



Core Content Review Criteria v2.1

English Language Arts

Grades 3-5

Figure 1: Gateways for Review of ELA Materials Based on Program Format

FS Supplemental	K-2 Comprehensive	3-5 Comprehensive	6-12 Comprehensive
Gateway 1*: Alignment to Research-Based Practices and Standards for Foundation Skills Instruction	Gateway 1: Alignment to Research-Based Practices and Standards for Foundation Skills Instruction (if applicable)	Gateway 1: Alignment to Research-Based Practices and Standards for Foundation Skills Instruction (if applicable)	N/A
N/A	Gateway 2: Comprehension Through Texts, Questions, and Tasks	Gateway 2: Comprehension Through Texts, Questions, and Tasks	Gateway 2: Comprehension Through Texts, Questions, and Tasks
Gateway 3**: Teacher and Student Supports	Gateway 3: Teacher and Student Supports	Gateway 3: Teacher and Student Supports	Gateway 3: Teacher and Student Supports
MLL Review <i>in Development</i>	Integrated MLL Review	Integrated MLL Review	Integrated MLL Review

*Gateway 1 indicators are consistent across all review tools.

**Gateway 3 differs for Foundational Skills Supplemental reviews.

Figure 2: Gateway Evaluation Process for Review of ELA Materials (Grades 3-5)

Gateway 1*	Alignment to Research-Based Practices and Standards for Foundational Skills Instruction
	Do the materials emphasize explicit, systematic instruction of research-based and/or evidence-based phonics for decoding and encoding multisyllabic words?
	Do materials and instruction support students in learning and practicing regularly and irregularly spelled words through word recognition and word analysis?
	Do materials provide varied and frequent practice in oral reading fluency using grade-level connected texts?

*Only programs designed to address foundational skills are reviewed for Gateway 1. Materials not designed to address foundational skills will begin at Gateway 2.

Meets or Partially Meets: move to next applicable gateway

Gateway 2**

Comprehension Through Texts, Questions, and Tasks

Do materials include content-rich, engaging texts that meet the text complexity criteria for the grade level? Do texts and text sets cohesively work together to build knowledge of specific topics and/or content themes?

Do materials include questions, tasks, and assignments that are meaningful, evidence-based, and support students in making meaning and building knowledge as they progress toward grade-level mastery of literacy skills?

Do materials include clear, explicit instruction guidance for teachers across all literacy skills?

**Programs designed to ONLY address foundational skills will not be reviewed for Gateway 2.

Meets for all applicable gateways: move to Gateway 3

Gateway 3

Teacher & Student Supports

Do materials include opportunities for teachers to effectively plan and utilize with integrity to further develop their own understanding of the content?

Are materials designed for each child's regular and active participation in grade-level/grade-band/series content?

Do materials include a visual design that is engaging and references or integrates digital technology, when applicable, with guidance for teachers?

Gateway 1

Alignment to Research-Based Practices and Standards for Foundational Skills Instruction

Gateway 1 Overview	Available Points	
<p>Criterion 1.3: Application of Foundational Skills for Word Reading * Indicators 1g-1n Materials support students in applying advanced word-reading strategies—including multisyllabic decoding and morpheme analysis—to build accurate, automatic, and meaningful reading. *Criterion 1.3 is non-negotiable. Instructional materials being reviewed must score Meet Expectations in this criterion to proceed to Gateway 3.</p>	<p>24</p>	
<p>Criterion 1.4: Word Recognition and Word Analysis Indicators 1o-1r Materials support students in reading and analyzing grade-level words through instruction in spelling patterns, syllable structure, and meaningful word parts. Instruction emphasizes automaticity and supports vocabulary development through word analysis.</p>		<p>12</p>
<p>Criterion 1.5: Fluency* Indicators 1s-1u Materials provide varied and frequent opportunities for students to build fluency—accuracy, rate, and prosody—through reading grade-level connected texts. Instruction supports the development of fluent reading as a bridge to comprehension. *Criterion 1.5 is non-negotiable. Instructional materials being reviewed must score Meet Expectations in this criterion to proceed to Gateway 3.</p>		<p>8</p>
<p>Total Available Points in Gateway 1</p>	<p>44</p>	<p>Meets: 38-44 Partially Meets: 22-37 Does Not Meet: <22</p>

Alignment to Research-Based Practices and Standards for Foundational Skills Instruction

Criterion 1.3 Application of Foundational Skills for Word Reading

Materials support students in applying advanced word-reading strategies—including multisyllabic decoding and morpheme analysis—to build accurate, automatic, and meaningful reading.

