THE READING LEAGUE

Curriculum Navigation Report

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) Curriculum, 3rd Edition (2025) for Grades K–5

Amplify CKLA

2026 Publication
Reviewed with Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (3rd Edition, 2026)

Introduction

CURRICULUM EVALUATION GUIDELINES DESCRIPTION

"Decisions regarding curriculum, instructional approaches, programs, and resources are critical and must be informed by more than experience, observations, or even belief systems. If we are to succeed in implementing effective practices, then we will need to embrace learning as a part of our work as much as teaching itself."

Hennessy, 2020, pg. 8.

Due to the popularity of the science of reading movement, the term "science of reading" has been used as a marketing tool, often promising a quick fix for decision makers seeking a program aligned with the scientific evidence base. However, as articulated in The Reading League's *Science of Reading: Defining Guide (2022)*,

> *The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. Over the last five decades, this research has provided a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some students have difficulty; and how educators can most effectively assess and teach, and, therefore, improve student outcomes through the prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties. (p.6)*

The Reading League's *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (CEGs)* are a resource developed to assist consumers in making informed decisions when selecting curricula and instructional materials that best support evidence-aligned instruction grounded in the science of reading.

The CEGs are anchored by frameworks validated by the science of reading. Findings from the science of reading provide additional understandings that substantiate both aligned and non-aligned practices (AKA "red flags") within the CEGs. These serve as a foundation for what to expect from published curricula that claim to be aligned with the scientific evidence of how students learn to read. The CEGs highlight best practices that align with the science of reading. Red flags specify any non-aligned practices in the following areas:



- **Word Recognition**
- **Language Comprehension**
- **Reading Comprehension**
- **Writing**
- **Assessment**



The CEGs have been used by educators, building and district leaders, local education agencies, and state education agencies as a primary tool to find evidence of red flags, or practices that may interfere with the development of skilled reading. While the CEGs have been useful for schools and districts for informing curricular and instructional decision-making, The Reading League recognized the challenge of school-based teams that might not have the capacity for an in-depth review process. In the spirit of its mission to advance the awareness, understanding, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction, expert review teams engaged in a large-scale review of the most widely used curricula currently used in the United States in order to develop informative reports of each.

This report was generated after a review of the curriculum using the revised *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines*, 3rd Edition, published in 2026. The *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines* have been refined based on feedback and a lengthy pilot review, and have undergone an inter-rater reliability study with positive results. As you read through the findings of this report, remember that red flags will be present for all curricula as there is no perfect curriculum. The intent of this report is not to provide a recommendation, but rather to provide information to local education agencies to support their journey of selecting, using, and refining instruction and instructional materials to ensure they align with the science of reading.

Disclaimer: The Reading League's curriculum review is deemed an informational educational resource and should not be construed as sales pitches or product promotion. The purpose of the review is to further our mission to advance the understanding, awareness, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction.

Curriculum Description

The evaluation on the following pages features the review of Amplify, 3rd Edition (2025), which is created for students in Grades K–5.

For this report, reviewers had access to both physical curriculum samples and digital program materials designed for teachers and students. These included Teacher Guides, Student Activity Books, Readers, and Assessment Guides in PDF format, along with key resources such as the Program Guide, Components Guide, Choice Units Overview, Assessment Overview, K–5 Knowledge Map, Curriculum Maps K–5, Scope and Sequence documents K–5, and Text Types and Range of Writing by Grade. In addition, a demo account provided access to Slide Decks with embedded teacher notes, Supplemental Instructional Resources, and Teacher Training Videos.

Reviewers were selected based on their deep knowledge of the science of reading and associated terminology, as well as high-quality instructional materials. Once selected, they were assigned to teams of at least three reviewers. The team met regularly to establish reliability in their individual scores based on the Red Flag rubric that follows and to report their findings. For a more comprehensive review process description, visit The Reading League Compass's Curriculum Decision Makers page.



1 Red Flag statement is False.



2 Red Flag statement is minimally True. Evidence is minimal or briefly mentioned.



3 Red Flag statement is mostly True. If applicable, evidence is in multiple places throughout the curriculum.



4 Red Flag statement is always true, pervasive, and/or integral to the curriculum.



A black box indicates that this component is not addressed in this curriculum and must be addressed with other materials.

Reviewers used the notes section of each component to capture helpful evidence and notes, such as keywords that described a practice listed within the CEGs, specific examples, and precise locations of evidence. Notes were included in the review of any optional aligned components as well.

Overall Design and Delivery

IDENTIFICATION OF THE FOLLOWING RED FLAG PRACTICES WAS PRIORITIZED IN THE REVIEW OF THIS SECTION.

OVERALL DESIGN AND DELIVERY	SCORE	
No evidence of deliberate and purposeful practice: "These two terms refer to practice that goes beyond rote repetition and involves practicing for a purpose (e.g., accuracy, fluent retrieval, generalization) with the deliberate goal of long-term improvement of skill performance" (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 406).	2	
No evidence of retrieval practice: Retrieval practice "consists of tasks requiring retrieval of targeted skills and knowledge from memory without prompts or cues" (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 407). "Retrieval practice is a strategy in which calling information to mind subsequently enhances and boosts learning" (Agarwal, Roediger, McDaniel, & McDermott, 2020, p. 2).	2	
No evidence of spaced or distributed practice: Spaced or distributed practice "involves taking a given amount of time devoted to learning and arranging that time into multiple sessions that are spread over time" (Carpenter & Agarwal, 2019, p. 3).	1	
No evidence of cumulative practice: Cumulative practice is "the systematic addition of a just-learned skill to previously learned and related skills, allowing them to be practiced together" (Hughes & Lee, 2019, p. 414; Archer & Hughes, 2011). "It requires that new (and usually related) skills are added to a practice activity as they are acquired, thus providing distributed practice for multiple skills within one session" (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 407).	1	
No evidence of interleaved practice: Interleaved practice "is similar to cumulative practice but involves mixing the order of skills and problems to be practiced by distributing them in a random fashion, causing the learner to have to discriminate" (Kirschner, P. & Hendrick, C., 2020).	1	
Student Interest: The materials are generally not intrinsically interesting and engaging for most students in that grade.	1	
Cohesion: The program components are disjointed and not seamlessly related to one another. Instruction based on the science of reading must be integrated, acknowledging the impact of various component skills upon each other.	1	
Usability: The materials are confusing and/or difficult to manage and use in a classroom setting.	2	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reviewers found that while practice opportunities are present within Amplify CKLA's materials, they are not always purposeful or aligned to the target skill. Lessons in phonics, grammar, and writing do include deliberate practice, but much of it takes the form of worksheet-based tasks that are heavily teacher-guided. There are opportunities for practice when students engage with the program's decodable text. Teachers also have options for additional practice as needed, specifically in the K–2 skills lessons. However, the purpose of the practice is not always made clear. In the early grades, students engage in activities like selecting words from a word bank, copying words, or circling the word the teacher says aloud as a spelling assessment to practice their decoding and encoding skills. However, the types of practice do not always ask students to retrieve this information. Additional practice opportunities are available through the Boost Reading platform, but this is not included as part of the Tier 1 program.

In Grade 1, Lessons 11–32 review phonics skills, graphemes, and blending and segmenting skills taught in kindergarten. This review moves at a rapid pace, but is appropriate for students who have already learned the majority of the letter-sound correspondences. In kindergarten, there are some opportunities to practice retrieving letter–sounds in the Skills Lessons. The Chaining and Chain-and-Copy routines also provide practice with familiar sounds alongside newly introduced ones; however, in some lessons, students are copying directly from the teacher's model and not independently retrieving or applying the sounds on their own. Thus, additional practice may be warranted. Finally, in Grade 4, morphemes are taught by unit, but there is no retrieval practice of previously taught patterns included.

Amplify CKLA is designed to build on previous content and expects students to continue to apply previously taught skills. Throughout the curriculum, there are notes about when students were introduced to concepts or skills, both within a single grade level and across multiple grade levels. Units are designed to teach knowledge, grammar, and phonics concepts in a continuous manner. However, previously taught concepts are not consistently included in new lessons, except for phonics and grammar skills reinforced through the Skills Warm-Ups in Grades 1–2. In Grades 3–5, foundational skills are embedded within the Knowledge Units, while the Lesson Warm-Ups primarily focus on activating prior knowledge rather than revisiting previously learned content. Although the curriculum doesn't explicitly state this, the decodable texts do reflect a cumulative structure, and each decodable includes phonics patterns students have already learned, while gradually adding more complex patterns. Additionally, grammar concepts are introduced and then revisited across later lessons and units. Writing instruction also builds in spaced practice by having students repeatedly engage in the writing process.

Both Skills and Knowledge Units include Pausing Points, which stop instruction of new content to focus on review. Knowledge Units are organized around text sets that support cumulative learning. In addition, several core units span multiple grade levels, further deepening and extending students' cumulative knowledge. Grammar concepts are introduced and then reviewed in later lessons alongside other skills, allowing students to continually build on what they already know. For example, in Grade 3, Unit 4, there are 16 lessons and two Pausing Point days "that may be used for differentiated instruction" (Teacher Guide, p. 1). These can be used to focus on understanding content, writing, spelling, grammar, morphology skills, or fluency. The goal of these activities is to provide opportunities for interleaving practice.

The program is designed to include spacing between skills, and lessons often address several skills at once; however, this sometimes feels loosely connected or not purposefully sequenced. Furthermore, reviewers noted that opportunities to practice a specific target sound or phonics pattern within a single lesson are brief, and the curriculum does not appear to intentionally mix or vary the order of skills in a way that would support retention. With the program's focus on knowledge, students are able to engage with fascinating content about the world; however, much of the content consists of expository science and social studies texts that are quite complex. By 4th and 5th grade, many of these texts are assigned for independent reading, which poses significant challenges for struggling readers. Students are exposed to a variety of text types across the units, including narrative, expository, and poetry. Additionally, in Grades K–2, the student decodable readers function like a chapter book and are full of connected stories, which are incredibly engaging for this age group.

The program shows some coherence in how certain topics and skills develop over time. Namely, some content areas build from grade to grade, and foundational skills like phonics, morphology, and grammar reappear consistently. However, beyond these areas, the program lacks a unified approach. For example, instructional time focuses on teacher-led questioning rather than explicit teaching of comprehension strategies or fluency. Fluency opportunities that could naturally connect to reading (such as poetry or reader's theater) are largely overlooked, and in Grades 3–5, fluency is treated as an optional focus for struggling readers who perform poorly on the program's comprehension assessments.

Finally, in terms of usability, when using the print materials alone, the curriculum places significant demands on teachers to prepare materials such as photographs for introducing vocabulary and sentences written on index cards. Additionally, some of the program's suggestions are difficult to carry out. For instance, in the Grade 4 Teacher Guide, Unit 5, teachers are encouraged to bring in a range of informational pamphlets for students to explore as part of the writing instruction. However, the usability increases significantly when using the program's online platform. Thus, the usability score reflects the integration of the online platform. The review team noted that it is essential that teachers reference the videos and guides to understand how to navigate the platform and how to assign digital materials. It is also important to note that the suggested lesson timings may underestimate the time needed in real classrooms, particularly when students need more support to read complex texts independently.

Finally, the Grade 1 appendix also advises finding additional time to work with individual or small groups of students for remediation. Given the length of the program's lessons and tight instructional blocks in most schools, this could be difficult to execute. In addition, fluency is viewed as an optional support for struggling readers, so teachers would need to allocate extra time in their daily schedule to incorporate it.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING WORD RECOGNITION

1A: Word Recognition Non-Negotiables

Identification of the following red flag practices was prioritized in the review of this section.

WORD RECOGNITION NON-NEGOTIABLES	SCORE
1.1: The three-cueing system is taught as a strategy for decoding in early grades (i.e., directing students to use picture cues, context cues, or attend to the first letter of a word as a cue).	1
1.2: Guidance is given to memorize any whole words, including high-frequency words, by sight without attending to the letter-sound correspondences.	1
1.3: Supporting materials do not provide a systematic scope and sequence nor opportunities for practice and review of elements taught (e.g., phonics, decoding, encoding).	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

In the Kindergarten Skills overview, Amplify CKLA clearly states that it approaches decoding using sounds first. The process includes hearing the sound, seeing the representation of the sound, reading the sound, and writing the sound. In Grade 2, lessons begin with decoding instruction. This includes a review of letter-sound correspondences and the introduction of foundational skills. However, much of the decoding practice requires students to use context cues to complete the activity, and not their decoding or encoding skills. For example, in the Grade 2, Unit 3 Activity Book, students complete fill-in-the-blank or sound/spelling activities. With these worksheets, students are asked to select the words that make sense in the sentences with minimal prompting to apply their decoding skills to read the word.

Additionally, some practice includes crossword puzzles where students are asked to consider the meaning of words and may attempt to solve them by relying on initial letter knowledge.

