocabulary word “misused.” Students then hear the word “misused” referenced during a read aloud of *The Story of the Jumping Mouse, Part II*. Students later echo the word and are provided a student-friendly definition of the word. Next, the teacher explains the meaning of the prefix *mis-* and provides several examples. Lastly, the teacher highlights that the last part of the word *misused* is *-ed* which means that something has already happened. Students then brainstorm other examples of words with the suffix *-ed*. Materials include opportunities for students to practice authentic application of grade-level language standards. In Grade 5, Unit 8, the *Teacher Guide* instructs educators to “model how to choose the correct transitional word or phrase for the first blank. If necessary, model again for the second blank. Have students fill in the remainder of the blanks independently.” This activity directly connects to the text students read and supports paragraph writing. In Kindergarten, Skills Unit 1, students develop essential handwriting strokes—such as vertical and horizontal lines, circles, diagonals, and loops—that prepare them to write upper- and lowercase letters in later units. Lastly, the *Vocabulary Guide* includes a scope and sequence and emphasizes explicit instruction in formal morphology, enabling students to “apply that formal morphology knowledge to deciphering the meaning of new words in new contexts” (*Vocabulary Guide*, p. 5).
- Materials include a wide range of authentic writing and explicit instruction in writing skills and strategies. Instruction follows a gradual release of responsibility model, building foundational skills and progressing to more complex tasks. In Grade 5, Unit 3, Lesson 1, students practice writing poetry. Students create poetry through a structured process of reading, analysis, discussion, and guided writing. Students begin by studying a model poem to understand key concepts and analyze the structure and style of writing through guided questions. Following group discussions and brainstorming, students apply what they have learned by drafting their own poems with teacher support. Students practice authentic writing through a variety of assignments. In Grades 4 and 5, students write a “pitch” of an invention, informational pamphlets, a Wiki Entry, an adventure story, a Codex Project, a diary entry, and an advice column. Materials for each grade include the *Writing Studio* supplemental resource to support explicit writing instruction.
- Materials have students engage in a range and volume of in-class and independent reading in Grades K-2. Texts represent a balance between literary/fictional texts and informational texts. Students engage

in content-rich read alouds alongside systematic instruction in reading and writing skills. Students in Grades K-2 read daily in class. In Grade 1, students participate in daily teacher-led read alouds featuring information-rich expository texts and stories across a variety of genres. They also read decodable texts chorally, with a partner, and independently. As students progress, they engage with rich, complex texts, such as reading an excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Grade 5, Unit 7. The *Independent Reading Facilitation Guide* for Grades K-5 outlines seven steps for implementing a successful independent reading routine and provides supporting materials, including reading logs, book reviews, home letters, goal guides, enrichment activities, and discussion questions. Materials also offer a *CKLA Trade Book List* to further support independent reading.

Areas for Growth

- While the *Teacher Guide* includes select discussion questions to accompany reading selections, materials provide limited guidelines or structured protocol for fostering student discussions. Additionally, supports for teachers to address students' challenges to develop independent speaking and listening skills are inconsistent (EdReports, 1I).
- Materials do not consistently address grade- level language standards across grades. While some units contain multiple opportunities for students to learn, review, or practice grammar and conventions skills, other units assume student understanding of grade- level grammar and convention (EdReports, 1N).
- Teachers may need to supplement the volume of materials that students engage with for in-class and independent reading in Grades 3-5. Materials reviewed for Grade 4 include fewer opportunities for students to practice oral reading skills. Student independent reading activities are typically brief, requiring students to read 1-2 pages. In Grade 5, reading options beyond the provided student texts are occasionally referenced in the *Teacher Guide*, but reading outside of class is typically composed of activity sheets. There is inconsistent support for students to develop reading habits with self-chosen texts (EdReports, 1F).

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR GROWTH

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Accessibility for Students



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. Materials support universal access through a range of visual, auditory, and instructional scaffolds. Materials provide differentiated supports for MLs based on their English proficiency levels. Teachers will need to supplement materials to ensure inclusive representation of identities related to gender, sexuality, family structure, and ability and to challenge existing narratives.

