THE READING LEAGUE

Curriculum Navigation Report

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's (HMH) Into Reading Curriculum 2023

HMH

2024 Publication
Reviewed with Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (2nd Edition, 2023)

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 (LEAs), and state education agencies (SEAs) as a primary tool to find evidence of red flags or practices that may interfere with the development of skilled reading. This report was generated after a review of the curriculum using the March 2023 *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines*, which have been refined based on feedback, a lengthy pilot review, and an inter-rater reliability study.

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. Expert review teams engaged in a large-scale review of the most widely-used curricula in the United States in order to develop these Curriculum Navigation Reports.

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 curriculum decision makers to support their efforts in selecting, using, and refining instructional materials to ensure they align with findings from 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 following pages feature the review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's (HMH) Into Reading Curriculum 2023. This curriculum is built around evidence-based elements of literacy instruction, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, language, and knowledge building. Additionally, the program features research-driven scaffolds and support for multilingual learners.

For this report, reviewers closely examined the HMH's Into Reading Curriculum for Grades K–5. For specifics connected to word recognition, reviewers utilized the program's teacher guides, Start Right Readers, and in Grades K–1, the Big Book sets, which are used for shared reading and application of targeted skills, for gathering evidence. For language comprehension, the team appraised the general lesson directions included within the teacher guides as well as reviewed authentic texts designated for teacher read alouds, and the *Bookstix* and *Teaching PAL* resources. 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 and report their findings.

For their review, each group member used The Reading League's *Curriculum Reviewer Workbook* to capture scores and evidence for their decisions. Once they determined which section and grade level of the *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines* to review, they individually conducted a review of that section for red flags. Individuals then looked for evidence of red flags within the curriculum materials, including scope and sequences, modules/units, and lessons, as well as any ancillary Tier 1 curriculum materials (e.g., assessment documents). As each component was reviewed, individual reviewers also noted the extent to which a red flag statement was "true" and selected the appropriate rating in the *Reviewer Workbook* as outlined below:



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.

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.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING WORD RECOGNITION

1A: Word Recognition Non-Negotiables

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

WORD RECOGNITION NON-NEGOTIABLES	SCORE
1.1: Three cueing-systems are taught as strategies 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).	2
1.2: Guidance to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	4
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

HMH's Into Reading word recognition non-negotiables are **"somewhat met."** Regarding the curriculum's strengths, the team noted that the program does provide educators with a scope and sequence of skills. Additionally, the practice of previously introduced skills is integrated into the Blend and Read slides. Here students are provided with rows of words to read: rows 1–2 include words with the new skill focus, and rows 3–4 were "review." These words feature skills that were the focus of prior lessons, encouraging student retention of previously taught concepts. Each grade level's scope and sequence includes a comprehensive review of the key content from the previous grade level. However, the team noted that the amount of review and reteaching notably slows the introduction of new content and necessitates much faster pacing when more complex, grade-appropriate skills are introduced later in the year.

The team did observe minimal evidence of context clues used to determine word meaning within the weekly fluency components. These activities address multiple skills connected to fluent reading, including expression, phrasing, intonation, accuracy, and self-correction. The accuracy and self-correction lessons (in Modules 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 & 12) all direct students to focus on context clues and include prompting learners to monitor their reading accuracy by asking, "Does that sound right?" Furthermore, reviewers noted that HMH's Into Reading occasionally directs students to check picture clues, versus graphemes, to self-correct. For example, in Grade 1, Module 7, Lesson 13, the teacher is prompted to model context use by following the provided script:

"Big fines help whales go this way and then that way. Does that sound right? No, the word fines doesn't make sense in that sentence. I'll look at the photo to see if there are any clues. I see whales with fins. The word is fins, not fines. I'll try again" (pg. 157).

The teacher is also provided with directions to "...coach children to use context and visuals to confirm or self-correct their wording" as they circulate and support students.

Similar instances of context use to determine unknown word meanings were noted in Grades 2 and 3. However, the team did note that this is not the only guidance provided. For example, in kindergarten lessons with decodable text, students (and teachers) are prompted to check the letters and sounds to self-correct. For example, in Grade K, Module 5, Lesson 9, teachers are prompted in the "correct and direct" note to:

"If a child misreads a word with a consonant y, point out the /y/ sound. Then have the student repeat the word and the sentence again. You said "jacks". What letter do you see? (y) What sound? (/y/) What word? (/yaks/). Reread the sentence" (p. 124–125).

The most problematic area noted by reviewers was widespread evidence emphasizing the memorization of high-frequency words (HFW). In Grades K–2, new HFWs, entitled Words to Know, are introduced each week. The introductory routine for HFWs is: See the word; Say the word; Spell the word; Write and check the word. Attention to spelling here can help students correlate sounds and letters; however, explicit attention to the sounds in words is omitted, and direct instruction and practice in identifying relationships between phonemes and graphemes is not included. Specific examples of this were noted in Grade K, Module 6, Lesson 1, (p. 33) and in Grade 1, Module 2, Lesson 1 (p. 202).

In kindergarten, HFW words are introduced on the first day of a five-lesson series and practiced again on the third lesson in an activity entitled, Build Automaticity: Speed Read, in which words are displayed in a chart. Directions to teachers state:

"Review this week's words by pointing to each word on the word wall, saying the word, and asking children to read and spell the word...If a child says the incorrect word or does not know the word, say the word and have everyone repeat it."

In Grades 1 & 2, HFW words are also introduced on the first day using the method described previously and then practiced and reviewed using a variety of routines and/or games that require students to read, spell, or match words. This includes activities like *Odd One Out* (Go Fish), *Word Match* (Memory), *Eruption* (whisper read, then act out), *Around the World* (reading words around a circle), and so forth. There are minimal opportunities to examine the sounds or the sound-spelling relationships in featured high-frequency words. Moreover, there is no discussion of regular versus irregular word parts. Later, in first grade, some high-frequency words are discussed as "decodable," but the non-decodable or irregular word parts are never examined. Then, in grades 3 and up, the high-frequency word routine does not attend to sound/symbol correspondences. For example, in Grade 3, Teacher's Guide Volume 1 (pg T24), the alternate activity, *Know it Show it*, asks students to, "Learn these words. You will see them in your reading and use them in your writing... Write a word from the box to complete each sentence." Students are not reminded to use what they know about the word to read or write them. Teachers are also instructed to remind learners that "Students can learn to recognize them [HFW], rather than decode them."

It is important to note that reviewers specified that some of the red flags in this section were improved upon in the curriculum's new structured literacy strand, which was released in the summer of 2023. At the time of this review, the lessons were only available to print from the manufacturer's website, but starting in 2024–2025, manuals will be available for purchase. However, as of this report, districts can choose whether they will implement the original foundational skills strand or the new structured literacy strand. In the structured literacy lessons, high-frequency words are taught with explicit attention to sound-symbol correspondences. There are different routines for high-frequency words versus heart words, or irregular words. The heart words routine includes the following steps: "Listen to the word and a sentence with the word; Tap and count the sounds; Say the sounds; Identify the irregular part; Spell the word; Spell the word again; Spell and write the word."

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS	SCORE
1.7: Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) without moving to the phoneme level (e.g., blends such as /t/ /r/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds).	2
1.8: Instruction is focused on letters only without explicit instruction and practice with the phonemes that letters represent.	1
1.9: Phoneme awareness is not taught as a foundational reading skill.	1
1.10: Phonological and phoneme awareness is not assessed or monitored.	1

HMH's Into Reading phonological and phoneme awareness practices are **"mostly met."** The team observed phonological awareness practice without the use of letters. The curriculum includes phoneme-level practice and prompts students to notice the individual sounds of blends; however, there is continued phonological awareness instruction.

The K-2 curriculum includes daily phonological practice, but the skills spiral with varying focuses from lesson to lesson. The emphasis appears to be exposure rather than mastery, as skills are not consistently structured to build from simple to more complex; rather, they are intermixed throughout. For example, in Grade K, Module 7, phonological awareness skills follow the progression below:

- rhyme (L1–2)
- segment phonemes (L3–4)
- rhyming and segmenting (L5)
- blend phonemes (L6–7)
- segment phonemes (L8–9)
- blending and segmenting (L10)
- isolate initial phoneme (L11–12)
- segment phonemes (L13–14)
- isolating & segmenting phonemes (L15)
- blend phonemes (L16–17), rhyme (L18–19)
- blending & rhyme (L20)

Although phonemes are a focus in Grades 1 & 2, work with syllables is still woven throughout modules. Additionally, as stated above, blends are taught as individual sounds. For example, in Grade K, Module 6, Lesson 13 (p. 172), students are taught to segment words into phonemes like in "land" (/l/ /a/ /n/ /d/) and in Grade 1, Module 7, Lesson 2 (p. 35) where they blend phonemes in the word "black" (/b/ /l/ /a/ /k/).

Finally, concerning assessment, both informal and formal checks are built into Grades K–1. In Grade K, weekly lessons include a "review" lesson that is intended for teachers to observe student performance with a set of target skills.

