May, 2018

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Response to EdReports Evaluation
Collections **©2017, Grades 9-12**

Introduction
Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on EdReports' review of *Collections* ©2017 Grades 9-12. It is a profound privilege to know that *Collections* teachers have encouraged millions of students to become lifelong readers and learners. Though we are confident that the efficacy of *Collections* ©2017 speaks for itself, we are also aware that opinions may vary. Allow us to shed new light on a few criteria that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt stands behind wholeheartedly but that EdReports has reviewed with mixed favorability. Included below are references to essential resources that EdReports did not consider in their analysis:

Gateway One: Text Quality and Alignment to Standards
- **1c and 1d:** *Collections* presents carefully chosen groups of topically related texts which together create impactful, powerful, and memorable instructional experiences. In some instances, a few texts will not follow a sequence of increasingly complex texts on a simple quantitative measure such as a Lexile score. These texts are included because they illuminate the Collection theme or teach critical literacy skills. All texts considered collectively fit the appropriate grade-band placement and reinforce the spiraling ladder of text complexity across the grades. Teachers can prepare for needed accommodations and/or scaffolding by consulting the Text Complexity Rubric and the Text X-Ray. Both quantify the characteristics of the text and identify challenges in advance of each lesson.
- **1f:** *Collections* prides itself on its diverse literature, representing a balance of genders and ethnicities, experiences, and perspectives. Multiple genres and media forms reveal the different perspectives of authors on the same theme or essential idea. The selections in the consumable Close Reader maintain the levels of complexity and can be used for application and practice or for independent reading. Students who struggle with close reading can view short, instructive Close Read Screencasts in their eBooks. This experience provides a model of how to discuss, analyze, and annotate significant passages. For immediate application, teachers will find in the Teacher's Edition a suggested passage from the same selection so that pairs of students can practice the kind of close reading they observed in the screencast.
- **1i and 1j:** As mentioned in **1f** above, Close Read Screencasts provide modeled academic conversations for students to actually hear discussion protocols in action. Students listen to the screencasts and then emulate the discussion best practices with their own Close Read Application. Interactive Lessons on Speaking can be used for whole group instruction, partner work, or self-paced independent lessons. In addition, task-specific rubrics are available for teachers and students to understand the expectations and grading criteria of the Collection level

Performance Tasks. Other examples of materials that support students' speaking and listening skills are:

- o As You Read questions
- o Collaborative Discussion
- o Analyzing the Text questions: Intended to be a starting point for class, peer, and small group discussions or individual response activities
- o The Selection and Collection Performance Tasks: Many of the activities mirror real world situations such as debating, making a presentation, or participating in a discussion

Gateway Two: Building Knowledge with Texts, Vocabulary, and Tasks

- **2a:** The title of our program, *Collections*, indicates the faith we place in the collective power of the text sets within it. Texts of all types—literature and literary nonfiction such as speeches, essays, biographies, memoirs, scientific writings, historical accounts, and media selections—were carefully chosen to illuminate universal themes that resonate with students. The following resources are intended to build students' knowledge and engagement levels:
  - o The Collection Opener: Offers a compelling image for the theme and a quote that invites an Essential Question
  - o Stream to Start and Channel One News videos: Spark students' interest and encourage discussion
  - o FYI: Stimulates interest in current topics and encourages the reading of complex texts related to each Collection's topic or theme
  - o Guiding Questions by Collection: Encourage students to slow down and dig deeper into the text for meaning
  - o Strategies for Annotation: Suggestions for digital annotation of key elements
  - o Collaborative Discussion: Prompts students to share ideas and claims about texts
  - o Close Read Screencasts: Model discussion protocols
- **2b:** *Collections* strives to give each and every student the tools to access appropriate, complex texts with increasing independence. Rigor builds across the Collections, and teachers have the flexibility to add or remove scaffolds according to their professional judgment. The Close Reading questions are a good example. After these have been modeled by the teacher, they can be assigned individually or further remediated in small groups. Another example is the Close Reader. Its architecture contains explicit scaffolds with designated stopping points and response opportunities. Finally, all Collection level Performance Tasks are preceded by multiple selection level tasks that provide a safe forum for trial and error. These are just a few examples of the activities in *Collections* that build toward higher cognitive processes.
- **2c:** Many resources help students build knowledge and ideas across texts:
  - o Analyzing the Text: Students revisit the text and cite specific textual evidence to support their responses
  - o Collaborative Discussion: Students refer back to the text as they work through their answers and ideas with peers
  - o The Close Reader: Students read and reread specific sections of text guided by text-dependent prompts and construct short responses that offer essential practice in the art of evidence-based writing
  - o **Selection** Performance Tasks: Students revisit texts and expand their views on the theme, perspective, issues, and structure of the selections
  - o **Collection** Performance Tasks: Students synthesize ideas across several texts and engage in a sustained writing process

