

Purpose of the Rubric

The CURATE rubric is designed for use by CURATE panelists to evaluate corecurricular materialsfor Digital Literacy and Computer Science, English Language Arts/Literacy, History and Social Science, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering, and may also be used by educators in other contexts. Core curricular materials are comprehensive resources designed for use with *all* students to access grade-level content and standards in a given class over the course of a year or semester.

Using the rubric, CURATE aims to identify and communicate evidence of alignment and quality of curricular materials. High-quality instructional materials (HQIM)are aligned to the Massachusetts content, language development (WIDA 2020), and practice standards; exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills, instructional practices, and understandings; and empower evidence-based practices that are inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining. They are also accessible for all students, including multilingual learners (MLs), students with disabilities (SWDs), students working above and below grade level, and students of color. In Massachusetts, HQIM should strongly support teachers in their everyday work to be inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining by including content, supports, resources, and educative teacher guides that enable them to orchestrate learning experiences that are grade-appropriate and through which students feel seen, heard, and valued; engage in deeper learning that is relevant, real-world, and interactive; and are held to high expectations with targeted support. *(See* [*DESE Educational Vision*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/default.html)*.)*

**Foundational Skills**

A comprehensive K-5 ELA/Literacy program may be high quality in all components EXCEPT foundational skills. Such a program could still be a high-quality option for reading comprehension, language, speaking and listening, and writing. In this case, the foundational skills component should be removed and replaced with a strong foundational skills resource, such as [*Appleseeds*](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7147567/Appleseeds-Resource-Sharing-Form). **This would create a high-quality package of curricular materials.** A single, comprehensive product does have special benefits because of its ability to connect knowledge-building and language-building across all components, including foundational skills. This is one element to consider in choosing the “strong horse” that’s right for your local education agency.

The CURATE rubric evaluates the quality of the curricular materials but **does not and is not** intended to measure implementation quality. Skillful implementation of HQIM requires investment in ongoing, curriculum-aligned professional learning for administrators and teachers, to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages all students to reach their full potential (*See* [*Standards of Effective Practice*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/standards/default.html)*.*)

Products that receive a rating of *Meets Expectations* in Standards Alignment and a rating of *Meets Expectations* or *Partially Meets Expectations* in Classroom Application are considered HQIM. Although a particular product may be rated “high quality,” this does not mean they are without limitations. Schools, districts, and other local education agencies (LEAs) should consider their localized context and equity priorities for students when analyzing CURATE reports since the challenges reported may impact each LEA differently.

Guidelines for Review

* Review and document all evidence before deciding on ratings.
* Consider quantity as well as quality of evidence for each indicator.
* Consider evidence of high quality as well as evidence of low quality.
* Do not feel compelled to weight each indicator and criterion equally.
* Do not consider provided examples to be exhaustive or restrictive.
* If evidence is lacking for an indicator, flag it for further data collection.

Sources of Evidence

* The product itself: unit and lesson plans, teacher guides, student-facing resources, associated software, and other components
* Other credible and comprehensive reviews of materials, such as those by [EdReports](https://edreports.org/)
* Perceptual data, such as survey responses and focus group findings, from educators with experience using the product in schools
* Information—such as product specifications and videos of teachers using the product—provided by its developers or publishers
* Research findings: see criterion 5 below for guidance on how to evaluate and interpret research on a product’s efficacy

Definitions of Ratings

* **3: 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.
* **2: 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.
* **1: 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.
* **N/A: Not Applicable** – Materials were not designed to address the criterion, and the publisher explicitly named the omission in legal submissions. This rating applies only to the Foundational Skills criterion in the K-5 ELA/Literacy rubric.
* **?: Insufficient Evidence** – More evidence is needed before a rating can be justified. If you are unsure about a rating because you lack relevant information, be sure to choose this option instead of “defaulting” to a rating of *Partially Meets Expectations*.

Rubric Structure

| ***Domains*** | Standards Alignment | Classroom Application |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Criteria*** | Text Quality & Organization | Foundational Skills | Classroom Tasks & Instruction | Accessibility for Students | Usability for Teachers | Impact on Learning |

Rubric

| **Domain: Standards Alignment** |
| --- |
| **Criterion** | **Indicator** | **Notes and Tips** | **Further Reading** |
| **1. Text Quality and Organization***Note:* This rubric was developed for CURATE, which evaluates materials that have previously been reviewed for alignment to college- and career-ready standards. If using this rubric to review materials not already screened for some degree of standards alignment, consider adding or expanding indicators to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. | 1. **Texts exhibit grade-appropriate complexity and are worthy of students’ attention.**
 | * Assess text complexity against grade-level expectations, not student reading levels. All students should have access to grade-appropriate text every day.
* Focus here on texts used for core instruction, including applied practice of phonics and texts used for read alouds, not independent reading or intervention.

