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Curriculum Navigation Report
SRA Open Court Reading Curriculum
2023 for Grades K-5

REPORT INTRODUCTION

Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines Description

“Decisions regarding curriculum, instructional approaches, programs, and resources are critical and must be informed by more than experience, observations, or even belief systems. If we are to succeed in implementing effective practices, then we will need to embrace learning as a part of our work as much as teaching itself.” Hennessy, 2020, pg. 8.

Due to the popularity of the science of reading movement, the term “science of reading” has been used as a marketing tool, often promising a quick fix for decision makers seeking a program aligned with the scientific evidence base. However, as articulated in The Reading League’s [Science of Reading: Defining Guide \(2022\)](#), “the ‘science of reading’ is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. Over the last five decades, this research has provided a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some students have difficulty; and how educators can most effectively assess and teach, and, therefore, improve student outcomes through the prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.”

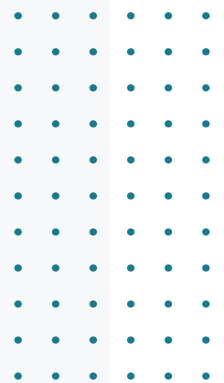
The Reading League’s [Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines \(CEGs\)](#) are a resource developed to assist consumers in making informed decisions when selecting curricula and instructional materials that best support evidence-aligned instruction grounded in the science of reading.

The CEGs are anchored by frameworks validated by the science of reading. Findings

from the science of reading provide additional understandings that substantiate both aligned and non-aligned practices (AKA “red flags”) within the CEGs. These serve as a foundation for what to expect from published curricula that claim to be aligned with the scientific evidence of how students learn to read. The CEGs highlight best practices that align with the science of reading. Red flags specify any non-aligned practices in the following areas:



- Word Recognition
- Language Comprehension
- Reading Comprehension
- Writing
- Assessment



The CEGs have been used by educators, building and district leaders, local education agencies (LEAs), and state education agencies (SEAs) as a primary tool to find evidence of red flags or practices that may interfere with the development of skilled reading. This report was generated after a

review of the curriculum using the March 2023 *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines*, which have been refined based on feedback, a lengthy pilot review, and an inter-rater reliability study.

While the CEGs have been useful for schools and districts for informing curricular and instructional decision-making, The Reading League recognized the challenge of school-based teams that might not have the capacity for an in-depth review process. Expert review teams engaged in a large-scale review of the most widely-used curricula in the United States in order to develop these Curriculum Navigation Reports.

As you read through the findings of this report, remember that red flags will be present for all curricula as there is no perfect curriculum. The intent of this report is not to provide a recommendation, but rather to provide information to curriculum decision makers to support their efforts in selecting, using, and refining instructional materials to ensure they align with findings from the science of reading.

Disclaimer: The Reading League's curriculum review is deemed an informational educational resource and should not be construed as sales pitches or product promotion. The purpose of the review is to further our mission to advance the understanding, awareness, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction.

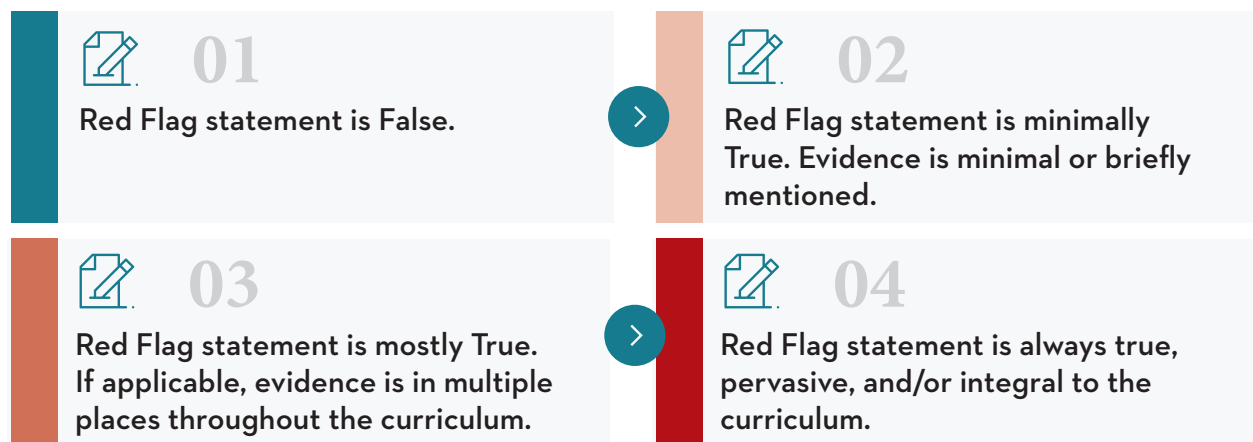


CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The following pages feature the review SRA Open Court Reading Curriculum 2023 for Grades K-5. This curriculum offers a strong basis established through decades of literacy research, tested in classrooms nationwide to demonstrate the effectiveness of the delivery of its systematic and explicit instruction to a variety of diverse learners (McGraw Hill, 2023). This curriculum features three instructional bands, each taught daily: Foundational Skills (Green Band), Reading and Responding (Red Band), and Language Arts (Blue Band).

