Overview

*Big Ideas Math: Modeling Real Life* for grades K-8 is a high-quality, rigorous math program built on the most current and widely accepted educational research. The data-driven program is effective in ensuring positive student outcomes in mathematics. This newly released math series is building a highly successful user base across a broad range of demographics and school settings.

**Gateway 1: Focus and Coherence**

On this objective portion of the EdReports review, our high scores reflect that *Big Ideas Math: Modeling Real Life* is a standards-aligned program that fully covers the required content, the major work focus, and the progressions for each grade level. See more about program focus and coherence [here](#).

**Gateway 2: Rigor and Mathematical Practices**

EdReports’ review of this gateway is not consistent across grades, revealing that there is a level of subjectivity to evaluating heavily embedded practices and rigor elements. *Big Ideas Math*’s single authorship provides a cohesive structure and scaffolding for rigor and mathematical practices across grade levels.

**Rigor**

A truly rigorous program offers a balance of the three aspects of rigor: conceptual understanding (discovering why), procedural fluency (learning how), and application (knowing when to apply).

**Conceptual Understanding**

In Gateway 2, the program was reviewed against a narrow expectation of how conceptual understanding should be developed in a curriculum. Big Ideas Learning highly values conceptual development, placing it at the forefront of every section with a discovery exploration.

In these explorations, students explore, question, explain, and persevere as they seek to answer questions that encourage concrete to abstract thought. The explorations provide rich opportunities for students to develop deep conceptual understanding of topics across a grade level. Each exploration was thoughtfully written to get students thinking conceptually, and while on the surface an exploration may appear quite simple, it is here that students often discover foundational concepts that are central to the learning target of the section.
As concepts are solidified in the lesson, every section provides opportunities for students to independently demonstrate conceptual understanding in the in-class Self-Assessment exercises and in the homework Practice exercises. Every lesson and homework set intentionally includes conceptual questions to reinforce the learning.

**Procedural Fluency**
Every exploration is followed by a lesson where students are presented with precise definitions, examples, and self-assessment opportunities. Here students begin to shift their conceptual understanding into procedural fluency.
**Application**

*Big Ideas Math* exposes students to real-life application examples within every lesson and then follows with additional application problems for in-class problem solving practice. The homework contains a variety of application problems to strengthen and deepen students’ problem-solving skills.

Exposing students to problem solving in class allows them to move with confidence to deeper problem solving in the homework. While some proficient or advanced learners may move to independent problem solving easily, emerging learners benefit from examples. In either case, our curriculum provides teachers with a versatile program to use with every student. See more about program rigor [here](#).

**Mathematical Practices**

The EdReports review of *Big Ideas Math* discounts explicit teaching instruction as a proven teaching strategy. EdReports’ focus maximizes the effect of the materials on students’ learning and minimizes the effect of the teacher; Big Ideas Learning believes the opposite.

We believe in the teacher’s role in instructing, cultivating, and measuring the math practices within daily instruction. The teacher creates a productive and conducive environment in which students are supported in exploration and discussion with their peers. The teaching edition notes opportunities for teachers to encourage expert mathematical thinking in students during
group work or in-class discussions. Fostering that thinking in class encourages these mindsets in students as they work independently.

The authors thoughtfully considered how students can develop mathematical proficiency throughout the program. The student and teaching editions regularly identify and encourage the mathematical practices throughout the curriculum.

To strengthen the connection between the textbook labels and the eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, we have placed a correlation document online at BigIdeasMath.com. It can also be found here.

**Gateway 3: Usability**

Usability is one of the hallmarks of the program that, regrettably, was not even reviewed. Student learning is our highest goal and our student materials are widely known for being clear and understandable. Similarly, the teacher materials are known for their depth and usability. Every component of the versatile teacher package was specifically targeted to help teachers in a practical way as they plan, teach, and assess for student learning. See more about program usability here.

**Conclusion**

*Big Ideas Math: Modeling Real Life* was developed from the latest research with students and teachers in mind. This rigorous program strives for positive math outcomes to prepare today’s students for the jobs of tomorrow. We invite you to go here to explore the program further.

Big Ideas Learning acknowledges the perceived value of third-party reviews as one of the criteria educational leaders use in their evaluation process. We appreciate the reviewer comments and consider all feedback in future program development. Please send any EdReports evaluation inquiries regarding *Big Ideas Math* to BIMqueries@BigIdeasMath.com.