Teachers are provided with guidance on what to do if students demonstrate difficulty with a skill. For example, Grade K, Module 5, Lesson 10 (p. 132) states: *"If children have difficulty blending phonemes, use snap cubes to represent sounds. Place a cube on the table as you say each sound in a word. Then touch each cube as you blend the sounds, pushing them together to say the word."*

Although teachers are not explicitly directed to monitor or collect anecdotal data on student performance, this aspect of the guide suggests that teachers are supposed to be monitoring and supporting students' PA progress.

Worksheet activities are also included and provide opportunities for whole-group check-ins around skills. Two examples include *Blend Syllables into Words* (Grade K, Module 2, Lesson 17) and *Break Apart Words* (Grade K, Module 5, Lesson 19). These activities are not consistent, however, with only one or two designated per module. Then, in Grade 1, every fifth lesson includes a set of teacher's choice review activities with the directions, "Use the following examples to gauge which skills need reinforcement." The foundational skills materials also include end-of-module inventories in Grades K–1, featuring a 1:1 phonological awareness measure. While PA assessment is not incorporated in the weekly and/or module assessments in Grades 2 and up, it is a component of the screening and diagnostic tool provided. A full PA inventory is included in the diagnostic assessment provided for intervention.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS	SCORE
1.15: Letter-sound correspondences are taught opportunistically or implicitly during text reading.	1
1.16: Instruction is typically "one and done;" phonics skills are introduced but with very little or short-term review.	2
1.17: Key words for letter/sound correspondences are not aligned with the pure phoneme being taught (e.g., earth for /ĕ/, ant for /ă/, orange for /ŏ/).	3
1.18: Phonics instruction takes place in short (or optional) "mini-lessons" or "word work" sessions.	1
1.19: 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
1.20: Blending is not explicitly taught nor practiced.	1
1.21: 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.	2
1.22: Words with known sound-symbol correspondences, including high frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as stand-alone "sight words" to be memorized.	2
1.23: Few opportunities for word-level decoding practice are provided.	2
1.24: 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.	2
1.25: Advanced word study (Grades 2–5) Instruction in phonics ends once single syllable phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCe) are taught.	1
1.26: Advanced word study (Grades 2–5) No instruction in multisyllabic word decoding strategies and/or using morphology to support word recognition is evident.	1

HMH's Into Reading phonics and phonic decoding practices are **"mostly met."** The team found that letter-sound correspondences are explicitly taught within the foundational skills strand. In kindergarten, typically, two new consonant sound-spelling patterns are introduced weekly. These patterns are then strategically applied to both word and text reading through the use of *Blend and Read* activities and the *Start Right Readers*, which feature controlled text. The sound-spelling patterns are included more opportunistically in the program's read-aloud texts, although the team noted that this is not the primary means of instruction. In Grades 1 and 2, a major focus skill is introduced and emphasized throughout the week. This is followed by the introduction of a secondary skill, usually around mid-week. These skills are explicitly applied in the decoding block of each lesson, the *Blend and Read* activities, and in controlled *Start Right Readers*.

In Grades K–2, daily foundational skills lessons are paced for 15–30 minutes daily. In Grades 3–5, there are two weekly foundationalskills lessons, also paced for 15–30 minutes. Additionally, in Kindergarten, the scope and sequence consist of 2–3 weeks dedicatedto teaching two consonant sounds per week, followed by one week introducing a new vowel sound, and this pattern is then repeated. All basic code is introduced by Module 6 (Week 24) of kindergarten, and the most common spellings of consonant sounds are introduced first. Furthermore, different sounds for the same letter are presented separately. For instance, in kindergarten, students are taught the hard sound of "g"(/g/) early on, followed by the introduction of the soft sound of "g" (/j/) later on. The soft sound of "g" (/j/) is then taught further and reinforced in Grades 1 & 2.

One issue noted centered upon review lessons. While taught patterns are naturally incorporated into future word reading activities and texts, there are no specific review lessons outlined or planned points of consolidation of new skills. For instance, the team suggested incorporating consolidation opportunities after introducing individual digraphs in Grade 1 or following the introduction of several sets of vowel team patterns in Grade 2, both of which appear to be natural points for learners to solidify their new knowledge. Review across grades is included, and the team observed that the first-grade scope and sequence reteaches all kindergarten skills while the second-grade scope and sequence reteaches most of the new patterns introduced in Grade 1. Finally, in Grades 3–5, the review focuses on additional work with syllables and morphemes.

Blending is taught explicitly throughout the program. In kindergarten, blending is taught and practiced through a variety of activities. In the *Teach Blending Letter Sounds* activities, students are taught to "Say the first letter and sound. Add the next letter and blend. Add the final letter and blend. Read the word." *In Review Blending Letter Sounds*, the teacher is directed to model the blending of targeted words before students engage in practice opportunities. As learners continue to Grade 1, foundational skills lessons include daily practice with blending. On Day 1 of the lesson plan, the teacher models the sound-by-sound blending of words with new patterns. This is followed by opportunities for practice and review through blending practice word lists and/or the *Blend and Read* slides. Blending in Grade 2 is similar to Grade 1, with the exception that teachers are instructed to model, and students then practice continuous blending. Finally, in Grades 3 and up, students still have access to the Blend and Read slides, but there is no reference to blending. Teachers are directed to "Have students read and blend and read lines aloud."

In terms of multisyllabic word instruction, the grade-level scope and sequence for Grades 2–5 include instruction related to the six syllable types. Grades 2 and above have lessons on syllable division, but these lessons are sporadic and not reinforced throughout. Thus, it is up to the teacher to include additional instruction on this topic.

The program features sound-spelling cards, which are emphasized in kindergarten through second grade. When students transition to Grades 3–5, however, the sound-spelling cards are no longer utilized. The team observed that several of the short vowel sound-spelling cards, which include keywords and images for each phoneme, are problematic. This includes:

- /ă/ - alligator (short vowel followed by a liquid)
- /ĕ/ - elephant (short vowel sound followed by a liquid)
- /ŭ/ - umbrella (short vowel sound followed by a nasal - creates nasalization issues)

Additionally, there are two keywords presented for the sound /k/, cat and kangaroo, there is no representation of the voiced /th/ sound (e.g., these, gather), and the qu pair is taught as one sound /kw/ with the keyword quail instead of the blending of two sounds (/k/- q & /w/- u). Reviewers also noted that Grade K does not have sound-spelling cards, and instead features alphabet cards. These cards feature different images from those used in Grades 1 & 2. For example, in kindergarten, "Ss" is sun, but in Grades 1 & 2, /s/ is seahorse. In total, nine of the consonant sound-spelling cards in Grades 1 & 2 differ from the images used for these consonant letters on the alphabet cards in Grade K. Grade K also features Alphafriend cards which use pneumonics and embed the letter shape into a visual. These do not always align with the alphabet cards OR the images used for the Grade K alphabet cards. For example, the image for "Rr" is rabbit. The alphafriend is "Ravi Rhino" and the sound-spelling keyword image for Grades 1 & 2 for /r/ is raccoon. There are no visual supports/alphafriend/sound-spelling cards in Grade K for digraphs, although those are introduced in Module 7.

Another issue noted previously is the emphasis on memorization for reading high-frequency words. In K-2, high-frequency words are taught as whole-word units, even when they are fully decodable. For example, in Grade 1, Module 6, Lesson 2, the teacher is prompted to, "Repeat the high-frequency words routine to review this week's high-frequency words: another, gave, house, over, own, read, water, and white and the decodable high-frequency words: be, he, into, me, she, and so." Although these words can be sounded out and blended, they are reviewed using the general high-frequency words routine.

Additionally, while word-level decoding opportunities are provided, the reviewers suggested that additional opportunities would strengthen the curriculum. For example, in kindergarten, word-level decoding practice is explicitly offered in two of the lessons per week. While kindergarten learners do engage in other opportunities for word-level work through word building, word dictation, and practice with controlled text, the team thought this was an area that HMH's Into Reading could improve upon overall.

Finally, the texts provided for student practice in the foundational skills lessons consist exclusively of controlled text through the use of the *Start Right Readers*. These texts feature high-frequency words and spelling patterns that have been introduced to students. In kindergarten, the earliest Start Right Readers are called pre decodable text. These texts do incorporate some predictable words and sentences and are composed of mostly high-frequency words and/or words that are not yet decodable, but are accompanied by a picture cue. For example, in Grade K, Module 1, Lesson 14 (p. 185), kindergarten students are tasked to read the sentence, "I see a van." A picture cue is located directly above the word "van" to assist students with reading. By Module 3 of kindergarten, students transition to decodable texts which are less predictable and feature reduced picture cues within sentences until they are fully eliminated by the third week of Module 3.