Note: Given grade-band differences, Criterion 1.1 and 1.2 are not applicable to grades 3-5. Therefore, this tool begins with Criterion 1.3 and includes Criterion 1.4 and 1.5 before moving into the comprehensive indicators.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria	Scoring
1g. Materials support students in applying a range of evidence-based strategies to read and spell multisyllabic words in connected text, including syllable division, syllable types, and morpheme-based approaches.	0 2 4
1h. Materials are absent of the three-cueing system.	0 4
1i. Materials, questions, and tasks provide reasonable pacing where phonics (decoding and encoding) skills are taught one at a time and allot time where phonics skills are practiced to automaticity, with cumulative review.	Not assessed in Grades 3-5
1j. Materials include systematic and explicit modeling and guided practice in applying multisyllabic word reading strategies, including syllable types, syllable division, and morpheme analysis.	0 2 4
1k. Materials include frequent and varied opportunities for students to decode and encode multisyllabic words that contain advanced sound and spelling patterns, including affixes and syllable types.	0 2 4
1l. Spelling rules and generalizations are introduced in a logical progression, embedded in grade-level content, and connected to word structure. Students receive sufficient practice to support accurate and automatic spelling.	0 2 4
1m. Materials include decodable texts with phonics aligned to the program’s scope and sequence and opportunities for students to use decodables for multiple readings.	Not assessed in Grades 3-5
1n. Materials include targeted assessment opportunities that identify students who require additional support with foundational phonics skills and provide guidance for appropriate instructional responses.	0 2 4

*Criterion 1.3 is non-negotiable. Instructional materials being reviewed must score Meet Expectations in this criterion to proceed to Gateway 3.

Total Available Points	24	Meets: 22-24 Partially Meets: 12-21 Does Not Meet: <12
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FS Criterion 1.4 Word Recognition and Word Analysis

Materials support students in reading and analyzing grade-level words through instruction in spelling patterns, syllable structure, and meaningful word parts. Instruction emphasizes automaticity and supports vocabulary development through word analysis.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria	Scoring
1o. Materials include instruction and practice in analyzing and applying meaningful word parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots) to support decoding, spelling, and vocabulary development.	0 1 2
1p. Materials support students in applying word reading strategies to decode unfamiliar multisyllabic words encountered in connected text, using knowledge of syllable types, morphology, and spelling patterns.	0 1 2
1q. Materials include explicit instruction in syllabication and morpheme analysis and provide students with practice opportunities to apply these strategies within grade-level content.	0 2 4
1r. Materials regularly and systematically offer assessment opportunities that measure student progress of word recognition and analysis.	0 2 4

Total Available Points	12	Meets: 10-12 Partially Meets: 6-9 Does Not Meet: <6
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FS Criterion 1.5 Fluency*

Materials provide varied and frequent opportunities for students to build fluency—accuracy, rate, and prosody—through reading grade-level connected texts. Instruction supports the development of fluent reading as a bridge to comprehension.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria

Scoring

1s. Instructional opportunities are built into the materials for systematic, evidence-based, explicit instruction in oral reading fluency.	Not assessed in Grades 3-5
1t. Materials include varied and frequent opportunities for students to build fluency-accuracy, rate, and prosody-through reading grade-level texts in order to support comprehension.	0 2 4
1u. Materials regularly and systematically offer assessment opportunities that measure student progress in oral reading fluency (as indicated by the program scope and sequence).	0 2 4

**Criterion 1.5 is non-negotiable. Instructional materials being reviewed must score Meet Expectations in this criterion to proceed to Gateway 3.*

Total Available Points	8	Meets: 6-8 Partially Meets: 4-5 Does Not Meet: <4
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Gateway 2

Comprehension Through Texts, Questions, and Tasks

To identify the Gateway rating, educators use evidence gathered to score indicators related to each criterion.

REMINDER:

- Materials must “Meet Expectations” or “Partially Meet Expectations” in Gateway 1* to be reviewed in Gateway 2**.
- Materials must “Meet Expectations” in BOTH Gateway 1* and Gateway 2** to be reviewed in Gateway 3.

Materials include engaging, content-rich texts that meet grade-level text complexity standards and work together to build knowledge on specific topics. They feature meaningful, evidence-based questions, tasks, and assignments that aid students in understanding and mastering literacy skills. Additionally, materials provide clear, explicit instructional guidance for teachers across all literacy skills.

****NOTE:** Materials being reviewed must score above zero points in each indicator. Otherwise, the materials automatically do not proceed to Gateway 3.

