



October, 2018

**EMC Publishing, LLC**  
**Publisher's Response to EdReports' Evaluation**  
***Mirrors & Windows: Connecting with Literature* ©2016**  
**Grades 6-8**

**Introduction**

EMC appreciates the opportunity to provide a response to EdReports' review of *Mirrors & Windows: Connecting with Literature* ©2016, Grades 6-8. Instruction in *Mirrors & Windows* is based on decades of solid research and best practices in language arts education and EMC is confident that our comprehensive ELA curriculum fully meets all Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts. The *Mirrors & Windows* program has been adopted throughout the nation, in a wide range of school settings, with favorable evaluations of the program and resulting teacher practices that have had a positive impact on student achievement.

We are pleased that the report recognizes the program's text quality and complexity and alignment to standards components as reflected in our strong scores in Gateway 1. However, we were disappointed to have received some conflicting scores, specifically in Gateway 2, in which the review comments often cite detailed examples that clearly demonstrate how the program does meet the criteria, while qualifying comments may go unsubstantiated. *Mirrors & Windows* builds knowledge through the gradual release of responsibility model, which provides three levels of scaffolded close reading support in each unit to build students' ability to read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently, thus allowing teacher flexibility around program implementation to meet the abilities of all students. We offer the following responses as further support for the indicators scored below fully meeting the criteria.

**GATEWAY ONE: Text Quality and Alignment to the Standards**

**1h:** As noted in the evaluation, *Mirrors & Windows* has culminating tasks that include but aren't limited to Writer's Workshops, Speaking & Listening Workshops, and Viewing Workshops. Prior to these workshops' lessons there are questions and activities before, during, and after readings that build toward the culminating tasks. In addition to building on the selections, genre, or theme of the units, the end-of-unit workshops actively integrate the strands of reading, writing, and speaking. For example, the Writing Workshop goals and strategies tie directly to the skills and texts found leading up to these projects. The Speaking & Listening Workshops are integrated with writing and collaboration, and Test Practice Workshops build on the selections, type of writing, or themes in the unit, asking students to apply the skills and knowledge gained in a practice assessment format.

**1i:** The report confirmed that students are given a chance to speak about texts and extensions of the texts using academic vocabulary and syntax in Collaborative Learning exercises as well as the *Exceeding the Standards: Speaking and Listening* resource, which provides step-by-step instructions for unit workshops. In addition, guidelines for speaking and listening are provided throughout the text and program in a number of formats, such as the Collaborative Learning activities following each selection and the Writing Workshop peer review instructions.

**1j:** The report credits *Mirrors & Windows* with applying speaking and listening instruction following each unit as well as providing teachers with ample questions for engaging the students in thinking about and responding to text. The report also cites examples of the Collaborative Learning activities in the After Reading for each selection in which students practice speaking and listening skills, and notes the evaluation forms for engaging in peer, small group, and large group discussions. In addition, the Extend Understanding Critical Literacy activities in the Student Edition, as well as Speaking & Listening, Differentiated Instruction, and Teaching Note activities in the Teacher's Edition provide consistent practice opportunities for relevant research, discussion, active listening, and explicit responses. End-of-unit Speaking & Listening workshops include evaluation rubric checklists with step-by-step instructions provided in *Exceeding the Standards* for each unit workshop.

**1n:** As noted in the evaluation, *Mirrors & Windows* includes instruction of grammar and conventions in the textbook and ancillary components, such as *Exceeding the Standards: Grammar & Style*. Embedded throughout each unit, multiple Grammar & Style workshops are available for students to learn, reinforce, and master specific skills. These lessons connect to the texts that immediately precede them, use professional examples of the skills with which students have had prior experience, and require students to apply new knowledge to activities. In addition, the Writing Workshops at the end of each unit provide grammar & writing style lessons that provide both explicit instruction and the opportunity for students to apply the convention directly to their writing assignment. Grammar Skills prompts are provided at point of use in the Teacher's Edition, as are Differentiated Instruction prompts that provide additional grammar and conventions instruction or activity ideas.

## **GATEWAY TWO: Building Knowledge with Texts, Vocabulary, and Tasks**

**2a:** The report noted that "each unit is given a theme and selections within the theme fit to the theme provided. Themes are presented on the title page of the unit, a description is offered to connect the theme to the texts, and contain a quote with guided questions and commentary intended to give insight into the collection." *Mirrors & Windows* presents texts organized around themes to engage and motivate students to make connections across texts and genres. The *Mirrors & Windows* after-reading questions tie

the selection to the unit theme by asking questions about the essential meaning of the text and asking students to apply that understanding to their own lives and the world around them.

The genre focus provides a balanced approach that supports thorough instruction of literary elements, while pairing different genres of texts within the unit to allow students to connect with multiple ideas, elements, and types of texts. In addition, the gradual release of responsibility structure, providing three levels of reading support in each unit, builds students' ability to read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently.