**Note**: Leveled texts are not considered grade-level complex texts and do not support evidence-based instruction of grade-level standards. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text*.*)* | * [Text Complexity and the Growth of Reading Comprehension](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06QRG-ReadingComp.pdf)
* Curriculum framework: guidance on text complexity in PK–5 (pp. [79–82](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=82)).
* [Text Complexity](https://achievethecore.org/page/2725/text-complexity) (Achieve the Core)
* Mass Literacy Guide: [Choosing and Using Complex Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/choosing-using.html)
* [Do Leveled Readers Hurt or Help My ELs?](https://www.elsuccessforum.org/resources/do-leveled-readers-hurt-or-help-my-els) (English Learners Success Forum)
 |
| 1. **Materials include texts of varying genres and types of complexity.**
 | * In addition to looking for variation in genre at every grade, check grade-level standards for expectations related to specific genres.
* Within the program, students at each grade level are expected to read shorter texts and extended texts: “well-written, full-length novels, plays, long poems, informational texts chosen for the importance of their subject matter and excellence in language use” (p. [12](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15)).
* Types of complexity include levels of meaning or purpose; text structure; format and text features; use of conventions, diction, and syntax; and knowledge demands.
* Texts should represent a balance between literary/fictional texts and informational texts, as aligned to the MA ELA/Literacy Framework (p. [11](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15)).

**Note:** Leveled texts are not considered grade-level complex texts and do not support evidence-based instruction of grade-level standards. Leveled texts are also not appropriate for teaching reading. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)* | * Curriculum framework: guidance on range of reading, listening, and viewing in PK–5 (p. [76](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=79)).
* Curriculum framework: guidance on types of complexity in 6–12 (pp. [79-81](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=82))
 |
| 1. **Materials include texts representing various cultures and perspectives.**
 | * Determine the extent to which students are represented and reflected in the curriculum, and the extent to which they’re exposed to many identities such as, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, language, religion, family structures, ability, gender, and sexual orientation.
* Full representation goes beyond tokens and stereotypes; it is nuanced and multidimensional.
	+ To what extent are different identities central to a story/text?
	+ To what extent do the characters accurately portray the histories and experiences of their cultures?
* Consider time period (setting, publication date), authors and places represented, as well as representation of primary and secondary sources that represent multiple perspectives.
* Standard 10 for reading literature expects that students engage with texts representing varied cultures and perspectives each year. “Diversity” should not be limited or exclusive to one unit.
 | * [Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED623049.pdf) (Coomer, Skelton, Kyser, Thorius, & Warren, 2017)
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/ejroc/CRE-Rubric-2018-190211.pdf) (New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, NYU, 2019)
 |
| 1. **Materials include coherent sets and sequences of texts that help students build knowledge systematically.**
 | * Each unit should center on a coherent topic or concept to support students in building a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise.
	+ Knowledge encompasses both literary content (e.g., theme, character, setting), as well as topical content (the topic or concept explored throughout a unit).
* Unit length should provide sufficient time for students to build knowledge on a topic or concept through the use of high-quality complex text, including content-rich nonfiction.
* Building knowledge systematically means:
	+ Knowledge of the topic, concept, or information is built in layers through repeated exposure to the same topic from different perspectives or entry points, and/or genres of text.
	+ Text-based tasks require students to repeatedly hear and use key vocabulary related to the topic.
	+ Text-based tasks require students to discuss and/or write about the topic and use the vocabulary.
	+ The assessments provided in the materials require students to apply/use knowledge gained in the unit.
* Building knowledge in this way is especially important for multilingual learners.
* Working with complex, knowledge-rich text sets is an evidence-based practice that supports comprehension. Using texts in related sets is a widely recognized strategy to build students' topical and conceptual knowledge. Text sets contain texts and multi-media related by a shared topic or concept (e.g., amphibians, the Civil Rights Movement, or adaptation). The focus is not strategy instruction but for students to understand the text(s) and build knowledge.
* Topics in ELA curriculum need not align to state standards for other subject areas, though alignment is worth noting where it exists.
 | * Curriculum framework: sample text set for middle grades (p. [83](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=86)).
* [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus II, Sustained Language and Content Support](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (English Learners Success Forum, p. 11)
* Mass Literacy Guide: [Choosing and Using Complex Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/choosing-using.html)
 |
| **2. Foundational Skills** | **Materials support direct teaching of foundational skills to contribute to the development of fluent reading, including: instruction in print concepts (Grade K), phonological and phoneme awareness, phonics and decoding, and fluency.** | * Materials demonstrate a clear and research-based progression of skills and content.
	+ Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher’s language is concise and specific, and the actions for teachers are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
	+ Systematic instruction means that lessons build on previously taught information and is delivered in a planned sequence from simple to more complex. (Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonics and Decoding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html))
* Materials support instruction in foundational skills that is both explicit and systematic.
* The program provides daily opportunities for students to practice reading. In K-2, this includes reading decodable words in isolation as well as reading decodable text and/or connected text for the purpose of providing practice with specific decoding skills and developing automatic word recognition.
* The program includes only evidence-based practices for teaching foundational skills and only includes texts that support evidence-based instruction.
	+ Such practice, when combined with oral language development, is particularly supportive of multilingual learners.