1D: Fluency

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR FLUENCY	SCORE	
1.40: Fluency instruction focuses primarily on student silent reading.	1	
1.41: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student's ability to read words quickly.	1	
1.42: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	2	
1.43: Fluency is practiced only in narrative text or with repeated readings of patterned text.	1	
1.44: Fluency assessment allows acceptance of incorrectly decoded words if they are close in meaning to the target word (e.g., assessment based upon the cueing systems, M/S/V).	1	

HMH's Into Reading fluency practices are **"mostly met."** In kindergarten, fluency is addressed at the word level in the foundational skills strand. This includes the Build Automaticity: Speed Read activity where learners practice reading high frequency words and Review Blending activities where students practice reading words with targeted patterns. In both activities, students are asked to read chorally. Then in Grades 1–5, explicit instruction around fluency is incorporated once in every five-day cycle. The focus of these fluency lessons rotate to address five different aspects of fluency:

1. accuracy and self-correction
2. reading rate
3. phrasing
4. expression
5. intonation.

Thus, the lessons do not prioritize reading rate and seek to address the varying aspects of fluency. These lessons also include instances of teacher modeling followed by opportunities for student practice.

For example, in Grade 1, Module 3, Lesson 3, a lesson focusing on reading rate involves teacher modeling of controlled text, followed by opportunities for student practice with a partner using a "... smooth, regular rate to make their reading sound natural." Students then use the echo reading routine to practice reading at a rate that a listener can easily understand. An example intonation lesson in Grade 2, Module 4, Lesson 3, also begins with instances of teacher modeling of controlled text and is followed by students using both choral and partner reading to "...use end punctuation as a guide to adjust the rise and fall of their voices." Additionally, in Grades 1 & 2, modeling fluency is a component of weekly read aloud lessons that feature authentic texts and picture books. Later, in Grades 3–5, students practice fluency with grade-level passages that are not controlled, but include words that contain the weekly decoding focus. After the teacher models one of the fluency-specific skills (e.g. accuracy and self-correction, reading rate, phrasing, expression, intonation), students practice choral reading of the passage with the teacher, then partner reading of the passage, focusing on the targeted skill.

Reviewers identified that word-level fluency practice to automaticity is an area of need. In grades 1 & 2, while word-level practice is presented daily, there is a lack of repetition from day to day and word lists are not revisited for fluency practice. For example, in Grade 1, fluency with word reading is only incorporated in two lessons per week during the use of *Blend and Read* slides. In Grade 2, the manual instructs teachers to "...have volunteers read words until they can identify them quickly." However, this is only practiced with select rows of words. In Grades 3–5, although students practice word reading twice each week during use of the *Blend and Read* slides, there is no explicit instruction on reading the words fluently and fluency instruction and practice is only conducted with text. This poses a significant challenge because the absence of consistent practice and review at the word level hinders the establishment of automatic word recognition skills and the curriculum could be enhanced by implementing a more structured approach to word-level fluency.

HMH's Into Reading does offer students opportunities for fluency practice with different types of texts; however, this varies depending on grade and age level. For example, in Grades 1–2 the majority of fluency practice is conducted with narrative texts. There are some instances where fluency practice is applied with informational controlled texts and read alouds. Specifically, in Grade 1, Module 4, Week 3, students focus on reading rate through use of the controlled text *Kids Skip*, which is a non fiction text about baby goats. Another example is in Grade 2, Module 5, Week 3, where students focus on phrasing with the text *Big Crops*, another non fiction text about farming. Fluency is also modeled with informational read alouds such as *Presidents' Day*, read in Grade 1, Module 6. Here teachers are prompted to, "Tell students you are going to show how to read at a smooth, steady rate. Demonstrate how reading at an appropriate rate makes the words sound as if someone is talking, and helps listeners better understand what you are reading." As students transition to Grades 3–5, the available fluency passages reflect a more balanced approach and about half of the materials feature informational text genres and structures. Examples include fluency passages *3.6 NF: Mt Rushmore, 4.1: Choosing a Career, and 4.11: Bossy Lois*.

While there are no formal or required assessments of fluency, HMH's Into Reading does record errors as a part of their optional leveled-text assessments, using the *Rigby Readers*. This, however, only measures words read correctly and reading rate. Additional optional diagnostic and screening tools are included as oral reading fluency measures with grade-level text. Again, these only assess reading accuracy and rate, and directions specifically state, "All errors, whether they change the meaning or not, are counted as errors."

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 (2001) reading rope. Therefore, identification of the following red flag practices were 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.	2
2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.	3
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level questioning skills.	1

Reviewers found that HMH's Into Reading practices for language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing were **"somewhat met."** In kindergarten through Grade 2, daily, teacher-led lessons were observed. These lessons identify specific texts for students to work with along with an aligned focus skill. The teacher then models the use of this skill and guides students in the application of skills to the concepts and ideas within the text. Additionally, students are exposed to rich vocabulary and complex syntax throughout the program. For example in kindergarten, students engage in lessons around academic vocabulary taken directly from texts they are reading twice per week. Then in Grades 1–5, weekly module vocabulary instruction includes the use of power words (connected to each module), academic words/critical vocabulary (connected to each text), and generative vocabulary words each week.

Daily vocabulary lessons accompany each reading comprehension lesson, and teachers are offered a glimpse at complex language in the "Preview Lesson Texts" resource. This allows educators to think proactively about words their learners may encounter as challenging and plan accordingly. Daily lessons around vocabulary accompany each reading/language comprehension lesson. The weekly preview lesson texts resource also offers details of text complexity and highlights aspects of language that may be complex or challenging. Furthermore, the curriculum features optional writing workshop lessons that accompany each module. These include one lesson on vocabulary, which incorporates the academic vocabulary within the mentor text. The team did note, however, that they were unable to locate explicit instruction in sentence structure and syntax within the reading/language comprehension or writing lessons.

Across grades, daily comprehension lessons center on a target skill or strategy. Questions and prompts are provided for teachers to use to monitor literal comprehension of key ideas in the text and to model the application of the targeted focus skill. After this, students engage in close reading of a part of the text to practice applying a different skill. The curriculum does provide graphic organizers specific to each targeted strategy/skill as an option for differentiation and use in additional small-group instruction. However, the graphic organizers are not included as a core component of Tier 1 instruction or included in the printed *myBook* materials for students. Teachers can opt to print them if they'd like to use them, but no models of completed organizers are provided to guide teachers and offer models of how these tools can be implemented.

Skill/strategy instruction entails displaying and discussing an anchor chart; however, reviewers observed that curricular materials often fail to provide specific steps or guiding questions specific to genre and text structure to help students generalize the application of skills. Instead, instances of instruction and modeling are always specific to a text and not generalized for application across texts. The teacher's guide does suggest that educators utilize the Tabletop Mini Lessons and graphic organizers to revisit lesson concepts as well as practice the application of taught comprehension skills and strategies to other texts during small-group and collaborative work time. However, these texts are typically leveled and students do not have opportunities to practice applying a skill to alternate and/or differentiated texts within the Tier 1 lesson plan. For example, in the first week of Grade 3, Module 5, the sequence of lessons is as follows:

- **Day 1:** Author's Purpose (Text - *Teamwork = Victory*)
- **Day 2:** Ask and Answer Questions (*Soccer Shootout*)
- **Day 3:** Literary Elements (*Soccer Shootout*)
- **Day 4:** Theme (*Soccer Shootout*)
- **Day 5:** Author's Craft (*Soccer Shootout*)

For the remainder of this module, students revisit the skills of author's purpose and literary elements in one additional lesson. Consequently, if teachers fail to create additional opportunities for student practice and application, students' likelihood of applying these skills to other texts is minimal.

The practice of "skill spiraling" was also observed to be evident across all grades. Thus, a skill is introduced in one lesson and revisited once or twice within a module instead of incorporating consistent practice of a skill across a series of lessons and texts. For example, in Grade 1, Module 4, out of eight stand-alone lessons, only two skills are repeated: topic and central idea and point of view. This is problematic as students are unable to develop deep and sustained mastery of targeted skills. Reviewers did find, however, that comprehension lessons and activities in Grades 3–5 seemed more consistent and cohesive than those in Grades K–2. As such, their recommendations in terms of building in consistent practice opportunities as well as increased opportunities for generalization mostly concern the early primary grades.

While the team observed that HMH's Into Reading provides learners across grade levels with opportunities to respond to text in writing several times per week, these activities are often disconnected from the targeted reading skill. There are also limited models/examples to support teachers' instruction and the team was only able to locate evidence of this in the kindergarten materials. For example, in Grade 2, Module 5, Lesson 8, learners focus on the author's use of text features in an informational text about Wilma Rudolph. Instead of capitalizing on the reading-writing connection and perhaps crafting an informational response that aligns with the genre of focus, students are tasked to write a letter to Wilma Rudolph listing reasons she should believe in herself.

A similar example was found in Grade 4, Module 4, Lesson 3, where learners worked to analyze the use of third-person point of view. Again, instead of capitalizing on the reading-writing connection, and having students participate in activities where they write in the third-person, learners are instead tasked to describe the story characters' traits and actions. Thus, while the reviewers found that there is a surface attempt to connect the genre of focus in reading to writing or to connect the writing process prompts to the reading module essential question(s), these are not always closely linked in instruction, and, overall, students are not expected to take the knowledge learned in the reading strand and apply it to composition tasks in the writing strand.

