



Curriculum Navigation Report

HMH Into Reading, Version 3 (2025) for Grades K-5



2026 Publication
Reviewed with Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (3rd Edition, 2026)

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, promising a quick fix for administrators and decision makers seeking a product to check a box next to this buzzword. 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. (p.6)

Accordingly, The Reading League’s *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (CEGs)* is 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.

This resource is anchored by frameworks validated by findings from the science of reading research that provide additional understandings that substantiate both aligned and non-aligned practices (i.e., “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, while 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, and state education agencies as a primary tool to find evidence of red flags, or practices that may interfere with the development of skilled reading. 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. In the spirit of its mission to advance the awareness, understanding, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction, expert review teams engaged in a large-scale review of the most widely used curricula currently used in the United States to develop informative reports of each.

This report was generated after a review of the curriculum using the revised *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines* (3rd Edition), published in 2026. The *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines* have been refined based on feedback and a lengthy pilot review, and have undergone an inter-rater reliability study with positive results. 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 local education agencies to support their journey of selecting, using, and refining instruction and instructional materials to ensure they align with 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 evaluation on the following pages features the review of HMH Into Reading, Version 3 (2025), which is designed for students in Grades K-5.

For this report, reviewers closely examined both teacher-facing and student-facing materials. Teacher-facing materials included Into Reading’s Teacher’s Guide Collection (nine volumes), Teaching Pal Set, Instructional Cards Kit, Genre Study Teacher’s Guide, Assessment Guide, online “Discover HMH Resources,” Lesson Plans and corresponding Slide Decks, Read Aloud Set, Anchor Charts, and Instructional Card Sets (including high-frequency and vocabulary cards), as well as BookStix. Student-facing materials included the Student myBook, Know It Show It Workbook, Writer’s Notebook, Grammar Practice Workbook, Read and Respond Journal, the program’s Decodable Readers and Text Sets, and Graphic Organizers, including worksheets for text analysis.

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 based on the Red Flag rubric that follows and to report their findings. For a more comprehensive review process description, visit [The Reading League Compass’s Curriculum Decision Makers page](#).

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|  <p>1 Red Flag statement is False.</p> |  <p>2 Red Flag statement is minimally True. Evidence is minimal or briefly mentioned.</p> |
|  <p>3 Red Flag statement is mostly True. If applicable, evidence is in multiple places throughout the curriculum.</p> |  <p>4 Red Flag statement is always true, pervasive, and/or integral to the curriculum.</p> |

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.

Overall Design and Delivery

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

OVERALL DESIGN AND DELIVERY	SCORE
<p>No evidence of deliberate and purposeful practice: “These two terms refer to practice that goes beyond rote repetition and involves practicing for a purpose (e.g., accuracy, fluent retrieval, generalization) with the deliberate goal of long-term improvement of skill performance” (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 406).</p>	1
<p>No evidence of retrieval practice: Retrieval practice “consists of tasks requiring retrieval of targeted skills and knowledge from memory without prompts or cues” (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 407). “Retrieval practice is a strategy in which calling information to mind subsequently enhances and boosts learning” (Agarwal, Roediger, McDaniel, & McDermott, 2020, p. 2).</p>	1
<p>No evidence of spaced or distributed practice: Spaced or distributed practice “involves taking a given amount of time devoted to learning and arranging that time into multiple sessions that are spread over time” (Carpenter & Agarwal, 2019, p. 3).</p>	1
<p>No evidence of cumulative practice: Cumulative practice is “the systematic addition of a just-learned skill to previously learned and related skills, allowing them to be practiced together” (Hughes & Lee, 2019, p. 414; Archer & Hughes, 2011). “It requires that new (and usually related) skills are added to a practice activity as they are acquired, thus providing distributed practice for multiple skills within one session” (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 407).</p>	1
<p>No evidence of interleaved practice: Interleaved practice “is similar to cumulative practice but involves mixing the order of skills and problems to be practiced by distributing them in a random fashion, causing the learner to have to discriminate” (Kirschner, P. & Hendrick, C., 2020).</p>	1
<p>Student Interest: The materials are generally not intrinsically interesting and engaging for most students in that grade.</p>	1
<p>Cohesion: The program components are disjointed and not seamlessly related to one another. Instruction based on the science of reading must be integrated, acknowledging the impact of various component skills upon each other.</p>	1
<p>Usability: The materials are confusing and/or difficult to manage and use in a classroom setting.</p>	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading includes opportunities for purposeful practice through its Signposts feature. Students are introduced to a skill through the Signpost and are asked to practice it when reading. Various Signposts include strategic thinking to enhance comprehension, fluency/prosody tips, and utilizing context clues to enhance comprehension. Skills are embedded into the curriculum as students strive for long-term improvement. For example, Into Reading includes a Signpost for nonfiction word gaps. This introduces students to the concept that nonfiction authors sometimes use unfamiliar words or phrases that readers may not recognize. Students are instructed to pause, ask themselves why the author chose the word, and look for clues to understand it. The teacher then models these steps and prompts students to use the Word Gap Signpost when reading certain myBook texts. Each Signpost is also printed on an Anchor Chart to display in the room, so students can review key questions connected to the skill. For instance, the Word Gap Signpost displays the following questions:

1. Do I know this word from someplace else?
2. Does it seem like a word about this topic?
3. Can I find clues in the sentence to help me understand the word?

Throughout Into Reading's Scope and Sequence, students are consistently asked to retrieve background knowledge, vocabulary, morphology/spelling knowledge, decoding/fluency skills, grammar, writing skills, and comprehension strategies to read, comprehend, analyze, discuss, and write about texts. Additionally, the team noted that distributive practice, where learning occurs in multiple sessions spaced over time, is utilized to improve retention and mastery. For example, in Grade 5, Module 1, Week 1, the same skills, including work with prefixes (e.g., "mid-," "semi-") and suffixes (e.g., "-al," "-ic") are reviewed on Days 1, 3, and 5. This structure provides students with multiple opportunities to revisit and apply skills in context, reinforcing learning and supporting long-term retention of target skills.

Cumulative and interleaved practice is also utilized. For example, in a Grade 5 Module on research writing, students begin by building content knowledge and language about methods of conservation. They then use that knowledge while collaborating on a shared research project. Afterward, they generate questions and develop a research plan, drawing on both their content understanding and collaborative discussions, culminating in an integrated research project where students gather evidence from sources, record information in writing, and present their findings, integrating their research, writing, and communication skills. In this way, earlier learning is continuously revisited and extended as students move through increasingly complex tasks. Furthermore, because these activities require students to alternate between reading, discussion, questioning, research, writing, and presentation, they are continually applying different skills in combination. This interleaving helps students learn when and how to use these skills flexibly in authentic academic tasks rather than practicing them separately.