**Note**: Leveled texts should not be considered supportive of foundational skills development nor should they be used to practice specific decoding skills or for developing automatic word recognition. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*  * To meet expectations for foundational skills, materials must not include any non-evidence-based practices, such as
	+ Instruction for students to guess at words rather than use phonic decoding
	+ Instruction to memorize words for which phonics have been taught
	+ Suggesting that students rely on pictures rather than phonic decoding to read words
 | For more on high-quality instruction in foundational skills for grades K-3, refer to the following sections of DESE’s Mass Literacy Guide:  * [Components of the Core Literacy Block](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/)
* [Skills for Early Reading](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/)

There is strong scientific consensus on the effectiveness of systematic phonological awareness and phonics instruction during the initial periods of reading instruction. Sources of relevant research include: * [Ending the Reading Wars: Reading Acquisition from Novice to Expert](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1529100618772271) (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018)
* [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/21) (Institute of Education Sciences, 2016)
 |
|  | 1. **Materials include explicit instruction and regular practice in *phonological* and *phoneme awareness*.**
 | To meet expectation, materials must:* Demonstrate a clear and research-based progression of skills.
* Support instruction in foundational skills that is both explicit and systematic.
	+ Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher’s language is concise and specific, and the actions for teachers are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
	+ Systematic instruction means that lessons build on previously taught information and is delivered in a planned sequence from simple to more complex. (Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonics and Decoding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html))

Examples include:* Phonological awareness activities like word and sound games and the use of poetry and rhyme that help students notice the sounds in words (alliteration, rhyme, syllables, onset and rime).
* Phonemic awareness activities using hand gestures or manipulatives, like blocks, magnetic letters, or Elkonin boxes to help students notice and manipulate the individual sounds in words.
* Regular student practice in connecting sounds to letters.

Non-evidence-based examples include:* Lack of clear routine or guide for instruction
* Limited opportunities for student practice

**Note:** Even if most of the materials within a program feature evidence-based practices, it should be noted if any non-evidence-based practices are also included. | Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonological Awareness](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonological-awareness.html)  |
|  | 1. **Materials include explicit instruction and regular practice in *phonics* and *advanced phonics*. For Kindergarten, materials should also include explicit instruction and regular practice in print concepts.**
 | To meet expectations, materials must: * Demonstrate a clear and research-based progression of skills and content
* Support instruction in foundational skills that is both explicit and systematic
	+ Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher’s language is concise and specific, and the actions for teachers are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
	+ Systematic instruction means that lessons build on previously taught information and is delivered in a planned sequence from simple to more complex. (Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonics and Decoding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html))

Examples include:  * Phonics instruction that offers a gradual release approach with active practice opportunities for students to transfer and apply the phonics and advanced phonics they are learning. This could mean direct practice of taught letter-sound correspondences, vowel patterns, or multisyllabic word reading in decodable texts, sentence-level text, word lists, and/or word sorts selected for and aligned to the lesson purpose.
* Instruction and practice with advanced phonics skills such as reading and spelling inflectional suffixes as well as common prefixes and Latin roots.
* Instruction and analysis with meaningful word parts (morphology) to support multisyllabic word reading.
* Modeling print concepts and discussing them in authentic reading contexts, such as during a teacher-led read-aloud or during teacher-child interactions in the classroom library (K).