Teacher resources include Tricky Word Flashcards for home use, where families are advised that students "simply must learn and remember how to read and spell them," emphasizing memorization. Furthermore, the Grade 1, Unit 2 Skills Teacher Guide does not recommend teaching whole words—rather, it acknowledges that:

> Every Tricky Word has at least one tricky part. However, few of these words are completely irregular. For most of them, there are some parts that are pronounced and written just as one would expect, but there are other parts that are tricky and need to be memorized. With each word, you are encouraged to make an effort to point out which parts are regular and can be blended and which parts are not regular or contain spellings not yet taught. These parts must simply be remembered. (p. 4)

However, a different approach was noted in Grade K, Unit 7, where the Tricky Words "down," "out," and "of" are taught as partially decodable. Students first try to sound out the word using what they already know, which leads them to pronounce each letter separately. The teacher then provides the correct pronunciation (/d/ /ou/ /n/) and guides students through an analysis of the spelling. The letters "d" and "n" are circled to show they make their regular, predictable sounds. The teacher then underlines "ow," explaining that this is the "tricky" part because readers might assume the letters represent separate sounds, but in this word, they work together to make the /ou/ sound. The lesson ends by reminding students that whenever they see "down," they need to remember that "ow" represents the /ou/ sound.

Finally, Amplify CKLA's Foundational Skills Scope and Sequence follows a systematic progression, with skills revisited across grades. Supporting materials include Scope and Sequence documents for each grade level, and the program offers a high-level overview of skills targeted across grade levels. However, this resource does not break the progression down into more detailed skill-by-skill expectations.

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS	SCORE	
1.7: Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) as a focus of instruction without moving to the phoneme level.	1	
1.8: Blends such as /b/ /l/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds.	1	
1.9: Students do not practice the phonemes as soon as they learn the graphemes.	1	
1.10: Instruction is focused on letters only without explicit instruction and practice with the phonemes that letters represent.	1	
1.11: Phoneme awareness is not taught as a foundational reading skill.	1	
1.12: Phoneme awareness is not assessed and monitored (e.g., a student's ability to identify the initial, final, and medial phonemes in a word).	2	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

The first two units of Amplify CKLA's Kindergarten Skills lessons focus on larger units of phonological sensitivity and environmental sounds (e.g., count and differentiate environmental sounds; segment spoken sentences into words by counting with fingers or manipulatives). Although the program lists these abilities as prerequisite skills, reviewers were unable to determine whether a placement test is administered to establish whether instruction in these units of sound is required. The provided curriculum map indicates that students work on the larger units of phonological awareness in Grade K, Units 2 and 6, where syllables and rhyming are addressed, while individual phonemes are introduced in Grade K, Unit 3. Instruction is also solely focused on the phoneme level in Grade K, Unit 7, which features the Oral Segmenting Warm-Up, used to help students break a spoken word into its individual phonemes.

Blends are referred to as "consonant clusters" in this curriculum and are introduced beginning in Grade K, Unit 6, Lesson 2. In this lesson, blends are introduced during the closing foundational skills section through the use of an activity Book page. This worksheet provides students with four words: "crab," "drum," "frog," and "steps," and asks them to write each word under the picture it matches. The page includes images of a drum, a crab, a set of steps, and a frog. Students must read the word list, identify each picture, and correctly write the corresponding word on the line below each image. Teachers are directed to work with some students in a small group while others work independently, and early finisher suggestions are provided. For small group instruction, teachers are directed to have students pay attention to individual phonemes rather than keeping them paired together.

Starting in kindergarten, phonemes and graphemes are taught in the same lesson. According to Amplify CKLA's Scope and Sequence document for kindergarten and its Kindergarten Curriculum Map for Skills, both phonemes and graphemes are introduced in Unit 3, which is approximately 20 days into the school year. When letters are introduced, students are taught how to articulate the sound and asked questions about how they made the sound (e.g., What do your lips do when you make the /m/ sound?). They do these activities with mirrors in hand. Students then practice hearing the sound (e.g., Raise your hand when you hear the /m/ sound: mad, bad, pail, mail, etc.) before moving on to spelling the sound.

In Grade K, Unit 3, students begin to make connections between sounds and symbols. Instruction begins with a warm-up/review, and then introduces the sound and spelling. Grade 1 follows a similar format, and each phonics lesson begins with an auditory drill that emphasizes listening for the target sound's placement in a given word (e.g., beginning, middle, or end), then introduces the sound, its spelling, and finally engages students in practice with writing. As such, sounds and their spellings are always taught together. Reviewers also noted that phoneme awareness is emphasized as a foundational skill.

Finally, reviewers found that phonological and phoneme awareness assessments were difficult to locate. The team observed an Oral Segmenting Observation Record intended for use with each lesson; however, the form did not clearly indicate that teachers should note sound positions. They also identified a rhyming assessment in Grade K, Unit 6, within the Unit Assessment Guide, but its scope was limited. Two additional examples include the Grade K, Unit 2.3 Assessment, in which the teacher produces target sounds and students blend them mentally before circling the matching picture, and the Grade K, Unit Assessment: Part One, where the teacher says a word, and students circle the corresponding picture. Overall, while some assessments exist, they do not offer a comprehensive measure of students' phonological and phoneme awareness skills.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR PHONICS AND PHONIC DECODING	SCORE
1.17: Letter-sound correspondences are taught opportunistically or implicitly during text reading.	1
1.18: Instruction is typically "one and done"; phonics skills are introduced but with very little or short-term review.	1
1.19: The first letters of key words for letter/sound correspondences are not aligned with the pure phoneme being taught (e.g., earth /ĕ/ant for /ă/, orange for /ŏ/).	n/a
1.20: Phonics instruction takes place in short (or optional) "mini-lessons" or "word work" sessions.	1
1.21: The initial instructional sequence introduces many (or all) consonants before a vowel is introduced, short vowels are all taught in rapid succession, and/or all sounds for one letter are taught all at once.	1
1.22: Blending is not explicitly taught nor practiced.	1
1.23: Instruction encourages students to memorize whole words, read using the first letter only as a clue, guess at words in context using a "What would make sense?" strategy, or use picture clues rather than phonic decoding.	1
1.24: Words with known letter-sound correspondences, including high-frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as standalone "sight words" to be memorized.	1
1.25: There are few opportunities provided for word-level decoding practice of new phonics patterns and interleaving practice for prior phonics patterns.	2
1.26: Early texts are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts which include phonic elements that have not been taught; decodable texts are not used or emphasized.	1
1.27: Advanced word study (Grades 2–5): Instruction in phonics ends once single syllable phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCe) are taught.	1
1.28: Advanced word study (Grades 2–5): There is no evident instruction in multisyllabic word decoding strategies and/or using morphology to support word recognition.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

In kindergarten, letter-sound correspondences are taught intentionally and explicitly in each Basic Code lesson. Educators can locate the order in which letter sounds are taught within the Kindergarten Curriculum Map document. Phonemes and graphemes are taught in the same lesson, and the Introduce the Spelling portion of the lesson plan repeats with every Basic Code section.

Additionally, there are some opportunities to review embedded in the curriculum. For example, the Sound-Spelling review activity, using the program's Large Letter Cards, offers students opportunities to practice targeted sound-spellings. Additionally, the Chaining or Chain and Copy routines also include some cumulative review by including familiar letter sounds with newly introduced ones. The program also provides some designated review lessons; however, they are not offered consistently across units. For example, in Grade K, Unit 2, only Lesson 5 is designated as a review lesson, while Unit 3 contains two review lessons (Lessons 5 and 10). Yet when students advance to Unit 4, no lessons are allocated for intentional review.

The team also found evidence that phonics pattaerns are reinforced in subsequent lessons.

In Grade K, Unit 3, Lesson 1, students are introduced to the "oo" pattern. Practice with this pattern is provided in Lesson 2 during dictation; however, they questioned the authenticity of the practice as students know that dictated words will contain that pattern. The "oo" pattern was also found in the shared reading text for Lesson 3, and students were asked to listen for the target sound (/oo/) during the teacher's read-aloud. Further review is interwoven during instruction and through the use of decodable readers; however, reviewers noted that little teacher guidance is provided to facilitate this, especially in Grade 2. For the most part, there is no explicit connection made to foundational skills; rather, the focus of the decodable texts is on comprehension. Additional practice with spelling alternatives is provided as an option, but is not embedded in the lesson itself and is separate from the reading students engage in during the lesson. Because the review team did not find an explicit blending routine aligned with practice in decodable text, they recommended including additional blending practice opportunities that do not include the teacher reading the words aloud prior to student decoding.

Amplify CKLA's letter-sound correspondences are not taught with a "first letter" keyword. The Large Letter Cards only highlight letters and include no pictures. The program's Sound Cards include pictures, but the keywords do not always use the beginning sound. Reviewers noted that the words provided on the Sound Cards appear to align with the pure phoneme; however, the letter may not be in the initial position. For example, the Sound Card for /g/ includes an image of a dog, while the sound card for /ă/ focuses on a child who is mad. When sounds are introduced, the teacher prompts students to draw a picture that represents the sound.

Phonics lessons are neither short nor optional. Kindergarten students participate in Skills Lessons for 60 minutes each day. As students progress through the grades, the time designated for foundational skills instruction lessens. For example, in Grade 3, the foundational skills component of instruction only appears in Unit 1, lasting 25–30 minutes. Reviewers noted that Lessons 1–5, 14, and 15 include the foundational skills component. Lessons 6–9, however, emphasize language use, while the remaining lessons focus on writing. No phonics instruction was evident in Grades 4 and 5 outside of morphology.

The instructional sequence introduces consonants and vowels in an appropriate sequence and pace. In Grade K, Unit 3, approximately twenty days into the school year, students are introduced to sound/spelling correspondences. They gradually learn the following 8 sounds in this unit, including a vowel sound within the second lesson: /m/>m; /ă/>a; /t/>t; /d/>d; /ŏ/>o; /k/>c; /g/>g; /ĭ/>i.

Blending instruction is embedded within other routines rather than addressed through standalone lessons. Although warm-ups include blending and segmenting alongside decoding practice, the program does not provide explicit, focused lessons on blending. Kindergarten warm-ups include activities such as the following:

- **Chaining:** Students change one sound in a word to create a new word, practicing blending as they move through a chain of related words (e.g., "chip" > "chips" > "chops").

- **Oral Segmenting:** Students are guided to segment words into individual sounds using finger motions to represent each sound. For example, the teacher says a word like "skips," and students repeat the word while segmenting it into sounds (/s/, /k/, /i/, /p/, /s/). They then blend the sounds back together to say the word.

- **Push & Say Activity:** Students use small objects (e.g., cubes, tiles) to represent phonemes in words. They push the objects into boxes while saying each sound, and then blend the sounds together as they run their finger under the boxes.

Reviewers noted that student practice typically emphasizes spelling and letter formation rather than blending, with the exception of teacher-guided chaining activities. In other grades, as well as in some instances in kindergarten, blending practice is largely included as a part of optional remediation activities. Additionally, during core lessons, the teacher performs most of the blending work through chaining and oral segmenting, leaving students with limited opportunities for independent blending practice.

The Teacher Guide and Appendix both explicitly state that teachers should clearly explain to students what is regular and irregular (e.g., known and unknown) in a given word. They are also prompted to clearly name the differences in spelling and sounds. However, reviewers noted that this sentiment is contradicted in kindergarten. The Grade K Teacher Guide (2025) states the following:

> At the end of Unit 3, several high-frequency number words–one, two, and three–were introduced as Tricky Words that cannot be sounded out, but just memorized. In this unit, two common words are introduced that cannot be pronounced accurately using the letter-sound correspondences taught. The two new Tricky Words are: a and *the*.

This guidance contradicts the program's stated approach, which emphasizes helping students identify the regular and irregular parts of a word rather than relying solely on memorization.

Phonics lessons include teacher explanation of the sound, how it differs from similar sounds, and feature the use of minimal pairs (e.g., ship vs. sip) to distinguish the target sound auditorily. Teachers then write the grapheme for the target sound, reinforcing handwriting guidelines, and may discuss how the new grapheme is similar to or different from others. Students are then asked to read an example word from their individual Code Chart, after discussing the newly acquired correspondence's "power bar." The program describes this visual cue:

> The power bar gives an indication of how common this spelling is for the sound it represents. A long power bar that stretches almost across the card means that this is the main spelling for the sound, and there are very few words that have this sound spelled any other way. A very short power bar means that the spelling is less common and occurs in fewer English words. (Vowels Code Flip Book, Skills Strand: Grade 1, p. 1)

After this, students trace the target phoneme on their desks with their finger and then complete a worksheet practicing the target sound, which concludes the lesson. As a result, students receive minimal opportunities for word-level decoding practice with new phonics patterns and limited opportunities for interleaved practice with previously taught patterns.

Only fully decodable texts are used in Grades K–2, including chapter books. New sounds introduced within each unit appear in bold print in the text. Even the student directions are written using only decodable words or delivered orally per directions in the Teacher Guide. Advanced phonics skills, which include building awareness of root words, begin in Grade 2, followed by work with derivational and Latin suffixes in Grade 3.

Finally, morphology is an included component of Amplify CKLA's weekly lessons. This instruction includes discussion of a word's part of speech, meaning, examples in context, and the creation of new words that use the morphemes. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 6, students learn how the prefixes "im-" and "in-" modify root words and form new words, and then they use those words in sentences. However, the team observed that word work in upper grades focuses primarily on meaning. Sometimes this work involves looking up the word's meaning in the glossary, while other times the teacher is prompted to explain it. Later lessons feature spelling instruction that teaches both pronunciation and syllabication. It was noted, however, that these spelling words do not follow any specific pattern; rather, they appear to be selected simply because they occur in the student reader. Instruction is also entirely teacher-led, with no opportunities for student practice, and teacher directions are often ambiguous. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 6, teachers are told that "you might note that the word 'declaration' includes a schwa sound (/ə/) in the second syllable of the word" (Grade 4 Teacher Guide, p. 135), without any further guidance on how to teach or reinforce this feature. As a result, teachers are left without the explicit information needed to deliver effective spelling instruction.