Regarding student interest, reviewers noted that a variety of high-interest topics are interwoven across grade bands. The rigor is age- and grade-appropriate, and the genres are mixed. Additionally, the program demonstrates strong cohesion through its themed Text Sets that are used to integrate learning. Knowledge building, vocabulary, word study, writing, and grammar are all taught and practiced within these cohesive Text Sets. Finally, Into Reading's Teacher Guide is systematically organized, highlighting the various components of effective literacy instruction. Student materials, including assessments, are clearly identified.

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.

WORD RECOGNITION NON-NEGOTIABLES	SCORE
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.	2
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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

In the foundational skills portion of instruction, Into Reading emphasizes using letter-sound relationships to decode words, with opportunities to apply these skills in decodable text. Additionally, the program teaches irregular words using the Heart Word approach, highlighting the parts that follow standard decoding rules and those that students need to memorize. Reviewers noted that in Grades 1 and 2, during the Reading and Vocabulary portion of instruction, students are provided with a list of Power Words and are prompted to read them or read along with the teacher in the text. However, students do not always have the prerequisite code knowledge needed to read and write these words, which may require them to rely on memorization or guessing rather than decoding strategies. For example, in Grade 1, Module 4, students are asked to read and write words like “team,” “equipment,” “coach,” and “goal,” while in Grade 2, Module 7, Week 1, students are prompted to read and write words including “approached,” “potential,” “series,” “motioned,” and “communicate.” As a result, students may have limited opportunities to apply recently taught phonics patterns and may instead rely on memorization or guessing when encountering these words during this portion of instruction.

Each grade, K-5, includes a corresponding scope and sequence document that builds from simple to complex. For example, Grade 1, Module 1, includes a progression of skills for Knowledge Building (e.g., understanding the concept: New Friends and Experiences), Foundational Skills (e.g., decoding and spelling words with short “a” and short “i”), Reading & Vocabulary (e.g., story structure, author’s purpose), and Writing & Grammar (e.g., naming and using nouns). All students receive direct instruction, where skills are modeled, followed by guided practice and application in decodable text.

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS	SCORE
1.7: Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) as a focus of instruction without moving to the phoneme level.	1
1.8: Blends such as /b/ /l/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds.	1
1.9: Students do not practice the phonemes as soon as they learn the graphemes.	1
1.10: Instruction is focused on letters only without explicit instruction and practice with the phonemes that letters represent.	1
1.11: Phoneme awareness is not taught as a foundational reading skill.	1
1.12: Phoneme awareness is not assessed and monitored (e.g., a student's ability to identify the initial, final, and medial phonemes in a word).	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading treats phoneme awareness as a foundational reading skill, especially in kindergarten and Grade 1, where it is included daily during the Foundational Skills portion of the lesson. Instruction progresses from larger units of phonological awareness (e.g., syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) to the phoneme level in an appropriate manner. For example, Grade K, Week 1, progresses from students blending syllables to blending onsets and rimes and then blending phonemes. Additionally, blends are taught as separate sounds. In Grade K, Module 8, students are taught, “When ‘s’ and ‘t’ are side by side in a word, we say them together and their sounds blend together. /s/, /t/” (Kindergarten Teacher Guide, p. 188). Students then say and spell the blend three times, followed by work with “sp,” “sl,” and “sn.”

Explicit instruction pairs letters with the phonemes they represent. In Grade K, Module 3, Week 1, Lesson 3, the letter “f” is introduced with both its grapheme and corresponding phoneme. Students then practice spelling and blending words that include the /f/ sound, build words such as “fib” and “fit,” and receive direct instruction in forming the letter “f” in writing. Finally, the program includes phonemic awareness assessments in kindergarten and Grade 1. In kindergarten, Into Reading provides a Phonological Awareness Inventory that assesses a range of skills, including monitoring words in sentences; blending and segmenting syllables; deleting syllables; identifying rhyming words; onset and rime; isolating initial, medial, and final sounds; blending and segmenting phonemes; and deleting, substituting, and adding phonemes. In Grade 1, the program includes diagnostic screening assessments in letter identification, phoneme segmentation, nonsense word reading, word identification, and oral reading fluency (ORF). Each assessment includes explicit administration directions and accompanying scoring rubrics.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR PHONICS AND PHONIC DECODING	SCORE
1.17: Letter-sound correspondences are taught opportunistically or implicitly during text reading.	1
1.18: Instruction is typically “one and done”; phonics skills are introduced but with very little or short-term review.	1
1.19: The first letters of key words for letter-sound correspondences are not aligned with the pure phoneme being taught (e.g., earth for /ě/, ant for /ă/, orange for /õ/).	1
1.20: Phonics instruction takes place in short (or optional) “mini-lessons” or “word work” sessions.	1
1.21: 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
1.22: Blending is not explicitly taught nor practiced.	1
1.23: 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.	2
1.24: Words with known letter-sound correspondences, including high-frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as standalone “sight words” to be memorized.	1
1.25: There are few opportunities provided for word-level decoding practice of new phonics patterns and interleaving practice for prior phonics patterns.	1
1.26: 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
1.27: Advanced word study (Grades 2-5): Instruction in phonics ends once single-syllable phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCe) are taught.	1
1.28: Advanced word study (Grades 2-5): There is no evident instruction in multisyllabic word decoding strategies and/or using morphology to support word recognition.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading explicitly teaches letter-sound correspondences and reinforces these skills during decodable text practice. For example, in Grade 2, Module 10, Week 1, Lesson 1, students practice reading text with the vowel teams “ew,” “ui,” and “ue” in the decodable text, “A Cruise Story.” The lesson begins with explicit teacher modeling and practice (I do) when decoding the sentence, “One day in art class, Sue drew a cruise ship” (p. 270). The teacher and students then read the next sentence together (we do): “Then she told her friend Newt a story about it.” Finally, students read the remaining sentences aloud as the teacher points to each word (you do). The program includes Anchor Charts to support instruction, featuring the varied letter-sound correspondences. The teacher’s script is explicit, and students have opportunities to respond orally and to write sounds. For example, teachers are prompted to reinforce targeted graphemes through their corresponding keywords, a review, and finger writing. Additionally, the program’s Articulation Videos can be used to reinforce instruction.

Instruction is intentionally designed and embeds consistent review. For example, in Grade 1, Module 4, Week 1, Lesson 2, students begin with a visual review where they are presented with letters and say the corresponding sounds. Students then participate in an auditory drill where they listen to target sounds and use a pencil and paper, or another multimodal approach (e.g., air writing), to write the corresponding grapheme. The program’s keywords are aligned to the pure phonemes taught (e.g., “apple” /ă/; “lion” /l/; “octopus” /ō/; “volcano” /v/), and Into Reading includes the use of a sound wall to help students understand the different sounds that make up words. There are specific instructions for teachers on what a sound wall is and how to use one in their classroom, as well as a vowel valley visual to help students become aware of mouth placement and articulation of the vowel sounds.