**2b:** The report confirms that *Mirrors & Windows* “has targeted questions and series of questions for students that promote students’ ability to build skills.” The examples provided demonstrate that selection questions “provide opportunities for students to read closely and study the components and text as parts and as a whole.” The two-part After Reading questions are based on Bloom’s Taxonomy, and organized sequentially to build understanding by progressing from text-based comprehension questions in the Find Meaning questions to higher level critical analysis and evaluative questions in the Make Judgments questions. In addition, language and structure are analyzed throughout the textbook in features such as Analyze Literature, which analyzes an author’s choice of structure and language, and Reading Skills, which applies strategies such as identifying key details, analyzing text organization, and finding main ideas.

**2c:** The report confirms that *Mirrors & Windows* “presents students with text-dependent and text-specific questions during reading embedded in the selections as well as in the after reading material.” It also notes that units contain texts that are paired to teach literary elements across texts. The unit’s progression includes skills built on questions requiring deep analysis and comparison of texts and the integration of knowledge and ideas across texts. Before Reading pages provide students with a Use Reading Skills section demonstrating the skills being built on in the selection and the following connecting selections, which are then revisited in the Text-to-Text Connection questions and After Reading and developed as the unit and textbook progress.

**2d:** As the report notes, “each unit includes three types of culminating activities: Speaking & Listening Workshop, Writing Workshop, and Test Practice Workshop. The performance tasks students complete in these activities correspond to the questions, discussions, and writing prompts.” *Mirrors & Windows* is designed around scaffolded texts that teach literary elements, text types, reading skills and strategies, and requires students to apply prior and newly-acquired knowledge to complete formative and summative tasks. At the end of every unit, students participate in culminating workshops for sustained writing, speaking, and listening. Test Practice workshops assess unit-based writing, revision, editing, and reading skills and strategies via constructed response, text correction activities, and response questions for grammar and conventions, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

**2e:** The report confirms that *Mirrors & Windows* “includes vocabulary over the course of the school year and is repeated in contexts, as seen in the Vocabulary and Spelling lessons which are integrated with two of the literature selections in each unit.” The report also notes that these lessons incorporate vocabulary words from the preceding selection to provide context and repetition for students to increase understanding. The Grammar & Style and Vocabulary & Spelling workshops are integrated with the texts within the units, which allows students to extend their use of language skills across all the strands. The *Exceeding the Standards: Vocabulary & Spelling* resource includes comprehensive skills development lessons for acquisition of vocabulary skills and includes Academic Vocabulary activities for each unit based on academic vocabulary words from the selections. In the Teacher’s Edition, unit Building Vocabulary pages provide an overview of all unit vocabulary words, academic vocabulary, and key terms (Tiers 1, 2, and 3). The teacher’s *Program Planning Guide* provides detailed lessons plans that include all vocabulary activities in the program and cover a cohesive year-long curriculum.



October, 2018

**EMC School**  
**Response to EdReports Evaluation - Counterevidence**  
***Mirrors & Windows: Connecting with Literature* ©2016**  
**Grades 9-12**

**Introduction**

EMC appreciates the opportunity to provide a response to EdReports' review of *Mirrors & Windows: Connecting with Literature* ©2016, Grades 6-8. Instruction in *Mirrors & Windows* is based on decades of solid research and best practices in language arts education and EMC is confident that our comprehensive ELA curriculum fully meets all Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts. The *Mirrors & Windows* program has been adopted throughout the nation, in a wide range of school settings, with favorable evaluations of the program and resulting teacher practices that have had a positive impact on student achievement.

We are pleased that the report recognizes the program's text quality and complexity and alignment to standards components as reflected in our strong scores in Gateway 1. However, we were disappointed to have received some conflicting scores, mostly in Gateway 2, in which the review comments often cited detailed examples that clearly demonstrate how the program does meet the criteria, while qualifying comments may go unsubstantiated. *Mirrors & Windows* builds knowledge through the gradual release of responsibility model, which provides scaffolded close reading support in each unit to build students' ability to read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently, thus allowing teacher flexibility around program implementation to meet the abilities of all students. We offer the following responses as further support for indicators scored below fully meeting the criteria.

**GATEWAY ONE: Text Quality and Alignment to the Standards**

**1g:** As noted in the report, *Mirrors & Windows* provides a consistent format with text-dependent questions and tasks. The examples provided strongly support how questions are text-dependent and require students to engage directly with the text drawing on textual evidence to support explicit references from the text. The After Reading questions are scaffolded to allow students to demonstrate levels of comprehension. The levels of higher-order thinking skills for each paired set of questions align with Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) cognitive complexity levels. Refer to Text questions asking students to recall facts from the text and are paired with Reason with Texts questions asking students to apply higher-level thinking skills. Extend the Text tasks require students to go beyond what they just read and apply new knowledge or reading skills through writing to sources, research, discussion, and collaboration.

