



K–5 Reading & Writing

Bookworms K–5 Reading & Writing is authored by a university-based literacy researcher who has dedicated her life's work to making research-based literacy practices accessible to teachers. This nationally-recognized curriculum is designed to ensure students develop a lifelong love of reading while learning to read. By helping teachers understand and apply research around the science of reading, *Bookworms* positively impacts student achievement.

Bookworms is structurally different from other curricula on the market. It is composed of three, 45-minute, instructional blocks: Shared Reading, English Language Arts, and Differentiated Instruction. Each block is consistent in layout and structure across modules, units, and lessons.

- The Shared Reading Block consists of grade-level reading instruction, spelling instruction, and foundational skills development.
- The English Language Arts Block consists of genre-based writing instruction, interactive read alouds with high-leverage vocabulary instruction, and explicit instruction of grammar and language standards.
- Differentiated Instruction is a multiple-entry skills block in which teachers use oral reading fluency and phonics assessment data to ensure students get additional direct instruction in the skills they need.

Student Achievement

There are rich case studies that show increased achievement on multiple measures when districts adopt *Bookworms*. In a 2017 study (Walpole et al.), students using *Bookworms* (n=594) outperformed students using guided reading (n=507) in DIBELS oral reading fluency and Scholastic Reading Inventory comprehension.

SBAC achievement data at the Seaford School District in Delaware was evaluated in a 2019 study (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy). The number of students at the highest proficiency rating increased from 15% to 23% across the upper elementary grades. One of the elementary schools in Seaford was recognized statewide for success with African American students. Before *Bookworms*, 32% of African American students met the proficiency benchmark; after *Bookworms*, 58% met that benchmark. Seaford serves a student population that is 36% Black and 23% Hispanic; 17% qualify for special education support, and 42% qualify for lunch subsidies.

In a longitudinal study currently under review, (May et al.) students using *Bookworms* (n=8,806) added an average of 4.9 months of growth in upper elementary grades on MAP compared to

their growth under the district’s instructional-level guided reading curriculum; students receiving special education supports and students with the lowest achievement made the most growth.

Curriculum Recognition

Bookworms has been recognized repeatedly by reading researchers and literacy organizations as a best-in-class curriculum, including:

- **2018: Acknowledged by Achieve the Core** for both its attention to foundational skills and reading volume. “Bookworms also deserves praise for its approach to close reading. Struggling readers traditionally have not been allowed to experience reading grade-level rich complex texts, but Bookworms engages all students in reading grade-appropriate text multiple times daily for different purposes.”
- **2021: Featured on the Education Trust podcast ExtraOrdinary District.** This podcast identified Seaford School District, which adopted *Bookworms*, as an outlier nationally for narrowing the achievement gap between White and Black students. The podcast host, Karin Chenoweth, also elevated the story of Seaford’s success in her 2021 book, *Districts That Succeed: Breaking the Correlation Between Race, Poverty, and Achievement*.
- **2022: Recognized as a knowledge-building curriculum by the Knowledge Matters Campaign.** “While these curricula share common virtues and are all solidly grounded in what matters most for literacy, each has a unique and compelling identity. They present students with substantive, rich content and lack ‘fluff.’ They support access for all students. They motivate and engage students through their content and design. They help all students achieve at high levels. And teachers get ever better at their craft by using them.”
- **2022: Foundational Skills materials were featured in the documentary, *The Right to Read*.**