Lessons are intentional, and instruction emphasizes explicit teaching of the target skill. In kindergarten, the Letter Knowledge Routines model key instructional practices. In Grade 1, Module 10, Week 1, Lesson 1, reviewers noted that students are explicitly introduced to the r-controlled vowel, “ar.” The teacher clearly displays the graphemes that represent the vowel and discusses its sound and articulation, using the program’s articulation videos as needed. The teacher then models blending with the word “star,” and students engage in guided practice with the word “cart,” before reading the word “hard” on their own. This is followed by student application within Into Reading’s decodable texts. Letter-sounds are taught in an appropriate progression, with one to three sounds introduced each week. Vowels are typically added within the second week of the instructional sequence. For example, in Grade K, Module 1, the sounds /m/ and /t/ are introduced in Week 3, followed by the short vowel sound /ă/ in Week 4. Blending is also explicitly taught and practiced in all lessons. The review team noted Grade 1, Module 10, Week 3, Lesson 11, where the teacher begins the warm-up by blending the sounds in the word “tarp” (/t/ /ar/ /p/). Students then practice alongside the teacher with the word “card” (/k/ /ar/ /d/) before blending the word “harm” (/h/ /ar/ /m/) on their own. Students are prompted to hold up a finger for each sound, and then slide all three fingers when blending the sounds together.

Into Reading addresses irregular words through the Heart Word approach. For example, in Grade 2, Module 10, the Heart Word “often” (/ɔ/ /f/ /ə/ /n/) is introduced, and students have the opportunity to practice working with its irregular word parts in varied ways. Additionally, students practice word-level decoding in each lesson; however, reviewers observed that some of Into Reading’s materials include words that students may not yet be able to decode. Students are provided with decodable texts aligned to target phonics skills; however, these are separate from the primary reading materials used during core instruction. While foundational lessons include resources such as Blend-It Books to support phonics development, the main text (myBook) is not consistently decodable.

For example, in Grade 1, Module 7, Week 1, Lesson 3 (*Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*), students are introduced to Power Words prior to reading. However, many of the words in the text include phonics patterns that have not yet been explicitly taught, making the text inaccessible for independent decoding (see Teaching Pal, p. 8). Although the Teacher Guide frames this as a read-aloud (“Read for Understanding”), it also includes language such as “guide children to read the story all the way through,” suggesting that students are expected to engage in reading the text themselves. This creates a potential mismatch between students’ current decoding knowledge and the demands of the text.

While decodable passages are included elsewhere in the program, they are part of a separate instructional component. As a result, students may be asked to read connected text during core instruction that is not aligned to the phonics skills they have been taught, which could impact their ability to apply decoding skills and develop reading accuracy.

Finally, Into Reading includes advanced word study, with an emphasis on multisyllabic word reading and morphology. Lesson instruction focuses on multisyllabic words and the varied syllable types in Grades 1–2, while students in Grades 3–5 use morphology to support word recognition. This includes word study that focuses on prefixes and suffixes, like the examples that follow:

- In Grade 3, Module 10, Week 1, Lesson 1, students learn the prefixes “semi-,” “anti-,” “sub-,” and “super-”
- In Grade 4, Module 4, Week 6, Lesson 3, students learn the prefixes “ir-” and “il-”
- In Grade 5, Module 5, Week 2, Lesson 8, students learn the root “fer”

1D: Fluency

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR FLUENCY	SCORE
1.42: Fluency instruction focuses primarily on student silent reading.	1
1.43: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student's ability to read words quickly.	1
1.44: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	1
1.45: Fluency is practiced only in narrative text or with repeated readings of patterned text.	1
1.46: Fluency assessment allows acceptance of incorrectly decoded words if they are close in meaning to the target word (e.g., accepting the word "house" instead of the printed word "home").	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading's fluency instruction does not emphasize silent reading, and students practice reading aloud while the teacher provides immediate corrective feedback. Additionally, the program focuses on reading with accuracy, at an appropriate rate, and with appropriate intonation. For example, in Grade 5, Module 1, Week 1, Lesson 1, the teacher models reading a sentence at an excessively fast rate. The teacher then discusses how reading too quickly can hinder comprehension of the author's intended message, before rereading the sentence at a smooth, even pace. This highlights the importance of appropriate pacing and demonstrates how fluent reading supports students' ability to understand and engage with text. Additionally, whole-group instruction explicitly teaches students what effective reading sounds like. This includes monitoring activities in which students listen to a passage read aloud and evaluate elements such as accuracy, intonation, and expression when reading at an appropriate rate.

Into Reading also embeds word-level fluency practice as students review previously taught words and engage in repeated practice of decodable words in order to build automaticity. This includes multiple opportunities for practice. For instance, in Grade 3, Module 1, Week 1, Lesson 5, after reviewing previously taught sounds, students decode the words "squid," "sprig," "scrub," "thrift," "shrug," "fresh," "blasts," "flu," and "humid" (Grade 5 Teachers Manual, p. 52). Additionally, students practice fluency with both fiction and nonfiction passages. In Grade 3, Module 1, Week 2, Lesson 6, students read the nonfiction stories, *A Camp in the Woods*, *What's on the Menu*, and *Taking Care With a Bike*, and the fiction stories, *Stuck in a Wetsuit*, *Hugo and Flo to the Rescue*, and *Charlie the Van*. Finally, Into Reading's fluency assessments emphasize accuracy across grade levels and do not accept any incorrectly decoded words.

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 reading rope. Therefore, identification of the following red flag practices was prioritized in the review of this section.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING	SCORE
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.	1
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level questioning skills.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading’s instructional framework emphasizes direct, explicit instruction with limited student choice. Students are provided with access to content-rich texts that are read aloud to expose them to rich vocabulary and syntax through meaningful reading experiences. For example, in Grade 2, Module 3, students listen to a variety of carefully selected texts to make connections to the science topic, “How Animals Live.” Titles include *Best Foot Forward: Exploring Feet, Flippers, and Claws* by Ingo Arndt, *The Nest* by Carole Roberts, and *Giraffes* by Katie Riggs. Through listening to these texts, students build language and knowledge of how animals’ bodies help them function in various situations and environments.

Students are guided to monitor their comprehension through retelling and by pausing to discuss the main idea and key details. For example, in Grade 2, Module 8, Week 2, Lesson 7, students are prompted to pause and think about the main events and details when retelling the story *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Furthermore, reading and writing are integrated, with the teacher referring back to model texts and graphic organizers to support students before they begin a writing piece. For example, in Grade 3, Module 3, Week 2, Lesson 7, the teacher revisits the focal text, *All the Places to Love*, to emphasize that descriptive writing uses both precise details and sensory words.