Reviewers did note that the kindergarten teacher manuals include writing strand instruction. This strand focuses on genre and process writing. In Grades 1–5, the topics of the writing modules are included in the module and week at a glance reference pages in the main teacher's guide; however, all process writing instruction is in a separate manual: *The Writing Workshop Teacher's Guide*. Reviewers intentionally pointed this out as it can be challenging for educators to navigate multiple resources, potentially hindering the overall effectiveness of their writing instruction.

Starting in Grade 3, there is a lesson at the end of each module that includes a writing performance task related to the topic and texts of the module. For example, in Grade 3, Module 4, Lesson 15, students are prompted to, "Think about the plays you read in the module. Review the elements of plays, such as narrator, dialogue, and stage directions. How do these elements help tell them stories? Write an opinion essay about whether or not you think the stories in the module worked well as plays. Use evidence from the module selections to support your opinion." This is then followed by directions for teachers to help guide students through prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and reflecting. However, this is only present in one lesson at the end of each module, and no such embedded writing instruction exists in Grades 1 or 2.

Finally, the team found that questioning was an overall strength for HMH's Into Reading. Questions for read aloud texts are provided in a supplemental resource titled *BookStix*. In kindergarten, questions are coded for use in dialogic reading, which the program describes as, "...a research-based technique that creates a dialogue between the reader and listeners, helping children become active participants in read alouds" (Program Guide p. 63). Questions are coded into the following types

- completion
- r ecall
- open-ended
- wh- questions
- distancing

An analysis of the kindergarten module 5 *BookStix* prompts revealed that the unit included three recall prompts, seven wh-question prompts, and fourteen open-ended prompts. No completion or distancing prompts were included. The program also includes additional listening comprehension prompts consisting of mostly literal or inferential questions about the texts.

In Grades 1–5, *BookStix* questions for read alouds and prompts in the Teaching Pal for shared reading are coded according to domains of knowledge (DOK) with most falling into DOK2: Apply Knowledge and Skills/Basic Reasoning, and DOK3: Strategic Thinking. Questioning in these grades connects to skill instruction and both DOK 2 & 3 are well represented throughout.

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.	2
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

Reviewers found that HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for background knowledge were **"mostly met."** The team found that read-aloud texts reflect appropriate grade-level complexity and include a mix of both narrative and informational/knowledge-building texts in each module. For example, an audit of the texts in Grade 2, Modules 1–3, revealed the use of twelve informational texts and fifteen narrative texts. A similar review in Grade 4, Modules 1–3, included six informational and nine narrative texts. Regarding shared reading materials in kindergarten through fifth grade, students are exposed to a variety of text types and genres including recipes, procedural text, drama, fantasy, fairy tales, informational text, narrative nonfiction, fantasy, and poetry. Furthermore, listening comprehension materials feature a variety of text types and genres, as well.

While texts recommended for small group instruction in Grades 3 and above are primarily leveled readers, Tier 1 shared reading texts from the *myBook* reading sets include a variety of authentic, diverse, and complex texts. Each module is based around a particular topic and features texts from a variety of genres used to develop students' knowledge. Additionally, the team noted that the curriculum updated the *Rigby Library* manual and it no longer references guided reading levels. Instead, texts are organized by module with the text topic related in some way to the module's essential questions. For example in Grade 2, the second module's essential question is: "How does exploring help us understand the world around us? The fifteen *Rigby Readers* associated with this module, for both small-group and independent reading, include a mix of fiction and nonfiction titles, feature five different genres, and encompass a lexile range of 500–600. Ten of the fifteen titles are informational texts suitable for background knowledge building. Sample titles include *An Encyclopedia of Fossils* (nonfiction), *Kitchen Table Science* (nonfiction), *and Dairy Farmers* (nonfiction). Then in Grade 4, the fourth module's essential question is: "What makes someone a hero?" The fifteen *Rigby Readers* associated with this module include a mix of fiction and nonfiction titles, feature eight different genres, and reflect a lexile range of 620–1070. Six of the fifteen titles are informational texts and two are historical fiction suitable for background knowledge building. Sample titles include *Amazing Stories of Survival* (nonfiction), *Intrepid Journeys* (nonfiction), and *Shipwrecked* (historical fiction).

Finally, the team did note inconsistent opportunities to bridge new knowledge to existing knowledge within HMH's IntoReading. In kindergarten, reviewers found that opportunities to bridge knowledge are included within lessons where a new text is introduced. As students progress to Grades 1 and 2, the only explicit opportunities for bridging knowledge are within the module wrap-up lessons where students revisit the knowledge map to compare and contrast texts and synthesize information gleaned from module texts and classroom discussions. Finally, in Grades 3–5, there were more examples of embedded opportunities to bridge knowledge. This includes exploration of the access prior knowledge component located in the module launch and a knowledge map that connects to the essential question.

2C: Vocabulary

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR VOCABULARY	SCORE
2.7: Vocabulary worksheets and activities are used with little opportunity for deep understanding of vocabulary words.	2
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.	1
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

Reviewers found that HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for vocabulary were **"mostly met."** The program does not emphasize memorization or provide learners with definitions out of context. When vocabulary words are presented, a definition is provided along with an example of the word used in context and recommendations for making connections between the word's meaning and students' lives and experiences. Explicit instruction in vocabulary for Tier 2 and 3 words is evident throughout and Independent practice activities are also provided that encourage teachers to provide practice through describing, writing, drawing, and discussing the use of words in specific scenarios. Targeted vocabulary is labeled as academic vocabulary/power words in Grades K–2 and as critical vocabulary in Grades 3–5. Again, these words are explicitly taught with each new text, and students are exposed to the words through both listening to and reading of shared texts. Additional application and practice opportunities are available, including the use of student workbook pages; however, this largely falls on the teacher to allocate time for scheduling these activities.

Morphology is taught according to a scope and sequence and instruction begins in kindergarten with the inflectional ending, -s. Then in grade 1, students are introduced to more additional inflectional suffixes including -es, -ing, and -ed. Finally, in Grades 2+, additional prefixes and suffixes are introduced; however, the team observed that this is only within the target lessons and not consistently embedded in the daily/weekly content. Several prefixes and suffixes are taught across grades as a part of generative vocabulary lessons. For example, the root vis is taught in Grades 3 & 4, while the affixes pre-, -full, and -less are taught in Grades 2–5. These lessons are repeated, but not built upon. Furthermore, the lessons lack actual instruction around using affixes to derive meaning other than a very literal breakdown of each part.

Finally, the team found that worksheets and activities were used inconsistently to develop students' deep understanding of targeted vocabulary words. In Grades K–2, three topic/big idea words are introduced at the beginning of each module. This includes the use of a vocabulary routine which includes: say the word, explain the meaning, and talk about examples. During the second lesson, three new oral language vocabulary words are introduced along with the corresponding topic words, and in the final lesson of each week, the topic words or vocab strategy (depending on the week) and oral vocabulary are reviewed. The manual suggests examples of words and texts from previous lessons to which the teacher could apply this strategy. Additionally, kindergarten learners are introduced to various vocabulary strategies starting in weeks 2–4. This includes strategies like sorting and grouping words (Grade K, Module 3) or multiple meaning words (Grade K, Module 5).

Vocabulary lessons in Grades 1–2 include opportunities for daily instruction and feature examples of the targeted terms used in context. There are also suggestions for *I Do, We Do, You Do* activities designed to "... guide students to make connections between each word's meaning and how they can use it in their own lives." For example in Grade 2, Module 7, the exploration of multiple meanings of words is suggested and students are provided with some examples of word use based on class read alouds. Additionally, vocabulary words featured in shared texts are highlighted for students; however, there is no explicit vocabulary instruction embedded in the comprehension lessons and prompts included in the Teaching Pal.

Finally, in Grades 3–5, critical vocabulary is introduced and then practiced via a worksheet. "Critical" or text vocabulary is then highlighted in the shared reading. However, there are no prompts for discussion provided and it is up to the teacher to locate and create opportunities for deeper conversations about words.

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.	2	
2.19: Instruction does not include teacher modeling nor sufficient opportunities for discussion.	2	
2.20: Students are asked to memorize parts of speech as a list without learning in context and through application.	1	

Reviewers found that HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for language structures were **"mostly met."** Reviewers found a heavy emphasis on conventions of print and some instruction in grammar both primarily located in the writing workshop or supplemental grammar lessons. This includes opportunities for explicit teacher modeling and class discussion. However, there was very little to no instruction in syntax.

In kindergarten, grammar is addressed primarily through the Writing Workshop. Skill instruction that is inserted throughout the module writing lessons and focuses primarily on discrete skills in isolation. For instance, in Grade K, Module 3, Lesson 4, the lesson's focus is to, "Identify nouns as words for anything you can point to." Kindergarten lessons also include one shared reading, through use of the big book, to practice the foundational target skill in context. Though they are not consistent, these lessons sometimes include attention to conventions of print, such as capitalization or punctuation, but not to grammar or syntax or how to use knowledge of these skills to support language generation and comprehension or printed text. Then in Grades 2–3, the reviewers were unable to find evidence of where the conventions of print, grammar and syntax were addressed in the reading comprehension lessons.

