THE READING LEAGUE

Curriculum Navigation Report

Reading Simplified, Grades K–3

Reading SIMPLIFIED®

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

Introduction

CURRICULUM EVALUATION GUIDELINES DESCRIPTION

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

Hennessy, 2020, pg. 8.

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

Curriculum Description

The evaluation on the following pages features a review of Reading Simplified, which is created for students in Grades K–3, a subset of the Reading Simplified complete system for Tiers 1–3 for beginning or struggling preK–12 readers.

For this report, reviewers closely examined both the program's teacher-facing and student-facing materials. This includes teacher-facing resources, such as the program's Teacher Manual and related teacher resources. Additionally, the team reviewed all student materials from preK–Grade 3. This includes Reading Simplified's Picture Dictionary for teaching difficult or unknown terminology. It does not include a review of additional online resources, including Reading Simplified Academy, which is often used in tandem with the curriculum. Please see the publisher's response for additional information.

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



1 Red Flag statement is False.



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



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



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



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

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

Overall Design and Delivery

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

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

In Reading Simplified, students practice reading and writing the same skill multiple times to build accuracy and fluency. Within a daily lesson, students might build or manipulate five words using grapheme tiles, sort twelve words by spelling pattern, write eight words grapheme by grapheme, and read a poem or other decodable texts in which these patterns appear five times (Grade 1 Student Materials, pp. B-77–B-84). Reviewers noted that vocabulary is not deliberately practiced; however, this is not a primary focus of the Reading Simplified curriculum. The program incorporates daily retrieval practice through guided oral reading passages. In fact, the guided oral reading procedure explicitly states, "when a student misreads a word, usually provide the least amount of support to enable him to figure out the word on his own." (Teacher Manual, p. 101)

Reading Simplified states that the program "builds strong phonics mastery through cumulative review and the strategic paired contrasts embedded in Switch It" (Teacher Manual, p. 185, p. 211). Switch It is a core instructional routine in which students manipulate individual phonemes within words, with a focus on letter–sound correspondences. For example, students replace one phoneme at a time (e.g., cat → mat → bat), requiring them to attend to changes in sounds and corresponding graphemes. This routine supports the development of phoneme segmentation and phoneme manipulation skills. Even as students are learning new, more advanced vowel patterns in reading and writing, they still work on practicing and strengthening their basic short vowel knowledge through the Switch It routine, highlighting the program's emphasis on cumulative review.

Students are also expected to know previously taught concepts as they come up in future texts. For example, in a Grade 1 lesson where they are taught the spellings for the long /ē/ sound (e.g., e, ee, y, e_e, and ea), students read a passage that expects them to know and practice previously learned phonics skills including: /or/ in "nor," /ck/ in "stick," /ə/ in "touch," /wh/ in "what" (Grade 1, Student Materials, B-109). Finally, Reading Simplified incorporates cumulative review by systematically reintroducing previously taught high-frequency words in student reading passages.

The curriculum states that it includes "year-long interleaving—especially through Switch It—[which] embodies this faster, research-aligned approach" (Teacher Manual, p. 211). Reviewers observed that previously taught words reappear in Read It passages, providing opportunities for further review. In Grade 1, after students learn long "o" and long "e" spellings, the curriculum includes lessons that intentionally interleave these two vowel patterns. During these lessons, students search through a decodable text to identify and compare different spelling options for the two sounds, reinforcing discrimination across patterns while supporting cumulative review. Reviewers also noted, however, that some passages include words containing spelling patterns that have not yet been explicitly taught.

Regarding student interest, Reading Simplified added additional passages to increase engagement and provide greater variety in student reading materials. These materials, entitled Decoding Discoveries, include STEM-related content. Games are also purposefully included to foster student interest and engagement. Titles include Steal It, Snakes and Ladders, Roll It, Tic-Tac-Toe, 4-in-a-Row, and Rainbow Land. An example of Tic-Tac-Toe can be found in the kindergarten materials, where students are tasked to read the word on the Tic-Tac-Toe board and place their marker wherever they read the word.

Reviewers observed that it was difficult to clearly identify the components and procedures associated with each part of the program, which affected the overall cohesion of the curriculum. Although each component targets a specific skill, the relationships among components are not always explicit. The review team also noted that Reading Simplified requires substantial prior knowledge and training on the part of the teacher for effective implementation. Without clear guidance, novice or struggling teachers may omit key elements or discontinue use of the resource altogether.

Finally, the program's overall usability for whole-group instruction was difficult to determine, as many of the instructional routines (e.g., Switch It, Build It) are written for small group implementation rather than a full class setting. Reviewers noted that the program appears to be primarily designed for small-group instruction, tutoring, or homeschooling. The "possible scope and sequence" includes differentiated lesson suggestions for approaching, on-level, and above-level groups (Teacher Manual, pp. 185–297). The Teacher Manual also states that:

> Reading Simplified's three-component lesson—re-reading for fluency, word work, and guided oral reading—can absolutely be taught in a whole-group setting; however, our experience and data consistently show that diagnostically driven small-group instruction accelerates progress more efficiently, especially for students with significant reading gaps. (p. 110)

A significant component of the program relies on teachers anticipating student errors and responding through guided coaching and correction. The Teacher Manual emphasizes the instructional value of errors, stating, "Remember, don't be afraid of mistakes—it is where the best learning happens. Use errors as launchpads for new insights. Our aim is to respond to students' responses and lead them to the next level" (p. 80).