Non-evidence-based examples include: * Instruction for students to guess at words rather than use phonic decoding
* Instruction to memorize words for which phonics have been taught
* Suggesting that students rely on pictures rather than phonic decoding to read words

**Note:** Even if most of the materials within a program feature evidence-based practices, it should be noted if any non-evidence-based practices are also included.   | Mass Literacy Guide * [Phonics](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html)
* [Advanced phonics](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/advanced-phonics.html)
* [Print concepts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/) (Kindergarten only)
 |
|  | 1. **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).**
 | To meet expectations, materials must: * Demonstrate a clear and research-based progression of skills and content
* Support instruction in foundational skills that is both explicit and systematic
	+ Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher’s language is concise and specific, and the actions for teachers are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
	+ Systematic instruction means that lessons build on previously taught information and is delivered in a planned sequence from simple to more complex. (Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonics and Decoding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html))

Examples include:* Practice opportunities with taught common letter patterns such as vowel teams, prefixes, or consonant blends.
* Explicit instruction of regular and irregular words that attends to sounds, spelling, and meaning to supportsight-based recognition of high-frequency words.
* Word recognition activities.
* Reading connected text (including decodable readers).
* Repeated oral reading.

Non-evidence-based examples include:  * Instructions to use pictures as clues, context as a clue, or to look only at the first letter in a word
* Instruction to guess at words
* Reading practice using texts not aligned with taught phonics patterns
* Visual memorization of sight words
* Using predictable texts for reading practice

**Note:** Even if most of the materials within a program feature evidence-based practices, it should be noted if any non-evidence-based practices are also included.   | Mass Literacy Guide * [Automatic word recognition](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/word-recognition.html)
* [Components of the Core Literacy Block](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/): Phonics and Decoding, Fluency
 |
|  | 1. **Lessons and activities allow for high-quality, daily *differentiation* of foundational skills, so all students achieve mastery of foundational skills.**
 | To meet expectations, materials must: * Demonstrate a clear and research-based progression of skills and content
* Support instruction in foundational skills that is both explicit and systematic
	+ Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher’s language is concise and specific, and the actions for teachers are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
	+ Systematic instruction means that lessons build on previously taught information and is delivered in a planned sequence from simple to more complex. (Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonics and Decoding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html))
* Provide resources to group students based on students’ standards-based literacy instructional needs, not on students’ perceived reading levels.

Examples include: * Purposeful independent or center-based activities that directly relate to evidence-based taught skills such as hands-on phonemic awareness activities with manipulatives, applied practice with phonics aligned decodable text, or repeated oral reading for fluency.
* Suggested formats and schedules to support small group instruction in foundational skills, including specific considerations and supports for multilingual learners.

Non-evidence-based examples include:  * Loosely structured, independent or small group approaches that embed implicit learning or guessing, or the use of leveled texts *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*
* Small group lessons that use leveled text for reading practice *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*
* Using small group to deliver core instruction only to some students
* Practice opportunities such as worksheets and games that are not purposeful and aligned with instruction

**Note:** Even if most of the materials within a program feature evidence-based practices, it should be noted if any non-evidence-based practices are also included.  | Mass Literacy Guide: [Differentiated Instruction](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/differentiated-instruct.html)  |
| **3. Classroom Tasks and Instruction**The *Classroom Tasks and Instruction* criterion includes both what students are asked to do and how teachers facilitate their success | 1. **Materials provide for structured discussions that address grade-level speaking and listening standards.**
 | * Consider both speaking and listening clusters*: comprehension and collaboration* and *presentation of knowledge and ideas,* as well as [English language development proficiency levels](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf) (p. 33)
* Do materials provide students with tools for speaking and listening development (oracy skills) during academic discussions (e.g., speaking prompts, listening/note taking tools)?
 | * [Standards Navigator](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/search/default.aspx): standards, related resources, and maps of connections between standards
* [Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards](http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/qrg-aligning-curriculum.pdf) and [Highlights of the 2017 Revisions to the ELA/Literacy Framework](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06RevisionHighlights.docx): differences between Massachusetts and Common Core State Standards
* [Vertical progressions](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/standards/) of standards in each strand PK–12
 |
| 1. **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.**
 | * Students should engage directly with texts, not just practice isolated skills (e.g., with worksheets). Occasional discussions and writing may not center on existing texts, but the reading standards are intertwined with the other strands, and most tasks and instruction should involve text.
* Building knowledge systematically means:
	+ Knowledge is built in layers through repeated engagement with the same topic or concept through different text-based tasks.
	+ Text-based tasks require students to repeatedly hear and use key vocabulary related to the topic.
	+ Text-based tasks require students to discuss and/or write about the topic and use the vocabulary.
	+ The assessments provided in the materials require students to apply/use knowledge gained in the unit.
* Though instruction and tasks should center on reading, comprehending, interpreting, and analyzing the written word, other types of texts also support access, engagement, and both close and comparative analysis. The curriculum framework defines text as “a composition or work of art: for example, a film, speech, photograph, drawing, or written work” (p. 184).
* Additional types of texts in the curriculum should include those that support evidence-based instruction around grade-level complex text for knowledge building.