Additionally, HMH's Into Reading includes a collection of grammar mini lessons within the Writing Workshop Teacher's Guide for grades 1–5; however, these lessons are not systematically connected to writing instruction. The team was also able to locate a grammar scope and sequence that recommends how to order and deliver the grammar lessons; however, this resource is only available online and it is the teacher's responsibility to find time for this instruction as it is not included as a part of the suggested daily instructional times included in the weekly planner. Finally, reviewers found directions located in the margins of the Writing Workshop lessons which offer suggestions for targeted grammar support. For example, the instructions state that "You may want to insert the following grammar minilessons to review key editing topics…" but again these are not presented in a sequential manner or even connected to the current writing skill.

Regarding student work with the parts of speech, the team noted that discussion of this is included as a part of the program's vocabulary instruction. It is also addressed in vocabulary strategy lessons in Grade 1. Additionally, in Grades 1–5, some of the cumulative vocabulary review lessons, located at the end of each module, include the option for tasks that have learners reflect on word meaning in relation to the connected part of speech. For example Grade 1, Module 4, "Children may also choose to group the words by parts of speech, such as nouns. The words body, idea, talent, and seed are all nouns. Guide children to group words into noun categories, such as 'nouns than name things.'" In Grade 3, Module 1, the teacher is prompted to, "Help students determine that all the words are adjectives. If necessary, review with students how adjectives are used." Reviewers also observed that the parts of speech are often discussed within the context of specific sentences during the grammar mini lessons.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR VERBAL REASONING	SCORE
2.26: Inferencing strategies are not taught explicitly and may be based only on picture clues and not text (i.e., picture walking).	1
2.27: Students do not practice inference as a discrete skill.	1

HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for verbal reasoning were **"met."** It was observed that inferencing is a skill for instruction in grades 1+. The curriculum offers educators language and prompts linked to specific excerpts of text to provide modeling of inference making included in the Teaching Pal. Students are also offered opportunities for practice with inferencing as a discrete skill. For example, in grades 3–5, there are between three to four lessons focusing on inference during the course of the first 9 modules. Finally, teachers can quickly reference the individual grade scope and sequence documents to identify lessons at each grade level that emphasize this skill.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR LITERACY KNOWLEDGE	SCORE	
2.33: Genre types and features are not explicitly taught.	2	
2.34: Genre-specific text structures and corresponding signal words are not explicitly taught and practiced.	1	

HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for literacy knowledge were **"mostly met."** The team observed lessons on text structure included at each grade level. Some of the examples observed include:

Grade K: narrative text structure & story grammar markers

Grades K–1+: description, sequence

Grades 1–2 ca+: use/effect

Grades 3–5: nine lessons per grade focus on varied text structures

Additionally, anchor charts for varying text structures (e.g. cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, sequence, etc.) are provided for and referenced in Tier 1 instruction. Graphic organizers for text structure can be downloaded from the program's online resources and are encouraged for use in small group instruction; however, these tools are not incorporated in Tier 1 programming.

While explicit instruction around genre and text structure occurs within the curriculum, reviewers specifically noted that this was not consistent across grades. For example, in kindergarten some genres are explicitly taught in connection to text, but this appeared to be opportunistic and not intentional. Additionally, genre is not consistently reviewed or discussed in kindergarten lessons. In grades 1–2, again, attention to genre appeared to be intermittent and instruction on and discussion of a text's genre is not included in every lesson. Then in grades 3–5, each module launch lesson includes a "genre focus" which highlights a specific genre reflected in several text selections throughout the module. Teachers review key aspects of the genre during this time with students. Genre and text features are also reviewed in the biweekly communication lessons; however, grades K–2 are not provided with these communication lessons. Finally, in Grades 1–5, Modules 11 & 12 are "genre study" modules. However, due to their placement as the last modules in the curriculum, schools districts may not have time to complete them due to their pacing.

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: Students are asked to independently read texts they are unable to decode with accuracy in order to practice reading comprehension strategies (e.g., making inferences, predicting, summarizing, visualizing).	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.	2	
3.3: Emphasis 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.	2	

HMH's Into Reading practices for reading comprehension were **"mostly met."** Reviewers highlighted that little emphasis is placed on independent reading and book selection. In fact, independent reading is only referenced as one of the "independent and collaborative" work options included in the daily small-group instruction section. Each daily lesson across grades K through 5, engages students with appropriately complex text. Furthermore, educators have access to lexile levels and complexity ratings for shared *myBook* texts in the preview lesson texts section, which appears at the beginning of each week. Tier 1 comprehension instruction does not utilize predictable or leveled texts at any grade level. Instead it revolves around authentic picture books and *myBook* texts which are complex and grade and age-level appropriate. These texts are only referenced in the small-group instruction guidance for each week and/or lesson, and in Grades K–2, these texts are only suggested, "For children already decoding on their own…" (Grade K) or "For children with strong decoding skills…" (Grades 1–2). Otherwise, K–2 teachers are guided to utilize controlled texts to reinforce decoding and foundational skills or use the Tier 1 lesson text to reinforce the lesson's target skill.

Tier 1 texts used for reading comprehension lessons in grades K–5 are accessed via teacher read alouds (Grades K–2) and shared reading (K–5). While instructions in the teacher guide directs educators to lead students through the text during the initial reading, subsequent targeted close-reading lessons require students to independently revisit portions of the text many of which may be above their independent reading ability. For small-group instruction in grades 3+, teachers are instructed to use the *Rigby Leveled Library* with guided reading groups to support student comprehension skills. However, guidance is not given in regard to text selection, so comprehension instruction may be delivered with texts above student reading levels.

HMH's Into Reading does not require students to engage in independent reading of texts. The texts themselves are not necessarily short but are often disconnected from what students are learning about. Opportunities for reading longer texts, such as chapter books and novels, are not included although excerpts from some novels are featured. For instance, in Grade 3 students read excerpts from *Stink, Freaky Frog Freakout*, and *Moody Judy: Mood Martian*. Then in Grade 4, learners read a chapter from the novel *Flora and Ulysses*. Though the program has grouped titles into modules around a shared essential question, the topics of the texts themselves are not closely related to support knowledge building that aids comprehension. Additionally, a mix of fiction and nonfiction text "sets" are used, but, again, they are often not closely related. Some examples by grade level are featured in the table below.

GRADE & MODULE	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	TEXTS INCLUDED
Grade 1, Module 4	Why is it important to do my best and get along with others?	*Good Sports, Baseball Hour, Goal!, Pele King of Soccer, Get Up and Go, Brontorina, The Great Ball Game, If you Plant a Seed, and Color Your World With Kindness*
Grade 4, Module 4	What makes someone a hero?	*Mack and the Hidden Tree House, Who's a Hero? Prince Charming Misplaces his Bride, Smokejumpers to the Rescue!, Perseus and the Fall of Medusa, and St. Augustine: A Story of America.*

Each grade level (K–5), includes monitor and clarify strategy lessons. For example, the reading strand scope and sequence, includes specific information on number of lessons per grade. Reviewers noted the following:

- Grade 1: four lessons
- Grade 3: five lessons
- Grade 4: four lessons
- Grade 5: three lesson

While methods to monitor and clarify are taught, the team observed surface level instruction as this is relegated to only a few lessons per grade and not incorporated as a regular aspect of reading comprehension practice. Strategies recommended to problem-solve challenging or unknown words are problematic. Recommendations for this include using context clues to determine the word's meaning or learners are directed to replace the unknown word with another word.

4A: Writing — Handwriting

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

RED FLAGS PRACTICES FOR HANDWRITING	SCORE
4.1: No direct instruction in handwriting.	2
4.2: Handwriting instruction predominantly features unlined paper or picture paper.	1
4.3: Handwriting instruction is an isolated add-on.	3

HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for practices were **"somewhat met."** Reviewers found that direct instruction occurs and that both manuscript and cursive handwriting pages are lined. However, the opportunities for direct practice are inconsistent across grade levels. In kindergarten, there is explicit instruction in upper and lowercase letter formation when the letters are introduced in Module 1. All of the letters of the alphabet, and their formations, are introduced in the first three weeks of the curriculum. In Modules 1–6, when letter sounds are explicitly taught, teachers are directed to, "Model how to write upper and lowercase _," and additional handwriting practice worksheets are provided.

In Grade 1, the foundational skills scope and sequence includes a handwriting strand. Approximately four to five letters are introduced and practiced every three weeks. Other skills like grip and directionality are also addressed. In the teacher's guide, a section called "model handwriting" is included in the first foundational skills lesson of each week, but this is not revisited. This section tells the teacher to model the lowercase forms of two letters, paying careful attention to the starting point for each letter. Educators are then directed to ask students to describe what they notice about each letter and then have them practice writing words that include the targeted lowercase letters. Practice through use of printable worksheets is used on an "as needed" basis. Reviewers noted that letters practiced for handwriting do not correspond to the letters introduced during the letter-sound introduction presented in the first part of the lesson. For example, in Grade 1, Module 1, Lesson 1, consonants m, s, t, b as well as short vowel spelling patterns are presented, but the handwriting section of the same lesson practices letters "a and d" only. No new letters are introduced and practiced until Grade 1, Module 3 when the letters "i, l, and t" are introduced. Additionally, Grade 1 does not introduce uppercase letter formation until Module 5.