Gateway 2 Overview		Available Points
<p>Criterion 2.1: Text Quality and Text Complexity Indicators 2a-2e</p> <p>Materials include content-rich, engaging texts that meet the text complexity criteria for the grade level. Texts and text sets cohesively work together to build knowledge of specific topics and/or content themes.</p>		14
<p>Criterion 2.2: Knowledge Building Through Reading, Writing, and Language Comprehension Indicators 2f-2v</p> <p>Materials include questions, tasks, and assignments that are meaningful, evidence-based, and support students in making meaning and building knowledge as they progress toward grade-level mastery of literacy skills.</p> <p>Materials include clear, explicit instruction guidance for teachers across all literacy skills.</p>		42
Total Available Points in Gateway 2	56	Meets: 50-56 Partially Meets: 28-49 Does Not Meet: < 28

Comprehension Through Texts, Questions, and Tasks

Criterion 2.1 Text Quality and Text Complexity

Materials include content-rich, engaging texts that meet the text complexity criteria for the grade level. Texts and text sets cohesively work together to build knowledge of specific topics and/or content themes.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria

Scoring

2a.	Materials provide opportunities for students to engage in a range and volume of reading through content-rich and engaging texts.	0	2	4
2b.	Core/Anchor texts have the appropriate level of complexity for the grade according to documented quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and relationship to their associated student task.	0	2	4
2c.	Materials provide appropriate scaffolds for core/anchor texts that ensure all students can access the text and make meaning. Scaffolds align with the text's qualitative analysis.	0	1	2
2d.	Text sets (e.g., unit, module) are organized around topic(s) or theme(s) to cohesively build student knowledge.	0	2	4
2e.	Materials include a range of texts and provide teacher support in helping students learn about people who are similar to and different from them.	Narrative Evidence Only		

Materials must meet the expectations of all scoring criteria in order to receive full points for the indicator. Materials may not score any 0s to meet expectations for this scoring criterion.

Total Available Points	14	Meets: 12-14 Partially Meets: 7-11 Does Not Meet: < 7
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Criterion 2.2 Knowledge Building Through Reading, Writing, and Language Comprehension

Materials include questions, tasks, and assignments that are meaningful, evidence-based, and support students in making meaning and building knowledge as they progress toward grade-level mastery of literacy skills. Materials include clear, explicit instruction guidance for teachers across all literacy skills.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria		Scoring		
2f.	Materials include a clear, research-based core instructional pathway with reasonable pacing throughout the year, which allows students to work towards grade-level proficiency.	0	2	4
2g.	Most questions, tasks, and assignments are text-based, allowing students to demonstrate their thinking in various formats.	0	2	4

2h.	Materials support students in developing their ability to comprehend complex ideas within and across texts through opportunities to analyze and evaluate texts.	0	1	2
2i.	Materials provide clear protocols and teacher guidance that frequently allow students to engage in listening and speaking about texts they are reading (or read aloud).	0	1	2
2j.	Materials provide opportunities for students to engage in listening and speaking about texts they are reading (or read-aloud).	0	1	2
2k.	Materials include explicit instruction on independent word-learning strategies and key vocabulary words to build knowledge within and across texts.	0	1	2
2l.	Materials include opportunities for students to practice independent word-learning strategies, as well as newly taught vocabulary words.	0	1	2
2m.	Materials include explicit instruction on sentence composition appropriate to grade-level standards, embedded in what students are studying throughout the unit.	0	1	2
2n.	Materials include evidence-based opportunities for students to practice sentence composition and editing of their own writing, appropriate for their grade level.	0	1	2
2o.	Materials include a mix of both on-demand and process writing opportunities that are appropriately aligned in purpose, genre, and/or topic to the reading and listening of that unit.	0	1	2
2p.	Materials include explicit instruction in varied writing processes, embedded in what students are studying throughout the unit.	0	1	2
2q.	Materials include frequent opportunities for students to practice the writing processes using evidence-based strategies, embedded in what students are studying throughout the unit.	0	1	2
2r.	Materials include frequent opportunities for students to practice evidence-based writing (by drawing from the texts and knowledge built throughout the unit) to explain what the text says explicitly and implicitly.	0	1	2
2s.	Materials include explicit instruction of research skills that guide research and writing projects to develop students' knowledge using multiple texts and source materials.	0	1	2
2t.	Materials include multiple opportunities for students to apply research skills to develop their knowledge of topics.	0	1	2
2u.	Materials include formative assessments and guidance that provide the teacher with information for instructional next steps.	0	2	4
2v.	Materials include culminating tasks/summative assessments that require students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the unit/module while integrating multiple literacy skills (e.g., a combination of reading, writing, speaking, and listening).	0	2	4

Materials must meet the expectations of all scoring criteria in order to receive full points for the indicator. Materials may not score any 0s to meet expectations for this scoring criterion.

Total Available Points	42	Meets: 38-42 Partially Meets: 21-37 Does Not Meet: < 21
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Total Available Points in Gateway 2	56	Meets: 50-56 Partially Meets: 28-49 Does Not Meet: < 28
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Gateway 3

Teacher & Student Supports

To identify the Gateway rating, educators use evidence gathered to score indicators related to each criterion.

REMINDER:

- Materials must "Meet Expectations" or "Partially Meet Expectations" in Gateway 1* to be reviewed in Gateway 2**.
- Materials must "Meet Expectations" in BOTH Gateway 1* and Gateway 2** to be reviewed in Gateway 3.