Finally, throughout the K-5 sequence, Into Reading teaches students to actively think about what they read and listen to by monitoring their understanding through questioning. Students are guided to generate and discuss questions before, during, and after reading, with high-level questioning both modeled by the teacher and elicited from students. The Active Listening Routine guides students through a structured process for engaging with a read-aloud text. First, the teacher sets a clear purpose for listening by connecting the text to the module topic and prompting students to consider what they want to learn. Next, the teacher reads the text aloud, modeling fluent reading through appropriate expression and pacing while directing students to listen attentively and prepare to respond. Finally, students engage in reflection and discussion by revisiting their listening purpose, considering what they learned, and making connections to the module topic and essential question. This routine supports comprehension by encouraging purposeful listening, active engagement, and reflection on understanding.

2B: Background Knowledge

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	SCORE
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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading’s read-aloud texts are complex and span a variety of genres, including informational texts, to support knowledge building. For example, in Grade 5, Module 3, Week 1, Lesson 2, students engage with the read-aloud text *Help Is on the Way* by Marcia Amidon Lusted, which introduces the role of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in responding to disasters. The text builds content knowledge by explaining how FEMA coordinates emergency response efforts, provides immediate aid such as food and shelter, and supports long-term recovery through housing and financial assistance. It also introduces key concepts related to disaster preparedness, helping students understand how organizations respond to crises and how individuals can prepare for them.

In this same lesson, students are guided to build knowledge and language by discussing how information about disaster response organizations connects to what they have previously learned about natural disasters. Through structured discussion, they compare ideas across texts and consider how this growing understanding contributes to safety and preparedness. In this way, opportunities to bridge new and existing knowledge are intentionally prompted, discussed, and expanded.

Finally, Into Reading features diverse, complex, knowledge-building text sets that develop background knowledge in a variety of subject areas, including social studies and science. For example, in Grade 2, Module 10, “Many Cultures, One World,” students listen to the stories *Where on Earth Is My Bagel?* by Frances Park, *Trombone Shorty* by Troy Andrews, and *Hello World*. These texts are carefully selected to spark students’ curiosity and help them build knowledge and language.

2C: Vocabulary

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR VOCABULARY	SCORE
2.7: Vocabulary worksheets and activities are used with little opportunity for deep understanding of vocabulary words.	1
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.	1
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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Regarding vocabulary, Into Reading offers a range of online, interactive resources that support students' word learning and application. These include activities such as digital flashcards, matching activities and games (including picture matching), cloze sentences with selectable responses, and tasks that require students to categorize and classify words. Instruction focuses on Power Words from the texts, generative vocabulary that builds morphological awareness, and vocabulary strategies that deepen understanding of word relationships, such as synonyms and antonyms.

Memorization is not emphasized; instead, Tier 2 vocabulary is introduced and reinforced within the context of the texts. Words are pre-taught in connection to the reading, and students engage in a variety of strategies, such as collaborative discussion and making personal connections, to support deeper understanding and internalization of vocabulary. For example, in Grade 4, Module 1, Week 1, Lesson 1, students engage in a structured vocabulary routine using the word "experience." The routine begins with explicit instruction as the teacher defines the word in a student-friendly way. Then, students are tasked with reading the word in a sentence and using it to generate their own examples. Students then deepen their understanding by exploring synonyms and antonyms, supporting flexible word knowledge. This is extended through collaborative discussion, where students connect the word to personal experiences and reflect on how past experiences influence new ones. This routine promotes active engagement with vocabulary and supports both conceptual understanding and meaningful use.

In addition to this focus on Tier 2 vocabulary, instruction also incorporates Tier 3, domain-specific terminology drawn directly from informational texts. These content-specific words are introduced within the context of knowledge-building topics, allowing students to develop precise vocabulary alongside their understanding of subject matter. Finally, morphology is embedded within vocabulary instruction and practice. Various parts of words, including prefixes and suffixes, are explicitly taught and practiced with corresponding activities, such as the program's Morpheme Boxes that students use to break up words into their base words and affixes.

2D: Language Structures

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	SCORE
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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Direct grammar instruction is embedded consistently within the weekly structure of Into Reading’s lessons. For example, in Grade 5, Module 3, Week 1, students learn about direct objects, compound direct objects, and indirect objects throughout the week. Additionally, the grammar portion of the writing block includes a review of complete sentences. Thus, grammar instruction is both explicit and recursive, providing students with multiple opportunities to learn, practice, and apply skills within the context of reading and writing.

Instruction in language structures follows an “I do, we do, you do” procedure, which allows for teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent application. Protocols that invite collaboration and discussion are also embedded into the lessons, including opportunities for student Turn & Talks and group collaboration. Finally, the weekly grammar lessons identify the parts of speech and usage from the text and explicitly teach these concepts. For example, in Grade 4, Module 1, Week 1, Lesson 3, students receive explicit instruction in subject-verb agreement, beginning with a review of verbs as action words and the role of present-tense verbs in describing actions happening now. Then the teacher models the concept of subject-verb agreement. Students learn to distinguish between singular and plural subjects and are guided to apply the appropriate verb forms (e.g., adding “-s” or “-es” for singular subjects, except when the subject is “I”). The lesson includes guided practice in forming sentences with correct agreement, supporting students in applying this grammatical rule within sentence-level contexts.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR VERBAL REASONING	SCORE
2.27: Inferencing strategies are not taught explicitly and may be based only on picture clues (i.e., picture walking), and not connecting them to background knowledge and instructional texts.	1
2.28: Students do not practice inferencing as a discrete skill.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading provides explicit instruction in inferencing across Grades 1-5. The skill is modeled by the teacher through the Teaching Pal resource, which supports the use of more complex, academic language, and students are offered ample opportunities to practice and apply inference skills, particularly in Grades 3-5. Inferencing is embedded within text discussions and reflected in questions that prompt and elicit students' thinking.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LITERACY KNOWLEDGE	SCORE
2.33: Genre types and features are not explicitly taught.	1
2.34: Genre types and text structures (e.g., cause and effect, problem and solution, sequence, compare and contrast) are not used to understand the purpose of what is being read.	1
2.35: Specific text structures and corresponding signal words are not explicitly taught and practiced.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading teaches students the key features of various genres to allow them to distinguish genres and text types from each other. For example, in Grade 4, Module 1, Week 1, Lesson 1, students are introduced to the storytelling genre through the novel, *Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*. They discuss that in this module, they will read several stories. The stories featured are made up, or fictitious, and include the following:

- *realistic fiction* with story elements that could occur in real life
- *fantasy* with characters, settings, and events that could not occur in real life
- *narrative poetry*, where the poem tells a story
- *folktales* with characters who are frequently animals acting like people, in settings or story events that could not occur in real life

Additionally, specific text structures and their corresponding signal words are explicitly taught and practiced. For instance, while reading persuasive texts about conservation and ecosystem restoration, students learn that persuasive writing gives an author's opinion about a particular topic to convince readers to adopt a certain viewpoint, feel a certain way, or take action. This genre includes the use of reasons and evidence that support the author's point of view, or stance. Additionally, persuasive writers often include visuals such as photographs, charts, and graphs in order to support their opinions.

