



# CommonLit 360 for Middle School (6-8) Background Information

## About CommonLit 360

CommonLit 360 for Grades 6-8 is a comprehensive, research-based English Language Arts curriculum that has demonstrated effectiveness in boosting student reading achievement across multiple experimental studies, and is designed to meet the needs of all learners. The curriculum includes six robust units per grade, with each unit centered around engaging anchor texts and topics relevant to students' lives. Throughout each unit, students build knowledge and develop critical reading, writing, listening, speaking, and research skills through carefully scaffolded lessons and meaningful performance tasks.

CommonLit 360's pedagogical approach is grounded in the following research-based guiding principles:

- **Students can engage with and learn rigorous, grade-level content.** With high expectations and appropriate support, all students can access complex texts and develop their academic language and literacy skills to reach grade-level proficiency.
- **Teachers drive student outcomes.** Providing teachers with robust instructional materials and resources to enhance their own pedagogical practices maximizes their capacity to meet the diverse needs of students in their classrooms.
- **Deep engagement fosters deep learning.** Exploring compelling essential questions and themes through thought-provoking texts that resonate with students inspires authentic engagement and meaningful, long-lasting understanding.
- **Learning is fundamentally social.** Incorporating frequent opportunities for academic discourse and collaboration promotes a positive classroom environment where students build conceptual understanding and language competence together.

## Features of the CommonLit 360 Curriculum

The CommonLit 360 curriculum is designed to be taught over the course of a single school year. Each grade level includes six units that focus on essential content and skills. The units are built around high-quality, grade-level anchor texts and supplemental materials that provide the foundation for rich content and deep inquiry.

For each grade level, teachers can access:

- A scope and sequence that outlines the units, topics, key texts, and standards map for the year
- A unit guide for each unit that outlines the essential question, the arc of instruction, core learning objectives and standards addressed, and suggested pacing

Each unit is designed around an essential question and includes a culminating task as the summative assessment. The backwards planning process ensures that all unit lessons and activities intentionally build the knowledge and skills students need to successfully complete the culminating task.

Each CommonLit 360 unit includes the following core components:

- **A series of lessons that focus on essential content and skills**, including close reading of complex texts, evidence-based writing, collaborative discussions, vocabulary development, and research. Each lesson is accompanied by comprehensive student and teacher-facing materials, including facilitation guidance, differentiation strategies, and exemplar responses to support effective implementation.
- **Engaging Related Media Exploration lessons** that help students delve into diverse multimedia resources to deepen their understanding of unit topics and themes while building media literacy skills.
- **Formative assessments embedded throughout** the unit lessons, such as short written responses, application questions, and multiple-choice questions, to monitor student progress and inform instruction.
- **A culminating task**, which requires students to demonstrate their mastery of core knowledge and skills through writing, speaking, presentations, research, or a combination of modes.
- **Optional supplemental texts and Independent Reading resources**, offering additional reading practice for remediation or extension of unit themes and skills. These texts are available at various complexity levels to support a wide range of learners.

## Evidence of Efficacy for CommonLit 360

Multiple ESSA Tier II and III aligned research studies have demonstrated the efficacy of CommonLit 360 in promoting students' reading growth, including for multilingual learners and students with disabilities.

Key findings include:

- A quasi-experimental study by a third party evaluator, Mathematica, examined over 110,000 students and discovered that students who frequently used CommonLit 360 achieved greater reading gains compared to non-users. Students with "high-usage" showed an additional growth of 2.1 months of learning. This study led to CommonLit earning an ESSA Tier III certification.
- A study of students across 11 New York City public schools in grades 6-8 showed that regular usage of CommonLit 360 was associated with greater than expected reading growth.
- A study of students in Lakewood Middle School, located in Lakewood Township, New Jersey, found that the number of students who met or exceeded expectations on the statewide NJSLA assessment was 10.5 percentage points higher than in SY 21-22, the year in which CommonLit 360 was adopted in the district. The study also showed that the more CommonLit 360 lessons students experienced, the better they tended to perform on the NJSLA.

These consistent, replicated results across contexts provide evidence that CommonLit 360 can improve student literacy outcomes and engagement in middle schools nationwide.

CommonLit is also committed to continuing to study the impact of our curriculum on student achievement. For updates and additional information on CommonLit's efficacy, [visit our impact page](#).



## CommonLit Paid Services

CommonLit is committed to supporting school districts with the adoption and implementation of CommonLit 360 for Middle School (6-8). CommonLit offers paid services and products for districts that use CommonLit 360. Services include:

- Rostering and Integrations
- Assessments
- School- and District-wide Data Reporting
- On-demand and Live Professional Development

For more information on CommonLit's paid services, [please visit our website.](#)