Grade 2 handwriting instruction mimics that of Grade 1, except with pacing. Grade 2 students cover all lowercase letters in Modules 1-2, uppercase letters in Modules 3-4, and are then introduced to cursive letter formation in Module 5. There is minimal explicit instruction on letter formation in the manual and educators must access and print resources from the online repository if they wish to receive teacher language for formation and/or provide any practice pages as these are not included in student workbooks.

Concerning cursive handwriting instruction, the only instructional resource noted by the team was a formation chart located in the teacher's guide. Teachers can download an anchor chart from the teacher dashboard as well as a cursive packet that includes 26 pages of individual cursive letters and 10 pages geared towards letter formation. However, there is no guidance for teachers or students on how to form letters or practice opportunities to connect letters, and although suggestions to practice handwriting are made in the teacher's guide, reviewers observed that there is no clear time allotment outlined in Grades 1–5 for handwriting.

Finally, while handwriting instruction in kindergarten includes explicit language and teacher directions for letter formation, this is not the case across all grade levels. In fact, in Grades 1+, time is not allocated for handwriting and the teacher guides do not include explicit language around teaching letter formation. This is problematic because it creates a potential gap in the ongoing development of students' handwriting skills, which are necessary for effective communication and academic success. Additionally, all resources related to letter formation, including student practice worksheets, can only be accessed from the online dashboard and cannot be purchased as a pre-printed part of the program. Thus, educators must navigate the online platform consistently, adding an extra layer of complexity to their responsibilities and potentially requiring additional time and effort in securing these digital teaching resources.

4B: Writing — Spelling

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR SPELLING	SCORE
4.7: No evidence of explicit spelling instruction; no spelling scope and sequence for spelling, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics / decoding scope and sequence.	1
4.8: No evidence of phoneme segmentation and/or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	3
4.9: 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.	1
4.10: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	1
4.11: 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.	2

HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for spelling were **"somewhat met."** Reviewers observed that there is a scope & sequence for spelling instruction and it is aligned with the phonics/reading scope and sequence. Weekly word lists target a different pattern each week. Some instruction around spelling patterns is provided when skills are introduced and educators can find the curriculum's weekly spelling focus in the grade level's foundational skills scope and sequence. Additionally, in grades 1–5, the weekly spelling words align with the phonics focus for decoding which can again be located in the foundational skills scope and sequence for a side-by-side view of the phonics decoding and encoding focus by grade level.

Phoneme-segmentation is practiced in grades K–2 although not consistently. For example, there is no phoneme-grapheme mapping or explicit practice of word spelling in lessons with the exception of kindergarten which includes word building with letter cards and dictation activities. In Grades 1–5, weekly spelling words, which align with the focus for decoding, are introduced in the first lesson of a week and are then sorted by pattern. There is no additional practice spelling within lessons for the remainder of the week.

While the reviewers found that grades K–2 typically introduce spelling patterns one at a time and in a sequential manner, they did note some exceptions. For example, when vowel teams are introduced, multiple patterns are presented all at once like in Module 10, Grade 1, where the long vowel sound /ū/ and its associated pattens, oo, ou, ew, ue, and u, are all introduced in week 3.

Then in grades 3–5, the presentation of words for study are congested with multiple patterns that can be confusing and making spelling mastery difficult. For example in Grade 3, Module 4, Week 3, Lesson 11, students are introduced to the sound /aw/ and are tasked to sort words by by spelling pattern (e.g. au, aw, al, o).

4C: Writing — Composition

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR COMPOSITION	SCORE
4.17: Writing prompts are provided with little time for modeling, planning, and brainstorming ideas.	1
4.18: Writing is primarily unstructured with few models or graphic organizers.	1
4.19: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure is not explicitly taught and practiced systematically (i.e., from simple to complex) with opportunities for practice to automaticity, instead it is taught implicitly or opportunistically.	3
4.20: Writing instruction is primarily narrative or unstructured choice.	1
4.21: Students are not taught the writing process (i.e., planning, revising, editing).	1
4.22: Writing is taught as a standalone and is not used to further reading comprehension.	2

HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for composition were **"somewhat met."** Writing is taught explicitly through a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do) and includes sufficient time for modeling, planning, and brainstorming ideas prior to drafting. Each module, which features approximately fifteen lessons, follows a common structure around the writing process. This typically includes 2-3 lessons around a mentor text and genre; 1-2 lessons on brainstorming, prewriting, and planning; 3 lessons on drafting, 3 lessons on revising; 2 lessons on editing; and 2 lessons on publishing and sharing. Additionally, students are provided with writer's notebooks as printable PDFs for each writing module. These resources include planning pages, genre-specific graphic organizers, model writing samples, revising/editing checklists, and goal-setting & self-reflection forms. Writing modules across grades feature a variety of genres including narrative stories, personal narratives, poetry, descriptive writing, argument/opinion writing, research writing, and more.

While some aspects of conventions and grammar are embedded in lessons, this is not taught in a consistently explicit manner and oftentimes grammar instruction appears to be opportunistic in nature. The team noted that the program provides teachers with a systematic scope and sequence for grammar; however, there is no specific time outlined in the suggested daily instructional times for grammar, so it would be the teacher's responsibility to wrestle with this ambiguity and ultimately take on the daunting task of determining not only what to teach but also how to find the additional time necessary to teach it. Furthermore, grammar lessons would need to be combined with writing lessons in a more effective manner. For example, there are some writing lessons that identify "targeted grammar support" However, these lessons do not align with the scope and sequence.

The team cited the following examples to highlight this inconsistent approach to writing instruction. Grade 1, Module 3, lesson 12 features an editing lesson on the correct use of irregular verbs, collective nouns, and persuasive words and transitions. Teachers are prompted, "If needed, go over relevant grammar minilessons with the class," and are provided with four mini lessons as a means of targeted grammar support. None of these lessons would have been taught, however, if following the program's scope and sequence. Later, in Module 4, Lesson 12, editing work addresses run on sentences. Then, in Module 5, the editing lesson focuses on pronouns, but also includes a review of complex sentences, subordinate clauses, and subordinating conjunctions. It is unclear how these topics have been identified and targeted as they do not align with the grammar scope and sequence.

In Grade 1, Module 6, where learners participate in personal narrative writing, past-tense verbs are taught in Lesson 7. Teachers are directed to review what a verb is, as well as examples of present and past tense verbs. Teachers are prompted to ask,"If you are writing a personal narrative about memories, should you use present or past tense verbs in your sentences?" (past tense). The teacher then revisits the writing model with students to identify verbs in past tense. Students continue to work on writing their drafts with the note: "They [students] should be sure to use past-tense verbs." Lesson 12 of Module 6 then discusses components of complete sentences and teachers show examples and highlight the subject and verb, or the parts that make a complete sentence, of each. Students practice identifying the missing component in examples of incomplete sentences before they practice writing a complete sentence about an image. This is applied to their narrative writing as they are instructed to review and revise their narratives for complete sentences. Finally, in Lesson 13, Students use an editing checklist to edit a partner's work checking to see if each sentence has a subject, a verb, begins with a capital letter, and ending punctuation. The teacher models with a few examples on the board. There are suggestions for additional grammar lessons provided in the module; however, these are optional and not a part of the core instruction.

The team also noticed inconsistencies across grade-levels in terms of the curriculum's ability to use writing as a means to foster reading comprehension. For example, in Grades 1–5, the topics and genres of writing modules often align with the topics and genre emphasis in the reading modules. This was observed in Grade 1, Module 3, where students focus on informational texts in the featured module, "Amazing Animals." Learners explore the essential question, "How do animals' bodies help them?" This correlates to the writing workshop lessons where students learn about the research essay and create an "all about" book about their favorite animal. Although this surface-level alignment makes it appear as though HMH's Into Reading capitalizes on the reading-writing connection, in actuality the writing lessons never reference any of the texts or lessons from the reading comprehension strand. Furthermore, while a skilled teacher could incorporate these texts and guide students to use knowledge gleaned to support their writing, the instruction is not designed this way. In fact, the writing modules have their own focus/mentor texts which are different from those presented in the reading modules.