**Note:** Leveled texts are not grade-level complex texts and do not support evidence-based instruction of grade-level standards. Leveled texts are also not appropriate for teaching reading. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*  | * Quick reference guides:
	+ [Anchor standards for reading](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06QRG-AnchorStandards.pdf)
	+ [Reading closely to analyze complex texts: secondary grades](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06QRG-Secondary.pdf)
* Curriculum framework: guidance on critical approaches to analysis (p. [12](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15))
* Mass Literacy Guide: [Responding to Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/responding.html)
 |
| 1. **Materials address grade-level language standards (conventions of standard English, knowledge of language, vocabulary acquisition and use) through both explicit instruction and authentic application.**
 | * Consider all language clusters: *conventions of standard English*, *knowledge of language*, and *vocabulary acquisition and use*. Exclude foundational skills, which are the focus of Criterion 2.
* *Authentic* here means *in context* or *for purposes beyond development of the target skill*. For language standards, *authentic application* might involve analyzing a speaker’s word choice or editing an essay.
 | * Curriculum framework: guidance on language standards (p. [14](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=17))
* Curriculum framework: key cumulative language standards, grades 3–12 (p. [84](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=87))
 |
| 1. **Materials include a wide range of authentic writing and explicit instruction in writing skills and strategies.**
 | * Consider all writing clusters: *text types and purposes*, *production and distribution of writing*, *research to build and present knowledge*,and *range of writing*.
* *Authentic writing* produces texts similar to those found outside of classrooms (e.g., brochures, editorials); accomplishes more than the demonstration of writing skills (e.g., communicates original thinking to a specific audience); and reaches audiences outside classrooms (e.g., family members, public officials).
* Writing instruction connects to reading and language development.
* Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher's language is concise and specific, and the actions of the teacher are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
* Additionally, explicit instruction in writing means that techniques are taught through a gradual release of responsibility. Instruction starts with a description of the technique and how it relates to specific writing purposes, followed by teacher modeling. This instruction can happen at the sentence, paragraph, or text level. Students then apply the technique with corrective feedback from the teacher until they can apply it independently [(Institute of Education Sciences](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/PracticeGuide/17), 2012).
* Non-evidence-based examples include:
	+ Lack of opportunities to write for audiences other than the teacher
	+ Lack of peer collaboration
	+ Inconsistent writing instruction and practice opportunities
	+ Writing instruction not connected to the topic knowledge being developed through complex text instruction
 | * Curriculum framework: guidance on writing (p. [13](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=16))
* [Writing Standards in Action](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/wsa/) (WestEd): sample student work meeting or exceeding grade-level writing standards
* [Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/writing_pg_062612.pdf) (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012)
* [Scaffolding Writing through the Teaching and Learning Cycle](https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/resource-scaffolding-writing-through-the-teaching-and-learning-cycle.pdf) (WestEd)
* [Examples of writing strategies for each stage of the writing process](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/WWC_Elem_Writing_PG_Dec182018.pdf#page=22), (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012)
 |
| 1. **Materials have students engage in a range and volume of in-class and independent reading.**
 | * Every student should be reading in class *every* day. Worksheets and activities that relate to texts do not take the place of reading.
* Texts should represent a balance between literary/fictional texts and informational texts, as aligned to the Massachusetts ELA/Literacy Framework.
	+ Reading in grades K–1 might include participating in teacher read-alouds of both information-rich nonfiction as well as stories. Additionally, reading decodable or other connected text to practice taught letter-sound combinations might also be included.
	+ In addition to participating in teacher read-alouds of both information-rich nonfiction as well as stories, reading in grades 2 and 3 might include fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and grade 3 might also include myths from diverse cultures.
	+ Reading in grades 4 and 5 might include texts across genres with multiple layers of meaning, complex or unconventional text structures, and complex vocabulary and knowledge demands.
* Materials include supports for teachers during complex text lessons so instruction may be scaffolded while the text at the center of instruction is at or above grade level.
* Core materials should provide protocols or instructional routines to support students’ independent reading (e.g., resources to support independent book choices, book talk resources).
* Once students have mastered basic decoding skills, leveled text could be one of a range of choices for independent reading practice. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*
 | * Curriculum framework: guidance on balancing extended and shorter texts (p. [12](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15))
* Curriculum framework guidance on independent reading ([Guiding Principle 3](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=19))
* Mass Literacy Guide: [Choosing and Using Complex Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/choosing-using.html)
 |

