

August 24, 2021



Response to EdReports Evaluation Mirrors & Windows: Connecting with Literature ©2020 Grades 6-8

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 and 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 at EMC School/Carnegie Learning share your commitment to providing a clear instructional pathway for teachers that guarantees all students 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 in the span of 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, and that 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 Understanding” tasks and the culminating writing and speaking & listening workshops at the end of each unit, were incorrectly identified by reviewers as optional, when in fact 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 Passport student and teacher 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 **text complexity** readability levels for each selection have been assigned as Easy, Moderate, Challenging based on close analysis of each selection by reading teachers, taking quantitative and qualitative measures into account. Difficulty and Ease factors are included to account for reader and task considerations. **(1c)**

Using a **gradual release approach** to reading, the scaffolding in progression from Guided to Directed to Independent reading **builds literacy skills** across the units to support students’ literacy growth and to develop independent reading skills. 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 Speaking & Listening workshops at the end of units provide **explicit instruction for speaking & listening tasks and evidence-based discussions**, including step-by-step instructions [protocols] and rubrics to assess Content, Delivery, and Presentation. Extensive 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 provides opportunities for students to address different **text types of writing that reflect the distribution required by the standards, including evidence-based writing**, in the Extend Understanding on-demand Writing Options and end-of-unit Writing Workshops, culminating in a research-report workshop in every grade level. The *Writing & Grammar* ancillary includes a writing scope & sequence, curriculum correlations, and an index of the Literature Models in the integrated grammar lessons that align the lessons with the selections in the textbook. **(1i-1k)**

Opportunities to **apply grammar & usage standards** in context are included in the Grammar & Style Workshops in each unit as noted in the example provided in the reports. The supplemental *Writing & Grammar* ancillary lessons include additional grammar instruction taught in the context of the selection literary writing models and applied directly to students’ writing assignments. Through Passport, teachers and students have access to all content from all grade levels and can search for grammar and usage standards using the standards search tool in the Teacher’s Edition eBook. **(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) covered in each unit. The teacher’s Program Planning Guide provides detailed lessons plans that include all **vocabulary activities in the program to cover 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 6-10 provide **thematically organized units with a genre focus**, including related independent readings. An introduction of the unit theme, with a related quotation, a tie-in to the unit selections, and essential questions are included in the unit openers. The genre focus provides a balanced approach that supports 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 that are built on questions that require deep **analysis and comparison of texts, and the integration of knowledge and ideas across texts**. 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. Language and structure are analyzed in the Analyze Literature and Compare Literature features and Extend Understanding activities that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding of concepts taught in the lesson. The Comparing Texts and Text-to-Text Connections features pair two or more texts with the intention of comparing and integrating concepts and ideas across texts. Writing Options and Extend Understanding activities build to the 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 after-reading Writing Options and end-of-unit 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’ **progression of focused research projects** are included in the TE pre-unit and Program Planning Guide Scope & Sequence under Extension activities. The Extend Understanding research activities progress toward a comprehensive research project in unit 8 in the end-of-unit writing workshop to write a research paper using sources and documentation. **(2f)**

Comprehensive **CCSS Correlations** are available in the TE eBook in the front pages and on every page in the standards tool, which are searchable by standard. The Assessment Guide Lesson Tests, Unit Exams, and Formative Surveys are aligned by each 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 truly blended learning solution that meets learning needs of all students. Our Passport online learning environment 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.