For this report, reviewers closely examined the Comprehensive Curriculum for Grades K-5. For specifics connected to word recognition, reviewers utilized the Foundational Skill (K-3) and Word Analysis (4-5) materials (e.g., Green Band) for gathering evidence. For language comprehension, the team appraised the general lesson directions included within the Student Anthologies and related materials as well as Teacher Guides (e.g., Red and Blue Bands). Reviewers were selected based on their deep knowledge of the science of reading and associated terminology, as well as high-quality instructional materials. Once selected, they were assigned to teams of at least three reviewers. The team met regularly to establish reliability in their individual scores and report their findings.

For their review, each group member used The Reading League's *Curriculum Reviewer Workbook* to capture scores and evidence for their decisions. Once they determined which section and grade level of the *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines* to review, they individually conducted a review of that section for red flags. Individuals then looked for evidence of red flags within the curriculum materials, including scope and sequences, modules/units, and lessons as well as any ancillary Tier 1 curriculum materials (e.g., assessment documents). As each component was reviewed, individual reviewers also noted the extent to which a red flag statement was "true" and selected the appropriate rating in the *Reviewer Workbook* as outlined below:



Reviewers used the notes section of each component to capture helpful evidence and notes such as keywords that described a practice listed within the CEGs, specific examples, and precise locations of evidence. Notes were included in the review of any optional aligned components, as well.

FINDINGS:

Components Supporting Word Recognition

1A: Word Recognition Non-Negotiables

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>WORD RECOGNITION NON-NEGOTIABLES</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
1.1: Three cueing-systems are taught as strategies for decoding in early grades (i.e., directing students to use picture cues, context cues, or attend to the first letter of a word as a cue).	1
1.2: Guidance to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	1
1.3: Supporting materials do not provide a systematic scope and sequence nor opportunities for practice and review of elements taught (e.g., phonics, decoding, encoding).	1

SRA Open Court’s word recognition non-negotiables are “**met.**” The first part of the Green Band Foundational Skills instruction focuses on phonics and decoding, starting with blending, and reviewers observed that this curriculum provides a systematic scope and sequence of instruction as well as frequent opportunities for practice and review. In fact, both new and review sound/spelling patterns are included in every daily blending lesson. Decoding and encoding are also part of the daily instruction and are featured components in the blending routines as well as dictation and spelling.

In the Green Band section, students are also introduced to new high-frequency words and offered a review of those they’ve previously learned. Educators receive an instructional routine card that guides them to “Point out any sound/spellings in the words students already know.” Teachers are then tasked to instruct students on how to pronounce any portion of the word that is non-decodable. This routine also emphasizes that students will see these high-frequency words often and encourages them to add them to their word bank. Additionally, teachers are directed to review and revisit these words often regularly. Reviewers did observe that Open Court’s high-frequency words are not grouped according to likeness to each other: (i.e., other, brother, mother) as is recommended; however, the organizing principle is consistent and sets students up for success with ensuring decodability before introducing the decodable reader.

While pictures, called rebuses, are used in pre-decodable texts, the teacher always names what is in the pictures prior to reading. Once students know what the picture represents, they decode the sentence with the high-frequency words taught in the lesson and the picture words already named. Furthermore, the team found no evidence that the three cueing systems are taught as strategies for decoding.

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
1.7: Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) without moving to the phoneme level (e.g., blends such as /t/ /r/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds).	1
1.8: Instruction is focused on letters only without explicit instruction and practice with the phonemes that letters represent.	1
1.9: Phoneme awareness is not taught as a foundational reading skill.	1
1.10: Phonological and phoneme awareness is not assessed or monitored.	3

SRA Open Court’s phonological and phoneme awareness non-negotiables are **“mostly met.”** Reviewers noted that instruction includes larger units of phonological awareness (syllable, rhyme, onset-rime) in Pre-K and the beginning of Kindergarten and progresses to the phoneme level as soon as possible. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 1, Lesson 3, Day 4 (pg. T236), instruction moves from isolating, blending, and substituting initial or final sounds to blending all phonemes in a word (e.g., /l/ /ü/ /n/ /ch/).

Instruction also emphasizes explicit instruction and practice with both letters and the phonemes that represent them. Reviewers noted that kindergarten does not begin the introduction of individual phonemes until after Unit 3, when the alphabet and individual letter formations have been taught. Additionally, all grade levels and units utilize sound/spelling cards and routines. For example, in Grade 3, Unit 3, Lesson 4, Day 1 (pg. T206), students review the phoneme /oi/ spelled oi and __oy. Phoneme awareness is also emphasized as a foundational reading skill and occurs early in first-grade lessons. Here students are first taught to attend to onset-rime, then move on to isolating, blending, and manipulating initial and final sounds, before moving on to blending all phonemes in a word.

Finally, a review of phonological and phonemic awareness assessment proved to be challenging. While the team found that both areas can be assessed through Grade 5 by a diagnostic assessment as evidenced by the Lesson and Unit Assessment Blackline Masters, progress monitoring of phonological and phonemic awareness does not occur past Grade 1, Unit 1, Lesson 2. In fact, progress monitoring is relegated to student observation starting in Grade 1, Unit 1. For example, in Grade 1, Lesson 3, Day 1, the curriculum directs teachers that “If students have difficulty blending phonemes in words, work with them in small groups” (pg. T446). This approach is problematic as it is dependent upon teacher discretion instead of using a systematic and data-driven approach to identify and remediate students’ needs.