| **Domain: Classroom Application** |
| --- |
| **Criterion** | **Indicator** | **Notes and Tips** | **Further Reading** |
| **4. Accessibility for Students***Note:* While no one set of materials can serve all students’ needs, they should strongly support teachers tasked with doing so. Standard II of the [MA model teacher evaluation rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/teacher-rubric.pdf) sets expectations for teaching all students. | 1. **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.**
 | * Consider whether materials provide differentiated strategies and/or activities to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities and those working above or below grade level, which includes multilingual learners.
* Focus on strategies and/or activities provided to support access to grade-level content, not intervention or remediation. Leveling of texts or grouping students by a program’s reading levels or reading continuum is not supportive of access to grade-level content.
* Consider whether materials provide [multiple means of representation](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/representation) and opportunities for collaborative learning (e.g., partner work).
* Consider intentional and varied points of access as an important strategy for multilingual learners.
* Materials should include multiple entry points for learning and leverage the strengths of all learners, including students with disabilities, students working above and below grade level, and multilingual learners.
* Texts in the curriculum should include those that support evidence-based instruction around grade-level complex text for rich language, ideas, a range of perspectives, vocabulary and knowledge building.

**Note:** Leveled texts are not grade-level complex texts and do not support evidence-based instruction of grade-level standards. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*  | * Guidebook for Inclusive Practice, [Example Artifact List](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/5b-exartifacts.pdf): illustrates ways in which instructional materials can support *inclusive practice*, which encompasses Universal Design for Learning (the focus of these two indicators), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning
* [Universal Design for Learning Guidelines](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/?utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=none&utm_source=cast-about-udl) (CAST, 2018)
* [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus IV, Leveraging Students’ Assets](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (English Learners Success Forum, p. 14)
 |
| 1. **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.**
 | * Consider whether materials provide students the support needed to succeed on tasks and activities, helping meet the diverse needs of all students, including students with disabilities, students working above and below grade level, and multilingual learners.
* Focus here on demonstration of grade level learning, not intervention or remediation.
* Consider whether materials provide [multiple means of action and expression](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/action-expression) and opportunities for students to make choices.
* Materials should **include multiple modes of assessment to demonstrate learning.**
* Consider intentional means of demonstrating learning as an important strategy for multilingual learners.
 |
| 1. **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.**
 | * Materials should offer supports specific to multilingual learners (e.g., references to cognates as-needed scaffolding, and entry points to amplify—rather than simplify—complex language) as well as supports that benefit multilingual learners among other learners (e.g., repeated exposure to academic vocabulary and opportunities to develop academic language in English).
* Materials should support teachers to [develop multilingual learners’ content knowledge and English proficiency simultaneously](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/sei/sei.docx) by using the WIDA standards framework to identify the language expectations, forms, and features students need to communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the literacy content (ELD-LA for Language Arts).
* Materials should support teachers to [differentiate language demands for multilingual learners while maintaining cognitive demand](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/2012-ELD-Standards.pdf#page=13) and access to grade level content.
* Supports could be language specific, language family generalized, and/or inclusive of home languages.
* Leveling of texts or grouping students by a program’s reading levels or reading continuum is not supportive of access to grade-level content.
 | * [English Learner Blueprint for Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/dashboard.html) (MA DESE)
* [Guidelines for Improving ELA Materials for MLs](https://assets.website-files.com/5b245df5d227e581c41b7c4b/5d0bee0995ca9218f246a98a_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (English Learners Success Forum)
* [The ELD Standards Framework](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld/2020), 2020 Edition (WIDA Consortium)
* [Examples of relevant resources](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Implementation-Guide-WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework.pdf) (WIDA Consortium, p. 8-16):
	+ Sensory supports (e.g., real-life objects, manipulatives, videos)
	+ Graphic supports (e.g., charts, tables, graphs, timelines)
	+ Interactive supports (e.g., pair and group work, software)
* [Do Leveled Readers Hurt or Help My ELs?](https://www.elsuccessforum.org/resources/do-leveled-readers-hurt-or-help-my-els) (English Learners Success Forum)
* [Analyzing Content and Language Demands](https://www.elsuccessforum.org/resources/ela-analyzing-content-and-language-demands), (English Learners Success Forum)
 |
| 1. **Materials include questions and tasks that affirm and value diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives.**
 | * Questions to consider:
	+ Do the materials elevate diverse backgrounds, perspectives, languages, and identities to deepen learning?
	+ Do the materials challenge existing narratives about historically marginalized and historically centered or normed cultures, including challenges rooted in systemic oppression?
	+ Do the materials promote recognition of the validity and worth of all cultures and languages?
* Consider whether the questions and tasks support students to:
	+ Actively draw upon their diverse backgrounds
	+ Make real-life connections
	+ Examine their own and others’ perspectives
	+ Help advance their thinking and actions about identity, equity, power, and oppression
 | * [Equity Resources Roundup](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Resource%20Roundup.pdf) (Achieve the Core)
* Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials (Coomer, Skelton, Kyser, Thorius, & Warren, 2017, pp. [6-8](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED623049.pdf#page=6))
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/ejroc/CRE-Rubric-2018-190211.pdf) (New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, NYU, 2019)
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum](https://www.wasa-oly.org/WASA/images/WASA/6.0%20Resources/Equity/DISCUSSION%20GUIDE---CULTURALLY%20RESPONSIVE%20CURRICULUM.pdf) (Hanover Research, 2020)
* [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html): MA DESE definition of culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, and tools for professional development
 |
| **5. Usability for Teachers***Note:* Materials should strongly support teachers in their everyday work. Standard I of the [MA model teacher evaluation rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/teacher-rubric.pdf) defines expectations for teachers related to curriculum, planning, and assessment. | 1. **Lessons and tasks advance student learning with clear purpose.**
 | Consider whether:* The intended purpose of each lesson and task is clear, and content and language learning are interdependent.
* Lessons and tasks serve their intended purposes effectively.
* All components in the teacher guide, manual, or instructions promote evidence-based practices.
* Lessons reflect alignment of text to the purpose of the lesson. For example, if the lesson is intended to support students in reading and discussing complex text, the text(s) included should reflect grade-level language, complexity, and should be used to promote understanding of a complex idea or topic, not to practice a skill or standard. In such a lesson instruction may be scaffolded while the text at the center is at or above grade level. Additionally, if the purpose of the lesson is for learning letter-sound correspondences and common spelling patterns, decodable texts should be used to support students consistently within the scope and sequence.
* Non-evidence-based examples include:
	+ Leveled texts or small group instruction based upon student reading levels rather than assessment data. These do not support advancing student learning with clear purpose. *(See the glossary at the end of this document for a definition of leveled text.)*
	+ Focusing units or lessons on stand-alone skill development rather than knowledge building.

