



Reading League Curriculum Evaluation: McGraw Hill Publisher's Response

SRA Open Court Reading ©2023

McGraw Hill appreciates the opportunity to learn from and reflect on the Reading League's Review of *SRA Open Court Reading*. We are pleased to see that its reviewers recognize many aspects of the program's strong research-based and explicit and systematic instruction. We are proud to not only be aligned to research best practices, but to also have decades of efficacy as proof that *Open Court Reading* is effective in the classroom. To learn more about the efficacy of *Open Court Reading* visit: <https://www.mheducation.com/prek-12/program/microsites/MKTSP-THA19M01/research.html>

Open Court Reading is built upon decades of research, field testing, and time-tested instructional models. The authors, who are educators and researchers, continuously update the program to include the latest research findings about the most effective ways to teach children to read and write. Key instructional areas are built across grade levels to ensure students become confident and effective readers by the end of grade 3.

Open Court Reading has had a long and successful history of teaching critical foundational skills using research-based materials that integrate findings from learning theory and cognitive science, also known as The Science of Reading, as well as literacy development and teacher expertise. Equally as important, these skills have always been an integral part of a comprehensive language arts curriculum.

McGraw Hill is excited to share that we are adding two new product enhancements for *Open Court Reading* that will expand our assessment and remediation guidance starting in school year 2025-2026 to all customers who use the copyright 2023 program.

1. *Open Court Reading* will feature a new reporting tool that will provide feedback and recommendations to teachers based upon student assessment performance. The tool will provide teachers explicit guidance at the individual student level for differentiation activities if those next steps are needed.
2. In addition, *Open Court Reading* will offer a new Small Group Guide that will provide teachers with more detailed instruction for grouping students and differentiating

instruction during their Workshop time. The guide will also include an inquiry project planner to give teachers additional examples, suggestions, and tools for planning and teaching Inquiry.

For additional clarification and to learn more about forthcoming enhancements in *Open Court Reading*, please see the following responses based on the Reading League’s evaluation rubric.

1.42: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.

Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, *Open Court Reading* will offer an Oral Reading Fluency Assessment digital tool. This technology will help teachers capture data on students’ reading fluency. The recording functionality will allow teachers to save time and easily administer fluency assessments.

2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.

4.22: Writing is taught as a standalone and is not used to further reading comprehension.

Through the writing lessons in *Open Court Reading*, students explore the steps of the writing process: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Editing/Proofreading, and Publishing/Presenting.

Students learn about the purposes and forms of various genres by studying models of each type of writing. *Open Court Reading* gives students time to explore, practice, and apply a given genre over several weeks. As the students begin learning about a new genre, the teacher leads the class through an analysis of an exemplary model of a particular type of writing to determine its characteristics and functions. Then the teacher models the writing process to compose his or her own piece of writing. After seeing models of the new genre, depending on the grade, the teacher and the students work together as a class to complete a writing assignment, or students work together in small groups or pairs to brainstorm and plan their next piece of writing. These writing assignments focus on the characteristics and features of the genre.

During the first half of the year, students spend several weeks on opinion/persuasive writing before spending additional weeks on informational writing and narrative writing. After students have a solid base in opinion, informational, and narrative writing, they spend the last half of the year practicing and applying these different writing types. Students use the writing process to write and publish a variety of compositions, including opinion writing, informational writing, narrative writing, autobiographies, news stories, research reports, responses to literature, and summaries.

In *Open Court Reading*, along with the genres of writing, the writer’s techniques within the selections are pointed out to students, discussed, and then taught and practiced within the context of students’ own writing. Students learn to read selections “with a writer’s eye” and then incorporate elements of the writer’s craft into their own writing.

Additionally, during Reading and Responding, students are prompted to write about the

selection that requires them to go back into the text to cite text evidence. Also, after reading during Text Connections and Look Closer, students write and discuss questions about the texts.

5.1: Assessments measure comprehension only without additional assessment measures to determine what is leading to comprehension weaknesses (e.g., phonics, phoneme awareness, nonsense word fluency, decoding, encoding, fluency, vocabulary, listening comprehension).

The *Open Court Reading* formal assessment system includes four major components to monitor the progress of students in their classrooms and differentiate instruction based on the needs of their students: the *Diagnostic Assessment*, *Benchmark Assessments*, *Lesson and Unit Assessments*, and *Comprehension and Vocabulary Weekly Assessments*.

A *Diagnostic Assessment* is provided to help identify student strengths, weaknesses, and areas of concern in the following six technical skill areas: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics and Decoding, Oral Reading Fluency, Spelling, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension. The *Diagnostic Assessment* can be used as an initial screener with individual students or groups of students who you observe might be lacking the prerequisite skills for the grade level. The information from the *Diagnostic Assessment* can then be used to inform instruction in those specific areas.

The *Benchmark Assessment* is a form of general outcome measurement that offers an overall framework for assessment and serves as a predictor of how well students will perform at the end of the school year. Each 100-Point Skills Battery in a *Benchmark Assessment* provides the teacher with a breakdown of each student's performance on each major component of the curriculum. Teachers can use this skill profile to determine which aspects of the reading program are important to target for the class and which aspects of the reading program require attention for individual or small groups of students.

Lesson Assessments cover the content of specific lessons, and *Unit Assessments* include all the content that was covered in the lessons within that unit. In most cases, content is tested at least twice within a unit, adding to the reliability of the assessment process.

The primary purpose of the *Lesson Assessments* is to allow the teacher to monitor student progress on a regular basis. This process makes it less likely that a student will fall behind because it gives teachers the opportunity to differentiate or repeat instruction as needed. Students' achievement in the components of the *Lesson Assessments* helps determine which students need additional skill instruction.

The *Unit Assessments* are summative in the sense that they represent a collection of related skills and are administered at the conclusion of a number of lessons. The goal of the unit assessment is to evaluate student proficiency of previously taught skills. The results serve as a summative assessment by providing a status of current achievement in relation to student progress through the curriculum. The results of the assessments can be used to inform subsequent instruction, aid in making leveling and grouping decisions, and point toward areas in need of reteaching or remediation.

The *Comprehension and Vocabulary Weekly Assessments* are designed to inform instruction while giving students an opportunity to practice and apply what they have learned. Weekly "cold read" reading selections are provided for additional comprehension and vocabulary assessment.

The topic of the reading selection connects to the lesson's essential question and genre focus. The comprehension assessment items align to the lesson's Access Complex Text Skill(s) and Writer's Craft elements learned that week. The vocabulary assessment items assess understanding and meaning of vocabulary words from the new reading selection.

McGraw Hill appreciates the work that The Reading League is doing across the nation and looks forward to future collaborations. For more information regarding the *Open Court Reading* program, its research basis, and its history of success, please visit opencourtreading.com.