1D: Fluency

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR FLUENCY	SCORE	
1.42: Fluency instruction focuses primarily on student silent reading.	2	
1.43: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student's ability to read words quickly.	2	
1.44: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	4	
1.45: Fluency is practiced only in narrative text or with repeated readings of patterned text.	1	
1.46: Fluency assessment allows acceptance of incorrectly decoded words if they are close in meaning to the target word (e.g., accepting the word "house" instead of the printed word "home").	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reviewers noted that materials within Amplify CKLA do not appear to emphasize the use of silent reading as a means for building fluency. However, the program's guidance does not clearly indicate how students should practice fluency on a routine basis, making it difficult to determine whether texts are intended to be read silently, aloud, or both outside of formal assessment. The team recommends that the program provide clearer, more explicit direction regarding expectations for fluency practice, including when and how students should engage in oral reading fluency practice. Evidence of fluency instruction is difficult to locate beyond general directions for reading a text. For example, the Grade 3 supplemental materials briefly describe what fluency entails (e.g., pausing at commas and using expression to read at an appropriate pace) and encourage students to "read with fluency" (Grade 3, Unit 3 Supplement, p. 133). In the Grade 2, Unit 5 Skills Teacher Guide, the term "fluency" appears only once in the front matter in reference to repeated reading. Additionally, sidebar notes occasionally suggest that students reread text to build fluency; however, these references are not accompanied by explicit routines, modeling, or guidance to support teachers in delivering this level of instruction.

Reviewers noted similar challenges in identifying evidence of rate, accuracy, and expression. These varied aspects of fluency are mentioned in the Teacher Guide, and while rate is not overemphasized, the team found no evidence that it is included at all during direct instruction. This gap is also reflected in the program's assessment practices. For example, in the Grade 4, Unit 2 Teacher Guide, the optional fluency assessment uses a timer, and teachers are instructed to tell students that they "should not rush but rather read at their regular pace" (p. 390). The scoring page for this assessment focuses on words read correctly per minute (WCPM), emphasizing accuracy. Yet, in Grade 3, direct instruction in rate, accuracy, and expression is not part of the core lessons or supplemental skills lessons. These skills are only embedded in the assessment. Reviewers noted that Amplify CKLA does include Supplemental Digital Resources that address fluency; however, these materials were not part of the review.

Regarding word-level fluency practice, students in kindergarten continuously review letter sounds, but not at the word level. The only practice at the word level is with the Tricky Word review. Reviewers did not observe any explicit word-level fluency instruction in Grade 1 and beyond; it is only addressed within the context of text reading, with optional practice offered within skills lessons. In Grade 4, there is a fluency supplement available on the curriculum's digital platform; however, this was not part of the review.

In Grade 4, fluency is assessed but not explicitly taught, as reviewers found no lessons designated for fluency instruction. Although Readers Theater appears in the Grade 4 curriculum, the teacher directions do not reference fluency; instead, the focus is solely on the content of the text, which reviewers identified as a missed opportunity to build in fluency practice. In addition, the script roles are limited and do not provide students with equal access to practice. Reviewers also noted another missed opportunity in the close-reading sections of lessons, where the teacher reads aloud to students rather than engaging them in choral or repeated reading that could strengthen fluency. Finally, fluency assessments are designated as optional; however, if administered, they require that only words read correctly or self-corrected be counted toward the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) score.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING

SECTIONS 2–4: Non-Negotiables for Language Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Writing

This section begins with a review of non-negotiable elements for language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing before moving on to the language comprehension strands highlighted in Scarborough's reading rope. Therefore, identification of the following red flag practices was prioritized in the review of this section.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING	SCORE	
2-4.1: (LC, RC, W) In early grades, the instructional framework is primarily a workshop approach, emphasizing student choice and implicit, incidental, or embedded learning.	1	
2-4.2: (LC, RC, W) Students are not exposed to rich vocabulary and complex syntax in reading and writing materials.	1	
2-4.3: (RC) Comprehension activities focus mainly on assessing whether students understand content (the product of comprehension) instead of supporting the process of comprehending texts.	1	
2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.	1	
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level thinking skills.	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Amplify CKLA's lessons are not based on student choice and incidental learning; instead, they provide directions for teachers to set the purpose for instruction. In Grades K–2, knowledge-building text is read aloud by the teacher, and students discuss and respond to the text and associated images. Literacy work is sometimes embedded in these lessons, but their primary focus is on building student knowledge.

Interactions with the components of language comprehension are not clearly identified in the Teacher Guide, and, therefore, they are not explicitly taught to students. For example, in Grade 2, Unit 3, Lesson 2 of the Knowledge Strand, students are asked to "identify what [the myth] 'Prometheus and Pandora' tries to explain" and "...record key information about a character's point of view from the Greek myth" in writing (p. 24). Because the guide is not clear about explicitly teaching students what language comprehension skills they are practicing, tasks or products are completed, but the process of developing the skills needed to create them is missing.

Reviewers noted that there is evidence of rich vocabulary and syntax embedded throughout the Knowledge Strand's texts and lessons. Additionally, Tier 1, 2, and 3 words were found within the texts and used for instruction. Read-aloud text selections were specifically chosen to provide complex language, based on Amplify CKLA's Text Complexity Guide. Reviewers observed several examples of rich, complex text, including the Grades 2, 4, and 5 Student Readers, which all contained varied syntax as highlighted in the following table:

Grade 2 - The Milk	*"The Bandit was sad. But then he spotted a string that ran from the shed to the deck" (p. 28).*
Grade 4 - A Long and Winding Road	*"Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" (p. 79).*
Grade 5 - A Changing World: East and West	*"If you were a Native American boy or girl born somewhere on the Great Plains during the 1500s or 1600s, European explorers existed mainly in rumors and campfire tales" (p. 8).*

Additionally, in Grade 3, students listen to the classic story, The Wind in the Willows, pausing to discuss the instances of British language interspersed throughout the text.

Comprehension questions range from literal to inferential, and evaluative questions primarily occur after the teacher read-aloud. While Amplify CKLA provides comprehension questions for teachers to check students' understanding, reviewers observed that the program places far greater emphasis on students producing answers about content than on teaching the processes skilled readers use to comprehend texts. For example, a Grade 1 astronomy lesson asks students only to determine whether a time should be labeled "a.m." or "p.m." — a content-based output that emphasizes fact recall. Lessons name skills such as interpreting idioms or close reading, but do not teach students how to do so. Students are asked to perform the skill, but there is no clear definition of what it is, including teacher modeling, guided practice, or strategies for applying the skill independently. For example, Grade 4, Lesson 4 is about the interpretation of idioms, yet no instructional guidance is provided to support students in learning how to interpret them. The lesson's accompanying activity page is described as a partner task in the student-facing directions but is assigned only as homework in the Teacher Guide, further limiting opportunities for guided practice. In another Grade 4 instance, the Teacher Guide references the use of close reading skills in Lesson 5: The Truth about Paul Revere; however, all questions are posed after students read the text silently, providing no teacher modeling of close reading processes. The review team noted that checks for understanding did meet the criteria for the indicators; however, the instructional routines would be bolstered by additional, concrete supports that help students understand how they got to their answer, thereby supporting the process of comprehension.

Regarding writing, most tasks are completed in response to reading, and each unit includes a designated writing focus. For example, in Grade 2, Unit 3, students work on crafting a narrative retelling, with a rubric provided in the back of the Teacher Guide to support evaluation. Subsequent lessons include teacher modeling of writing a narrative that clearly demonstrates using a story map. Reviewers noted that in some Grade 2 lessons, there are missed opportunities to embed explicit writing instruction during students' journal responses. These tasks often function as pre-writing activities within the application portion of the lesson, yet students are prompted to write in response to the text without consistent support in crafting sentences, summaries, or other written structures. For example, in Grade 2, Unit 3, Lesson 6, students are prompted by images to summarize or retell the main events in the story Daedalus and Icarus. This task occurs before the modeling portion of the lesson, so students are not given the opportunity to see the teacher complete it. Additionally, summarizing and retelling are not the same skill, and should not be used interchangeably.

2B: Background Knowledge

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	SCORE	
2.1: Read-aloud opportunities emphasize simple stories or narrative texts. Read-aloud text is not sufficiently complex and/or does not include knowledge-building expository texts (i.e., topics related to science, social studies, current events).	1	
2.2: Opportunities to bridge existing knowledge to new knowledge is not apparent in instruction.	1	
2.3: Advanced (Grades 2–5): For students who are automatic with the code, texts for reading are primarily leveled texts that do not feature a variety of diverse, complex, knowledge-building text sets to develop background knowledge in a variety of subject areas.	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Amplify CKLA is built around a variety of complex texts grounded in science and social studies, with an intentional focus on knowledge building. Most lesson objectives emphasize content learning rather than a focus on literacy. Topics and themes also connect vertically to build knowledge across grades. For example, first graders study Animal Habitats, third graders explore Animal Classification, and fifth graders examine Oceans. However, these topic progressions do not necessarily align with individual state standards.

Units are designed to connect to previously developed background knowledge. This approach, however, assumes that students have participated in CKLA instruction in earlier grades. For example, in Grade 2, students participate in the unit, Legends and Heroes: Greek Myths. The curriculum references previously learned units, including *Underdogs and Heroes in kindergarten, The Moral of the Story: Fables and Tales* in Grade 1, and *The Birthplace of Democracy: Ancient Greece from earlier* in the Grade 2 year.

In contrast, some units activate more general or experiential background knowledge that does not depend on prior participation in the curriculum. For instance, Grade 5 teachers are prompted to activate learners' prior knowledge by asking varied question types about their experiences with poetry (e.g., Have you read poetry before? If so, where or when? Can you name any poems or poets you particularly like? What words, ideas, or feelings come to mind when you hear the word "poetry"? What makes poetry different from other genres like fiction or nonfiction?). These questions draw on students' broader experiences rather than CKLA-specific knowledge.

Beginning in Grade 3, students access complex texts through the student readers. In Grade 2, however, students experience complex texts primarily through teacher read-alouds while using decodable texts for practice. These decodable texts increase in complexity both across the year and within each unit, so that by the end of Grade 2, students are working with decodables that are considerably more complex.

2C: Vocabulary

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR VOCABULARY	SCORE	
2.7: Vocabulary worksheets and activities are used with little opportunity for deep understanding of vocabulary words.	1	
2.8: Instruction includes memorization of isolated words and definitions out of context.	1	
2.9: Tier 2 words are not taught explicitly and practiced; students are not given opportunities to use them in their speech, see them in print, and use them in writing.	2	
2.10: Students are not exposed to and taught Tier 3 words.	1	
2.11: Explicit instruction in morphology is not present and/or not taught according to a scope and sequence (i.e., simple to complex) consistently throughout K–5 instruction.	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

In Amplify CKLA, vocabulary is intentionally embedded within students' reading work. Explicit vocabulary instruction is a mainstay in each knowledge lesson, with a word work portion that delves deeper into the meaning of a specific target word. Other words are meant to be taught incidentally during the read-aloud portion of the lesson. At the beginning of each unit, a full list of vocabulary is provided, and bolded words indicate those taught during word work. For example, in the Grade 2 Unit, The Birthplace of Democracy: Ancient Greece, the following word work words are highlighted: "independently," "summoned," "mission," "grand," "Spartan," "ideal," "democracy," "tribute," "prefer," "marvelous," "tame," and "invader." Thus, words are connected to topics and themes and are not isolated nor taught out of context.

Tier 2 words are included in the vocabulary charts with specific guidance for teachers. Some of these words are explicitly taught, and some are incidentally taught. For example, in the Grade 2, Ancient Greece Unit, the following Tier 2 words are highlighted: "boundaries," "independently," "unique," and "contributions"—but "independently" is the only word that is explicitly taught. Reviewers noted that when Tier 2 words are explicitly taught, they are not practiced sufficiently to promote student mastery. In Grades K–2, most vocabulary instruction occurs through teacher read-alouds and discussion. As a result, younger students may never encounter these words in print, and their exposure is limited to the pictures displayed during the read-aloud. There is also no indication that these words are collected in a word bank or used to support students' own writing. In Grades 3–5, students do experience vocabulary in both speech and print; however, opportunities for students to write with these words or use them in meaningful discourse are minimal in the Teacher Guides.

While not included in every lesson, Tier 3 words are addressed when appropriate and included in the text for reading. In the Grade 2, Unit 2 Vocabulary Chart for "All About Sparta," students are exposed to the Tier 3 words "Spartan" and "conquest" as well as their cognate, "conquista." Often, Tier 3 words are taught implicitly, through the read-aloud, where they are found and discussed in context. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 7, the Tier 3 term "musket ball" is discussed in the context of the text, "They searched Concord and found a few cannons and some musket balls" (p. 70).

Morphology is incorporated throughout the program, particularly in the upper grades. In Grade 1, students are introduced to simple inflectional morphemes such as "-ed," "-s," and "-es," laying an early foundation for understanding how word endings affect meaning and grammar. By Grade 3, instruction expands to include more complex derivational affixes, such as "-ish" and "-ness," helping students see how affixes can shift a word's meaning or part of speech. In Grade 5, students begin exploring Greek roots, including "bio-" and "photo-," which support comprehension of increasingly sophisticated academic vocabulary across science and social studies texts.