**Note:** Even if most of the materials within a program feature evidence-based practices, it should be noted if any non-evidence-based practices are also included.   | * [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus I, Interdependence of Oral Language, Disciplinary Writing, and Text Engagement](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (English Learners Success Forum, p. 10)
* Mass Literacy Guide: [Differentiated Instruction](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/differentiated-instruct.html)
 |
| 1. **Materials support teachers with suggested classroom routines and structures (e.g., grouping strategies).**
 | * *Routines* might involve annotating a text, responding to peer feedback, or revising and editing writing.
	+ *Routines* should encourage equitable and inclusive student participation that support the simultaneous development of language and content learning. Routines should be evidence-based and ensure that all students have daily access to grade-level complex texts and tasks.
* *Structures* (e.g., pair work, reading stations, talk protocols, speaking prompts, listening/note taking tools, group work roles, speaking and listening opportunities) might be designed to broaden participation and cultivate collaboration among all students, including students with disabilities, students working above and below grade level, and multilingual learners.
	+ *Structures* create opportunities for teacher monitored practice with explicitly taught skills and have a clear purpose that is aligned to ongoing instruction and the topic of study.
* Small group instruction should be evidence-based, teacher-led, and based upon instructional need as opposed to grouping by reading levels.
	+ Small group instruction should be evidence-based, teacher-led, and based upon instructional need as opposed to grouping by reading levels.
* Materials provide resources to actively avoid potential bias in grouping strategies.
* Explicit instruction involves direct explanation. The teacher's language is concise and specific, and the actions of the teacher are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))
* Materials provide resources to support productive student discourse.
 |
| 1. **Pacing is reasonable and flexible; the curriculum can be implemented effectively within a typical school year.**
 | Consider whether:* Time estimates for lessons and units are accurate.
* The program includes only practices that are evidence-based.
* Required number of minutes per day and days per year are feasible.
* Flexible options exist for a variety of school schedules and unforeseen circumstances.
* Guidance is provided to make educated decisions for what resources and aspects of the lesson to be prioritized on a daily basis. Evidence-based approaches are not compromised to conserve time.
 |
| 1. **Materials include informal and formal assessments that help teachers measure learning and adjust instruction.**
 | Consider whether:* Assessments help identify students’ misconceptions about taught skills, topics, or concepts within and across units, and surface gaps in skills and content knowledge, including language learning.
	+ Knowledge encompasses both literary content (e.g., theme, character, setting), as well as topical content (the topic or concept explored throughout a unit)
	+ The assessments provided in the materials require students to apply/use knowledge gained in the unit.
* Materials guide teachers toward next steps based on assessment data (e.g., reteaching, reassessing, continued practice).