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, which includes MLs. Materials support universal access through a range of visual, auditory, and instructional scaffolds. In Grade 2, Knowledge Domain 6, Lesson 7, students learn about the life cycle of a frog. A time-lapse video depicting the stages of a frog's growth from egg to adult provides a clear visual representation of the life cycle. Students working above grade level are challenged by the probing question, "What other animals undergo metamorphosis, transforming from one form to another?" Scaffolds for MLs accompany read-aloud comprehension questions that are tailored to various language proficiency levels. Lessons include "Pausing Points" for students needing additional processing time, small-group differentiation guidance, knowledge-building videos, an "Advanced Preparation" section, and sidebar support with clarifications and suggestions for teachers. Enrichment opportunities and English Language Development supports are organized by language level. Universal access recommendations for each lesson provide additional supports for students working below grade level and optional extension activities for some lessons for students working above grade level (EdReports, 3P).
- 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, which includes MLs. Universal access recommendations are embedded throughout materials, alongside an *Assessment and Remediation Guide* to support students who may need re-teaching or skill reinforcement. In Grade 3, Unit 7, Lessons 11-14, students develop scripts about their characters' experiences landing on the moon. Over the course of the lessons, students engage in partner reading with feedback and ultimately end

with a reader's theater to show their understanding. Scaffolds for both students with disabilities and MLs are included for the assignment. Each lesson incorporates scaffolds such as modeling, formative assessments, language and visual aids, and background knowledge to ensure comprehension.

- 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 Kindergarten, Knowledge Domain 4, Lesson 1, materials provide differentiated supports for MLs based on their English proficiency levels. During a Think-Pair-Share, students at the Entering/Emerging proficiency level answer Yes/No questions, while those at the Transitioning/Expanding level are provided with sentence stems and students at the Bridging level are encouraged to use content-specific vocabulary in complete sentences. The *Language Studio* supplemental resource provides students at various levels of language proficiency with access to speaking, listening, reading, and writing instruction. The *Language Studio* supplemental resource also equips teachers with tools to monitor student progress toward language and content goals. Materials feature multilingual glossaries with content-specific vocabulary in 10 languages, and a list of cognates within units are included in lesson-specific vocabulary tables.
- Materials sometimes include questions and tasks that promote cultural affirmation and value diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives. In Grade 3, Unit 7, Lesson 16, students engage with a read-aloud about Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African American woman to travel into space. The lesson explores why Dr. Jemison is a role model and affirms the importance of BIPOC women in STEM fields. Across grades, the materials highlight diverse backgrounds, perspectives, languages, and identities to enrich learning and foster inclusivity. In Grade 1, Knowledge Domain 4, students examine the role of world religions in shaping civilizations and explore similarities and differences among different religions. Materials recognize the validity and worth of all cultures and languages. In Grade 2, Knowledge Domain 2, Lesson 7, students learn about Hinduism and the significance of Diwali. Through reading and discussion, they explore the role of Hinduism and the Diwali celebration within the broader context of global history.

Areas for Growth

- Materials do not challenge existing narratives about historically marginalized and historically centered or normed cultures, including challenges rooted in systemic oppression. In Kindergarten, Knowledge Domain 9, Lesson 9, the read aloud "Thanksgiving" oversimplifies history by framing the event as a harmonious collaboration between the Wampanoags and Pilgrims, celebrating unity and mutual learning. This account neglects the perspectives and experiences of many Indigenous peoples. Teachers will need to supplement the curriculum to avoid historical inaccuracies and ensure inclusive representation of identities related to gender, sexuality, family structure, and ability across all grade levels.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Usability for Teachers



Lessons and tasks advance learning with clear purpose but require supplementation to contextualize historical events and ensure inclusivity across linguistic, racial, ethnic, and gender identities. Pacing may be overly ambitious for effective implementation within lessons and the school year. Teachers will need to supplement materials to provide exemplars to set clear expectations. Materials include classroom routines, diverse assessments, and progress monitoring with teacher scripts and guidance. However, there is a lack of explicit support for adjusting instruction based on assessment results in Grades 4 and 5.