2D: Language Structures

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	SCORE
2.18: Conventions of print, grammar, and syntax are taught implicitly or opportunistically with no evidence of consistent, explicit, simple to complex instruction across all grade levels.	1
2.19: Instruction does not include teacher modeling nor sufficient opportunities for discussion.	1
2.20: Students are asked to memorize parts of speech as a list without learning in context and through application.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Across the grades, the team found that grammar instruction in Amplify CKLA follows a generally coherent sequence, progressing from simple forms in the early grades to more advanced concepts in upper elementary. However, the review team noted opportunities for explicit instruction to be stronger. For example, in Grade 3, Unit 3, students are asked to identify the part of speech for the word "confidence" without prior teaching or review, while other lessons, such as the Grade 3, Unit 8 lesson on plural nouns ending in "-fe" (e.g., knife vs. knives), include explicit instruction and practice.

In Grade 4, grammar lessons themselves are explicit and reinforced through prompts and worksheet completion, yet the complex texts students read—particularly the reader's theater scripts—are not leveraged for syntax instruction. Much of this text is read silently, providing no teacher guidance or monitoring of students' facility with syntax. Even when a potential opportunity arises, such as a Unit 6 activity in which students complete a sentence anagram activity to form a sentence summarizing Paul Revere's mission, the task is presented without any instructional support for teaching syntactic structure.

In Grade 5, grammar is incorporated into the Language/Vocabulary section of the integrated Knowledge Units. The focus of this section varies by lesson—some lessons address only word work, while others include a combination of word work, grammar, and morphology. Overall, the team found no evidence of explicit instruction in syntax in Grades 1–5, despite numerous opportunities and the increasing syntactic demands of the texts.

In most lessons, teachers are directed to first explain information to students and then include students in processing their thinking; this often includes opportunities for discussion and is especially true in earlier grades. For example, in Grade 2, Knowledge Unit 1, the teacher is directed to explain that a statement tells something and has two parts: a part that names who or what the statement is about and a part that tells what is happening or the state of being. This, however, is not the same as teacher modeling, where the teacher demonstrates what a skilled reader's thinking sounds like, making inaudible cognition audible. Lessons also include a variety of questions about the text read, whether it's a read-aloud, shared reading, or a text read independently. These questions include evaluative prompts intended for class discussion; however, they are primarily focused on the content/product rather than the thinking processes students must use to develop deeper understanding. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 7, students answer questions about From the *Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, such as: Who is Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler? Why is she writing to her lawyer? What changes did she make in her last will and testament? While these questions require students to retrieve information, the task centers on providing answers rather than learning how to think more deeply. There is no explicit teacher modeling of inferential thinking—particularly for the "why" questions—nor reinforcement of why this deeper level of reasoning is essential for building global coherence and strong comprehension.

While many lessons offer examples and visuals to help teachers introduce concepts before students complete an activity, they do not consistently include opportunities for teachers to model the skill or process. For instance, in Grade 4, in a lesson about the use of quotation marks, teachers are given examples, reminders, and visuals (e.g., a poster) to explain rules for using quotation marks, followed by directions for students to write their own quotations using the poster as a reference. However, there is no explicit teacher modeling of how to construct a sentence with correct quotation marks, and students are asked to apply the skill independently without first seeing the process demonstrated.

A similar approach was found with writing lessons, as activities are frequently assigned, but not modeled. In one writing lesson, students are tasked to construct paragraphs detailing additional causes of the Revolutionary War. This includes planning a body paragraph, pulling information from a source, note-taking, using quotation marks to indicate a sourced quote, and an understanding of argument; however, none of this is modeled by the teacher. Furthermore, the activity page that follows focuses on writing a response about the Boston Tea Party with emphasis on the inclusion of content-specific terms (e.g., "repeal," "protest," "massacre," "tax collector," "Parliament"). There are some lessons that include teacher modeling; however, modeling and opportunities for discussion are largely inconsistent throughout the curriculum.

Work with parts of speech is embedded within vocabulary Word Work sections as well as within sentence work or grammar components of lessons. For example, in Grade 2, vocabulary is targeted in both the knowledge and skills components of the curriculum. There is also direct instruction included in the language portion of the lessons, which is paired with student practice on the activity page. In Grade 3, Unit 1, Lesson 6, the teacher reviews nouns, verbs, and adjectives using a Parts of Speech chart and then guides students in generating a list of nouns. Finally, students complete a worksheet where they identify each part of speech in a series of sentences by circling nouns, underlining verbs, and boxing adjectives.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	SCORE
2.26: Inferencing strategies are not taught explicitly and may be based only on picture clues and not text (i.e., picture walking).	3
2.27: Students do not practice inference as a discrete skill.	2

While Amplify CKLA includes inferential questions in every lesson, explicit instruction on how to make inferences was difficult to find. Lessons typically provide sample responses and brief reminders that "inferences must be grounded logically in the text," but do not guide teachers in teaching the process (Grade 2 Skills, Unit 2 Teacher Guide, pp. 53–54). Some evidence of inference instruction was found in Grade 4, Unit 9, where the teacher uses a think-aloud while reading a passage about Madam C. J. Walker. As the teacher reads, they verbalize their thought process—highlighting important details, posing questions, noting historical context, and demonstrating how to infer the meaning of the word "resilient" using context clues from the text. However, no strategy instruction is provided. A later lesson within the same unit asks students to write down key details that are used to convey the main point of the text. Again, there is no direct instruction on what makes a detail a key detail, other than to say, "I think I see a detail here . . . Would you agree that this is an important detail?" (Grade 4, Unit 9 Teacher Guide, 2025). Students are told that this detail, along with the rest, can help them determine the main idea, which could be an opportunity to practice inferencing. Students are then tasked with independently finding key details without any guidance on how to differentiate essential from nonessential details. When the main idea is later identified, teachers are instructed to rephrase student responses that do not align with the predetermined answer.

In a Grade 4 poetry unit, the teacher poses direct, leading questions to help students infer meaning in Walt Whitman's "I Hear America Singing"—but again, explicit instruction on how to make an inference is not provided, leaving students to practice the skill without guidance and only within the context of the specific text. Later, during the discussion of the figurative language used in the poem, the teacher explains that the metaphor is not meant to be literal. Students are expected to quickly discern that Whitman uses singing as a metaphor for the individuality and value of people's work. In a Grade 5 poetry unit, students are given a sentence frame using the words "From the observed images of _____ and _____, I can infer the poem will be about. . ."; however, no explicit instruction is provided on how to use the visual details provided to infer the poem's theme.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR LITERACY KNOWLEDGE	SCORE
2.33: Genre types and features are not explicitly taught.	1
2.34: Genre types and text structures (e.g., cause and effect, problem and solution, sequence, compare and contrast) are not used to understand the purpose of what is being read.	3
2.35: Specific text structures and corresponding signal words are not explicitly taught and practiced.	3

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Throughout Amplify CKLA, students encounter a range of text types. While the program places strong emphasis on informational texts and narrative informational genres (e.g., biography and autobiography), it provides limited explicit instruction in text structures. Reviewers noted that poetry is the only genre explicitly taught within the reading block. Although genre types are addressed in the writing block, opportunities are missed to deliver explicit instruction in reading and to intentionally link reading and writing. For example, in Grade 3, there is little to no evidence of direct teaching of narrative elements such as setting, plot, and character. Similarly, nonfiction text types are not sufficiently explored, and instruction related to text features is minimal.

The Grade 4 curriculum includes exposure to narrative, nonfiction, and poetry. The narrative lessons introduce character and plot, but setting is primarily taught within the writing block. With nonfiction text, the program emphasizes the text features of pictures, photographs, and captions, with the inclusion of a map in Grade 4, Unit 6. Again, elements of poetry are taught within the reading block through lessons that guide students through reading select poems and answering corresponding questions.

In Grade 5, narrative structure is addressed in Unit 1 when students learn about personal narrative. Grade 5, Unit 2 features a combination of nonfiction and myths, where the text features of nonfiction are embedded. For example, teachers are directed to highlight the nonfiction text feature of headings by pointing to the heading in the featured reader and asking a student to read it aloud.

Outside of poetry, the team noted that writing lessons ask students to produce cause-and-effect compositions, and similar cause-and-effect questioning appears regularly in reading lessons to support comprehension. However, this approach does not fully leverage the integration of reading and writing. Finally, the team found little evidence of instruction on how specific words signal different text structures. For example, in the Grade 5 Scope and Sequence, "signal words" are mentioned only once, and "transition words" appear twice within the language component of the lessons. These references also relate solely to chronological order and managing a sequence of events.

SECTION 3: Reading Comprehension

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR READING COMPREHENSION	SCORE	
3.1: Comprehension strategies such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, noting text structure, inferencing, and fix ups are not taught and practiced throughout the year using a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do) using appropriate instructional text that students can accurately decode.	2	
3.2: Students are asked to independently apply reading comprehension strategies primarily in short, disconnected readings at the expense of engaging in knowledge-building text sets.	1	
3.3: Emphasis is on independent reading and book choice without engaging with complex texts.	1	
3.4: Materials for comprehension instruction are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts.	1	
3.5: Students are not taught methods to monitor their comprehension while reading.	3	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reviewers found that Amplify CKLA's reading comprehension lessons are conducted in an "I do, we do, you do" manner. However, many of the lessons consist of direction following, where the teacher tells students what to write on their activity pages. Additionally, lessons on comprehension strategy are often cursory at best. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 2, a brief lesson on summarizing appears; however, it does not teach students how to determine what should be included or omitted beyond the vague directive to focus on "the most important parts." The teacher generates the summary by asking leading questions rather than modeling a clear summarization process. In Grade 2, the close reading lessons do not explicitly teach comprehension strategies (such as predicting, summarizing, questioning, making inferences, or identifying text structure). Instead, the focus is primarily on rereading the decodable text and answering teacher-posed, text-dependent questions. Reviewers also noted that in Grade 2, students' primary exposure to text is through decodables, which are appropriate for their reading level, but also naturally limit opportunities for more complex comprehension instruction. In Grade 3, comprehension strategy instruction is inconsistent. For example, after learning about the main idea in a lesson on vertebrates and invertebrates, students are not given opportunities to revisit or practice the strategy independently. Furthermore, in Grade 3, Unit 7, Charlotte's Web, the team noted a missed opportunity to use the Story Map organizer as a summarizing tool in addition to its intended purpose, which is to plan a narrative story. Finally, a self-monitoring strategy appears in Grade 5, Unit 1, when the teacher introduces the Think As You Read poster and models its use with a text students previously read with a partner after first reading it silently.

Students answer questions about the texts they read, and these questions are intended to show their use of comprehension strategies. However, students are not actually taught to apply these strategies while reading; instead, questions are directed to the class through post-reading discussion and activity-book questions. Furthermore, while texts are lengthy and organized into knowledge-building text sets within each unit, comprehension strategy use is evaluated through questioning rather than explicitly taught or practiced during the reading process.

In Amplify CKLA, students work only with the texts assigned in the program and are not provided opportunities for outside independent reading or book choice. In Grades K–2, students encounter texts primarily through teacher read-alouds or decodable readers, while in Grades 3–5, they read the complex texts included in their readers. By Grades 4 and 5, students are frequently expected to read these complex texts independently. No leveled texts are featured.

Finally, regarding self-monitoring, the team was able to locate limited examples throughout the curriculum. For instance, in Grade 3, Unit 5, the teacher mentions self-monitoring, and students are encouraged to reread to self-correct misunderstandings—but there is no teacher modeling or think-aloud on how to do so. Students in Grade 5 are introduced to the Think As You Read poster to promote self-monitoring, as mentioned previously.

4A: Writing — Handwriting

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR HANDWRITING	SCORE	
4.1: There is no direct instruction in handwriting.	1	
4.2: Handwriting instruction is an isolated add-on.	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Amplify CKLA's manuscript handwriting instruction begins in Kindergarten Skills Unit 1, where students are taught proper pencil grip and how to form slanted and curved lines. By Unit 3, kindergarteners learn the letter formation of each newly introduced phoneme. In Grade 2, students continue handwriting practice in their Activity Books; however, teachers are not provided guidance for delivering direct handwriting instruction. Cursive handwriting is introduced in Grades 4 and 5 through a separate Teacher Guide and Cursive Activity Book. The Grade 5 Cursive Teacher Guide recommends an additional 15–20 minutes of daily instruction outside the core curriculum, making this supplemental instruction, and advises teachers to extend cursive practice throughout the year. The introductory cursive lesson attempts to build relevance by connecting to signatures on the Declaration of Independence and highlighting the mechanics of cursive versus print, after which students transition to independent practice in their Activity Books.

4B: Writing — Spelling

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR SPELLING	SCORE	
4.5 There is no evidence of explicit spelling instruction, no spelling scope and sequence, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics/decoding scope and sequence.	2	
4.6: There is no evidence of phoneme segmentation or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	1	
4.7: Patterns in decoding are not featured in encoding/spelling; spelling lists are based on content or frequency of word use and not connected to decoding/phonics lessons.	2	
4.8: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	1	
4.9: Spelling patterns for each phoneme are taught all at once (e.g., all spellings of long /ā/) instead of a systematic progression to develop automaticity with individual grapheme/phonemes.	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reviewers observed inconsistent alignment between Amplify CKLA's phonics and decoding Scope and Sequence. In some cases, the spelling work during the language skills component of the program targets different spelling concepts from those taught in the foundational skills lesson. Additionally, since much of the spelling practice is oral or involves filling in blanks, the crucial connection between decoding and encoding is weakened. For example, in Grade 2, Unit 2, Lesson 2, students and the teacher work with a "magic e" game called Pop-Out Chaining. This activity is conducted almost entirely through oral language as students read words aloud, listen to the teacher pronounce new words, and respond chorally when prompted (e.g., "cute," "hope"). Although letters are added to words written on the board, students themselves do not write, manipulate, or encode the words.