**Note:** Assessments to place students into leveled reading groups are not evidence-based and do not support the adjustment of instruction.   |
| 1. **Materials include rubrics, exemplars, or other resources to help teachers set clear and high expectations for students.**
 | In addition to rubrics and exemplars, relevant resources might include: * Checklists for students to use in peer or self-assessments.
* Annotated student work at various levels of achievement, including non-exemplars, or student work at different levels of English development.
* Guidance for the teacher to avoid bias in setting expectations for students
 |
| 1. **Materials include guidance and resources designed specifically to build teachers’ knowledge.**
 | * Relevant supports might bolster aspects of *content knowledge* (e.g., grammar, literary theory), *pedagogical content knowledge* (e.g., development of phonemic awareness, effective strategies for writing instruction), and *inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining practice*.
	+ Do the materials provide a range of supports for teachers that include topic understanding, language development, and specific lesson/standards guidance?
	+ Do the materials support teachers to recognize their own pedagogical biases?
	+ Do the materials provide context for teachers to develop their sociocultural consciousness by accurately contextualizing historical frames and providing various cultural developments for similar concepts?
	+ Do the materials provide teachers with guidance on how to approach, enhance, and customize lessons to be inclusive and responsive to the diverse identities of students, inclusive of linguistic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity?
* Format may vary: consider callout boxes and annotations in lessons, videos of classroom instruction, implementation guides, and more.
 | * [Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/instruction/smk-guidelines.docx) set expectations for Massachusetts educators’ content knowledge. Information about SMKs is available on DESE’s [educator preparation page](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/).
* [Designing Educative Curriculum Materials to Promote Teacher Learning](http://www.project2061.org/research/ccms/site.archive/documents/Promote_Teacher_Learning.pdf) (Davis & Krajcik, 2005)
* [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) (MA DESE)
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum (Hanover Research, 2020)](https://www.wasa-oly.org//WASA/images/WASA/6.0%20Resources/Equity/DISCUSSION%20GUIDE---CULTURALLY%20RESPONSIVE%20CURRICULUM.pdf)
 |
| **6. Impact on Learning***Note:* For CURATE reviews, DESE’s research office determines ratings for this indicator and criterion. | 1. **Research demonstrates that the materials have a positive impact on student learning.**
 | * Meets Expectations
	+ Research that meets a definition of evidence in tiers 1, 2, or 3 as [defined by ESSA](https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/discretionary/2023-non-regulatory-guidance-evidence.pdf), on the *specific* product under review, not just pedagogical strategies the product incorporates.
* Partially Meets Expectations
	+ The curriculum demonstrates alignment to research-based practices, supported by a rating of at least Partially Meets Expectations in the other criteria assessed with the CURATE rubric.
* Does Not Meet Expectations
	+ The curriculum does not demonstrate alignment to research-based practices, evidenced by concerns raised across the other criteria assessed with the CURATE rubric.
 | * DESE’s [“How Do We Know?” Initiative](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/howdoweknow/) helps educators gather, assess, and use evidence to make informed decisions about programs and practices.
 |

Glossary

**Explicit instruction** involves direct explanation. The teacher's language is concise and specific, and the actions of the teacher are clear, unambiguous, direct, and visible. This makes it clear what the students are to do and learn. Nothing is left to guess work. ([Florida Center for Reading Research](https://fcrr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/comprehensive_glossery_of_terms.pdf))

**Leveled texts** are texts that have been given a difficulty rating based on length, amount of words, sentence length, and complexity. Leveled texts are often selected by topic or interest with a focus on “authentic text” that allows for prioritizing making meaning over decoding. (Adapted from the [Colorado Department of Education](https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/decodable_leveled_text))

**Systematic instruction** means lessons build on previously taught information and is delivered in a planned sequence from simple to more complex. (Mass Literacy Guide: [Phonics and Decoding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/skilled-reading/fluent-word-reading/phonics-decoding.html))