1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR PHONICS AND PHONIC DECODING	SCORE
1.15: Letter-sound correspondences are taught opportunistically or implicitly during text reading.	1
1.16: Instruction is typically “one and done;” phonics skills are introduced but with very little or short-term review	2
1.17: Key words for letter/sound correspondences are not aligned with the pure phoneme being taught (e.g., earth for /ĕ/, ant for /ă/, orange for /ŏ/).	2
1.18: Phonics instruction takes place in short (or optional) “mini-lessons” or “word work” sessions.	1
1.19: The initial instructional sequence introduces many (or all) consonants before a vowel is introduced, short vowels are all taught in rapid succession and/or all sounds for one letter are taught all at once.	1
1.20: Blending is not explicitly taught nor practiced.	1
1.21: Instruction encourages students to memorize whole words, read using the first letter only as a clue, guess at words in context using a “what would make sense?” strategy, or use picture clues rather than phonic decoding.	1
1.22: Words with known sound-symbol correspondences, including high frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as stand-alone “sight words” to be memorized.	1
1.23: Few opportunities for word-level decoding practice are provided.	1
1.24: Early texts are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts which include phonic elements that have not been taught; decodable texts are not used or emphasized.	1
1.25: Advanced word study (Grades 2-5) Instruction in phonics ends once single syllable phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCe) are taught.	1
1.26: Advanced word study (Grades 2-5) No instruction in multisyllabic word decoding strategies and/or using morphology to support word recognition is evident.	1

SRA Open Court’s phonics and phonic decoding non-negotiables are **“mostly met.”** To begin, throughout K-3 programming, sound/spelling routines are used to introduce and practice letter-sound correspondences utilizing a scope and sequence that moves from simple to complex. Phonics instruction occurs in each lesson daily and includes blending, decoding, dictation, and reading of decodable texts. The instructional sequence provided in Grade 1 Getting Ready Lessons (1-10) explores two to three letters per day in alphabetical order. Beginning in Grade 1, Unit 1, Lesson(s) 1-3, sound/symbol relationships are taught one at a time. The first three taught, s, m, and a, lead to blending sounds in real words as well as practice opportunities within the first Core Decodable text. Furthermore, blending is a typical routine within the foundational skills component of the curriculum.

The reviewers also found that Open Court’s emphasis is on phonic decoding as opposed to instruction that asks learners to memorize whole words, guess, or use picture clues. This is evidenced by the curriculum’s Reading a Decodable routine which instructs teachers to have students apply their knowledge of spelling and syllabication patterns to blend decodable words. Additionally, if students are unsure, educators can refer them to the sound/spelling cards to prompt recall as necessary. The program’s High Frequency Words routine includes drawing students’ attention to both regular and irregular sounds once sound/spellings have been taught. This practice has the teacher spell the high-frequency word with students, highlighting sound/spellings that students already know and then demonstrating how to pronounce the part of the word that is irregular. Thus, again, instruction in high-frequency words does not include whole-word memorization.

Open Court offers students opportunities to practice decoding and encoding at the word-level, as well. This is highlighted in Grade 3, Unit 3, Lesson 5, Days 1-5, where student practice includes individual word blending and dictation & spelling of targeted words as well as practice within the skills practice books. The curriculum also employs the use of decodable texts where students can practice and apply the decodable elements that have been taught. Early texts include five pre-decodables, which provide students with high-frequency word practice before they transition to the core decodables, which offer students fluency practice by reading controlled text.

In regard to advanced word study, instruction begins with basic letter-sound correspondences and is followed by increasingly complex patterns and concepts such as syllable types, morphemes, and etymology. For example, in Grade 3, Unit 3, Lesson 2, students work on spelling the sound /ou/, which is represented by the graphemes ow and ou. Then in the next lesson, students move on to the sound /aw/, which can be spelled au_, aw, augh, ough, and al. In Grade 5, Unit 6, morphology is explored when learners are introduced to various prefixes (e.g., non-, pre-, con-, mid-) and suffixes (e.g., -ness, -ment, -ize, -ance, -ence). Reviewers also noted that the Closed and Open Syllable routines present learners with a set of procedures for decoding multisyllabic words. Additionally, students are provided with instruction in Greek (e.g., cycle, phon, log, graph) and Latin (e.g., loc, flect) roots to support word recognition.

Reviewers observed several strengths in Open Court Reading’s curriculum, such as its daily integration of decoding and encoding instruction through the predictable framework of its sound/spelling routines. This includes activities like blending words, reading sentences, guided skill practice pages, dictation & spelling, as well as reading decodable books. However, the team also noted that a review of previously taught skills is not explicitly included within the curriculum. Instead, the previous skills are embedded in word reading, blending, and additional application in texts. Another problematic area resided with key words for letter/sound correspondences. Reviewers found that the key words for both short a (i.e.,/ă/ - lamb) and e (i.e.,/ĕ/- hen) include a vowel followed by a nasal sound, which could alter the sound as it deviates from the pure phoneme being targeted.