The program also does not provide a clear spelling scope and sequence. Although scope and sequence documents outline the skills addressed at each grade level, they do not make it easy to see how skills develop or progress across grades. While morphemes are explicitly taught beginning in Grade 4, and grapheme–phoneme correspondences are taught in Grade 1, spelling instruction itself is largely unsupported. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 1, a lesson on "there" and "their" introduces the meanings and spellings of the homophones, yet the accompanying activity page is unrelated to the skill. In Grade 4, students are also expected to check their own spelling independently without prior modeling or guided practice.

The materials reference additional supports, specifically the Decoding and Encoding Remediation Supplement and an Intervention Toolkit, said to include extensive phonics, fluency, comprehension, handwriting, and other key skills; however, reviewers were unable to locate these resources. Moreover, these tools appear to be designed for intervention rather than core instruction, meaning only some students would receive this support even if the materials were accessible.

Across the early grades, CKLA introduces some elements of phoneme–grapheme mapping, but the instruction is inconsistent. First-grade warm-ups include oral segmenting drills that shift from sounds to syllables as units progress, which can reduce the frequency of phoneme-level practice. Tricky Words are introduced through phoneme–grapheme mapping, but overall, opportunities for students to practice and apply phoneme-grapheme mapping are limited. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 1, students complete a worksheet that requires only copying words from a word bank after the class has read them together—an activity that does not reinforce sound-symbol connections. More robust mapping practice, such as building words with enlarged letter cards, appears only in supplemental supports rather than in the core lesson sequence.

While word-chaining lessons are included and can reinforce phoneme–grapheme correspondences, much of this instruction remains oral, like in the Grade 2 Pop-Out Chaining activity mentioned previously. Additionally, this activity does not adhere to typical chaining procedures in which only one phoneme changes; transitions such as *cut* → *cute*, followed immediately by *hop* → *hope*, require multiple sound changes. When students move to the accompanying activity page, they are simply asked to add an "e" to a word and read it aloud rather than engaging in encoding practice that would strengthen phoneme–grapheme mapping.

Reviewers also observed a recurring disconnect between the phonics patterns taught during Foundational Skills lessons and the spelling instruction embedded in the Language sections. For example, in Grade 1, Tricky Words are introduced as spelling words and assessed, yet they often do not correspond to the phonics pattern taught in the lesson. In Unit 1, Lesson 1, the phonics focus is /er/, but the Tricky Words focus on the irregular element "-ay" in the days of the week. Furthermore, the schwa in Monday, the /ur/ in Saturday, or the "dnes" sequence in Wednesday are not explained. Reviewers noted that this mismatch occurs repeatedly throughout the materials. In Grade 2, Unit 2, Lesson 1, for instance, students are expected to read and spell one-syllable words with "a_e" and "i_e" patterns during phonics instruction, while spelling expectations in the Language block focus on the inflectional ending "-ed." Also, students are only assessed on the Language portion at the end of the week.

In Grade 3, spelling often becomes embedded within grammar lessons with minimal explicit instruction. Students may work with words such as irregular plural nouns (child children) where the instructional focus is on meaning rather than spelling. Only the earlier Grade 3 units link spelling to a sound–spelling pattern, and even then, application relies heavily on context. For example, students must select the correct spelling of /n/ (e.g., "n" versus "nn," "mn," or "gn") based on meaning rather than explicitly mapping phonemes to graphemes. Finally, by Grade 4, spelling instruction is no longer present outside of morphology.

Reviewers noted a few instances where memorization is emphasized. For example, in Grade 2, Unit 2, Lesson 2, on "magic e," students complete an activity page where they practice by simply adding the silent "e" to the end of a word before reading it with the new spelling. Guidance on the periodic Tricky Word assessment also stresses that these words should be temporarily memorized. The spelling analysis directions in Grade 1, Unit 1, Lesson 5, specify that if students miss several words, teachers should ask them to explain their errors; no further guidance or remediation is provided. This same unit also includes Tricky Word flashcards for home use, where families are advised that students "simply must learn and remember how to read and spell them" (Amplify, 2025, *Tricky Word Flashcards*). Reviewers did note that explicit instruction in Tricky Words does occur, as observed when learning the Tricky Word "picture." Here, students learn that the "p," "i," and "c" are pronounced as expected (e.g., /p/ /ĭ/ /k/), while the "t," "u," "r," and "e" stand for the sounds /ch/ /er/. However, these words are not practiced nor seen again, unless they are included in the weekly spelling assessment.

Spelling patterns are not taught all at once. Students begin spelling phonemes in one-syllable, short-vowel words in Unit 5 of kindergarten. This continues in Unit 6, adding consonant clusters to the spelling practice. Subsequent grades progress in a similar manner. However, many follow-up activities are labeled as optional, limiting practice opportunities. For instance, in Grade 2, teachers are told that they "may choose to complete" activity pages 11.1 and 11.2. Furthermore, the practice of writing "yes" or "no" next to a series of questions featuring words with /oo/ or /ou/ (e.g., Will a round spoon fit in your mouth?) will not ensure students reach automaticity.

4C: Writing — Composition

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR COMPOSITION	SCORE
4.15: Writing tasks and prompts are provided with minimal instruction for the skills needed to complete them and little time for planning prior to writing.	2
4.16: Writing assignments are primarily unstructured with few models or graphic organizers.	1
4.17: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure are not explicitly taught, and opportunities for practice to develop automaticity are not provided; instead, they are addressed opportunistically.	2
4.18: Writing instruction and assignments are focused primarily on narrative writing or unstructured student choice.	1
4.19: Students are not taught the writing process (i.e., planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).	1
4.20: Writing is taught as a standalone and is not used to further reading comprehension.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Amplify CKLA provides limited direct instruction in writing. In some instances, students are told exactly what to write, instead of being provided with explicit instruction. For example, in Grade 1, Unit 3, students are told that the first sentence of a book report should introduce the title, the characters, and where the story occurs. There are no instances of modeling this skill for learners, and if students struggle to compose the sentence, the teacher is prompted to offer an example that students can utilize as needed. Furthermore, this lesson demonstrates a mismatch between the writing skill and the type of writing targeted. The overall goal of this unit is for students to compose a narrative; however, this book report activity functions as a retelling and opinion piece as students are prompted to retell story events and themes, and then share whether they liked it or not. Heavy teacher facilitation continues during the editing phase as students are expected to edit their writing independently after one instance of teacher modeling. This includes correcting their written work to ensure they included all key story elements (e.g., title, where, who, what) and applied foundational writing conventions (e.g., capitalization, punctuation, spelling).

In Grade 3, Units 2 and 7, there is minimal teacher modeling of the writing process. For instance, in Unit 2, Lesson 13, students use brainstorming webs (and other tools from previous lessons) to decide which animal group, connected to the story *Charlotte's Web*, to write about. This is positioned as the planning phase of the writing process. While the teacher explains the steps and references available tools, teacher modeling is limited. The lesson includes a brief example of a topic sentence; however, there is no sustained teacher modeling or think-aloud to demonstrate how to write supporting details or draft a full paragraph. As a result, the level of modeling does not match the complexity of the task. In other lessons, explicit instruction writing is similarly underdeveloped. For example, in Grade 2, students are prompted to write 2–3 sentences in their journals with reminders on the page about capital letters and punctuation, but there is little evidence of teacher modeling on how to generate or structure those ideas. Additionally, the terminology of summary and retell is used interchangeably when, in fact, these skills differ. This may lead to confusion in instruction and student expectations.

Graphic organizers and examples are included in the curriculum, and teachers are instructed to create a model of writing in some units. Other times, teachers explain the activity without any modeling, as seen in the letter writing task in Grade 1, Unit 5.. Reviewers noted that while graphic organizers are used effectively in many Knowledge Units, much of the writing in response to reading remains largely unstructured.

Writing conventions, grammar, and sentence structure lessons are included during Knowledge Units. At times, the lessons emphasize application during reading instruction or within student worksheets, but do not explicitly address how to apply these skills in writing, even though students are expected to use them in their written responses. For example, in Grade 2, Lesson 10: Great Thinkers of Greece, the teacher introduces students to compound sentences by reviewing what an independent clause is and explaining how two complete ideas can be joined with coordinating conjunctions such as "and," "but," "because," "so," and "yet." Each conjunction is briefly discussed, and one example is highlighted before students move on to applying this work in an activity. Students are held accountable for including compound sentences in their opinion composition, which also goes along with this unit.

In Grade 3, Unit 2, Lesson 1, students spend 25 minutes practicing conventional spelling for suffixes "-ed" and "-ing." The focus is mostly on adding the suffixes to root words when spelling, with little discussion of meaning or grammar. This lesson also features minimal teacher questioning about how the suffix changes the meaning of the root word (e.g., What does the suffix "-ed" or "-ing" signal?). Additionally, the teacher is frequently directed to explain a concept without ever modeling. Without modeling, students never see how to apply the skill, what it looks like in action, or how an expert thinker approaches the task, making it less likely that learning will be successfully transferred.

Amplify CKLA does feature a varied mix of writing genres, and assignments include genre-specific prompts and directions for students to follow. In Grade 3, for example, the team observed informative pieces, poems, and comic strips with elements of poetry, opinion essays, and research writing, where students take notes on a short article, fictional narratives, letter writing, newspaper articles, and a longer research essay and presentation. Students are also introduced to the writing process through the Plan, Draft, Edit routine, which begins in Grade 2. This work continues in Grade 3 when students use brainstorming webs and other resources to write about an animal group in the story, *Charlotte's Web*. However, as mentioned previously, teacher modeling is not utilized, even though the writing process is discussed. A similar approach to instruction was observed in Grade 5, Unit 2. Here, the teacher talks about the writing process, including looking at parts of a paragraph, its identifying components, and providing verbal descriptions of topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences; however, there is no modeling, guided practice, or gradual release included.

Finally, writing lessons are presented as separate lessons and appear to be disconnected from what students are reading. While students often write in response to what they read—an approach that can implicitly support comprehension—key writing skills such as summarizing are not explicitly taught. Additionally, Amplify CKLA fails to capitalize on any conceptual overlap between the reading and writing featured. Thus, the relationship is present but largely implied, and the curriculum provides little guidance for teachers on how to make these connections explicit. For example, in Grade 3, Unit 7, Lesson 9, students are asked to draft dialogue and add descriptive words to their writing. The teacher refers to the rubric to show where these elements appear and then prompts students to brainstorm descriptive words and possible dialogue for the beginning, middle, and end of their narratives. Students then complete their story planners independently. This lesson includes no instances of teacher modeling. Moreover, although dialogue appears in both the reading and writing portions of the lesson, there are no directions for the teacher to explicitly connect the strategies used during reading instruction to what students are expected to do in their writing.

FINDINGS:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT

SECTION 5: Assessment

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
5.1: Assessments measure comprehension only without additional assessment measures to determine what is leading to comprehension weaknesses (e.g., phonics, phoneme awareness, nonsense word fluency, decoding, encoding, fluency, vocabulary, listening comprehension).	1
5.2: Assessments include miscue analysis in which misread words are marked correct if the mistake does not substantially alter the meaning of the text.	1

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
5.6: Assessments result in benchmarks according to a leveled-text gradient.	1
5.7: Foundational skills assessments are primarily running records or similar assessments that are based on whole language or cueing strategies (e.g., guess the word by looking at the first letter, use picture support for decoding).	1
5.8: Phonics skills are not assessed.	1
5.9: Phoneme awareness is not assessed.	2
5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	1
5.11: Oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments are not used.	1
5.12: The suite of assessments does not address aspects of language comprehension (e.g., vocabulary, syntax, listening comprehension).	1
5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	4

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Across the grades, Amplify CKLA offers multiple forms of assessment, including unit tests, performance tasks, dictation, spelling assessments, and end-of-unit content tests. These tools measure a range of reading, writing, language, and content knowledge skills. However, the assessments vary widely in purpose and design from grade to grade, and the coherence of the assessment system is not always clear. In the early grades, students are assessed on discrete foundational skills. For example, in kindergarten, students are assessed on a wide range of skills through the use of the program's Unit Tests and Performance Assessments. This includes measurement of letter formation, segmenting, blending, decoding, letter identification, rhyming, high-frequency words, reading a decodable text, and other foundational skills. End-of-unit domain assessments measure students' understanding of the unit's core vocabulary and content. These assessments are primarily delivered through a digital platform assigned to students. However, these digital assessments could not be fully evaluated due to the reviewers' limited access to online materials. Thus, the review team was unable to determine how the application of comprehension skills is measured. Teachers also have the option of conducting a paper-and-pencil assessment as outlined in the Teacher Guide.