SECTION 3: Reading Comprehension

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR READING COMPREHENSION	SCORE
3.1: Comprehension strategies such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, noting text structure, inferencing, and fix-ups are not taught and practiced throughout the year using a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do) using appropriate instructional text that students can accurately decode.	2
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 is 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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading teaches comprehension strategies and vocabulary skills in support of the module topic and texts by following a consistent lesson progression. This includes systematic vocabulary building and the development of academic language that follows an “I do, we do, you do” progression. While the program introduces comprehension strategies at each grade level, it does not revisit them often enough. For example, the skills trace document for Module 1, Grade 1, reflects a minimally distributed instructional sequence. Most reading comprehension skills are introduced in a single week, with limited follow-up opportunities for review or reinforcement. For example, skills such as using Story Structure and Author’s Purpose to aid in comprehension are introduced and then revisited once; others, like Make Inferences, Monitor and Clarify, and Topic and Central Idea, are taught but show little to no evidence of subsequent reinforcement across the remaining weeks. The skills trace document for Module 1, Grade 5, reflects a similar pattern to the Grade 1 example, with comprehension skills introduced across the module but receiving limited and inconsistent opportunities for review and reinforcement. While there is slightly more distribution of skills across weeks and some instances of immediate reinforcement (e.g., Text Structure is both taught and reviewed in Week 2 of the instructional sequence), most skills remain isolated within a single week of instruction. The publisher clarified that although skills may not be revisited multiple times in any given module, they are revisited multiple times throughout the program.

Reviewers observed that students are guided through comprehension strategies with direct instruction using a combination of graphic organizers, sentence frames, anchor charts, paired reading, and discussion. For example, during a lesson on choosing details, students engage in a structured prewriting process in which they review their notes, select relevant details based on audience and purpose, and organize their ideas using a graphic organizer to support planning for writing.

During independent tasks, students are directed to reread or listen to previously read stories, and optional activities are not based on independent text selection. For example, in Grade 4, Module 2, Week 2, students listen to texts such as *Animal Senses* or *Blind Ambition* in their *myBook* or an HMH Reader. This task is connected to previously read texts rather than engaging with self-selected texts. When this task is completed, students record their book and corresponding notes using the program's Listening Log and practice specific comprehension skills and strategies with their Read and Respond Journal. Furthermore, books are selected to build knowledge and language connected to the curriculum's content topics. For example, in Grade 4, Module 2, Week 1, texts are connected to the science strand, The Five Senses, and the essential question, "How do people and animals use their senses to navigate the world?"

Finally, students are taught to use various methods (e.g., sentence frames, graphic organizers, direct instruction, anchor charts, paired reading, shared discussion, etc.) to monitor their comprehension. In one instance, students are provided with the sentence frame "The girl could use her sense of ____ to understand what the lizard feels like." This supports idea generation and language development, prompting students to incorporate sensory details as they describe how a character might experience the lizard. In another example, students use the Think-Pair-Share routine to respond to questions like the following:

- What super sense would you want to have, and why?
- Why do you think an eagle's super sense is important to its survival?
- What details in the video can you use to answer the Essential Question?

Finally, teachers are instructed to prompt students to think about the central idea the author wants readers to understand. While at times the author may provide this information at the beginning or end of a paragraph, sometimes readers must use evidence in the text to infer, or figure out, the author's central idea on their own.

4A: Writing – Handwriting

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR HANDWRITING	SCORE
4.1: No direct instruction in handwriting.	1
4.2: Handwriting instruction predominantly features unlined paper or picture paper.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Direct instruction in handwriting begins in kindergarten. Students are instructed in proper grip and letter formation, which is then reinforced throughout handwriting instruction. For example, in Grade 1, students engage in explicit handwriting instruction focused on the formation of specific lowercase manuscript letters (“m,” “s,” “t,” “b,” “a,” “i”). The teacher models each letter using step-by-step verbal directions that describe stroke sequence and placement (e.g., where to start, direction of movement, and when to lift the pencil). Students first practice guided techniques, such as finger writing, before transitioning to independent written practice. Opportunities for review of previously taught letters are embedded as time allows. Instruction also includes corrective feedback and support for proper pencil grip, ensuring that students develop both accurate letter formation and appropriate fine-motor habits. Handwriting is integrated within phonics instruction by linking letter formation to letter-sound relationships, allowing students to practice writing letters while reinforcing their associated sounds.

4B: Writing – Spelling

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR SPELLING	SCORE
4.5: There is no evidence of explicit spelling instruction, no spelling scope and sequence, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics/decoding scope and sequence.	1
4.6: There is no evidence of phoneme segmentation or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	1
4.7: 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
4.8: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	1
4.9: 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 graphemes/phonemes.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading includes a clear scope and sequence for explicit spelling instruction embedded in each grade-level scope and sequence document. Spelling is included as a part of the foundational skills portion of instruction in Grades K-3 and then transitions to the word study portion of the instructional block in Grades 4-5. Reviewers observed evidence of phoneme segmentation and phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction, including the use of Elkonin boxes and sound wall cards. Spelling patterns are taught systematically to build encoding skills, progressing from simple to more complex patterns. Spelling instruction is developmentally sequenced, progressing from basic phonics patterns to advanced morphological structures (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, and Greek/Latin roots), with differentiated word lists aligned to students' stages of spelling development.

As shown in Foundational Skills & Word Study Studio, Session 346, spelling instruction is explicitly grounded in phonics and orthographic analysis, not rote memory. Students are taught to analyze base words, identify regular spelling patterns, and apply consistent spelling rules when adding inflectional endings (e.g., changing y to i, doubling consonants, dropping final e), with instruction closely connected to decoding, syllable division, and letter-sound relationships. Even when addressing words with irregular elements (including “heart words”), instruction emphasizes understanding which parts of a word follow regular patterns and why a word is spelled the way it is, rather than asking students to memorize spellings without explanation or practice tied to phonics. This integrated approach supports transferable spelling knowledge aligned to structured literacy principles, not memorization routines.