1D: Fluency

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR FLUENCY</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
1.40: Fluency instruction focuses primarily on student silent reading.	1
1.41: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student’s ability to read words quickly.	1
1.42: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	4
1.43: Fluency is practiced only in narrative text or with repeated readings of patterned text.	2
1.44: Fluency assessment allows acceptance of incorrectly decoded words if they are close in meaning to the target word (e.g., assessment based upon the cueing systems, M/S/V).	1

SRA Open Court’s fluency non-negotiables are **“mostly met.”** The curriculum utilizes a variety of fluency practices, including reading aloud, partner reading, choral reading, turn-taking, and so on, to build fluency. Furthermore, the curriculum does not prioritize rate, evidenced by the Grade 5, Lesson and Unit Assessment, Book 1, which provides a checklist for reading prosody (e.g., pace and intonation) in addition to the measure of words correct per minute (WCPM). This includes expectations that students attain proficiency in prosody elements, along with grade and age-level expectations for WCPM.

Despite these strengths, the team could find no evidence of fluency practice at the word level beyond the Word Blending and Sentence Blending routines. Additionally, the term “fluency” is only used in regard to the reading of texts, specifically with Decodable Books or within the Reading and Responding activities. Finally, reviewers noted that the decodable books feature narrative text only; however, nonfiction is presented to students within the Reading and Responding component of the curriculum.

FINDINGS:

Components Supporting Language Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Writing

SECTIONS 2-4: Non-Negotiables for Language Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Writing

This section begins with a review of non-negotiable elements for language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing before moving on to the language comprehension strands highlighted in Scarborough’s (2001) reading rope. Therefore, identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
2-4.1: (LC, RC, W) In early grades, the instructional framework is primarily a workshop approach, emphasizing student choice and implicit, incidental, or embedded learning.	1
2-4.2: (LC, RC, W) Students are not exposed to rich vocabulary and complex syntax in reading and writing materials.	1
2-4.3: (RC) Comprehension activities focus mainly on assessing whether students understand content (the product of comprehension) instead of supporting the process of comprehending texts.	1
2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.	3
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level questioning skills.	1

Reviewers found that SRA Open Court’s non-negotiables for language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing were **“mostly met.”** Reviewers began by noting that there is a clear and consistent focus on the direct and explicit instruction of the elements of language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing. Students are exposed to rich, complex text that includes a variety of Tier 2 and Tier 3 words. Additionally, teacher questioning is focused on skills for processing the comprehension of text, such as summarizing, clarifying,

asking & answering questions, visualizing, making connections, and predicting. When informational text is featured there is an emphasis on student use of text structures to assist them in synthesizing content from the text. The team observed that Open Court’s curriculum stresses inferential thinking and questioning, which often necessitates students to integrate and/or apply their understanding of the text. The table below highlights examples of these types of queries, which reviewers found evidence of throughout the curriculum.

<i>GRADE</i>	<i>UNIT</i>	<i>QUESTION</i>
Grade 1	Unit 9, T113	What do you think is the narrator’s opinion of getting involved with your community is?
Grade 1	Unit 2, T337-342	Can you use context clues to clarify what it means? Who can clarify what he is explaining in this last part, using words related to cause and effect?
Grade 5	Unit 5, T369	Which sentence best states the main idea?

Finally, while writing is taught throughout Open Court’s curriculum, the writing lessons are frequently not connected to the genres students are reading during the week. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 10, students read realistic fiction, but the writing component focuses on crafting a report. In Grade 3, Unit 2, students read a play as a part of their weekly lessons but then write an informative/explanatory essay. This is seen again in Grade 5, Unit 5, where learners explore

informational text while writing persuasive essays. Reviewers did note that there are some units where the writing component aligns with the genre of text read; however, this wasn’t a consistent finding. Reviewers observed that this failure to connect what students are reading and writing about was a missed opportunity as doing so fosters student comprehension and helps them to think deeply about and integrate ideas they encounter in text.

2B: Background Knowledge

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
2.1: Read-aloud opportunities emphasize simple stories or narrative texts. Read-aloud text is not sufficiently complex and/or does not include knowledge-building expository texts (i.e., topics related to science, social studies, current events).	1
2.2: Opportunities to bridge existing knowledge to new knowledge is not apparent in instruction.	1
2.3: Advanced (Grades 2-5): For students who are automatic with the code, texts for reading are primarily leveled texts that do not feature a variety of diverse, complex, knowledge-building text sets to develop background knowledge in a variety of subject areas.	1

SRA Open Court’s background knowledge non-negotiables are **“met.”** Reviewers found that instructional units are organized around themes supported by narrative and expository texts. Themes include topics such as What’s the Weather? (Grade K), Light and Sound (Grade 1), Citizenship (Grade 2), A Changing Nation (Grade 3), Adaptations in Action (Grade 4) and Our Planet, Our Home (Grade 5). Before unpacking each Reading and Responding text, there are building background components for teachers to utilize. For example, in Grade 1, Unit(s) 1-2, students are reminded to make connections between what they are reading in class and prior personal experiences or from other resources they have read or heard about, as this will help them to understand the selection. Another example is highlighted in Grade 3, Unit 3, where students are tasked to investigate the word “renaissance” by considering the question: What other periods in time has this term been used to describe? Finally, leveled text is not included in Open Court’s curriculum materials. Additionally, the program does a good job differentiating between the Decodable Readers to build fluency in grades K-3, and the Student Anthologies, which are used in grades K-5 to build student background knowledge. The anthologies are organized around knowledge-building themes and topics, and additional aligned texts are available in Open Court’s online repository.