- o   Performance Assessment: Students read two or three new texts and analyze, compare, and synthesize ideas across all of them before writing independently
- **2d:** *Collections* supports teachers and students in every step of the writing process. Students receive a Performance Task Preview at the start of each Collection that helps them focus their energy and annotations during reading. Selection level Performance tasks gear students up for the more substantive tasks at the end of the Collection. Students have a treasure trove of Interactive Writing Lessons, linked in their eBooks at point of use. The Performance Assessment resource provides stepped-out instruction on how to synthesize multiple texts and then respond in writing using text evidence. Moreover, tools like revision charts and scoring rubrics set students up for success and give teachers a consistent measure for evaluation.
- **2e:** *Collections* uses academic vocabulary as a tool for effective expression, and it is reinforced and practiced throughout the curriculum. Close Read Screencasts often portray students discussing the meaning of challenging words, both academic and critical vocabulary. Academic vocabulary is introduced at the opening of each Collection and comes full circle with the Collection level Performance Task. By contrast, vocabulary that is specific to the subjects or domains of each individual selection is called critical vocabulary. These words are defined at point of use, as they are essential to understanding the text.
- **2f:** *Collections* provides a rigorous, year-long approach to writing. Lessons engage students in writing to sources, creating their own texts, and analyzing and critiquing the writing of their peers. Writing instruction begins with the reading and analyzing of texts. The standards and skills lessons following selections often present the critical elements of a type of writing that students will tackle in the upcoming Performance Tasks. To further students' learning of key elements of writing, the self-paced Interactive Lessons in the eBook take students into the specific skills they will need to be successful. They can apply these skills to the selection level Performance Tasks and perfect them for the Collection level tasks. For further practice and even for formative assessment, teachers may use the lessons in the Performance Assessment resource. The three-part lesson asks students to demonstrate competencies such as reading and analyzing several related texts, making comparisons, synthesizing ideas, and citing evidence in an original essay—all in preparation for writing they will encounter on high-stakes tests.
- **2g:** Research skills are often weaved into the Selection and Collection Performance Tasks when students are asked to further explore historical background or cultural connections. Other times they are required to find and analyze additional texts that enrich or provide compelling contrast to the themes of the Collection. Additional opportunities for research and writing include:
  - o   The Interactive Research Lessons
  - o   Extend and Reteach Lessons
  - o   Writing and Research in a Digital Age
  - o   FYI site
- **2h:** Resources for Independent Reading in the Teacher's Edition at the end of every Collection offer suggestions on how to create and maintain an independent reading program. Digital resources support this effort as well:
  - o   The FYI website at www.hmhfyi.com is an ideal asset to address students' interest and knowledge as well as foster their love of reading
  - o   NovelWise
  - o   More Texts by Collection
  - o   Nonfiction Connections

It is with absolute confidence that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt places *Collections* ©2017 in the hands of millions of teachers and students, and we are proud of the proven difference it has made.