

***Into Reading* Publisher's Response**

Grades 3-6

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is very pleased with Ed Reports' "All Green" evaluation for all levels of our *Into Reading* program. *Into Reading* K-6 is a comprehensive English language arts solution for a new generation of readers and writers. All aspects of *Into Reading* are based on solid research evidence for how literacy (reading and writing), speaking, and listening develop over the elementary school span and how high-quality instruction supports that development.

We would like to provide some specific comments on the following indicators in the Grades 3-6 reviews.

1. **INDICATOR 1H** "Sets of high-quality sequences of text-dependent questions and tasks build to a culminating task that integrates skills (may be writing, speaking, or a combination)."

Grade 3

HMH believes that Grade 3 was held to a different standard than Grades 4-6 in the evaluation of this indicator. The Grade 3 evaluation says, "some tasks can be completed without utilizing knowledge from the texts, and instead demonstrate skills absent of strong content grounding." This same choice is mentioned in the Grade 4-6 evaluation that received full credit for the indicator.

Selection questions in the Teaching Pal carefully build deep understanding over multiple readings. The first reading, Read for Understanding, culminates in Collaborative Discussion prompts about the text. The second reading, Targeted Close Read, culminates in a response writing prompt, integrating students' overall understanding of the text.

Though students may employ background knowledge, all ten module performance tasks in Grade 3 are built around an essential question and require students to demonstrate knowledge gained across the module.

2. **INDICATOR 1J** "Materials support students' listening and speaking about what they are reading and researching (including presentation opportunities) with relevant follow-up questions and supports."

Grades 3-6

The Collaborative Discussion questions employ a gradual release model. Questions 1-2 scaffold support by stating which page or pages should be reread to find text evidence. Question 3 requires students to find text evidence independently and often requires an overall understanding of the selection or a synthesis of ideas from the text. For example:

- Grade 3, Teaching Pal, Book 1, page 73 (*Stink and the Freaky Frog Freakout*): Questions 1-2 tell students to look back at pages 62-63 and 64-67. Question 3 asks, "What does the way Judy helps Stink with his homework tell you about Judy's personality?"

- Grade 6, Teaching Pal, Book 2, page 197 (*Sports Poetry*): Questions 1-2 tell students to revisit pages 190-191 and 192. Question 3 is “Compare and contrast the sports poems in this selection. What do they have in common? How are they different?”

The Teaching Pal provides suggested answers to the questions. The suggested responses make clear that students are expected to use text evidence.

3. **INDICATOR 1Q** “Instructional opportunities are frequently built into the materials for students to practice and achieve reading fluency in oral and silent reading, that is, to read on-level prose and poetry with accuracy, rate appropriate to the text, and expression.”

Grades 3-5

We believe that practicing fluent reading of poetry should be authentic. Consequently, fluency activities for poetry appear after students have read authentic poetry selections.

The report states, “explicit instructions for how often teachers should be assessing students who are at or above grade level are not evident in the materials. Benchmark Books can be used to assess accuracy but do not prompt teachers to calculate a WCPM range to guide the teacher in determining appropriate rate.” HMH provides *Intervention Assessments* that include Progress-Monitoring Assessments to assess Oral Reading Fluency in Grades 1-6. These assessments can be used to monitor Oral Reading Fluency for any student for whom a teacher would like to record a WCPM score, including at- or above-level students. The Oral Reading Fluency norms provided in this component are applicable to any student within the grade for which they are being observed.

4. **INDICATOR 2D** “The questions and tasks support students’ ability to complete culminating tasks in which they demonstrate their knowledge of a topic (or, for grades 6-8, a theme) through integrated skills (e.g., combination of reading, writing, speaking, listening).”

Grade 3

HMH believes that Grade 3 was held to a different standard than Grades 4-5 in the evaluation of this indicator. The Grade 3 evaluation says, “At the end of each module, students are tasked with completing a performance task that utilizes the texts, skills, and strategies from the module and requires students to apply their learning to a writing prompt. These tasks require students to reflect on material they learned in the module, including the knowledge they gained; however, they inconsistently require the students to use the module texts and vocabulary as well and demonstrate comprehension.” This same choice is mentioned in the Grade 4-5 evaluation that received full credit for the indicator.

HMH believes that all of the Grade 3 culminating tasks and performance tasks meet the letter and spirit of the indicator. In each selection culminating task, students must use information from the module texts in their responses, demonstrating comprehension. In each module culminating task, students must use evidence from the texts for examples and support. This requirement appears in the prompt, plan step, draft step, and revise and edit

rubric. In addition, students are encouraged to use Big Idea Words and Critical Vocabulary in their writing. For example:

- Module 1: Students learn about a variety of interesting characters. In the module culminating task, students write about using an idea from a story character to solve a problem.
- Module 2: Students learn about modes of self-expression. In the module culminating task, students demonstrate their own self-expression by writing a persuasive letter. Students must use evidence from the texts they read for examples to support their argument.
- Module 4: Students learn about stories told as plays. In the module culminating task, students write a story that could be performed as a play. Students must use evidence from the texts and video to provide examples of story characters who faced a problem, as well as evidence of the characteristics of stories that are best told as plays.
- Module 5: Students learn about teamwork through sports. In the module culminating task, students write an editorial in which they state their opinion about the value of time spent playing sports. Students must use evidence from the texts and video to provide support for their reasons.
- Module 7: Students learn about the importance of being helpful members of communities. In the module culminating task, students write a news report in which they draw on the module texts to explain how people can impact their communities.
- Module 10: Students learn about the importance of storytelling. In the module culminating task, students write a story the way a storyteller long ago would have told it. Students must draw on the module texts for ideas, examples, and a lesson or message in order to write their story.

5. **INDICATOR 3B** “The teacher and student can reasonably complete the content within a regular school year, and the pacing allows for maximum student understanding.”

Grades 3-6

We believe the program organization provides the right balance of predictable structure and flexibility to entrust teachers as professionals to make the appropriate choices for their students, which includes making reasonable adjustments to planning and pacing based on a school or classroom’s unique situation. No publisher’s program can accurately accommodate for all the various disruptions that may occur in a school year.

The grade-level evaluations mention that “The Guiding Principles and Strategies Resource Handbook emphasizes the importance of introducing and practicing routines and procedures in the beginning of the year; however, this is not built into the flow of the materials.”

Point-of-use routines are highlighted in green throughout the Teacher’s Guides. For example:

- Grade 3, Teacher’s Guide Volume 1, page T31 (Read for Understanding, Think-Pair-Share)
- Grade 4, Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, page T39 (Choral Reading, Partner Reading)
- Grade 5, Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, page T40 (Vocabulary)
- Grade 6, Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, page T111 (Collaborative Discussion)

The report also mentions that the sample schedule in The Guiding Principles and Strategies Handbook “does not provide for daily social studies and science instruction.” And “In order to complete Modules 11 and 12, all other Module lessons must be completed, because lessons in these two modules require students to revisit texts and anchor charts from Modules 1-10.” HMH’s daily schedule recommendation for Grades 3-6 includes 30 minutes for Science or Social Studies *Into Reading* provides teachers with options and flexibility. The anchor charts are intended for reuse throughout the year. One text per week is used as an exemplar for the lessons in Modules 11-12. If students have not read a text before encountering it there, they can read it in the first lesson of the week and reread it in the subsequent lessons.

6. **INDICATOR 3D** “Materials include publisher-produced alignment documentation of the standards addressed by specific questions, tasks, and assessment items.”

Grades 3-6

HMH provides assessment item-level alignments to CCSS via online reporting or in PDF versions of the assessment Answer Keys.