2C: Vocabulary

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR VOCABULARY</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
2.7: Vocabulary worksheets and activities are used with little opportunity for deep understanding of vocabulary words.	2
2.8: Instruction includes memorization of isolated words and definitions out of context.	1
2.9: Tier 2 words are not taught explicitly and practiced; students are not given opportunities to use them in their speech, see them in print, and use them in writing.	2
2.10: Students are not exposed to and taught Tier 3 words.	1
2.11: Explicit instruction in morphology is not present and/or not taught according to a scope and sequence (i.e., simple to complex) consistently throughout K-5 instruction.	1

SRA Open Court’s vocabulary non-negotiables are **“mostly met.”** To begin, Open Court vocabulary selection derives from the Reading and Responding texts, which students across all grade levels read weekly. Furthermore, the program provides learners with access to both Tier 2 and Tier 3 words. For example, in Grade 1, Unit(s) 3-4, the term “sprout” is taught within the context of the text, *From Seed to Flower*. In Grade 3, Unit 1, students learn the words “sod” and “homestead” which are featured in the text, *The Prairie Fire*. A final example can be found in Grade 5, Unit 6, where the terms “pewter,” “monocle,” and “palette” are taught in connection with the text, *The Last Leaf*. There is also explicit instruction in morphology starting in Grade K. The table below highlights the sequence of when morphological concepts are taught to students.

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Morphemes Taught</i>
K-5	Inflectional endings
K-5	Plurals
K-5	Prefixes and suffixes
3-5	Greek and Latin roots

Reviewers observed that Open Court Reading offers weekly instruction in vocabulary with routines that support Developing Vocabulary, Practicing Vocabulary, Applying Vocabulary, Extending Vocabulary Knowledge, and Reviewing Vocabulary. While this was noted as a relative strength, the review team reported that students would likely benefit from additional opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the “layers of meaning” in words as this would assist them in recognizing the various shades of meaning a word can hold depending upon its usage or context. These daily routines also provide students with practice using vocabulary in their reading, speaking, and writing exercises within the Skills Practice pages.

Unfortunately, learners are unable to apply taught terminology to writing process activities included within the Language Arts block because the writing activities featured do not necessarily connect to the knowledge-building component. Consequently, there is a disconnect between vocabulary and the application of taught terms in writing. Reviewers noted that this omission was a misfire for enhancing instruction as students are never tasked to apply the precise language they have been learning and reading about in writing.

2D: Language Structures

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE STRUCTURES</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
2.18: Conventions of print, grammar, and syntax are taught implicitly or opportunistically with no evidence of consistent, explicit, simple to complex instruction across all grade levels.	1
2.19: Instruction does not include teacher modeling nor sufficient opportunities for discussion.	1
2.20: Students are asked to memorize parts of speech as a list without learning in context and through application.	1

SRA Open Court’s language structures non-negotiables are **“met.”** The curriculum includes a scope and sequence for teaching the conventions of print, grammar, and syntax that move from simple to more complex. In fact, the teacher guides indicate that students should participate in two to three days of grammar, usage, and mechanics lessons per week. Thus, learners have sufficient opportunities for practice that include teacher modeling and classroom discussion. Grammar and syntax are taught explicitly, and concepts are introduced and taught within the context of writing (i.e., sentence examples). Within the three-day cycle, students are given opportunities to identify concepts in writing, generate their own examples of each concept, and then use their examples in writing. Activities are offered in various formats, including teacher-led modeling, class interactives to promote student engagement and interaction, partner work, and skills practice pages.

Finally, the parts of speech are taught explicitly and systematically, moving from simple to complex, through context and application activities. The reviewers noted an example of application in Grade 5, Unit 2, where students are tasked to work in small groups to apply comma usage, the focus of prior instruction. After crafting their sentences, groups are directed to exchange their examples with other groups and check the sentences for correct comma use. Volunteers are also called upon to share some of the examples and explain the purpose of commas in each. Additionally, application activities provide students with practice at both the oral and written levels.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR VERBAL REASONING</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
2.26: Inferencing strategies are not taught explicitly and may be based only on picture clues and not text (i.e., picture walking).	1
2.27: Students do not practice inference as a discrete skill.	1

Reviewers found that SRA Open Court's non-negotiables for verbal reasoning were **"met."** Inferencing is taught both frequently and explicitly and requires students to utilize the text when engaging in this process. For instance, in Grade 1, Unit(s) 7-8, students are reminded that skilled readers use information from the text, along with personal experiences and/or knowledge, to gain a deeper understanding of a story. Open Court lessons that target this skill are clearly labeled as Making Inferences, which the Program Overview indicates is taught in Grades 1-5. Teacher language incorporates the terms "inference," "inferring," "inferencing," and so forth in order to foster and reinforce a shared understanding amongst students. The team also highlighted an example in Grade 4, where inferencing is taught explicitly using a graphic organizer and the formula, Clue + Prior Knowledge = Inference. Using the organizer, the teacher first models how they developed an inference with the text being read that week. The goal is for students, following instances of teacher modeling and practice, to independently employ this strategy to aid in their inference-making.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LITERACY KNOWLEDGE</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
2.33: Genre types and features are not explicitly taught.	1
2.34: Genre-specific text structures and corresponding signal words are not explicitly taught and practiced.	1