In the upper grades, assessments emphasize content knowledge, vocabulary, grammar, and written composition, yet explicit measures that help teachers understand why students may struggle with comprehension are limited. For example, in Grade 4, content knowledge, written composition, grammar, and vocabulary are assessed using passages that students read independently before responding to text-based questions. While the answers to these questions come directly from the text, the written essay component requires students to synthesize information and craft a personal response. The assessment is expected to take 75 minutes. Additionally, an end-of-unit spelling test is also given and is based on morphemes introduced in the final unit. However, reviewers noted that students are offered limited practice with these new morphemes prior to the assessment. Furthermore, practice opportunities include take-home activities like copying the words onto paper or writing them in alphabetical order. CKLA provides guidance in analyzing student errors.

Fluency assessments are inconsistently embedded across the grades and are often treated as optional rather than required. In Grade 3, reviewers noted that no fluency assessment is mentioned in the Teacher's Guide. In Grade 4, a fluency assessment is offered only for students who score poorly on the spelling test, yet no benchmark is provided to determine when it should be administered. For this Grade 4 measure, students are instructed to read at a normal rate while the teacher times them, followed by a set of comprehension questions. The miscue analysis does not accept misread words and has specific coding instructions for words read incorrectly, omissions, insertions, substitutions, self-corrections, and teacher-supplied words. Teachers also have access to an Assessment and Remediation Guide, which includes a placement assessment, a fluency measure, and lesson templates to support students who are not yet ready for grade-level skills instruction.

The assessments primarily offer formative information, writing performance measures, and other checks for understanding. When benchmarks are included, they focus on student performance in foundational skills and in listening or reading comprehension. There was no evidence of a leveled text gradient. The placement tests in the Assessment and Remediation Guides are designed to help teachers determine the appropriate entry point for students within the grade-level lessons. Score ranges are used to indicate whether students would be candidates for fluency assessment and/or benefit from remediation work, and they follow the Hasbrouck and Tindal benchmark guidelines for fluency. Teachers are asked to take running records during fluency assessments; however, nothing is done with this information. In kindergarten, students are assessed on a wide range of skills, including segmenting, blending, and decoding. As students progress through the grades, phonics is primarily measured through word list reading and decodable text, which students read independently, followed by answering literal comprehension questions. Additionally, outside of kindergarten, phonemic awareness is assessed only in Grade 1 and only when a student scores below a benchmark on the fluency assessment. While the sample spelling assessment asks students to attend to phonemes by changing one sound at a time, a traditional phonemic awareness diagnostic is not provided in Grade 2.

In Grade K, Unit 8 includes a comprehensive performance assessment of all letter-sound correspondences. Students who struggle with word recognition are given a Pseudoword Reading Assessment, which the program describes as a more direct measure of decoding skills, stating that "Asking students to decode and blend nonsense words is a very pure test of whether a student has mastered individual letter-sound correspondences and the ability to blend them together" (Amplify, 2025, Kindergarten Assessment Guide).

This is the only instance where CKLA uses nonsense words for assessment, and teachers may substitute the real-word assessment if needed. The team recommended that teachers utilize these optional assessments for students who show weakness in word reading and/or comprehension to ensure they are using phonic decoding strategies and not relying on whole word memorization.

In Grade 1, decoding is assessed using real words, though some selections (e.g., "rut," "clot," "pane," "boon," "knave") may function like nonsense words for young learners due to unfamiliarity. In Grades 2 and 4, word-reading assessments also rely on real words presented in isolation. The program does make note of the use of universal screeners, including DIBELS 8, which would provide a nonsense-word assessment.

Fluency assessments are present; however, they are either optional or administered only when students do not meet the success criteria on comprehension measures. For example, Kindergarten Skills Units and Grade 3 materials include optional fluency assessments. In Grades 1 and 4, an ORF assessment is recommended only for students who do not meet the expected benchmarks on comprehension assessments. In Grade 2, fluency assessment is provided in the Assessment Guide as well as an optional assessment located in the Grade 2 Fluency Packet. The team recommended building teacher knowledge around the connection between fluency and comprehension to ensure all students are monitored for fluency weaknesses, particularly in the early grades.

Finally, Amplify CKLA's assessment materials are only provided in English. As such, educators would also need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that multilingual learners are assessed in their home language. However, the team noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.

Final Report Summary

Overall, the reviewed components for the Amplify CKLA curriculum demonstrate strengths as well as areas that would benefit from further refinement. Continued attention to these elements can help ensure high-quality instruction across Grades K-5. While an evidence-aligned core curriculum is a critical part of any literacy program, it is no substitute for building a solid foundation of educator and leader knowledge in the science of reading as well as a coaching system to support fidelity of implementation.

STRENGTHS

Amplify CKLA demonstrates a strong, vertically aligned knowledge-building approach across the elementary grades. The curriculum intentionally sequences content so students in this program continually build and deepen conceptual understanding over time, supporting both literacy development and content knowledge growth.

Amplify CKLA offers engaging, student-centered content and exposes learners to a range of genres, helping sustain interest while introducing learners to different text types.

Amplify CKLA's decodable readers are thoughtfully designed to resemble chapter books rather than early-learning texts, helping them feel developmentally appropriate, respectful, and appealing to students.

Amplify CKLA includes purposeful opportunities for students to write about what they read, and grammar is consistently embedded as an intentional strand across both reading and writing instruction.

Amplify CKLA offers helpful digital teacher resources, including lesson-aligned slide decks and training videos that enhance instructional clarity. However, reviewers noted that these materials were often difficult to find and recommended making them more accessible to their users.

CHALLENGES

Navigating Amplify CKLA is challenging, particularly when locating materials and determining what is available digitally versus in print. Additional training or clearer guidance may be necessary to support teachers in effectively accessing resources.

Amplify CKLA places a strong emphasis on teacher-created materials to support instruction; however, the time required for teachers to design and prepare these resources is not explicitly accounted for within the program and will require additional planning time outside of the scheduled instructional block.

Reviewers found that Amplify CKLA provides limited clarity and explicit instruction around fluency development. While fluency is referenced, there is little consistent guidance, modeling, or routine practice embedded in lessons, resulting in fluency being assessed more often than it is intentionally taught.

Amplify CKLA's purposeful practice is inconsistent across the program, which could impact students' opportunities to deeply apply and transfer their skills.

Amplify CKLA's support for multilingual learners is not consistently aligned with best practices. Instead of providing intentional scaffolds to ensure full participation and access, the program often reduces task expectations (e.g., suggesting students ask for help if needed rather than embedding structured support). While some strengths exist, such as the inclusion of cognates for Spanish speakers, stronger, more proactive scaffolding is needed to promote equitable engagement and learning.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE

Amplify CKLA

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) Curriculum, 3rd Edition (2025) for Grades K–5

Amplify CKLA

Table of Contents

Amplify CKLA Introduction **2**

Amplify CKLA Publisher Response **4**

Overall Design and Structure 4

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness 7

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding 9

1D: Fluency 10

2C: Vocabulary 12

2E: Verbal Reasoning 14

2F: Literacy Knowledge 15

Section 3: Reading Comprehension 17

Section 4B: Writing - Spelling 19

Section 4C: Writing - Composition 21

Section 5: Assessment 23

Amplify CKLA Introduction

Amplify welcomes the opportunity to have Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) 3rd Edition reviewed by The Reading League as part of its ongoing commitment to alignment with the Science of Reading. Since 2000, Amplify has developed K–12 educational resources informed by research on how children learn, and that commitment to evidence-based practice is central to the design of Amplify CKLA.

Amplify CKLA is a comprehensive K–5 literacy curriculum grounded in the Science of Reading. The program is currently used by more than four million students across all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Amplify CKLA is one of a limited number of core literacy curricula that meets the criteria for Tier I – Strong Evidence as an educational intervention under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Click here for a closer look at Amplify CKLA's research base, efficacy, and impact.

Amplify CKLA is designed to support students in developing foundational reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through evidence-based instruction across all key literacy domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing—using both print and digital materials.

In Grades K–2, the curriculum features separate Skills and Knowledge Strands, providing explicit foundational skills instruction alongside language comprehension development. In Grades 3–5, foundational skills, language development, and knowledge-building are integrated to support students as they engage with increasingly complex texts and topics. For students who require continued foundational skills support beyond Grade 2, the 3rd Edition includes dedicated Skills instruction for Grades 3–5.

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition builds on the 2nd Edition, which has demonstrated positive student outcomes nationally. Updates include new and revised Knowledge units with streamlined pacing, domain-aligned writing instruction, daily activities that support comprehension, syntactical awareness, sentence-level writing, and composition development. The accompanying digital platform includes

lesson-aligned teacher presentation screens, skill-building practice activities, and standards-based reporting from automatically scored assessments. When teachers teach using Amplify CKLA, they grow in their understanding of how literacy develops. When students learn in classrooms that use Amplify CKLA, they develop as confident and capable readers and writers.

Hallmarks of Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition:

- a program structure that reflects well-established literacy frameworks
- systematic, integrated reading and writing instruction to support literacy proficiency
- explicit and cumulative instruction to support all students
- domain-focused knowledge building that systematically develops students' background knowledge and vocabulary through carefully sequenced topics that build within and across grades
- comprehensive writing instruction from shared writing experiences in early grades to independent composition across multiple text types, with explicit instruction in the writing process and transcription skills
- engaging content featuring diverse texts and high-interest topics spanning genres that motivate student learning and build sustained engagement

Amplify CKLA Publisher Response

Overall Design and Structure

No evidence of deliberate and purposeful practice: "These two terms refer to practice that goes beyond rote repetition and involves practicing for a purpose (e.g., accuracy, fluent retrieval, generalization) with the deliberate goal of long-term improvement of skill performance" (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 406).	2
No evidence of retrieval practice: Retrieval practice "consists of tasks requiring retrieval of targeted skills and knowledge from memory without prompts or cues" (Hughes & Riccomini, 2019, p. 407). "Retrieval practice is a strategy in which calling information to mind subsequently enhances and boosts learning" (Agarwal, Roediger, McDaniel, & McDermott, 2020, p. 2).	2

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition is designed to move beyond rote repetition, providing practice experiences that are purposeful and goal-oriented—targeting accuracy, fluent retrieval, and generalization with the deliberate aim of long-term skill improvement. Daily Primary Focus Objectives anchor all practice activities to specific learning goals, with each lesson segment including strategically aligned practice, checks for understanding, and formative assessments that ensure deliberate focus throughout instruction. Importantly, instruction is designed to build on previous lessons, and while a skill may not always be a primary objective, it remains integrated into ongoing instruction. This cumulative design ensures that students continue to encounter, apply, and strengthen previously learned skills within new instructional contexts, supporting retention and long-term mastery rather than treating skills as isolated, one-time learning events.

Purposeful practice in Amplify CKLA is characterized by clear performance goals, targeted feedback, and deliberate skill refinement across all strands and grade levels. In the K–2 Skills Strand, for example, chaining activities require students to systematically manipulate sound-spellings with teachers setting specific goals and monitoring improvement, while daily concentrated practice in writing, spelling,

word-level reading, and word sorting ensures that newly taught patterns are applied purposefully in varied contexts. Students also engage in purposeful practice through Amplify's Boost Reading Practice Games. Teachers can assign these optional games to their whole class or to individual students for targeted skill-specific practice aligned with core instruction.

In the Knowledge Strand and Grades 3–5 Integrated Units, iterative writing instruction moves students through structured, multi-stage processes with explicit performance goals and targeted feedback at each stage, while systematic vocabulary development through domain immersion provides repeated, purposeful application of academic language across multiple weeks. In Grades 3–5, Writing building block activities develop sentence-level skills through purposeful practice in sentence expansion and combining, and morphology instruction builds students' understanding of prefixes, suffixes, and root words as transferable tools for reading and spelling complex, multisyllabic words. Daily independent and small group reading and writing activities provide additional opportunities for purposeful, skill-specific practice across all grade levels.

Retrieval practice—which requires students to independently call targeted skills and knowledge to mind from memory, without prompts or cues—is systematically incorporated throughout the program's design, recognizing that the act of retrieving information itself strengthens and boosts learning over time. Skills Strand lessons begin with a dedicated Warm-Up section requiring students to retrieve previously learned sound-spellings from memory, while K–2 Knowledge domains feature "Core Connections" and "Where Are We Now?" segments in which students actively recall related concepts from prior learning. In Grades 3–5 Integrated Units, students continuously recall and apply previously learned concepts, such as grammar and language skills, across lessons and units. The program's coherent knowledge domain sequence provides an additional and powerful vehicle for retrieval practice, as students who have built background knowledge and vocabulary within a domain are regularly required to draw on that prior learning when engaging with new texts and concepts. Within units, students retrieve and apply domain-specific and academic vocabulary across multiple lessons and weeks, while the systematic progression of

knowledge domains across grade levels ensures that students revisit and build upon previously learned content over time. This cross-unit and cross-grade retrieval of knowledge and vocabulary not only deepens conceptual understanding but also strengthens long-term retention, as students repeatedly activate and extend their growing networks of word and world knowledge in service of reading, writing, and discussion tasks.

Usability: The materials are confusing and/or difficult to manage and use in a classroom setting.	2

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition materials are specifically designed for classroom usability, with comprehensive organizational features, digital resources, and user-friendly supports that facilitate efficient teaching and learning. These comprehensive design features support classroom implementation, helping teachers deliver research-based instruction, monitor learning, and support student growth.

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition Teacher Guides feature intuitive organization with unit introductions, detailed lesson plans with embedded teacher language, scaffolding supports, and Checks for Understanding to inform instructional adjustments and assessments. Organizational features, including tables of contents, glossaries, appendices, and internal lesson structures, are consistent across all units and grade levels. Appendices provide detailed information about the program's origins and pedagogical approach.