Another missed opportunity noted by the review team centers on the writing that occurs within the reading strand. Although there are opportunities to respond to text in writing outlined in the daily lessons in grades K-2, these tasks are not always related to the comprehension focus and there is no writing instruction included, just prompts for response. Teachers are solely guided to read the prompt to students, and lead a discussion about the prompt. Students are then directed to use ideas from their discussion to complete their plan for writing. There are no sample responses or additional teacher language, moves, or directives to support students provided. Sample prompts include:

> **Grade 1:** *Pick a scene from the text and rewrite it in your own way as a short drama. Add yourself as a character.*
>
> **Grade 2:** *Shoes are an important part of both stories. Compare Zoey's shoes with Kwan's shoes. How are their parts in the stories alike? How are they different?... Write sentences comparing Zoey's and Kwan's shoes. Use the details in your chart to explain how they are alike and different. Remember to: Describe how Zoey and Kwan feel about their shoes. Add an apostrophe to show ownership, like Kwan's shoes.*

In Grades 3–5, the team did observe a more intentional use of writing to further reading comprehension in the vocabulary and comprehension activities. Also, in Grades 3–5, Lesson 15 of each module is dedicated to the completion of a writing task that is linked to ideas and texts present in the module. For example:

> **Grade 3:** *Think about how the characters and people in this module worked together to accomplish a goal. What challenges did they face? What lessons did they learn about teamwork? Write an expository essay to tell how the authors use sports to teach readers about homework. Use evidence from the module selections in your essay.*

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).	2
5.2: Assessments include miscue analysis in which misread words that have the same meaning are marked as correct.	1

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
5.6: Assessments result in benchmarks according to a leveled text gradient.	2
5.7: Foundational skills assessments are primarily running records or similar assessments that are based on whole language or cueing strategies (e.g., read the word by looking at the first letter, use picture support for decoding).	1
5.8: Phonics skills are not assessed.	2
5.9: Phoneme awareness is not assessed.	2
5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	2
5.11: Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessments are not used.	3
5.12: The suite of assessments does not address aspects of language comprehension (e.g., vocabulary, syntax, listening comprehension).	2
5.13: Multilingual Learners are not assessed in their home language.	4

HMH's Into Reading non-negotiables for assessment were **"somewhat met."** One major challenge noted by reviewers is that the program and teacher resources do not come with any printed assessment information or assessment-specific details. All assessments must be accessed and downloaded from the teacher dashboard which is problematic because it can hinder an educator's ability to effectively implement assessments as they may be unable to locate or access materials with ease.

A variety of assessments exist by grade level, but the teacher's guide only references Module Assessments, Weekly Assessments, and Selection Assessments. The following table highlights these measures by grade level.

ASSESSMENT MEASURE	CORRESPONDING GRADES	DESCRIPTION
Printable Module Inventory	K–5	These 1:1 assessments measure student foundational skills including Phonological Awareness, High-Frequency Words, Decoding (pseudo words), and Print Concepts. These measures involve the use of a Leveled/Guided Reading Text. However, students primarily use the text to identify cover & title, point to words on a page, and demonstrate knowledge of directionality, etc.
Printable Module Assessments **also available in interactive/digital format*	K–5	These whole group assessments measure text comprehension. This includes: -Grade K: listening comprehension -Grades K–1: foundational skills -Grades 1–5: independent reading -Grades 1–5: grammar & syntax -Grades 1–2: writing composition (on demand genre piece) -Grades 3–5: writing composition (on demand essay & response to text)
Printable Module Assessments **also available in interactive/digital format*	K–5	These measures mimic the module assessment, but are shorter, do not include on-demand writing and are stated to align with the skills targeted in the weekly lessons. *Note: Text and prompts are not consistently aligned to what was taught.*
Printable selection Quizzes **also available in interactive/digital format*	K–5	These brief, five question assessments assess comprehension of shared reading texts from the *myBook/ TeachingPal*.
Printable Rigby Reader Assessments **also available in interactive/digital format*	K–5	These brief, multiple-choice quizzes feature five questions and relate to a leveled text that students read independently or during small group instruction.
Printable Benchmark Evaluation Guide **also available in interactive/digital format*	K–5	These assessments utilize paired nonfiction/fiction passages and collect data on the Reading Accuracy Record. This tool is similar to an oral reading fluency (ORF) measure and assesses words correct per minute (wcpm), student retelling, and also includes a ten questions multiple-choice assessment about ideas/information in the text.

Additionally, HMH's Into Reading provides screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring measures. Reviewers again noted that these tools were located in the"all resources" section of the teacher dashboard, which required some digging on the part of the team. They are also not referenced within the teacher guides except for a brief snippet in the introductory pages of each grade level's Student and Teacher Resources Manual, Volume 1. Consequently, these resources seem rather disconnected from the Tier 1 curriculum's content and scope and sequence. The following table highlights these measures.

ASSESSMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Screening Measures	This one packet of assessment materials is for use with any student across grade levels. It includes assessments of: - Letter identification/naming (both upper and lowercase) - Oral phoneme segmentation - Nonsense word reading (including CVC, CVCe, and "other" patterns) - High frequency words, - Multisyllabic words - Oral reading fluency passages (for Grades 1–6
Diagnostic Measures	This one packet of assessment materials includes a print concepts inventory, letter sound correspondence inventory, and a 19-page phonological awareness inventory.
Progress Monitoring Measures	All progress monitoring assessments align with lessons from the Word Study Studio, a supplemental word recognition intervention aspect of the curriculum. However, this is not part of the Tier 1 programming. Additionally, the *Word Study Studio* follows a scope and sequence that is not tightly aligned with the one provided with the program's core materials. Progress-monitoring assessments include aspects of phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, high frequency words, decodable words, and sentence reading. These resources are only accessible online from the teacher dashboard and guidance for teachers or support staff regarding the use of this tool is not provided in the core curriculum materials.

Phonics & Decoding skills

In Grades K–2, instead of the directive to form guided reading groups, the dIfferentiated instruction in small groups includes a section where students practice decoding skills. These skills are assessed at the weekly and module level and the program provides 1:1 assessments as well. Although the foundational skills strand is a component of daily instruction in Grade 2, and is included twice each week in grades 3–5, the weekly and module assessments do not assess any foundational skills. Additionally, there are no 1:1 assessments provided beyond the singular, generic screening and diagnostic tools that can be used at any grade-level.

Reviewers also observed that when decoding skills are assessed in the multiple-select module and weekly assessments only real words are used. If teachers use the 1:1 module inventories for students in Grades K-1, pseudo words are used for the decoding assessment. There is no teacher guidance around the use of the inventories, however. If Teachers do not administer the 1:1 module inventories, students' decoding would be assessed using real words only. Furthermore, decoding skills are not assessed in Tier 1 assessments in Grades 2+.

Phonemic Awareness: Reviewers observed that phonemic awareness is assessed in the 1:1 module inventories for students in Grade K–1. Phonemic awareness, however, is not assessed in Grade 2+ unless educators locate and administer the screening and/or diagnostic assessments. Additionally, while this program does provide some tools for ongoing instruction and assessment of PA skills, the scope and sequence for skills assessed do not necessarily align with what students are expected to be doing in the phonics strand. For example, in Grade K, Module 3, students are working on decoding CVC words but are only assessed for accuracy blending/segmenting words into onset and rimes. There is no assessment of blending/segmenting individual phonemes provided. Furthermore, typically only 2–3 probes are used per task, which appears to be a minimal amount to assess mastery. A list of the probes and their corresponding modules is provided below.

- **GK M1:** Identify Rhymes (3 probes), Identify Syllables (3 probes), Blend Syllables (3 probes)
- **GK M3:** Produce Rimes (2 probes), Identify Initial Sounds (3 probes), Recognize Alliteration (3 probes), Identify Final Sounds (3 probes), Blend Onsets and Rimes into Words (2 probes) Segment Words into Onset and Rime (3 probes)
- **GK M6:** Isolate Final Sounds (2 probes), Segment Words into Phonemes (3 probes), Isolate Medial Vowel Sounds (3 probes), Isolate Initial Sounds (3 probes)

Oral Reading Fluency: The primary assessment tools referenced in the teacher's guide, the module assessments, module inventories (K–1), weekly assessments and selection assessments, do not incorporate an ORF measure. The leveled benchmark assessments do incorporate an assessment of oral reading fluency as well as grade-level passages for ORF usage located in the screening assessment packet; however, neither of these tools is required for use in the Tier 1 core curriculum. The assessment guide and materials are all located online and no physical assessments are provided. This is an additional challenge for educators attempting to deliver this program with fidelity.

Language Comprehension Assessments

The module assessments do include measures of vocabulary and syntax. Formal listening comprehension assessments are included in the kindergarten module assessments and the first few Grade 1 module assessments but not beyond that. Further module assessments in grades 1+ do not include any listening comprehension measures. Furthermore, the supplemental diagnostic and screening tools do not include measures of listening comprehension, vocabulary or syntax.

Assessments for Multilingual learners

Both printable and online assessments for HMH's Into Reading are provided in English only. Thus, educators would need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that Multilingual Learners are assessed in this manner. However, the team also noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs. HMH's Into Reading also offers their Spanish program, *¡Arriba la Lectura!*™ However, the team did not review this program as a part of investigation.

Final Report Summary

Overall, the reviewed components for HMH's Into Reading Curriculum were found to **"mostly meet"** or **"somewhat meet"** most criteria for Grades K–5. This means there was minimal to moderate evidence of red flag practices. 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

HMH's Into Reading fluency lessons do not prioritize reading rate and seek to address the varying aspects of fluency (e.g. accuracy and self-correction, reading rate, phrasing, expression, intonation). These lessons also include instances of teacher modeling followed by opportunities for student practice.