Highlights from the Report

| Criterion | Indicator | Explanation |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Anchor Texts | 1.a | The texts used in both the Shared Reading and ELA Lesson Plans meet the criteria of high-quality, engaging texts. Students listen to and chorally read familiar texts with high-interest topics, such as family stories, imaginary characters, and trickster tales. The texts that students listen to multiple times for multiple purposes contain rich language, supporting illustrations or text features, and multidimensional characters. |
| Tasks, Texts, & Assignments | 1.f | Students have daily opportunities to engage in questions, tasks, and assignments that are |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| | | text-specific and/or text-dependent. students respond to text-dependent and/or text-specific questions during reading, as well as after reading, during both the Shared Reading and ELA blocks. |
| Writing Instruction | 1.i, 1.j, 1.k, 2.e | <i>Bookworms</i> offers students a multitude of opportunities to address different types of writing including opinion, informative, and narrative writing. Over the course of the year, students complete multiple writing pieces in ELA. All explicit instruction for writing occurs in ELA, while some opportunities to write about the text (both opinion and informational) also occur in Shared Reading. In ELA, writing opportunities follow a gradual release of responsibility model over the course of the year. Most writing opportunities connect to texts read aloud in the ELA Lesson Plans, and Shared Reading Lesson Plans. |
| Analyzing & Integrating Knowledge | 2.c | Students have opportunities in both ELA and Shared reading to demonstrate their ability to analyze and integrate knowledge within individual texts as well as across multiple texts. Through embedded questioning, post-reading discussions, and/or writing prompts, students demonstrate knowledge of a topic, describe events based on the text's illustrations or diagrams, compare and contrast characters within the same story, and across stories, and recall details across several related books. |

Response to Partially-Met Indicators

| Criterion | Indicator | OUR's Response to Indicator Feedback |
|-------------------|-----------|---|
| Text Distribution | 1.b | Although reviewers noted that the texts in <i>Bookworms</i> are high-interest and worthy of students' time and attention, the curriculum did not receive full points for this indicator due to not having a 50/50 balance of literary and informational texts. <i>Bookworms</i> intentionally uses more literary texts in |

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|--|
| | | Shared Reading (especially in the early grades) because narrative-style writing affords greater opportunity to develop fluency. |
| Text Complexity & Quality | 1.c, 1.d | The curriculum did not receive full points for this indicator, but that is because the author recommends Shared Reading and ELA texts be considered separately. In the primary grades, Shared Reading texts are chosen to meet the needs of beginning and novice readers. ELA texts are chosen for the purpose of knowledge building. Shared Reading text increases in difficulty over time and the scaffolds are clear. |
| Foundational Skills | 1.n-1.s | Foundational skills lessons are scripted to make teaching them easy for teachers, even teachers new to the science of reading. students with strong foundational skills engage in additional repeated reading or in silent reading with collaborative discussion. While teachers are teaching groups, students are completing assignments from Shared Reading and then engaging in wide, self-selected silent reading. |
| Grade Level Instruction | 2.g | All instruction is aligned to grade-level standards in both Shared Reading and ELA for 90 minutes every day. During the Differentiated Instruction Block, students receive an additional 15 minutes of instruction tailored to their individual needs. |
| Implementation | 2.h | <i>Bookworms</i> has a structure that requires very specific daily time allocations. Manuals identify this as a requirement for adoption, and the program has been feasibly used and tested in hundreds of sites. The author has provided guidance to reduce the number of instruction days if necessary for a specific school's calendar. |

Summary

The *Bookworms* curriculum distills research-based best practices into straightforward lesson structures that support reading through careful attention to foundational skills, language comprehension, and composition based on grade-level expectations and the individual needs of

each student. The instructional routines build classroom communities through the use of strategies such as teacher modeling, shared reading, evidence-based writing, discussion, and intentional vocabulary instruction.

The curriculum's systematic phonics-based foundational skills block features unique skill-based groupings, supported by frequent progress monitoring, with tailored instruction for each group. Instructional protocols are explicit and simple for teachers to follow.

Over the course of elementary school, students will study 283 full-length texts that expose them to a high volume of full-length, deeply engaging trade books to build knowledge and drive literacy instruction. These complex texts are varied and serve different purposes. Both teachers and students engage in close reads, shared reading with peers, and independent reading.

All students deserve the opportunity to have access to and to engage in literacy instruction that fosters their love of reading and supports their learning potential. The simplicity of the *Bookworms'* structure makes the program accessible for teachers to internalize literacy research and provide systematic instruction and practice for students that promotes rapid learning about the world while nurturing a deep appreciation of reading and writing.