Reviewers found that SRA Open Court’s non-negotiables for literacy knowledge were “**met.**” Genre types and features are explicitly taught. Prior to starting each Reading and Responding Text, teachers are directed to discuss the genre as listed under the genre heading listed in the teacher’s guide. For example, in Grade 1, Unit(s) 7-8, the teacher is directed to tell students that *Grow, Ladybug, Grow!* is an explanatory text. Following this, there is a review of the elements of explanatory text with learners. Another instance is in Grade 3, Unit 6 where the teacher is guided to tell students that *The Panic Broadcast* is an informational text. Again, this is followed by classroom discussion regarding the elements of informational text. The same applies to Grade 5, Unit 2 where teachers remind students that *Ookpik: The Travels of a Snowy Owl* falls under the category of realistic fiction. This is then preceded by a conversation about the elements that make up this genre.

The team also found that genre-specific text structures and signal words are taught explicitly and practiced during Reading and Responding lessons. This is underscored in Grade 1, Unit(s) 7-8, which focuses on compare and contrast. Students are reminded that authors use this text structure to tell how people, events, things, or ideas are alike or different. Skilled readers can use this knowledge of compare and contrast as a way to help them understand and comprehend what they are reading. Students are then directed to read select pages in the text, paying careful attention to both the text and photographs. After reading, the teacher collects student responses about how the animals in the text are alike and different and records them on a compare-and-contrast graphic organizer provided by the program.

Section 3: Reading Comprehension

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR READING COMPREHENSION</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
3.1: Students are asked to independently read texts they are unable to decode with accuracy in order to practice reading comprehension strategies (e.g., making inferences, predicting, summarizing, visualizing).	1
3.2: Students are asked to independently apply reading comprehension strategies primarily in short, disconnected readings at the expense of engaging in knowledge-building text sets.	1
3.3: Emphasis on independent reading and book choice without engaging with complex texts.	1
3.4: Materials for comprehension instruction are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts.	1
3.5: Students are not taught methods to monitor their comprehension while reading.	1

Reviewers found that SRA Open Court’s non-negotiables for reading comprehension were “**met.**” To begin, Open Court’s text selections always align with the overarching themes present in its units and include rich literary and knowledge-building informational texts. In the foundational grades (K-3), students are asked to read Core Decodable texts independently and with a partner to build fluency. Practice of comprehension strategies occurs during teacher-guided read-aloud of the Reading and Responding text selection. In the upper grades (4-5), students are expected to have achieved the foundational reading skills necessary for both independent and partner reading. Fluency work occurs within the Reading and Responding component. Additionally, during daily lessons, the teacher consistently models and encourages the use of comprehension strategies.

Reviewers were also unable to locate any statement specific to independent reading and/or book selection. Instead, lessons include components labeled as Access Complex Text for readers to utilize independently. Furthermore, mentor and shared texts for each unit are selected for their complexity and knowledge-building of unified themes. Students also have access to additional texts that are aligned with taught themes and topics for additional practice.

Finally, students are routinely reminded to utilize strategies to monitor their comprehension. For instance, in Grade 1, Unit 4, teachers remind students that asking themselves questions is an excellent way to check in and assess their understanding of a text selection. This is expanded upon in Grade 5, Unit 6 where students are reminded that when they make inferences, they combine information from the story with their own knowledge or experiences to help them clarify something not directly stated in the text. Additionally, learners are prompted that making inferences is something skilled readers employ to deepen their understanding of story characters and events.

4A: Writing – Handwriting

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR HANDWRITING</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
4.1: No direct instruction in handwriting.	1
4.2: Handwriting instruction predominantly features unlined paper or picture paper.	1
4.3: Handwriting instruction is an isolated add-on.	1

SRA Open Court’s non-negotiables for handwriting instruction were **“met.”** Direct instruction in handwriting occurs in Grades 1 & 2 for print letters and Grade 3 for cursive letters. (McGraw Hill, 2023). Penmanship instruction occurs three times per week in Grades K & 1, one time per week in Grade 2, and two times per week in Grade 3 as students are introduced to cursive at this time. Beginning early on, there is explicit instruction on how to form letters and develop student handwriting. For example, in Grade K, Unit 5, Lesson 1, Day 1, the teacher models letter formation while using explicit teacher language to describe the formation process. The Teacher’s Edition scripting clearly walks educators through the process, which states, “Start here at the top, and go all the way down to make a vertical line. Start here, and go all the way around, making a small circle. Lowercase b.” While Penmanship lessons decrease to 1x per week in Grade 2, students focus on letter formation during a portion of the Language Arts component, as well. Finally, Open Court provides lined paper and dry-erase boards within their resources.