HMH's Into Reading features rigorous controlled text selections for Grades K–2. This includes stories that feature a substantial amount of text on each page, resembling authentic text, and their narratives develop progressively throughout the week, engaging learners in a cohesive storyline.

HMH's Into Reading equips educators with high-quality questions through the use of their BookStix and Teaching Pal resources. Question types are varied and range from simple to complex. Thus, included questions tap into varying levels of student understanding as well as foster learner engagement.

HMH's Into Reading targets inferencing as a skill for instruction in grades 1+. The curriculum offers educators language and prompts linked to specific excerpts of text to provide modeling of inference making included in the Teaching Pal.

HMH's Into Reading includes read-aloud texts that reflect appropriate grade-level complexity and include a balanced mix of both narrative and informational text. These texts are high-interest, culturally relevant, and represent diverse perspectives and varied voices and view points.

CHALLENGES

HMH's Into Reading guides learners to memorize high frequency words. While there have been updates to this in the new structured literacy strand including the teaching of high-frequency words with explicit attention to sound-symbol correspondences, the foundational skills materials still emphasize the memorization of high frequency words.

HMH's Into Reading features several problematic keywords/images for their sound spelling cards. Additionally, while word level decoding is included the review team recommended that additional opportunities for word level decoding practice would enhance the program. Additionally, the curriculum features the inconsistent use of images for the alphabet, alphafriends, and sound-spelling cards in Grades K-2. There were also no sound-spelling resources provided in Grades 3+.

HMH's Into Reading provides students, with the exception of kindergarteners, with minimal opportunities to practice phoneme-grapheme mapping or to receive explicit instruction with spelling. Additionally, the presentation of spelling words for study are congested with multiple patterns that can be confusing and making spelling mastery difficult.

HMH's Into Reading offers little to no instruction in syntax and sentence comprehension. Thus, students are not provided with opportunities to learn about and discuss the varied ways words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are combined to make meaning. Additionally, grammar instruction often appeared opportunistic in nature and was not aligned to the scope and sequence provided. Finally, there was limited explanation for educators provided in the teaching manuals and guides which can impact effective implementation of the curriculum.

HMH's Into Reading fails to capitalize on the reading-writing connection and students are not consistently expected to take the knowledge learned in the reading strand and apply it to composition tasks in the writing strand. Reviewers noted that the writing lessons never referenced the texts highlighted in the reading comprehension strand, and in fact, the writing modules have their own focus/mentor texts which are different from those presented in the reading modules.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE



Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's (HMH) Into Reading Curriculum 2023

HMH Publisher's Response to *Into Reading* Review

April 2024

NOTE: The Reading League's review of *HMH Into Reading* is incomplete in its current form since the review was conducted in mid-2023, prior to new program content included in *Into Reading*. For this school year, HMH has a new explicit, systematic, and research-based foundational skill strand called Structured Literacy, which is foundational to the SY23-24 version of *Into Reading*. These new Structured Literacy components have been available digitally, free of charge, to all current *Into Reading* users since the start of the 2023/2024 school year.

HMH advises decisionmakers to consider the SY23-24 *Into Reading* materials, inclusive of Structured Literacy, as part of your adoption review. The Reading League has planned an upcoming review of the Structured Literacy components of Into Reading as they are essential to implementation.

HMH is glad to be part of The Reading League's review of *HMH Into Reading* using the 2023 Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines. *HMH Into Reading* is a **highly-rated, evidenced-informed program** that helps teachers deliver innovative learning experiences built on the foundations of best teaching practices and educational research.

We share The Reading League's commitment to using evidence to drive content decisions in instructional materials to achieve our shared goal that educators have access to high-quality instructional materials that empower them to make the best instructional decisions for students. We look forward to continued partnership with The Reading League to inform our journey toward ever-better, research-based content. We take all feedback seriously and always strive to incorporate new evidence into our materials.

In that spirit, HMH eagerly awaits The Reading League's review of the full, current version of *Into Reading*, including Structured Literacy as The Reading League's own review of *Into Reading* acknowledges that the Structured Literacy content of Into Reading would improve the program's ratings against the non-negotiables. Unfortunately, the timing of The Reading League's review did not allow for Structured Literacy to be evaluated in the non-negotiables rating. However, HMH program authors and development team heavily consulted The Reading League's documentation in designing and developing the instruction.

Furthermore, the evidence base for Into Reading outlines the underlying research informing the program design, and we have recent efficacy research from a 2020-2022 study finding that *Into Reading* **significantly improved students' reading skills in studied grades in comparison to other programs.** Our full library of *Into Reading* efficacy research can be found here. Additionally, numerous case studies are available and highlight teacher success and student growth using *Into Reading*, such as Laurens 55 School Districts success as outlined here.

The following criteria was scored at a "1" (Red Flag statement is False), based on HMH's alignment analysis, when reviewing *Into Reading's* complete offering, i.e. including Structured Literacy:

1A. Word Recognition Non-Negotiables

Reading League Criteria	***HMH Into Reading* Alignment to Criteria, from SY23-24 version of *Into Reading* (includes Structured Literacy)**
1.1 Three-cueing systems are taught as strategies 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.)	*Into Reading* does not employ three-cueing systems in any way.
1.2 Guidance to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	*Into Reading* utilizes the Heart Word Method to support students in attending to all the sound-symbol correspondences they already know.

	For Grades 3 and up, the High-Frequency Word cards in *Into Reading* prompt students to apply the sound-symbol correspondences they know to decode the words.

1C. Phonics and Phonic Decoding

Reading League Criteria	***Into Reading* Alignment to Criteria, from SY23-24 version of Into Reading**
1.16 Instruction is typically "one and done;" phonics skills are introduced but with very little or short-term review.	Phonics skills are introduced and then repeatedly reviewed, including in daily auditory, visual, and blending reviews.
1.17 Key words for letter/sound correspondences are not aligned with the pure phonemes being taught (e.g., earth for /ĕ/, any for /ă/, orange for /ŏ/.)	Key words for letter/sound correspondences were carefully selected to align with the pure phoneme being taught. For example, the keyword for /ă/ is apple, the keyword for /ĕ/ is echo, and the keyword for /ŭ/ is up. The voiced /th/ sound is represented by the keyword feather. All graphemes and corresponding keyword images are the same throughout K-2.
1.21 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.	Instruction explicitly guides students to use known sound-symbol correspondences to decoding words. Instruction does not encourage students to memorize whole words, read using the first letter only, guess at words, or use picture clues.
1.22 Words with known sound-symbol correspondences, including high frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as stand-alone "sight words" to be memorized.	*Into Reading* utilizes the Heart Word Method to support students in attending to all the sound-symbol correspondences they already know. For Grades 3 and up, the High-Frequency Word cards in *Into Reading* prompt students to apply the sound-symbol correspondences they know to decode the words.
1.23 Few opportunities for word-level decoding practice are provided.	*Into Reading* lessons feature daily blending reviews and continuous blending practice to provide ample opportunity for word-level decoding practice.
1.24 Early texts are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts which include phone elements that have not been taught; decodable texts are not used or emphasized.	*Into Reading* features decodable texts to support lessons on every phonics skill.

1D. Fluency

Reading League Criteria	***Into Reading* Alignment to Criteria, from SY23-24 version of Into Reading**
1.42 Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	*Into Reading* lessons feature daily Blending Reviews to provide practice reading with automaticity. All Blending Review words contain

	previously learned skills and children are given the opportunity to practice those daily to build fluency/automaticity.

4A. Writing – Handwriting

Reading League Criteria	***Into Reading* Alignment to Criteria, from SY23-24 version of Into Reading**
4.1 No direct instruction in handwriting. / 4.3 Handwriting instruction is an isolated add-on.	*Into Reading* includes explicit handwriting instruction and practice multiple times per week.

4.B. Writing – Spelling

Reading League Criteria	***Into Reading* Alignment to Criteria, from SY23-24 version of Into Reading**
4.8 No evidence of phoneme segmentation and/or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	*Into Reading* includes phoneme segmentation and phoneme-grapheme mapping practices in all spelling instruction.
4.11 Spelling patterns for each phoneme are taught all at once (e.g., all spelling of long /ā/) instead of a systematic progression to develop automaticity with individual grapheme/phonemes.	*Into Reading* introduces spelling patterns for each phoneme in a systematic progression that allows students to develop automaticity with individual grapheme/phonemes.

Components Supporting Assessment

As noted in The Reading League's review, implementation of *Into Reading* is supported by both print and digital resources. Use of digital resources, including assessments, allows districts to take full advantage of HMH's robust data and reporting to make instructional decisions. HMH believes a variety of resources are best suited to meet the needs of today's classroom.

HMH Into Reading has become a leading choice for districts across the country because it is proven to support educators in creating positive student learning outcomes in an affirming learning environment that makes each and every student feel respected, important, and proud.