

We are pleased to have received a “Meets Expectations” rating for Gateway One (Text Quality & Complexity and Alignment to Standards Components) and Gateway Two (Building Knowledge with Texts, Vocabulary, and Tasks) for Fishtank ELA Grades K-2. Our curriculum uses only high-quality, rigorous, and engaging fiction and nonfiction texts that promote authentic interaction with the Common Core Standards while simultaneously allowing for rich evidence-based discussions and frequent writing about texts. Our curriculum also places a strong emphasis on building knowledge and vocabulary by exploring high-interest topics and themes through strategically sequenced text-dependent questions, culminating projects, and independent reading. We believe the “Meets Expectations” ratings for Gateways One and Two recognize the strengths of our curriculum.

Match Fishtank’s curriculum is intentionally less prescriptive about implementation than many other published curricula. Our goal was to create a culturally-relevant and standards-aligned curriculum that provides strong texts, tasks, and questions that push students and teachers to the rigor of the Common Core Standards, while also leaving teachers autonomy to decide how to teach the curriculum in their classrooms. A unique feature of our curriculum is that we do not script daily lesson plans or provide student worksheets. We believe that a rigorous ELA lesson is one where students are engrossed in a complex text, discussion, or writing assignment, and teachers are responding and giving feedback based on a deep knowledge of the text, the goals of the lesson, and student needs. Overly-scripted lesson plans can interfere with teachers’ intellectual preparation and detract from the dynamic relationship between teacher and curriculum that brings content to life for students in meaningful ways.

As a result, when it comes to specifying *how* teachers should teach, Match Fishtank’s curriculum is leaner than many other curricula. We believe this leanness is an asset and we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers across the country about the flexibility Match Fishtank offers around implementation. While many teachers find the curriculum highly usable for this reason, Match Fishtank did not meet expectations for Gateway Three (Usability) because many of the Gateway Three indicators look for more detailed prescriptive content.

As we continue to refine and improve Fishtank ELA we will be adding new features and enhancements that support effective implementation, while continuing to make sure Fishtank ELA is easy to use and adapt. These improvements will likely address some of the indicators assessed in Gateway 3.