4C: Writing – Composition

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR COMPOSITION	SCORE
4.15: Writing tasks and prompts are provided with minimal instruction for the skills needed to complete them and little time for planning prior to writing.	1
4.16: Writing assignments are primarily unstructured with few models or graphic organizers.	1
4.17: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure are not explicitly taught, and opportunities for practice to develop automaticity are not provided; instead, they are addressed opportunistically.	1
4.18: Writing instruction and assignments are focused primarily on narrative writing or unstructured student choice.	1
4.19: Students are not taught the writing process (i.e., planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).	1
4.20: Writing is taught as a standalone skill and is not used to further reading comprehension.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading’s writing tasks are well-defined and include clear instructional routines that follow a gradual release model (e.g., “I do, we do, you do”). For example, the Grade 4 Writing Routine consists of three steps where writers read the prompt, plan their writing, and write their response. Teachers are provided with explicit scripting to model the process. For example, when planning, teachers are prompted to say, “Reread the prompt to make sure you include everything in it. If you want to change parts of your plan, this is the time to do it. Cross out what you don’t like and decide what changes to make.” The explicit language and modeling help students to clearly see the planning process in action.

Graphic organizers and visual supports (e.g., anchor charts) are used across all grade levels to help students organize language and support writing. This includes posters that clearly display the steps in the writing process and graphic organizers that correspond to varied genres (e.g., idea-support map, story map). Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure are embedded in the weekly lessons across Grades K-5. Furthermore, students are taught various types of writing, including narrative stories, opinion essays, editorials, thank you letters, and more. Grammar instruction is integrated within these writing lessons and addresses skills such as comma usage, correct verb tenses, and the construction of complex sentences. All phases of the writing process are taught, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing and sharing.

Finally, Into Reading's Inquiry and Research Projects provide consistent opportunities for students to build background knowledge, collaborate and engage in discussion, read multiple sources to investigate a topic, and record their learning. Together, these activities serve as foundational building blocks for strong reading comprehension.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT

SECTION 5: Assessment

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

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
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).	1
5.2: Assessments include miscue analysis in which misread words are marked correct if the mistake does not substantially alter the meaning of the text.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Into Reading features both formative and summative assessments, along with screening assessments of foundational skills. Its screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring measures assess students' early literacy skills in the areas of alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, phonics and word study, and oral reading fluency. Furthermore, the oral reading fluency (ORF) directions guide educators to carefully monitor students' oral reading and document errors and self-corrections on a recording form. Teachers are instructed to mark misread, omitted, inserted, and self-corrected words. Errors are counted regardless of whether they affect meaning; however, repetitions and self-corrections are not counted as errors. If a student self-corrects, the initial error is not counted, and repeated instances of an error are counted only once (e.g., consistently reading "have" as "had" is recorded as a single error).

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
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.	1
5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	1
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).	1
5.13: Multilingual Learners are not assessed in their home language.	3

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

The review team did not find evidence of running records or benchmarks according to a leveled-text gradient in the digital materials.

Reviewers noted that phonics skills are clearly assessed across grade levels, beginning with letter-sound identification and progressing to basic and advanced code knowledge as well as multisyllabic word decoding. Nonsense word reading is also assessed in Grade 1. Phonemic awareness is assessed in kindergarten and Grade 1, and the program includes oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments in Grades 1-6. Into Reading uses its module activities and assessments to generate formative data on students’ understanding of key language comprehension skills within each module. The Module Assessments are designed to evaluate content knowledge while also preparing students for high-stakes testing through the use of rigorous questions, complex texts, and technology-enhanced item formats (online). The Reading section assesses students’ comprehension and vocabulary skills, while the Grammar section evaluates the grammar concepts taught to date; both are administered as standalone assessments. In addition, writing is assessed through the program’s Module Performance Task, providing a more extended opportunity for students to demonstrate their written expression.

Finally, assessments within Into Reading's assessment suite are primarily designed to measure reading and language comprehension in English. The program does include a Supporting Multilingual Learners by Language Proficiency Level document, which outlines ways to assess students' understanding at the Entering, Emerging/Developing, and Expanding/Bridging levels of English proficiency. However, the curriculum does not include resources to assess multilingual learners in their home language. As such, program adopters would also need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that multilingual learners are assessed in their home language. However, the team noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.

Final Report Summary

Overall, the components reviewed for the Into Reading curriculum demonstrate strengths as well as areas that could benefit from further refinement. Continued attention to these elements can help ensure high-quality instruction across Grades K-5. While an evidence-aligned core curriculum is a critical part of any literacy program, it is no substitute for building a solid foundation of educator and leader knowledge in the science of reading as well as a coaching system to support fidelity of implementation.

STRENGTHS

1. Into Reading offers a comprehensive approach to literacy, with clear scope-and-sequence pathways that progress from simple to complex, along with strong program supports and embedded guidance—including probing questions in the Teacher Guide—that help educators implement instruction effectively. Additionally, the program is intentionally designed with teacher-friendly digital and print materials that promote ease of use and implementation.
2. Into Reading features engaging, visually appealing texts with diverse representation, ensuring that students encounter representations of themselves (mirrors) and others. Additionally, the curriculum offers learners a strong balance of fiction and nonfiction, supporting exposure to varied text types and meaningful connections across thematic units.
3. Into Reading integrates reading and writing instruction and provides students with frequent opportunities to apply their learning across both domains. Furthermore, the program includes clear, built-in supports for differentiation to meet the diverse needs of learners.
4. Into Reading is highly data-driven, with a strong assessment system that provides actionable insights to support progress monitoring, differentiation, and instructional planning.

CHALLENGES

1. Because Into Reading is all-encompassing, at times it prioritizes breadth over depth, with a rapid, additive approach to skill coverage that limits opportunities for deep, transformative learning and mastery.
2. The volume of Into Reading's content and components may make it difficult for educators to prioritize instructional targets, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation across classrooms.
3. The pacing of Into Reading may require a rapid instructional delivery that is not always realistic within typical classroom time constraints, and the complexity of its materials and structure may necessitate significant professional development for educators to effectively implement the program.
4. While Into Reading includes decodable passages as part of its foundational skills instruction, there is ambiguity within the "read aloud" portions of lessons. At times, students appear to be asked to read connected text during core instruction that is not aligned to the phonics skills they have been explicitly taught. This lack of clarity may limit students' ability to apply their decoding knowledge, impact reading accuracy, and lead to frustration or reliance on less efficient strategies, such as guessing.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE



**HMH Into Reading, Version 3
(2025) for Grades K-5**

HMH Into Reading®

HMH’s Responses to The Reading League’s Curriculum Evaluation of HMH Into Reading v3

Introduction

HMH appreciates The Reading League’s thoughtful review and recognition of *HMH Into Reading’s* alignment with the science of reading and evidence-based literacy practices. We thank reviewers for the time, expertise, and professionalism dedicated to the evaluation of curriculum materials.