Strengths

- Lessons and tasks advance student learning with clear purpose. Each lesson includes concise “Primary Focus Objectives” for speaking and listening, reading, language, and, when applicable, writing. Materials align vocabulary, reading, and writing tasks with content objectives, with a focus on both content mastery and language development. In Grade 3, Unit 1, Lesson 5, students practice literary analysis skills through character study and theme exploration. Students use a “Themes Chart” to connect characters’ actions to broader ideas of friendship and responsibility. Vocabulary instruction, including words like “summoned” and “atmosphere,” supports comprehension and interpretation of the author’s language throughout the lesson. Writing tasks prompt students to analyze character motivations and events, guiding them to articulate their understanding in structured, meaningful ways.
- Materials support teachers with suggested classroom routines and structures. Routines for monitoring progress are embedded throughout the materials. In Grade 4, Unit 6, Lesson 1, materials provide teachers with the following instructions to check for understanding following a close reading of a text: “Ask all students to close their eyes and visualize the houses described in this vignette. Ask them to keep their eyes closed, but to raise their hand when they have seen a vision of the house in their mind. You may wish to ask one or two students to describe what they visualized.” The “Lesson at a Glance” outlines suggested grouping sizes for each activity as well as suggestions for variation in partner groupings depending on the dictates of the lesson. Additionally, extension activities within the “Pausing Points” offer collaborative opportunities, including large group performances of read alouds, plays, and other literary works (EdReports, 3R).
- Materials include informal and formal assessments that help teachers measure learning. A variety of assessments are embedded throughout lessons for student to demonstrate understanding in multiple ways. In Grades K-3, there are various assessments that measure students’ knowledge and word reading

skills and fluency. Progress monitoring checks are integrated into all units, accompanied by teacher scripts and instructions to use the Assessment and Remediation Guide for targeted support in Grades K-3. The *Assessment and Remediation Guide* provides suggestions on how to support students with specific skills development. A flowchart on page 116 of the *Assessment and Remediation Guide* identifies activities to support students in counting words in a spoken sentence. One activity involves students using cubes to mark words in a sentence, with page 123 detailing how to adjust the task's difficulty based on word complexity.

- Materials include rubrics or other resources to help teachers set clear and high expectations for students. The provided rubrics are concise and clear, providing specific criteria for each score. In Grade 3, Unit 4, Lesson 14, two versions of a 4-point rubric in the Teacher Guide include detailed expectations, such as a score of 3 requiring students to provide their opinion, identify the author's opinion, and cite three relevant facts without extraneous information. The *Writing Studio* supplemental resource offers rubrics to help teachers set expectations, though it is found in supplemental materials rather than core lessons. In Grade 2, Skills Unit 2, Lesson 7, students engage in peer review using a "Narrative Checklist." This activity guides students in evaluating narrative elements like character development, setting, and plot, deepening their understanding of narrative structure while providing meaningful feedback to improve their classmates' drafts.
- Materials include guidance and resources designed specifically to build teachers' knowledge. Materials include a PD Library with videos, white papers, resources to improve teacher understanding, and slide shows addressing pedagogical knowledge. The *Additional Scaffolding Options for English Learners* (K-5) document in the PD Library, offers scaffolds for reading, writing, speaking, and listening across English proficiency levels (entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, and bridging). The *Teacher Guide* for the Skills Strand includes guidance for how to implement basic skill instruction. There are also teacher resources at the end of each unit that assist with the implementation and direct instruction of the lessons including, but not limited to, dialogue starters, rubrics, checklists, image cards, activity book answer keys, and code charts (EdReports, 3G).

Areas for Growth

- The pacing for the instruction may be too ambitious to be implemented effectively within a typical school year. The materials are designed for 180-186 instructional days and include little guidance on how teachers should select which lessons to prioritize or omit, if necessary. The pacing may not allow adequate time for review, re-teaching, enhancing, and/or extending student learning for maximum understanding. Although "Pausing Points" are included at the end of each unit, their single-day structure often isn't enough for thorough review or in-depth exploration, especially on complex topics like the human body systems (EdReports, 3B). Additionally, teachers indicated the pacing was a challenge in implementation, noting "The pace on CKLA Skills is very fast and includes many pieces."

