

*“My students love the texts in Wit & Wisdom. They gain empathy and broaden their horizons by encountering the different perspectives and experiences of the people and places featured in the texts. Wit & Wisdom is my anchor in a sea of hopes that my students can learn to appreciate the complexities of the world and the written word, helping them succeed in their careers, college, and beyond.”*

—Grade 8 Teacher, Friendship Blow-Pierce Middle School, Washington, D.C.

A curriculum focused on excellent, knowledge-building texts is one of the most important tools in a community’s effort to build lifelong learners. At Great Minds, the creators of *Wit & Wisdom*, we believe all students deserve rich, rigorous content. We know that a coherent curriculum—one that builds knowledge from one year to the next through the deep study of important topics—compels students to inquire, debate, discuss, and write about what they know. History, science, literature, and fine art texts, organized in a curated sequence, generate thinking within and beyond the classroom.

The work of the EdReports.org team is essential to empowering leaders, teachers, students, and communities with insight into curriculum design. The EdReports.org analysis supports decision-makers in the choice of curricula to challenge all learners, students and teachers alike. The EdReports.org indicators are pillars of *Wit & Wisdom*—a curriculum created by teachers, for teachers who believe in the value of choosing quality texts and teaching those texts based on the shifts of the standards. Great Minds teacher–writers focused on building knowledge with carefully selected and sequenced texts, through time spent on vocabulary worth teaching and tasks that support students with explicit writing and speaking opportunities. The teachers who created the curriculum are grateful for the near-perfect scores the curriculum received at all grades. We hope readers of the reports will note the many illustrative examples the EdReports.org team highlighted. These relevant, thoughtfully selected examples provide a window into the curriculum’s depth.

The EdReports.org review team captured the intentions of our curriculum design: to build deep knowledge and empower students with tools to articulate their knowledge in speaking and writing. As indicated in the helpful EdReports.org feedback, *Wit & Wisdom* creates opportunities for engaging in excellent content by spending time reading, rereading, and questioning worthy texts.

While we know that the teacher–writers and EdReports.org reviewers are astute in their assessment of our curriculum, the real stars are the texts. In reviewing the text quality and the alignment of the teaching and learning to the standards, the EdReports.org team highlighted many examples of ways in which *Wit & Wisdom* texts are exceptional in both content and craft. The teams highlighted how literary texts feature plot complexity, exemplary use of language and literary devices, and high-quality illustrations. Informational texts pique curiosity, build content knowledge, and introduce a range of perspectives and forms. Representing grade-level complexity expectations or higher, the literary and informational texts in *Wit & Wisdom* merit close reading, lend themselves to the development of content knowledge and the skills described in the Common Core State Standards, and, most importantly, engage students in productive—and joyful—struggle.

In addition to literary and informational texts, reviewers noted the unique ways in which *Wit & Wisdom* incorporates fine art, video, and audio recordings. Visual art texts include paintings, sculptures, architecture, and photographs that expand understanding of module topics and develop students' visual and cultural literacy. Visual and multimedia texts support striving readers while engaging all students with rich content.

Together, a module's texts create the module's Knowledge Puzzle: each piece contributes to key learning about a topic. Individually and collectively, the pieces of each Knowledge Puzzle empower students with the literary, historical, scientific, artistic, and cultural knowledge required for successful thinking and citizenship.

While it is rewarding to examine how *Wit & Wisdom* meets the criteria of the evaluation tool, we are most interested in the thoughtful analysis of ways in which we can improve the curriculum. The feedback from the EdReports.org team augments ongoing discoveries we make while working closely with schools and districts currently implementing *Wit & Wisdom*. Some areas where we are focused for improvement and growth include making the content available in varied, interactive digital formats to provide more opportunities for students and teachers to collaborate using digital tools.

As a nonprofit provider of instructional materials and professional development, the core of our mission is focused on helping every teacher and student realize what we know to be true: that every child is capable of greatness. We are grateful to the EdReports.org team for helping to accelerate our efforts to enrich the lives of students and teachers with book-based, integrated curriculum so that young minds can meet a worthy, engaging challenge every day.