We also appreciate the opportunity to provide a publisher response that gives additional information on the instructional design of *Into Reading*. Additional information on the underlying research that informed our program design can be found in the [Into Reading Research Evidence base](#).

With approvals in more than 34 states, HMH *Into Reading* has become a leading choice for districts looking to implement a literacy program that is aligned to the science of reading. The measurable literacy gains associated with *Into Reading* reflect how the program helps educators drive student growth in an affirming learning environment that makes each and every student feel respected, important, and proud.

Responses

1A: Word Recognition

The Reading League Criteria and Score	
1.2: Guidance is given to memorize any whole words, including high-frequency words, by sight without attending to the letter-sound correspondences.	2
Reviewer Comments	
Reviewers noted that in Grades 1 and 2, during the Reading and Vocabulary portion of instruction, students are provided with a list of Power Words and are prompted to read them or read along with the teacher in the text. However, students do not always have the prerequisite code knowledge needed to read and write these words, which may require them to rely on memorization or guessing rather than decoding strategies. For example, in Grade 1, Module 4, students are asked to read and write words like “team,” “equipment,” “coach,” and “goal,” while in Grade 2, Module 7, Week 1, students are prompted to read and write words including “approached,” “potential,” “series,” “motioned,” and “communicate.” As a result, students may	

have limited opportunities to apply recently taught phonics patterns and may instead rely on memorization or guessing when encountering these words during this portion of instruction.

HMH's Response

HMH Into Reading emphasizes using letter-sound relationships to decode words, with opportunities to apply these skills in decodable text. Irregular words are taught using the Heart Word approach, in which students analyze the parts of the word that align to known phonics patterns and identify any irregular elements. This routine ensures that students continue to attend to letter-sound relationships rather than relying on whole-word memorization. Additionally, *HMH Into Reading* includes a clearly defined scope and sequence that systematically builds phonics knowledge from simple to complex so that students develop the necessary decoding skills before being expected to apply them independently.

The Reading and Vocabulary portion of *HMH Into Reading* is intentionally designed to support meaning making, background knowledge, and academic language development, rather than to serve as the primary context for phonics instruction. During this portion of the lesson, students engage with rich texts and key vocabulary to build conceptual understanding and oral language related to the module topic. Words highlighted for discussion are introduced to deepen comprehension and language use within authentic reading experiences, not to be memorized by sight.

This instruction occurs alongside, and after, dedicated foundational skills lessons, where phonological awareness, phonics, and encoding are taught explicitly and systematically. When students encounter complex or unfamiliar words during Reading and Vocabulary instruction, they are not expected to guess or rely on whole-word memorization. Instead, instruction supports access to text and language so that students can participate meaningfully in discussion and knowledge building. More complex words (such as those cited in the report - *team, equipment, approached, communicate*) are introduced through teacher modeling, read-aloud, and supported discussion within connected text. Routines provide contextual and oral language support, ensuring that students are not prompted to guess or treat these words as isolated sight words.

1.C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

The Reading League Criteria and Score

1.23: 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.	2
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Reviewer Comments

Reviewers observed that some of Into Reading's materials include words that students may not yet be able to decode. Students are provided with decodable texts aligned to target phonics skills; however, these are separate from the primary reading materials used during

core instruction. While foundational lessons include resources such as Blend-It Books to support phonics development, the main text (*myBook*) is not consistently decodable.

For example, in Grade 1, Module 7, Week 1, Lesson 3 (*Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*), students are introduced to Power Words prior to reading. However, many of the words in the text include phonics patterns that have not yet been explicitly taught, making the text inaccessible for independent decoding (see Teaching Pal, p. 8). Although the Teacher Guide frames this as a read-aloud (“Read for Understanding”), it also includes language such as “guide children to read the story all the way through,” suggesting that students are expected to engage in reading the text themselves. This creates a potential mismatch between students’ current decoding knowledge and the demands of the text.

While decodable passages are included elsewhere in the program, they are part of a separate instructional component. As a result, students may be asked to read connected text during core instruction that is not aligned to the phonics skills they have been taught, which could impact their ability to apply decoding skills and develop reading accuracy.

HMH’s Response

HMH Into Reading foundational skills and decodable text are a core part of instruction every day. The instructional model includes explicit instruction in foundational skills, reading, vocabulary, writing, and grammar daily.

Foundational skill instruction is structured spirally so that phonics patterns and decoding routines are explicitly taught, practiced, and revisited across the year, reinforcing accurate word reading rather than cue-based guessing strategies. The program includes systematic teaching of these skills and follows a logical scope and sequence, progressing from simple to more complex sound–spelling patterns, ensuring students learn how to map sounds to letters and blend them to read words. Additionally, when students encounter unfamiliar words, instructional routines direct teachers to prompt students to attend to all letters in the word, apply known sound–symbol correspondences, and blend phonemes, rather than relying on first letter cues, pictures, or context. *HMH Into Reading* provides a consistent focus on accurate word reading aligned with research from the [National Reading Panel report](#) and the [International Dyslexia Association](#).

In the whole class shared reading portion of the lesson, students engage with meaning-rich, authentic grade level text during the “Read for Understanding”. This is not an independent decoding task. Students are not expected to independently decode all words in the text within this specific instructional context. The Teacher’s Guide includes language such as “guide children to read,” within a scaffolded instructional context where the teacher models fluent reading and supports comprehension. The students are supported by the teacher rather than being prompted to guess or rely on contextual or visual cues. In English, there are many orthographic regularities that readers eventually use, so some must be acquired implicitly through repeated exposure to print.

Research shows that students benefit from exposure to complex text through read-alouds and shared reading before they can independently decode all words, as this builds vocabulary, knowledge, and comprehension. *Into Reading* treats decoding and meaning-making as parallel strands, using different text types for different instructional purposes.

3: Reading Comprehension

The Reading League Criteria and Score

3.1: Comprehension strategies such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, noting text structure, inferencing, and fix-ups are not taught and practiced throughout the year using a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do) using appropriate instructional text that students can accurately decode.	2
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Reviewer Comments

Into Reading teaches comprehension strategies and vocabulary skills in support of the module topic and texts by following a consistent lesson progression. This includes systematic vocabulary building and the development of academic language that follows an “I do, we do, you do” progression. While the program introduces comprehension strategies at each grade level, it does not revisit them often enough. For example, the skills trace document for Module 1, Grade 1, reflects a minimally distributed instructional sequence. Most reading comprehension skills are introduced in a single week, with limited follow-up opportunities for review or reinforcement. For example, skills such as using Story Structure and Author’s Purpose to aid in comprehension are introduced and then revisited once; others, like Make Inferences, Monitor and Clarify, and Topic and Central Idea, are taught but show little to no evidence of subsequent reinforcement across the remaining weeks. The skills trace document for Module 1, Grade 5, reflects a similar pattern to the Grade 1 example, with comprehension skills introduced across the module but receiving limited and inconsistent opportunities for review and reinforcement. While there is slightly more distribution of skills across weeks and some instances of immediate reinforcement (e.g., Text Structure is both taught and reviewed in Week 2 of the instructional sequence), most skills remain isolated within a single week of instruction. As a result, the sequence provides limited opportunities for cumulative practice, which may impact students’ ability to internalize and transfer comprehension strategies over time.