Each lesson contains clear and consistent structural supports, including Lesson at a Glance Charts that provide an overview of components, grouping recommendations, time stamps, and required materials; Primary Focus Objectives that clearly identify the main purpose of each activity; and Advance Preparation sections that outline necessary teacher preparation and Universal Access recommendations. Formative Assessments aligned to grade-level standards are highlighted at the start of each lesson for clear alignment. All required ancillary materials are clearly identified with

visual icons and embedded notes within lesson plans, enabling teachers to quickly locate and integrate supporting resources.

Amplify CKLA's digital platform, on Amplify Classroom, provides organized access to all program components through a user-friendly interface, including customizable Teacher Presentation Screens, digital assessments for streamlined progress monitoring, and data analysis tools. The platform houses additional planning resources, including K–2 and 3–5 Implementation Guides (login required), Curriculum Maps, Pacing Guides, Master Supply Lists, Scope and Sequences, and the Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition PD Library (login required).

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

1.12: Phoneme awareness is not assessed and monitored (e.g., a student's ability to identify the initial, final, and medial phonemes in a word).	2

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition assesses and monitors phoneme awareness through a systematic approach that includes informal observations within instruction, observational records, and formative and summative assessments. Together, these methods give teachers multiple opportunities to evaluate and monitor students' developing awareness of individual phonemes, including their ability to identify initial, medial, and final sounds in words. Targeted reteaching instruction is included for students who need more practice with phonemes.

Daily instruction in the K–2 Skills Strand includes listening activities in which students identify whether words contain specific sounds in the middle position, and sound box activities in which students use manipulatives to determine whether target sounds appear at the beginning, middle, or end of words. Daily warm-up activities provide ongoing monitoring opportunities through oral blending and segmenting practice. As students blend and segment single-syllable words, teachers

record individual performance in the Oral Blending and Segmenting Observation Record, enabling daily progress monitoring and timely instructional adjustments.

Amplify CKLA integrates phonemic awareness with phonics instruction from the earliest stages of Kindergarten, recognizing that these skills develop more effectively together through systematic knowledge of the alphabetic system. Instructional activities such as blending, segmenting, and chaining simultaneously build students' sound manipulation abilities while reinforcing letter-sound relationships. As a result, phonics assessments inherently measure phonemic awareness, considering successful decoding depends on the same sound manipulation skills that form its foundation.

Formal assessments build on this foundation by targeting phoneme isolation skills more explicitly, assessing students' ability to blend individual sounds in words and isolate initial and medial short vowel sounds in spoken words.

Within core instruction, formative assessments and observational records allow teachers to monitor the development of phonological and phonemic awareness and adjust instruction as needed. Teachers are guided to analyze error patterns in both formal and informal assessments, and can draw on the digital Assessment and Remediation Guides or Intervention Toolkit for additional practice activities. Targeted reteaching opportunities include Circle Spelling activities, Push and Say activities using manipulatives to segment phonemes, and Simon Says activities in which students blend individual phonemes through kinesthetic movement. Additional Support sections at the end of each K–2 Skills lesson provide further practice and progress monitoring opportunities.

For systematic screening and progress monitoring, Amplify recommends universal screening through mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition, which aligns with Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) models and is validated to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. This comprehensive assessment framework ensures continuous monitoring of phonemic awareness development and provides multiple entry points for targeted intervention when students demonstrate difficulty

with these foundational skills. More information on Amplify CKLA's early literacy suite can be found here.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

1.25: There are few opportunities provided for word-level decoding practice of new phonics patterns and interleaving practice for prior phonics patterns.	2

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition provides structured opportunities for word-level decoding practice of both new phonics patterns and previously learned patterns through multiple daily instructional routines designed to build accuracy and automaticity with the alphabetic code.

Word-level decoding practice for new phonics patterns is embedded throughout Skills Strand lessons through concentrated activities, including word-level reading, word sorting, and encoding. Chaining activities provide systematic practice where students manipulate sounds within words to decode new words. For example, when teaching /oo/, students work through a chain such as crook > brook > book > look > took > cook > hook > hood > wood, applying the newly taught pattern in a progressive sequence of related words.

Interleaving practice with previously learned phonics patterns occurs alongside instruction in new patterns. Daily Warm-Up activities consistently review previously taught letter-sound correspondences before introducing new content, beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through Grade 3. Teachers review Large Letter Cards and previously taught spellings to support retention of prior learning. Mixed chaining activities further reinforce interleaving by combining new and previously learned patterns within a single activity. For example, the chain chap > map > man > than > then > them > hem > hen > pen requires students to apply multiple phonics skills simultaneously. Additional cumulative review opportunities occur through games and activities such as Homophone Matchmaker, Wiggle Cards, and mixed review activities.

Decodable texts extend word-level practice into connected reading contexts by incorporating both newly taught and previously learned phonics patterns. Within each lesson, students first practice targeted patterns at the word level before applying them in decodable text, ensuring they have the necessary foundation before reading in context. Because each decodable text includes previously learned sound-spelling correspondences alongside new patterns, students have regular opportunities for interleaved practice in authentic reading contexts through whole group, small group, partner, and independent reading activities.

1D: Fluency

1.42: Fluency instruction focuses primarily on student silent reading.	2
1.43: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student's ability to read words quickly.	2
1.44: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	4

Amplify Response

Reading fluency is essential for comprehension, as it enables readers to focus on making meaning of text rather than simply decoding it. Fluency involves three key elements: accuracy, which reflects decoding proficiency; rate, which represents automatic word recognition; and prosody, which involves the use of intonation, stress, and rhythm to demonstrate nuanced understanding of a text's meaning and emotion.

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition is built on the premise that reading fluently requires automaticity in decoding, recognizing that students who cannot decode quickly, accurately, and automatically will experience difficulty comprehending what they read. The program provides comprehensive fluency instruction with a daily focus on all three elements—accuracy, rate, and prosody—through explicit sound-spelling

instruction, word-level reading, decodable reading practice, oral syntax practice, and explicit attention to expression.

In Amplify CKLA, accuracy is developed through a carefully sequenced approach to the English code, beginning with the most common or least ambiguous spelling for each sound before introducing alternative spellings. Word-level accuracy practice begins in Kindergarten through specific instructional routines designed to build fluency from phoneme-grapheme connections to whole-word recognition, including Pocket Chart Chaining, Individual Chaining, Word Box activities, Wiggle Cards, Tricky Words, and Introduce the Spellings activities. Each Skills lesson includes daily concentrated practice in writing, spelling, word-level reading, and word sorting using newly taught sound-spelling patterns, building the foundation for accurate word recognition.

Reading rate develops as students become more confident and demonstrate consistent accuracy with specific spelling patterns. Instruction includes repeated reading activities, and teachers can monitor rate through timed practice opportunities. Frequent rereading activities throughout the program help students improve fluency by building automaticity, and in Grades 3–5, a structured five-day routine with instructional texts systematically develops reading rate alongside accuracy. This deliberate progression from accuracy to automaticity ensures students develop efficient word recognition, freeing cognitive resources for comprehension rather than word-level decoding.

Prosody is developed through structured practice embedded throughout daily instruction across all grade levels. Teacher-led Read-Alouds serve as the foundation for prosody development, providing students with consistent modeling of appropriate phrasing, stress, intonation, and rate across a variety of text types. During these modeling sessions, teachers demonstrate how to adjust pace, use expression to convey character emotions or emphasize important information, and employ strategic pausing to support comprehension, helping students internalize the characteristics of fluent, meaningful reading. Additional fluency routines, including partner reading and choral reading, offer varied opportunities for students to

practice and refine prosodic features in collaborative contexts. Partner reading provides immediate peer feedback, while choral reading offers a supportive environment for less confident readers to practice alongside their peers.

2C: Vocabulary

2.9: Tier 2 words are not taught explicitly and practiced; students are not given opportunities to use them in their speech, see them in print, and use them in writing.	2

Amplify Response

A key objective of Amplify CKLA is to systematically build students' knowledge while providing structured exposure to and instruction in both academic and domain-specific vocabulary, enabling students to grow as confident readers and writers across grade levels. Unlike theme-based units that loosely connect topics, Amplify CKLA organizes content into coherent domains with shared vocabulary, supporting vocabulary acquisition by introducing students to networks of related words that facilitate connections and inferences. By repeatedly engaging with core vocabulary and concepts in these domains, students deepen their understanding of subject matter and develop both the breadth and depth of their word knowledge over time.

Amplify CKLA develops academic vocabulary through domain-based units during which students engage deeply with content across history, geography, science, culture, and the arts. The program takes a depth-oriented approach using a three-tier vocabulary framework. Tier 2 words, which appear across disciplines and in directions, assessments, and discussions, are intentionally targeted within each unit and used consistently throughout instruction in reading, writing, grammar, morphology, and spelling.

In the K–2 Knowledge Strand, explicit vocabulary instruction occurs through daily Word Work activities—short, focused segments that address academic words, multiple-meaning words, idiomatic expressions, and complex vocabulary. Delivered immediately following Read-Alouds, Word Work allows students to practice newly

learned vocabulary through structured activities such as using target words in oral sentences, identifying synonyms and antonyms, and connecting vocabulary to personal experience. Vocabulary instruction is also embedded before, during, and after interactive Read-Alouds, with core vocabulary words introduced before reading, highlighted in context during reading, and reinforced through post-reading discussions and written practice activities.

As Amplify CKLA extends into Grades 3–5, students' developing background knowledge allows them to interact with new content in increasingly complex contexts. Vocabulary learning at this level occurs through two primary pathways. First, students acquire vocabulary implicitly through sustained engagement with rich, complex texts, building networks of related words within meaningful content contexts. Second, students are explicitly taught word-learning strategies, such as using context clues to independently determine the meaning of unknown words. Instruction within units also regularly incorporates multiple-meaning words, figurative language, and idioms, helping students grasp the flexibility and nuance of language.

For additional vocabulary practice, Amplify CKLA includes a digital Vocab App that allows students to engage with Tier 2 academic words drawn directly from program domains in Grades 3–5. Rather than emphasizing memorization of isolated definitions, the Vocab App engages students in academically rigorous, game-based activities that require them to interpret and apply vocabulary within meaningful contexts, supporting deeper comprehension and long-term word mastery. More information on the Vocab App can be found here.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

2.27: Inferencing strategies are not taught explicitly and may be based only on picture clues (i.e., picture walking), and not connecting them to background knowledge and instructional texts.	3
2.28: Students do not practice inferencing as a discrete skill.	2

Amplify Response

Research on text comprehension indicates that skilled readers employ both implicit and explicit strategies—drawing on background knowledge to form inferences, make predictions, and establish connections within and across texts. Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition treats comprehension strategies, including inference-making, as tools for knowledge-building rather than isolated skills to be practiced independently. By organizing instruction around coherent knowledge domains, the program ensures that students develop the background knowledge necessary to engage analytically with texts.

In K–2 Knowledge domains, students study topics for approximately two to three weeks, building vocabulary and knowledge they can draw upon when making predictions, monitoring known versus unknown information, and making gap-filling inferences. Teachers guide students' use of this knowledge through questions and discussions before, during, and after Read-Alouds. In Grades 3–5, students make increasingly complex connections based on their accumulated knowledge and growing experience with diverse text types. This approach embeds comprehension strategy instruction within a knowledge-focused context that reflects research on how comprehension develops among skilled readers.

Text-dependent questions are woven throughout daily instruction in three categories that scaffold increasingly complex thinking. Literal questions assess students' recall of key details, requiring them to paraphrase or refer back to specific text passages. Inferential questions ask students to draw conclusions from the text, requiring them to summarize and reference the portions of text that support their inferences. Evaluative questions ask students to build on their learning through

analytical thinking, forming opinions, and citing textual evidence to substantiate their reasoning.

Amplify CKLA explicitly defines and teaches inference strategies to support text comprehension. Students are taught that making an inference involves using what they already know about a topic, combined with what the text states, to figure out information not explicitly stated. Teachers model inference-making through Think-Alouds during reading, demonstrating how textual information combined with reasoning leads to specific conclusions. Lessons focus on practicing inference skills, with teacher modeling followed by guided and independent student practice. Students analyze characters' actions, thoughts, and dialogue to infer motivations and traits, and evaluate peers' inferences using structured feedback stems grounded in textual evidence. This systematic approach ensures that inferencing is taught within the content of the text and draws on students' developing knowledge.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

2.34: Genre types and text structures (e.g., cause and effect, problem and solution, sequence, compare and contrast) are not used to understand the purpose of what is being read.	3
2.35: Specific text structures and corresponding signal words are not explicitly taught and practiced.	3

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition takes a systematic approach to teaching genre, text structure, and signal words, building students' awareness of how authors organize information to support both reading comprehension and writing composition. These skills develop progressively across grade levels and are reinforced through connected reading and writing instruction.

Students are explicitly taught that authors write for specific purposes—to persuade, inform, or entertain—and that understanding these purposes helps readers

approach texts strategically. Instruction distinguishes between fiction and nonfiction, and introduces students to specific genres such as fables, myths, personal narratives, informational essays, and how-to texts, each with distinct organizational features and purposes. As students progress through each grade level, they encounter increasingly complex texts that require more sophisticated analysis of genre and structure.