4B: Writing – Spelling

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR SPELLING</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
4.7: No evidence of explicit spelling instruction; no spelling scope and sequence for spelling, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics / decoding scope and sequence.	1
4.8: No evidence of phoneme segmentation and/or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	1
4.9: Patterns in decoding are not featured in encoding/spelling; spelling lists are based on content or frequency of word use and not connected to decoding/phonics lessons.	1
4.10: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	1
4.11: Spelling patterns for each phoneme are taught all at once (e.g., all spellings of long /ā/) instead of a systematic progression to develop automaticity with individual grapheme/phonemes	2

SRA Open Court’s non-negotiables for spelling were **“mostly met.”** To begin, the spelling scope and sequence aligns directly with the phonics/decoding and word analysis scope and sequences. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 2, students are taught the sound /k/ represented by ‘c’. Students then engage in dictation and spelling activities that include words with the /k/ sound spelled with ‘c’. When students move on to word analysis lessons in Grade 5, the spelling words pretest includes words that contain affixes taught in the upcoming lessons. Reviewers also found evidence of phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction. They specifically noted that teachers are guided to use the Word Building routine and Sounds-in-Sequence Dictation routine to support this skill with students.

Patterns in decoding are directly tied to encoding/spelling instruction and practice. In the early grades, the team reported no evidence of arbitrary spelling lists. Instead, the focus is on applying newly taught decoding and encoding patterns to words in reading and spelling. As students transition to the upper grades, pretests are administered at the beginning of each unit. These assessments include words aligned to the Word Analysis instruction and include more advanced phonics patterns, prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin roots. This pretest also serves as a ready-made study guide to review the spellings of targeted words. Furthermore, the team determined that there is no evidence of memorization practice with spelling words. Instead, this occurs through Open Court’s Word Building and Sounds-in-Sequence Dictation routines.

While consonant and vowel spelling patterns are taught in a systematic progression, these lessons often introduce two or more spellings for one sound. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 1, students are taught that /t/ can be spelled 't' or with 'tt' in one lesson, while in another, they learn that /ā/ can be spelled with 'a' and with 'a_e'. The team also highlighted a lesson in Grade 3, Unit 1 where students are taught that /ow/ can be spelled 'ow' and 'ou' and that 'ow' can also feature the sound /ō/. Then in another lesson, third graders are taught that /aw/ can be spelled 'au_', 'aw', 'augh', 'ough', and 'al'. This rapid rollout of spelling patterns is problematic because some learners may not develop automaticity with individual grapheme/phoneme relationships.

4C: Writing – Composition

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR COMPOSITION</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
4.17: Writing prompts are provided with little time for modeling, planning, and brainstorming ideas	1
4.18: Writing is primarily unstructured with few models or graphic organizers.	1
4.19: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure is not explicitly taught and practiced systematically (i.e., from simple to complex) with opportunities for practice to automaticity, instead it is taught implicitly or opportunistically.	1
4.20: Writing instruction is primarily narrative or unstructured choice.	1
4.21: Students are not taught the writing process (i.e., planning, revising, editing).	1
4.22: Writing is taught as a standalone and is not used to further reading comprehension.	3

SRA Open Court's non-negotiables for composition were **"mostly met."** Writing is taught in a process model (i.e., pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and presenting), and students are exposed to multiple writing genres, including narrative, informational/explanatory, and persuasive. The program emphasizes prewriting and assigns multiple days for this process across grade levels. These lessons begin with a teacher introduction and modeling of how to brainstorm and plan ideas connected to the topic and genre. Prewriting activities are varied and include the use of graphic organizers, whole group and small group instruction, and partner discussions of writing topics. The curriculum also features explicit instruction on specific planning strategies, including self-regulated strategy development (SRSD). This evidence-based approach combines genre-specific writing skills with self-regulation strategies equipping students with the tools to both compose and monitor their writing progress. For example, in Grades 3 and 4, students are introduced to the SRSD mnemonic TREE, which stands for **T**opic sentence, **R**easons, **E**xplanation, and **E**nding. They use this mnemonic, and its corresponding graphic organizer, to plan and organize their writing. Additionally, Open Court provides learners with a model paragraph highlighting the TREE strategy as an exemplar.

The review team also found that the program is highly structured and routinely includes the use of models and graphic organizers. In each stage of the writing process, teachers provide clear instances of modeling and then support students during guided practice. Additionally, graphic organizers are utilized when they complement the genre being taught. A few examples of note include idea webs, four-column charts, and the TREE organizer mentioned previously. Furthermore, lower-order writing skills, like grammar, usage, and mechanics (as well as spelling) are taught three times per week and include an "I do," "we do," and "you do" component in each lesson. These skills are also taught systematically from simple to increasingly complex.

While SRA Open Court's writing component is highly structured and explicit, it does not capitalize on the reading-writing connection, and writing activities are not related to texts students are reading in class. Additionally, students are expected to write responses to reading and literature within their student notebooks; however, there is little to no instruction on how to write a reading response. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 1, Day 2, students are asked to write a paragraph describing a story character as a response to the reading selection. However, no instruction is provided on how to do so (i.e., find evidence in the text, cite and explain evidence). This lack of guidance can hinder learners' ability to develop this critical skill and lead to superficial student responses.