- Teachers for Grades 4-5 will need to substantively supplement materials to adjust instruction based on assessment data as materials do not include specific next steps for reteaching and intervention based on formal assessment results.
- Teachers will need to supplement materials with exemplars to establish clear expectations for students. Materials lack exemplars, potential student responses, or non-examples. While student work samples are available, they lack commentary or explanations. Additionally, there is no guidance to help teachers avoid bias when setting expectations for students.
- Materials do not support teachers in recognizing their own pedagogical biases. Teachers will need to supplement the materials to more accurately contextualize historical events and create lessons that are inclusive and responsive to the diverse identities of their students—encompassing linguistic, 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 Amplify had to say about *Core Knowledge Language Arts, CKLA (2022)*.

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 identities 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.

To help students truly value humanity's diversity, *Amplify CKLA* ensures that children become familiar with civilizations, individuals, and experiences from around the world, and students learn that people from different backgrounds and circumstances have made many important contributions. *Amplify CKLA* lessons and knowledge domains expose students to a diverse array of subjects, cultures, genres, authors, and time periods. The program offers many opportunities for students to recognize themselves in familiar characters and to open their minds to new perspectives—all while gaining empathy and developing a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Many *Amplify CKLA* texts help children develop an appreciation for diverse cultures. For example, in the Different Lands, Similar Stories domain, students enjoy identifying similarities and differences in stories like “Little Red Riding Hood” from Germany, “Hu Gu Po” from China, and “Tselane” from Botswana. Other units, such as Personal Narratives and Poetry, showcase a diverse group of individuals, many of whom are confronting new challenges and figuring out their own particular identities. *Amplify CKLA* characters and authors come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, live in a variety of urban and rural environments, have varied physical abilities, and exhibit unique characteristics. Throughout the program, *Amplify CKLA* students learn about people who have advocated for change, confronted race- and gender-based stereotypes, and grappled with unfamiliar places or cultures. In addition to sharing the stories and histories of diverse individuals, *Amplify CKLA* teaches students about the forces that have shaped civilizations and cultures. For example, students learn about the concept of religion and gain a historical perspective on the origins of several world religions, both monotheistic and polytheistic.

Throughout *Amplify CKLA*, characters of historically marginalized backgrounds are highlighted for their important contributions to society. Kindergarten students will encounter real-life and fictional characters that demonstrate the significance of scientists of color. Through Amplify's collaboration with ReadWorks,

students also read about performers such as Duke Ellington, Celia Cruz, Alvin Ailey, and Lin-Manuel Miranda; inventors such as George Washington Carver and Lyda Newman; politicians and activists such as Shirley Chisholm and Bertie Bowman; and artists such as Jean-Michael Basquiat, Frieda Kahlo, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Edmonia Lewis. Students also read texts such as Sharon and Shirley Firth and “A Native American Ballerina” (a biography of Maria Tallchief), which offer a contemporary perspective to help students understand that Native Americans are more than figures from history. Instead, they are vibrant, varied individuals—just like those in all the other cultures *Amplify CKLA* students study.

The *Amplify CKLA* Equity Guides highlight activities within each domain (K-2) and unit (3-5) that support understanding of issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The guide for each grade details how each domain aligns with outcomes identified in the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards. This tool enables teachers to understand how the *Amplify CKLA* program connects to these standards.

Amplify CKLA materials undergo numerous phases of review, including sensitivity and bias review, from both subject matter experts and educators to ensure that students encounter diverse, age-appropriate texts. The program’s careful text progression gives all students the opportunity to see themselves represented and to use their increasing knowledge of self to better understand both the commonalities and the rich complexity of the human experience.

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 specific professional learning opportunities available specifically to support skillful use of the materials with multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students working above or below grade level, and/or students of other diverse identity markers, please include this information.

We are excited to work alongside districts in the state of Massachusetts to build a strong foundation in Amplify CKLA, partnering to deepen educator practice at both the classroom and school level. We know educators have significant demands on their time and different preferences for when and how they learn. Given this, our professional development offerings are designed with the following principles:

- **Scaffolded, phased professional learning:** Our professional development opportunities go far beyond initial product trainings, supporting participants through different stages of learning:
 - **Launch** sessions introduce administrators and teachers to their new program—including the core features and research behind its design—and give teachers opportunity to practice in a collaborative environment.
 - **Strengthen** sessions advance administrators’ and teachers’ understanding of their program and support them in taking their instructional practice to the next level. They meet educators’ needs, deepening content knowledge and planning, instructional, and/or data analysis practices.
 - **Coach** sessions incorporate each school’s specific needs by offering a menu of popular topics or working with an Amplify coach to customize the time spent together. These sessions provide administrators and teachers with in-the-moment feedback, grade-level workshops, and other support in just-in-time.
- **Differentiation by audience:** We offer multiple, differentiated professional development options developed for targeted audiences, such as teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators to support the evolving needs of educators at all levels.
- **Variety of modalities for maximum reach and efficiency:** We offer a variety of delivery methods including:

- On-site: synchronous learning experiences are delivered in person (up to 30 participants)
- Virtual: synchronous learning experiences are delivered virtually through webinars (up to 30 participants) and asynchronous e-learning courses (individual, on-demand)
- Professional Learning Site: curated resources are housed on a site that can be accessed any time (individual, on-demand).

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).

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) is a comprehensive English Language Arts program that includes 180 days of instruction, with 120 minutes of daily instruction in Kindergarten through Grade 3 and 90 minutes in Grades 4-5. The program includes complete teacher and student materials, including Student Readers, Teacher Guides, Student Activity Books, Image Cards, Flip Books, Big Books, manipulatives, and other items. For a comprehensive list of materials, please see the [Amplify CKLA Start Here Guide](#).

Amplify CKLA is a print-based program that includes access to online materials, including Teacher Resources, projectable images and videos, and interactive Quests for Grades 3-5. Many of the Amplify CKLA print materials are also available for online viewing.

The Amplify Hub gives students digital access to materials both at school and at home. Grades K-2 students can read the audio-enabled student Readers in the Library, watch Knowledge Builder videos, or watch and listen to videos featuring the forty-four phonemes. Students in Grades 3-5 can access the student Readers, the Vocab App, and Biblioteca (the Spanish translations of the unit Readers). Teachers also have access to the site.

Amplify CKLA also offers an interactive teaching and learning experience for Grades K-5 that enables teachers to conduct digital lessons and students to participate and complete activity pages online. Called the digital experience, the platform features instruction in a student-friendly slide format. The slides that teachers can project include everything needed to teach the lesson. In addition, the platform is accessible to the students as well.*

Online access to Amplify CKLA requires the technical infrastructure outlined below:

The Amplify CKLA curriculum is supported across the following platforms and browsers:

- Windows (Windows 10+, Chrome (latest 2 versions))
- Chromebooks (Chrome OS, Chrome, latest 2 versions)
- Mac OS 12.6+ (Safari 13+, Chrome, latest 2 versions)
- iPad 6+ (iOS 15+, Safari 15+)

Hardware Requirements:

- School/District IT can create a bookmark in a browser for HTML5 applications
- Projector and screen or electronic whiteboard
- Speakers in each classroom so that class can hear any video projections

Network Requirements:

- Latency from school to Amplify servers of no more than 100ms during peak utilization
- Connection speed to each user device will support 2mbps per device during peak usage
- The ability to allow/list Amplify supplied URLs on school content filters

For more information on technical requirements, please see [here](#).

RESPONSE TO REPORT

We wish to thank the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for a thorough and insightful review of our *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)* program for Grades K-5. Amplify is proud of its partnership with the Core Knowledge Foundation in creating and continuously improving the CKLA program. We appreciate the careful attention given to and recognition of this collaborative work. We find such rigorous feedback helpful in improving our program, and we routinely adjust and enhance the program based on such insights.

Thank you, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, for the important work you do in helping educators discover high-quality programs and for the feedback you have given us. We will add your insights to the comments we receive from teachers and students using our program every day, providing the foundation for how we will keep improving CKLA.



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

Amplify updated the copyright of *Amplify CKLA* to 2022 because of a redesign of CKLA K-2 Skills unit readers “to increase student engagement and a sense of connection with the decodable stories and their characters. Stories with human characters have improved diversity, inclusivity, and authenticity, while others have fantastical creatures to bring more excitement and whimsy to the tales. For all units, Student Reader thumbnail images in the © 2022 Teacher Guides and illustrations in the © 2022 Activity Books have changed.”

EdReports reviewed these revisions and verified that no additional changes were made to the materials. As such, the EdReports review of *Amplify CKLA* © 2015 which established the gateway threshold for the CURATE review is still accurate of the reviewed product.