Text structure instruction builds systematically from foundational concepts in early grades to complex analysis in upper grades. Students use graphic organizers that explicitly outline how authors organize information and identify signal words associated with each structure. Sequence structure is signaled by words such as *first*, *next*, *then*, *after*, and *finally*. Comparison structure uses clue words and phrases such as “on the other hand,” *however, unlike*, and *similarly*. Cause-and-effect structure is identified through conjunctions such as *so* and *because*, with students learning that "cause" is the reason something happened, whereas "effect" describes the result. Problem-and-solution structure is taught within narrative contexts, where students use story maps to identify central problems, outline event sequences, and describe resolutions. During Read-Alouds, students actively listen for signal words and analyze how authors structure their writing, developing metacognitive awareness of how structural choices affect meaning and comprehension.

Signal words and text structures are reinforced through active application in writing instruction. Students incorporate temporal words and transition phrases into sentence-combining exercises, graphic organizers, and writing drafts. In narrative and informative writing, students use words like *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally* to show chronological order, and words like *similar*, *both*, *however*, and *unlike* to draft comparative sentences. In opinion and informative writing, students use linking words and phrases such as “for example,” “another reason,” “in conclusion,” and *additionally* to connect ideas and ensure logical flow. In some units, students choose their own text structure and incorporate appropriate signal words to organize their writing, demonstrating flexible and purposeful application of these skills.

Exposure to a wide range of texts across varied structures and genres further develops students' ability to identify, analyze, and respond to different organizational patterns. This dual focus on reading and writing ensures that students not only recognize how authors structure texts but also apply those structural choices purposefully in their own composition, strengthening both comprehension and critical thinking across grade levels.

Section 3: Reading Comprehension

3.1: Comprehension strategies such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, noting text structure, inferencing, and fix-ups are not taught and practiced throughout the year using a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do) using appropriate instructional text that students can accurately decode.	2
3.5: Students are not taught methods to monitor their comprehension while reading.	3

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition approaches reading comprehension not as an isolated set of strategies to be practiced independently, but as the natural outcome of building the knowledge, vocabulary, and word recognition and syntactic skills students need to engage meaningfully with complex texts. This distinction is central to the program's design. Research indicates that efficient word reading, robust vocabulary, and background knowledge are prerequisite conditions for comprehension; without these foundations, strategy instruction alone has limited impact. When students possess these foundations, comprehension strategies such as summarizing, inferencing, and identifying main ideas become meaningful tools for deeper engagement with texts rather than ends in themselves.

Knowledge-building serves as the cornerstone of Amplify CKLA's approach to comprehension. Cognitive science indicates that prior knowledge both facilitates the intake of new information and supports retention, and that the strongest predictor of whether a reader will comprehend a text is prior familiarity with its content. By organizing instruction around coherent knowledge domains studied over

approximately two to three weeks, Amplify CKLA instruction provides the background knowledge and vocabulary necessary for students to comprehend and analyze texts at increasing levels of complexity. Comprehension strategies are taught explicitly within these knowledge-rich contexts, serving as tools that help students access, extend, and consolidate their growing understanding.

Text-dependent questioning is one vehicle through which Amplify CKLA develops comprehension. Questions are sequenced across three levels of cognitive demand. Literal questions assess students' recall of key details, requiring them to paraphrase or refer directly to the text. Inferential questions ask students to draw conclusions by synthesizing information from multiple parts of the text. Evaluative questions require students to apply analytical thinking, form opinions, and cite textual evidence to support their reasoning. This questioning framework is consistent across grade levels, with text complexity and cognitive demand increasing as students progress.

Close reading is another systematic structure used to deepen comprehension. Following partner or independent reading, teachers lead students through text-dependent questioning, discussion of academic vocabulary, analysis of complex syntax or challenging transitions, and a culminating writing activity. This structure provides students with repeated, purposeful opportunities to return to the text, examine it carefully, and articulate their understanding in both oral and written forms.

Summarization and self-monitoring are taught explicitly as comprehension tools rather than isolated strategies. Students learn that a summary captures only the most important information and omits unnecessary detail. Self-monitoring is introduced as the practice of pausing during reading to check understanding, retell key information, and reread when meaning breaks down. Teachers model this process explicitly, demonstrating how to assess one's own comprehension and use rereading as a strategy for clarification. This metacognitive instruction helps students develop awareness of their own reading processes and builds the habits of mind necessary for independent comprehension.

Amplify CKLA's approach reflects research indicating that background knowledge and comprehension strategies are not competing priorities but complementary ones. Background knowledge provides the foundation upon which strategies operate, while strategies help students engage more deeply with content and acquire further knowledge. Even when background knowledge is secure, some students benefit from additional explicit support in applying that knowledge strategically during reading. Amplify CKLA addresses this through structured questioning, teacher modeling, sentence supports, and guided practice that help students identify and apply relevant knowledge to support their comprehension of specific texts.

Section 4B: Writing - Spelling

4.5: There is no evidence of explicit spelling instruction, no spelling scope and sequence, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics/decoding scope and sequence.	2
4.7: Patterns in decoding are not featured in encoding/spelling; spelling lists are based on content or frequency of word use and not connected to decoding/phonics lessons.	2

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition takes an approach to spelling instruction that goes beyond traditional spelling tests, teaching encoding directly connected to the phonics scope and sequence. Reading (decoding) and writing (encoding) are taught as inverse processes, with students never required to spell words that go beyond the letter-sound correspondences they have already been taught for decoding. This systematic alignment ensures that patterns introduced in decoding instruction are immediately reinforced through encoding and spelling practice.

Explicit spelling instruction begins in Grade 1, providing a systematic review of the exact letter-sound correspondences students have recently learned to decode. The program deliberately structures instruction this way because spelling achievement generally trails reading achievement—students must first learn to decode spelling

alternatives in print before selecting correct spelling patterns in their own writing. Amplify CKLA explicitly teaches students that spelling involves breaking a word into its individual sounds and writing a spelling for each sound, mirroring the decoding process in reverse. Dictation exercises require students to spell words immediately following decoding practice using the same learned sound-spelling patterns, reinforcing both processes simultaneously.

Students practice transferring decoding knowledge to spelling through several structured instructional routines. Chaining for Spelling activities require students to encode words by arranging letter cards and changing one sound or spelling at a time. Word Sort activities help students practice encoding when learning that single sounds have multiple spelling patterns, sorting written words into columns based on specific patterns. Spelling Trees provide visual reinforcement by having students categorize decodable words onto correct spelling branches, illustrating frequency patterns for specific sounds. Weekly spelling lists consist entirely of sound-spelling correspondences already taught for decoding, with the addition of select Tricky Words, ensuring that students can segment and blend every word on their list. When students learn to decode a new pattern during reading instruction, their weekly spelling list immediately requires them to encode words using those exact patterns, providing direct and consistent reinforcement of current phonics content.

The K–2 Skills Strand provides explicit instruction on all 44 distinct sounds of English and the more than 150 spelling patterns that represent them. Instruction begins with the most common and reliable spelling patterns in Kindergarten and gradually introduces more complex orthographic representations, including vowel teams, silent letters, and morphological elements. Throughout the program, students also learn to spell morphological patterns such as prefixes, suffixes, and root or base words, developing an understanding of how meaningful units combine to form complex words and how spelling may change when morphemes are added—such as doubling consonants or dropping a silent 'e.' Spelling rules for morphological patterns are taught explicitly, including inflectional endings such as *–ed* and *–ing*, derivational suffixes such as *–tion* and *–ment*, and the principle that base words maintain their spelling when affixes are added. Students apply these patterns

through dictation exercises, word sorts, and writing activities that require them to encode words using the letter-sound correspondences and morphological knowledge they have been taught.

Section 4C: Writing - Composition

4.15: Writing tasks and prompts are provided with minimal instruction for the skills needed to complete them and little time for planning prior to writing.	2
4.17: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure are not explicitly taught, and opportunities for practice to develop automaticity are not provided; instead, they are addressed opportunistically.	2

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition incorporates comprehensive writing instruction emphasizing explicit skill instruction, teacher modeling, structured planning, and supported practice across all grade levels. Writing instruction is integrated with reading throughout both the Skills and Knowledge Strands in K–2 and all Grades 3–5 Integrated Units, with students writing multiple texts in each major text type. Projects range from daily writing and text responses to extended formal pieces developed across multiple lessons, ensuring that students engage with writing as a recursive, purposeful process.

Writing instruction begins in the earliest grades through shared writing experiences in which teachers model how to organize ideas, construct sentences, and revise text while students contribute content and observe the thinking process behind effective writing. These sessions connect to the Knowledge domains students explore through Read-Alouds and texts, providing meaningful topics and relevant vocabulary as students compose narratives, informational texts, and opinion pieces. As students progress, instruction moves from shared and modeled writing to guided and independent practice.

Amplify CKLA introduces a structured writing process beginning in Grade 1 with three foundational steps: planning, drafting, and editing. As students progress,

instruction expands to include a clear distinction between revising—making changes to content and organization—and editing, which focuses on correcting grammar, punctuation, and spelling. In Grades 3–5, students practice a fuller process that includes planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, and editing, moving among these components flexibly as experienced writers do. Planning is embedded within unit content through graphic organizers, story maps, 5Ws charts, T-charts, and genre-specific templates, with lessons scaffolding progression from oral discussion to collaborative and then independent writing.

Each unit includes one formal writing piece constructed over several lessons, in which students synthesize concepts from unit texts to compose opinion, informative/explanatory, or narrative writing. Building block experiences—including pre-writing activities, note-taking, and sentence or paragraph writing—occur earlier in each unit, with students bringing this work together in their final piece. Visual supports, such as the Elements of an Informative Paragraph Poster and text structure clue word references, help students understand paragraph and text structure, while genre-specific frameworks and planning templates support students at all levels.

Grammar, conventions, and sentence structure are taught explicitly within meaningful contexts as integral components of the reading and writing process. Syntactic awareness activities are woven throughout the curriculum to help students understand the direct connection between grammatical structures and meaning, always grounded in the complex texts presented in Read-Alouds. Dedicated grammar lesson segments provide direct instruction in concepts, including subjects and predicates, sentence combining, clauses, conjunctions, and prepositions, with teachers modeling concepts using sentences drawn from unit texts. Students learn that varying sentence structure, combining sentences, and using linking words such as *also*, *so*, *and*, *but*, and *because* can improve the clarity and flow of their writing.

Writing building block activities develop students' understanding of sentence types, expansion, and combining, beginning with simple two-word sentences in Kindergarten and progressing to complex sentence construction across grade levels.

Instruction begins orally in Kindergarten and advances to written application in upper grades, where students compose declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in content-specific contexts. Conventions are reinforced throughout the editing process, with teachers modeling application of grammar skills and students practicing in pairs before working independently. Daily warm-ups and syntactic awareness activities provide consistent practice that builds automaticity with grammatical concepts over time.

Please review the Amplify CKLA Writing Approach and Progression document for additional information.

Section 5: Assessment

5.9: Phoneme awareness is not assessed	2
5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	4

Amplify Response

Amplify CKLA 3rd Edition provides a systematic approach to assessing phonemic awareness through continuous observation, formal assessments, and structured remediation pathways that support teachers in monitoring student progress and responding to identified needs.

Phonemic awareness assessment begins in the earliest Kindergarten units through daily blending and segmenting routines, with teachers using observation records to track individual student progress. As students practice orally blending and segmenting single-syllable words with up to four phonemes, teachers record performance in Oral Blending and Segmenting Observation Records, generating regular data points throughout each unit. Assessment methods include concrete approaches such as Sound Boxes, where students push objects into boxes for each phoneme and then blend the word, and finger tapping, where students wiggle

individual fingers for each sound in a word. These embedded routines ensure that phonemic awareness is monitored consistently within the flow of daily instruction.

Formal phonemic awareness assessments are administered at regular intervals with developmentally appropriate expectations. In Kindergarten, students are assessed on their ability to orally segment up to five sounds in single-syllable words, with scoring rubrics that identify students requiring additional reteaching. By Grade 1, assessments advance to segmenting and blending two-syllable words with up to six or seven phonemes. As instruction progresses, phonemic awareness continues to be assessed through phonics activities, reflecting the program's understanding that these skills develop most effectively together. Because decoding depends on the same sound manipulation abilities that underlie phonemic awareness, phonics assessments inherently measure phonemic awareness development as well.

Following assessment, Amplify CKLA provides structured remediation pathways for students performing below expectations. Targeted support is available through Additional Support activities at the end of lessons and Pausing Point sections that address specific skill gaps, such as blending syllables, oral blending, and listening for beginning sounds. Teachers can also access activities from the digital Assessment and Remediation Guides and Intervention Toolkit, while the Instructional Guidance and Corrective Feedback Toolkit provides specific corrective feedback suggestions for common phonological awareness difficulties.

For systematic screening and progress monitoring beyond the core program, Amplify recommends universal screening through mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition, which aligns with Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) models and is validated to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. For multilingual Spanish-speaking learners, Amplify provides universal and dyslexia screening in Spanish through mCLASS Lectura, which offers full parity between English and Spanish assessment, cross-linguistic transfer guidance, and authentic measures of Spanish literacy rather than a direct translation. Amplify also offers Amplify Caminos, a Spanish literacy program that pairs with Amplify CKLA and supports a variety of dual language instructional models.

More information on mCLASS Lectura, Amplify Caminos, and Amplify's biliteracy suite can be found here.