FINDINGS:

Components Supporting Assessment

SECTION 5: Assessment

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

<i>NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR ASSESSMENT</i>		<i>SCORE</i>
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).	3	
5.2: Assessments include miscue analysis in which misread words that have the same meaning are marked as correct.	1	
<i>RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT</i>		<i>SCORE</i>
5.6: Assessments result in benchmarks according to a leveled text gradient.	1	
5.7: Foundational skills assessments are primarily running records or similar assessments that are based on whole language or cueing strategies (e.g., read the word by looking at the first letter, use picture support for decoding).	1	
5.8: Phonics skills are not assessed.	1	
5.9: Phoneme awareness is not assessed	2	
5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	4	
5.11: Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessments are not used.	1	
5.12: The suite of assessments does not address aspects of language comprehension (e.g., vocabulary, syntax, listening comprehension).	2	
5.13: Multilingual Learners are not assessed in their home language.	4	

SRA Open Court's non-negotiables for assessment were **"somewhat met."** The curriculum contains a variety of formal and informal assessments measuring an array of critical skills related to reading. This includes benchmark assessments, diagnostic assessments, and lesson and unit assessments, including some comprehension and vocabulary.

In regard to foundational skills, assessments feature curriculum-based measures of accuracy. For example, letter knowledge fluency, phonemic awareness, high-frequency words, oral reading fluency, dictation, and spelling tasks for encoding mastery are all assessed within the context of the curriculum. Additionally, phonics, phonemic awareness, and oral reading fluency are monitored within diagnostics and benchmarks. With oral reading fluency, Open Court provides an assessment within every lesson and unit, as well as diagnostic and benchmark assessments in Grades 2-5. During this assessment, teachers follow a miscue analysis protocol where they are instructed to code words read as correct or incorrect.

The reviewers noted two observations regarding the phonics and phonemic awareness tools. First, while a diagnostic assessment addressing phonological and phonemic awareness (i.e., identifying and manipulating beginning, middle, and ending sounds, identifying rhymes and the number of syllables present in words) is available in Grade 1, Unit 1, Lessons 1-2, the team could not locate additional measures after lesson 2. Furthermore, the team noted that decoding skills are assessed through real words only. This is problematic as nonsense words reveal a student's ability to decode unknown words by following predictable phonetic patterns. In

fact, with Open Court's decoding assessment, students are asked to select the correct real word in print after the teacher reads the words aloud and are not tasked to apply their decoding knowledge by reading.

In regard to language comprehension, the team found that there are assessments that address vocabulary and syntax, but Open Court does not include an assessment that addresses listening comprehension. While comprehension rubrics that appear to address oral language and listening comprehension are offered, the team noted that these tools would be used informally and not in a systematic manner. Furthermore, the listening rubric primarily assesses behaviors of active listening and not listening comprehension specifically.

Finally, the review team found that all of SRA Open Court's assessments are written and delivered in English and the program does not provide opportunities to assess Multilingual Learners in their home language. Additionally, while the English Development Kit does include placement assessments, including measures of teaching non-transferable sounds, exploring language structures, and building oral language, students are tasked to complete these measures in English. Thus, educators would need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that Multilingual Learners are assessed in this manner. However, the team also noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.

FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

Overall, the reviewed components for SRA Open Court's Reading Curriculum were found to **"mostly meet"** or **"meet"** most criteria for Grades K-5. This means there was minimal evidence of red flag practices.

STRENGTHS

SRA Open Court's curriculum equips educators with clear instructional routines and materials, notably a comprehensive Teacher's Edition, which clearly outlines the program and all of its various components. However, reviewers emphasized the importance of adhering to the program with fidelity and not disregarding or dropping suggested or ancillary materials. Such actions could significantly impact the curriculum's overall effectiveness.

SRA Open Court's curriculum provides learners with direct, explicit instruction throughout its foundational skills, language comprehension, and writing lessons.

SRA Open Court's curriculum includes a systematic scope and sequence of skills for phonological and phonemic awareness and phonics, building from simple to complex. Additionally, reviewers found that the emphasis on foundational skills (i.e., Green Band) stood out as a relative strength of the curriculum.

SRA Open Court's reviewers found that its instructional units are organized around knowledge-building themes supported by reading rich texts across genres. Thus, students are building background knowledge and academic vocabulary.

SRA Open Court's writing curriculum emphasizes the process model (i.e., pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and presenting) across genres, and students are introduced to evidence-based strategies for writing, like SRSD.

CHALLENGES

SRA Open Court's decoding skills are assessed using real words only. This is problematic as nonsense words reveal a student's ability to decode unknown words by following predictable phonetic patterns. Thus, educators using this curriculum would need to look to outside assessments to gain a true understanding of student skills.

SRA Open Court does not provide for word-level fluency practice to automaticity. This is an issue as slow decoding at the word level can impair a student's understanding, especially as they move into connected text. To gain a sense of a student's word-level fluency, teachers would need to look to outside assessment measures to gain a true understanding of student skills.

SRA Open Court's writing component does not capitalize on the reading-writing connection, and writing activities are not related to texts students are reading about in class.

SRA Open Court's vocabulary instruction could benefit from enhancements that allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the "layers of meaning" in words in order to assist them in recognizing the various shades of meaning a word can hold depending upon its usage or context. Additionally, students are not provided with opportunities to use these words within their written expression as the curriculum's writing process activities and knowledge-building components are not connected.

SRA Open Court's language comprehension assessments are somewhat limited. Reviewers specifically noted the lack of a listening comprehension assessment. An assessment of this measure would provide critical information about students' understanding of the spoken text, and reviewers noted that educators may need to look to their district's larger suite of assessments as this is not typically included within core curriculum programming.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE

Curriculum Navigation Report
**SRA Open Court Reading Curriculum 2023
for Grades K-5**



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.