

August 24, 2021



Response to EdReports Evaluation Mirrors & Windows: Connecting with Literature ©2021 Grades 9-12

Core Instructional Path for ELA Standards Mastery

Instruction in *Mirrors & Windows* is based on decades of solid research and best practices in language arts education. EMC School/Carnegie Learning is confident that our comprehensive ELA curriculum fully meets all criteria and learning indicators required by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.

We wish to respond to a pattern in the comments across multiple indicators in Gateways 1 & 2. We share your commitment to providing a clear instructional pathway for teachers that guarantees all students have access to the learning opportunities they need to master college and career readiness standards. We know that the opportunity gap for students in the United States is real, and that our energy as developers of instructional materials must be devoted to ensuring equitable access to grade-level learning through rich, complex texts.

We also believe in the value of empowering teachers to adjust instruction to meet the unique needs of particular students and groups of students. As such, our program provides more instructional material than may reasonably be used during a school year. However, it also sets forth a clear course of study for standards mastery at every grade level. We believe many of the comments made in reference to the apparent lack of an “explicit core instructional path” throughout the reports are based on a misinterpretation of the structure of the *Mirrors & Windows* curriculum. This interpretation can be clarified with a careful look at the College & Career Readiness Curriculum Guide contained in the Program Planning Guide for each grade level (hereafter referred to as the CCR Curriculum Guide).

The CCR Curriculum Guide clearly outlines the core instructional path to meet CCR ELA standards. The introduction to the curriculum guide explicitly states:

“The selections and workshops listed here represent the core course of study students need to master critical skills that appear on state and national assessments...”

Comments regarding a lack of a clear path of core instruction were applied to multiple indicators in both gateways that have been ranked as “partially meets expectations,” resulting in substantially reduced scores overall even where positive feedback and evidence of each indicator were provided in the reviewers’ comments. See Gateway 1 indicators **1C, 1G, 1I, 1J, 1K**, and Gateway 2 indicators **2B, 2C, 2F, 2G, and 2H**.

In the comments for these indicators, several recurring elements of the curriculum, including “Extend the Text” tasks and the culminating writing and speaking & listening workshops at the end of each unit, were incorrectly identified by reviewers as optional, even though they are identified in the CCR Curriculum Guide as essential components of the pathway to standards mastery. It is useful to note as a rule of thumb that *all* instruction in the CCR Curriculum Guide is intended to be core curriculum, including the extension activities and end-of-unit workshops. Also note that all student and teacher ancillaries are included in the student and teacher Passport digital packages and can easily be accessed to support core instruction.

We hope that this clarification and the further evidence provided below will help articulate how *Mirrors & Windows* enacts its guarantee to enrich students’ lives through literacy and prepare all students for the demands of college, career, and citizenship.

Text Quality and Alignment (Gateway 1)

Mirrors & Windows thematic and genre-based units include Text-to-Text Connections to contemporary and informational texts to compare across genres in every unit. This **balance of literary and informational texts** amply addresses the distribution of text types and genres required by the standards, including 100% of the CCSS text types recommended for each grade in the student text. **(1b)**

Mirrors & Windows **text complexity** readability levels for each selection have been designated as Easy, Moderate, or Challenging based on close analysis by reading teachers, taking quantitative and qualitative measures into account. Difficulty and Ease factors are included as a rationale for reader and task considerations. **(1c)**

Using a **gradual release approach** to reading, the scaffolding from Guided to Directed to Independent reading in each unit in grades 9-10 progresses to Directed and Independent reading in grades 11-12. Each unit provides selections at a **variety of reading levels**. While Independent Readings have scaffolded support in the student edition, they retain **full support in the Teacher’s Edition** and include all related ancillary support. **(1d)**

Mirrors & Windows end-of-unit Speaking & Listening workshops provide **explicit instruction for speaking & listening tasks and evidence-based discussions**, including step-by-step instructions [protocols] and rubrics. Teacher guidance for speaking & listening extension activities and workshops is provided in the TE wrap and communication evaluation forms in the Program Planning Guide. **(1g-1h)**