**1h:** The report confirms that “After every text selection in the After Reading, Refer to Text, Reason with Text section, there are text-dependent questions, and throughout each reading, there are strategies and activities that build students’ skills to complete the end of unit activities. Each unit includes three types of culminating activities: Speaking and Listening Workshop, Writing Workshop, and Test Practice Workshop. The performance tasks that the students are asked to complete in these culminating activities correspond to the questions, discussions, and writing prompts that students have completed throughout the unit as they read the various selections.” In addition, the end-of-unit workshops actively integrate the strands of reading, writing, and speaking. The Writing Workshop goals and strategies tie directly to the skills and texts leading up to the assignment. The Speaking & Listening Workshops are integrated with writing and collaboration, and Test Practice Workshops build on the text types, genres, or themes in the unit, asking students to apply the skills and knowledge gained in a practice assessment format.

**1j:** *Mirrors & Windows* is credited in the report with applying speaking and listening instruction following each unit, as well as providing teachers with ample questions for engaging the students in thinking about and responding to text, and speaking and listening opportunities that require students to provide evidence from what they are reading and researching. The report also notes the evaluation forms for engaging in peer, small group, and large group discussions. Speaking & Listening is routinely emphasized, supported, and integrated through Extend the Text Collaborative Learning activities in which students practice speaking and listening skills, as well as in step-by-step instructions for each end-of-unit workshop provided in *Exceeding the Standards*. Differentiated Instruction and Teaching Note activities in the Teacher’s Edition also provide consistent practice opportunities for relevant research, discussion, active listening, and explicit responses in context of an assignment.

**1n:** The report noted that *Mirrors & Windows* includes instruction of grammar and conventions in the form of several workshops in Grammar & Style, and Vocabulary & Spelling within each unit, as well as additional developmental lessons in the resource workbook *Exceeding the Standards*. The workshops in the textbook are tied to the texts that immediately precede them, use professional examples of the skills with which students have had prior experience, and require students to apply new knowledge to activities. Grammar Skills prompts are provided at point of use in the ATE, as are Differentiated Instruction prompts that provide additional grammar and conventions instruction or activity ideas. In addition, the Writing Workshops at the end of each unit provide grammar & writing style lessons provide both explicit instruction and the opportunity for students to apply the convention directly to their writing assignment.

## **GATEWAY TWO: Building Knowledge with Texts, Vocabulary, and Tasks**

**2a:** *Mirrors & Windows* Levels IV-V for grades 9-10 provide five genre-based units including thematic independent readings, and a culminating multi-genre thematic independent reading unit. The genre focus provides a balanced approach that supports thorough instruction of literary elements, while pairing different genres of texts based on common topics or themes to

allow students to make connections across texts and genres. *Mirrors & Windows* Grade 11 American Tradition and Grade 12 British Tradition are designed around chronological units that follow a timeline; the structure is such that events and topics paramount to the historical events that led to the literary movements are thematically embedded. Additionally, each unit is subdivided into parts that further narrow the thematic focus and build on prior knowledge.

**2b:** The report states that *Mirrors & Windows* has targeted questions and series of questions for students that promote students' ability to build skills such as drawing conclusions and citing textual evidence, determining theme, and analyzing point of view. *Mirrors & Windows* After Reading questions are based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's DOK, and 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. In addition, language and structure are analyzed throughout the textbook in the Analyze Literature feature with questions that apply an author's choice of structure and language directly to the selection, in both Before Reading and After Reading.

**2c:** As noted in Indicator 2b, *Mirrors & Windows* After Reading questions are organized sequentially to build knowledge and 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. The unit's progression includes skills that are built upon, questions that require deep analysis and comparison of texts, and the integration of knowledge and ideas across texts. In the Text Connections or Comparing Texts pairings, skills built on are introduced Before Reading in the Analyze Literature and Set Purpose features. These questions and skills are revisited in the Text-to-Text Connection or Comparing Texts questions and After Reading pages, and revisited and developed as the unit and textbook progresses.

**Indicator 2d:** At the end of every unit in *Mirrors & Windows*, students participate in integrated culminating workshops for sustained writing, speaking, and listening. Each unit includes three types of culminating activities: a Speaking & Listening Workshop, Writing Workshop, and Test Practice Workshop. The performance tasks students complete in these activities correspond to the unit questions, discussions, and writing prompts. Test Practice workshops assess unit-based writing, revision, editing, and reading skills and strategies via constructed response, text correction activities, and response questions for grammar and conventions, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

**2e:** The report states that *Mirrors & Windows* includes vocabulary over the course of the school year and is repeated in contexts, as seen in the Vocabulary and Spelling lessons which are integrated with two of the literature selections in each unit. The report also notes that these lessons incorporate vocabulary words from the proceeding selection to provide context and repetition for students to increase understanding. The Vocabulary & Spelling workshops are integrated with the texts within the units, which allows students to extend their use of language skills across all the strands. In addition, the *Exceeding the Standards: Vocabulary & Spelling* resource includes comprehensive skills development lessons for acquisition of

vocabulary and includes Academic Vocabulary activities for each unit based on academic vocabulary words from the selections in the unit. In the ATE, unit Building Vocabulary pages provide an overview of all unit vocabulary words, academic vocabulary, and key terms (Tiers 1, 2, and 3). The teacher's *Program Planning Guide* provides detailed lessons plans that include all vocabulary activities in the program and cover a cohesive year-long curriculum.