HMH’s Response

Strategies are introduced explicitly, modeled by the teacher, practiced collaboratively, and then applied repeatedly across multiple texts, genres, topics, and tasks. The spiral design ensures that comprehension strategies are revisited multiple times in new context across the year and grades. While strategies may be introduced in specific weeks, students continue to apply them through reading, discussion, and writing tasks all year long. The skills trace referenced in the review is looking at what appears in a 3-week module and not across the full year of the program.

5: Assessment

The Reading League Criteria and Score	
5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	3
Reviewer Comments	
<p>Reviewer Comments: Assessments within Into Reading’s assessment suite are primarily designed to measure reading and language comprehension in English. The program does include a Supporting Multilingual Learners by Language Proficiency Level document, which outlines ways to assess students’ understanding at the Entering, Emerging/Developing, and Expanding/Bridging levels of English proficiency. However, the curriculum does not include resources to assess multilingual learners in their home language. As such, program adopters would also need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that multilingual learners are assessed in their home language. However, the team noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.</p>	
HMH’s Response	
<p>HMH understands the role of home language in literacy development, and the importance of screening and early intervention for Multilingual learners and provides a number of multilingual resources. While core assessments remain in English to measure progress toward grade-level English Language Arts standards in <i>HMH Into Reading</i>, AI tools enable teachers to provide equitable access and gather evidence of student understanding.</p> <p>Located on Ed within the <i>Into Reading</i> digital program, HMH AI Tools offers a variety of features to support teachers, including a text translation tool. All <i>Into Reading</i> program content is ingested to make it easy for teachers to leverage these tools with the curriculum, including assessments.</p> <p>Before assessments, AI-powered translation tools can translate directions, task expectations, and key vocabulary into students’ home languages, so learners clearly understand what is being asked, reducing construct-irrelevant language barriers. After instruction or assessment, teachers can use AI to generate optional, informal checks to confirm whether difficulties stem from language acquisition or content understanding.</p> <p>AI tools can also support more accurate interpretation of assessment results by translating student responses, summarizing patterns, and suggesting targeted instructional aligned to language proficiency levels. Translations can help teachers communicate results and instructional recommendations clearly with families in their home languages.</p>	

Final Report Summary- Challenges

Challenge #1

Because Into Reading is all-encompassing, at times it prioritizes breadth over depth, with a rapid, additive approach to skill coverage that limits opportunities for deep, transformative learning and mastery.

HMH's Response

HMH Into Reading is purposefully designed to balance breadth with depth by pairing comprehensive skill coverage with a coherent instructional model that prioritizes mastery over time, rather than one-time exposure. While the program introduces a wide range of standards-aligned skills, these are not taught in isolation or through rapid, additive coverage.

Priority skills are instead explicitly taught and revisited through a structured, spiraling approach in which students encounter and apply the same skills across lessons, weeks, and modules with increasing complexity. This design ensures that learning builds cumulatively, allowing students multiple opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and demonstrate understanding in new contexts.

Students engage in cumulative reading, writing, and discussion tasks grounded in authentic texts, enabling them to deepen understanding and transfer skills over time while building knowledge across topics. Module and weekly structures further support this progression by organizing skills around meaningful texts and essential questions, helping teachers maintain clear instructional focus.

To support prioritization and implementation, teachers are provided embedded guidance on instructional focus, including modeled routines, probing questions, and point-of-use supports, along with differentiation resources and flexible pathways for reteaching or extending learning. These supports enable teachers to maintain full standards coverage while ensuring that instruction emphasizes depth, coherence, and mastery for all learners.

Challenge #2

The volume of Into Reading's content and components may make it difficult for educators to prioritize instructional targets, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation across classrooms.

HMH's Response

HMH Into Reading supports consistent instructional focus by making learning goals explicit and actionable. Each module clearly identifies priority skills and outcomes at the outset, which are reinforced through daily lesson objectives and embedded assessment checkpoints.

The Implementation Guides further support prioritization by distinguishing essential instructional components from those that are flexible, helping teachers make informed

decisions about time and emphasis. These resources promote coherent planning and more consistent implementation across classrooms, while still allowing responsiveness to student data and local needs.

In addition, Teacher’s Corner on the Ed platform provides ongoing professional guidance, reinforcing best practices for implementation, and helping educators sustain clear instructional priorities over time.

Challenge #3

The pacing of Into Reading may require a rapid instructional delivery that is not always realistic within typical classroom time constraints, and the complexity of its materials and structure may necessitate significant professional development for educators to effectively implement the program.

HMH’s Response

HMH Into Reading is designed to support realistic instructional delivery through flexible lesson structures and embedded professional learning. Lessons clearly distinguish core instruction from optional extensions, enabling teachers to prioritize essential content and adjust pacing based on available time and student needs.

Pacing guidance in the Implementation Guide (pg. 5) outlines essential components and sample pathways, while planning tools such as Editable Weekly Plans and the Classcraft session organizer help teachers anticipate upcoming lessons and allocate time effectively. The instructional model is designed for 90–150 minute literacy blocks, with explicit guidance for adapting the 180-day scope to fit local schedules.

To address implementation complexity, *HMH Into Reading* includes embedded professional learning such as Getting Started modules, lesson walkthrough videos, and on-demand PD, along with coaching support through HMH Coachly. Together, these resources reduce the need for extensive external training and help teachers build confidence in pacing and implementation.

Challenge #4

While Into Reading includes decodable passages as part of its foundational skills instruction, there is ambiguity within the “read aloud” portions of lessons. At times, students appear to be asked to read connected text during core instruction that is not aligned to the phonics skills they have been explicitly taught. This lack of clarity may limit students’ ability to apply their decoding knowledge, impact reading accuracy, and lead to frustration or reliance on less efficient strategies, such as guessing.

HMH’s Response

HMH Into Reading separates decodable text for student reading from more complex text used in teacher-led read-alouds and shared reading. Students are not expected to independently decode these more complex texts.

During foundational skills instruction, students read only decodable texts that align to previously taught phonics patterns, ensuring accurate application of skills and reducing reliance on guessing. In contrast, *myBook* selections are designed to expose students to rich, grade-level language and content, supporting vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and knowledge building.

This clear instructional distinction protects the integrity of decoding practice while allowing students to engage with complex text, ensuring that skill application remains aligned to instruction and developmentally appropriate.