Materials support teachers to fully utilize the curriculum, understand the skills and learning of their students, and support a range of learners.

Gateway 3 Overview	Available Points
Criterion 3.1: Teacher Supports Indicators 3a-3i	10

Materials include opportunities for teachers to effectively plan and utilize with integrity to further develop their own understanding of the content.	
Criterion 3.2: Student Supports Indicators 3j-3q Materials are designed for each child's regular and active participation in grade-level/grade-band/series content.	4
Criterion 3.3: Intentional Design Indicators 3r-3u Materials include a visual design that is engaging and references or integrates digital technology, when applicable, with guidance for teachers.	Narrative Evidence Only
Total Available Points in Gateway 3	14
Meets: 12-14 Partially Meets: 7-11 Does Not Meet: < 7	

Teacher and Student Supports

Criterion 3.1 Teacher Supports

The program includes opportunities for teachers to effectively plan and utilize materials with integrity and to further develop their own understanding of the content.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria	Scoring
3a. Materials provide teacher guidance with useful annotations and suggestions for how to enact the student materials and ancillary materials to support students' literacy development.	0 1 2
3b. Materials contain explanations and examples of grade-level/course-level concepts and/or standards and how the concepts and/or standards align to other grade/course levels so that teachers can improve their own knowledge of the subject.	0 1 2
3c. Materials include a year-long scope and sequence with standards correlation information.	0 1

3d.	Materials provide strategies for informing all stakeholders, including students, parents, or caregivers about the program and suggestions for how they can help support student progress and achievement.	Narrative Evidence Only
3e.	Materials explain the program’s instructional approaches, identify research-based strategies, and explain the role of the standards.	0 1 2
3f.	Materials provide a comprehensive list of supplies needed to support instructional activities.	0 1
3g.	The assessment system provides consistent opportunities to determine student learning throughout the school year. The assessment system provides sufficient teacher guidance for evaluating student performance and determining instructional next steps.	0 1 2
3h.	<i>This is not an assessed indicator in ELA.</i>	
3i.	<i>This is not an assessed indicator in ELA.</i>	

Materials must meet the expectations of all scoring criteria in order to receive full points for the indicator. Materials may not score any 0s to meet expectations for this scoring criterion.

Total Available Points	10	Meets: 8-10 Partially Meets: 5-7 Does Not Meet: < 5
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Criterion 3.2 Student Supports

The program includes materials designed for each child’s regular and active participation in grade-level/grade-band/series content.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria		Scoring
3j.	Materials provide strategies and support for students in special populations to work with grade-level content and meet or exceed grade-level standards, which support their regular and active participation in learning.	0 1 2
3k.	Materials regularly provide extensions for students who are above grade level to engage with literacy content and concepts in greater depth.	0 1 2
3l.	Materials provide varied approaches to learning tasks over time and variety in how students are expected to demonstrate their learning with opportunities for students to monitor their learning.	Narrative Evidence Only
3m.	Materials provide opportunities for teachers to use a variety of grouping strategies.	Narrative Evidence Only

3n.	Assessments offer accommodations that allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without changing the content of the assessment.	Narrative Evidence Only
3o.	Materials provide a range of representation of people and include detailed instructions and support for educators to effectively incorporate and draw upon students' different cultural, social, and community backgrounds to enrich learning experiences.	Narrative Evidence Only
3p.	<i>This is not an assessed indicator in ELA.</i>	
3q.	<i>This is not an assessed indicator in ELA.</i>	

Materials must meet the expectations of all scoring criteria in order to receive full points for the indicator. Materials may not score any 0s to meet expectations for this scoring criterion.

Total Available Points	4	Meets: 4 Partially Meets: 2-3 Does Not Meet: < 2
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Criterion 3.3 Intentional Design

The program includes a visual design that is engaging and references or integrates digital technology, when applicable, with guidance for teachers.

Indicators + Scoring Criteria		Scoring
3r.	Materials integrate technology such as interactive tools, virtual manipulatives/objects, and/or dynamic software in ways that engage students in the grade-level/series standards, when applicable.	Narrative Evidence Only
3s.	Materials include or reference digital technology that provides opportunities for teachers and/or students to collaborate with each other, when applicable.	Narrative Evidence Only
3t.	The visual design (whether in print or digital) supports students in engaging thoughtfully with the subject, and is neither distracting nor chaotic.	Narrative Evidence Only
3u.	Materials provide teacher guidance for the use of embedded technology to support and enhance student learning, when applicable.	Narrative Evidence Only

Total Available Points	Narrative Evidence Only	Meets: N/A Partially Meets: N/A Does Not Meet: N/A
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Total Available Points in Gateway 3	14	Meets: 12-14 Partially Meets: 7-11 Does Not Meet: < 7
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