Mirrors & Windows covers the **distribution of types of writing required by the standards, including evidence-based writing**, in the Extend the Text on-demand Writing Options and end-of-unit Writing Workshops, including a research-report workshop in every grade level. The *Writing & Grammar* ancillary includes a writing scope & sequence, curriculum correlations, and index of Literature Models in the integrated grammar lessons aligning the lessons with selections in the textbook. **(1i-1k)**

Grammar & Style Workshops in each unit **apply grammar & usage standards** in context of the preceding selection. The supplemental *Writing & Grammar* ancillary includes additional grammar instruction in the context of the textbook literary writing models, applied directly to students’ writing assignments.

Through Passport, teachers and students have access to all content from all levels, allowing access to grammar and usage lessons covered in other levels for review. **(1l)**

In the Teacher's Edition unit Visual Planning Guide, Building Vocabulary pages provide an overview of all unit vocabulary words, academic vocabulary, and key terms (Tiers 1, 2, and 3). The Program Planning Guide provides detailed lesson plans that include all **vocabulary activities in the program, covering a cohesive year-long curriculum**. The *Vocabulary & Spelling* ancillary includes comprehensive skills development lessons with Academic Vocabulary activities based on words from each unit. **(1m)**

Building Knowledge (Gateway 2)

Mirrors & Windows Grades 9-10 units are **thematically-organized with a genre focus**, including a culminating thematic multi-genre independent reading unit. In Grades 11-12, units are organized around a **thematic focus and aligned with historical and literary periods**. The unit opens include an introduction of the unit theme, related quotation, tie-in to the unit selections, and essential questions. The genre focus provides a balanced approach supporting the distribution of text types and genres required by the standards at each grade level, while pairing different genres of texts based on common topics or themes to allow students to make connections across texts and genres. **(2a)**

Mirrors & Windows unit progression includes skills built on questions requiring deep **analysis and comparison of texts and the integration of knowledge and ideas across texts**. The two-part after-reading questions, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, are organized sequentially to build understanding by progressing from text-based comprehension questions in the Refer to Text questions to higher-level critical analysis and evaluative questions in the Reason with Text questions. Analysis of language and structure in the Analyze Literature and Compare Literature features and Extend the Text activities provide opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding of concepts taught in the lesson. Comparing Texts and Text-to-Text Connections features pair two or more texts, comparing and integrating concepts and ideas across texts. Writing Options and Extend the Text activities build to culminating end-of-unit workshops, integrating reading, writing, speaking, and language. **(2b-2d)**

The comprehensive Full Scope & Sequence in the Program Planning Guide shows the **progression of the Writing Options and Writing Workshops** throughout the course of the program. The *Writing & Grammar* ancillary includes a writing scope & sequence, curriculum correlations, and an index of the selections used as Literature Models in the integrated grammar lessons to align the lessons with the selections in the textbook. **(2e)**

Mirrors & Windows **focused research projects** are included in the TE pre-unit and Program Planning Guide Scope & Sequence under Extension activities. The Extend the Text research activities progress toward a comprehensive end-of-unit research writing workshop using sources and documentation. **(2f)**

Comprehensive **CCSS Correlations** are included in the TE eBook in the front pages and on every page via the standards tool, searchable by standard. The *Assessment Guide* Lesson Tests, Unit Exams, and Formative Surveys are aligned by item with the CCSS standards, which can be accessed through **Edulastic. (2g-2h)**

Usability

(Gateway 3 - Not reviewed)

The *Mirrors & Windows* program combines hardcover print textbooks, consumable workbooks, and Passport™ Online Learning environment for a blended learning solution that meets learning needs of all students. Passport provides digital access to all selections from all grades. Each teacher receives all grade level resources for grades 6–12. Carnegie Learning is always available to provide teacher guidance for embedded technology and professional development needed to create 21st century learning environments and address all educator needs throughout the life of the adoption.