Reviewers also expressed usability concerns related to Reading Simplified's materials. For example, the font used in the decodable passages can make words difficult to read. In the passage "The Magic of 'e,'" the word "often" may appear as "of ten," creating potential confusion for students (Grade 1 Student Materials, p. B-213).

Usability depends heavily on teacher training. Once instructional routines are learned, they are repeated daily; however, navigating the curriculum to learn these routines can be challenging. Effective implementation requires substantial background knowledge on the part of the teacher. Reviewers also noted that the use of the dynamic assessment could be more explicitly clarified in the manual, as it provides critical guidance for lesson structure and clarifies what students are expected to master within each instructional pathway. Finally, the team suggested that providing a clear "roadmap" of the materials—indicating where to begin and how to progress through lessons—would improve usability and support more consistent implementation.

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).	1
1.2: Guidance to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	1
1.3: Supporting materials do not provide a systematic scope and sequence nor opportunities for practice and review of elements taught (e.g., phonics, decoding, encoding).	1

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) as a focus of instruction without moving to the phoneme level.	1	
1.8: Blends such as /b/ /l/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds.	1	
1.9: Students do not practice the phonemes as soon as they learn the graphemes.	1	
1.10: Instruction is focused on letters only without explicit instruction and practice with the phonemes that letters represent.	1	
1.11: Phoneme awareness is not taught as a foundational reading skill.	1	
1.12: Phoneme awareness is not assessed and monitored (e.g., a student's ability to identify the initial, final, and medial phonemes in a word).	1	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Phonemic awareness is taught as a foundational reading skill, with instruction at the phoneme level beginning right away in kindergarten. Reviewers noted little emphasis on larger units of sound, such as syllables or onsets and rimes. A strong emphasis is placed on mapping phonemes to graphemes throughout the program. For example, one procedure instructs teachers to have students "erase and say each sound" to reinforce phoneme segmentation and letter–sound knowledge (Teacher Manual, p. 87). Similarly, during the Write It routine, teachers are directed to erase student writing and have students rewrite words if they are not orally producing the corresponding sounds while writing the graphemes (Teacher Manual, p. 87). Additionally, blends are treated as individual phonemes rather than single units.

Reading Simplified includes assessment of phonemic awareness through multiple tools. The Snapshot Informal Assessment is a diagnostic measure used to place students into instructional groups. Within this assessment, Measure #2 evaluates phoneme segmentation, while Measures #3 and #4 assess phoneme blending.

In addition, the Reading Simplified Dynamic Assessment is a one-page, lesson-embedded assessment completed daily during instruction. This tool is used to inform lesson planning for the following day. During routines such as Build It and Switch It, teachers assess students' phonemic awareness, specifically in the areas of segmenting, blending, and manipulating phonemes. The assessment allows teachers to note which phonemes (e.g., initial, medial, final) present difficulty for students (Teacher Resources, p. 178).

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

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

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

By following Reading Simplified's scope and sequence and using the provided assessment tools, instruction is designed to intentionally target and monitor the development of phonics and letter-sound correspondences. Guided Oral Reading: Putting It All Together serves as a culminating activity in which skills practiced during Word Work routines (e.g., Switch It, Read It, Sort It, Write It) are applied within connected text (Teacher Manual, p. 97). Skills, old and new, are consistently reviewed, both within the program's texts and targeted review weeks.

Phonics instruction is embedded throughout the program's Word Work activities, including the Build It, Switch It, Read It, Sort It, and Write It routines. Reading Simplified follows an instructional sequence that introduces consonants and vowels in a developmentally appropriate progression. For example, the initial set of sounds taught includes /ă/, /d/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /s/, /t/, and /th/.

Blending is also taught explicitly during the Read It routine. The Teacher Manual directs teachers to coach students through continuous blending by prompting them to "blend these two sounds together… now keep holding this sound and add the next sound," revealing one sound at a time (p. 77). Furthermore, Reading Simplified discourages guessing at words. To address this, the program recommends the Points Game, a brief instructional activity designed to reinforce sound-by-sound decoding. The Teacher Manual states that the game "flips the script on guessing and makes sound-by-sound decoding the clear winner." (p. 82). As implemented, this activity provides a clear, immediate way to redirect students toward accurate, sound-by-sound decoding.

Keyword supports for letter-sound correspondences are present, though not central to the program's design. However, the team did note the inclusion of "key sentences" for long vowel sounds, which incorporate a word representing each spelling of the target vowel pattern. These sentences are located in the Teacher Resources (pp. 54–55).

Reviewers also observed that phonics patterns sometimes appear in decodable texts prior to formal instruction within the program's scope and sequence. For example, in the Grade 1 text "The Hot Day," the target skill is CVC word review. However, the passage includes words such as *"very," "feels," "sees,"* and *"cause,"* which contain vowel patterns that are not introduced until later in the instructional sequence (Grade 1 Student Materials, pp. B-3–B-6).

The scope and sequence addresses this practice by noting that, in Grade 1, some exposure to multisyllabic words and advanced spelling patterns is expected, particularly for students who received kindergarten instruction. For students who are new to the program, the Teacher Manual recommends scaffolding through strategies such as Blend As You Read by Chunk or Buddy Reading, and explicitly pointing out and naming unfamiliar graphemes during reading (Teacher Manual, p. 211).

Finally, reviewers also noted that direct instruction of certain spelling patterns is not always explicitly modeled prior to student practice. For instance, when students are introduced to the long /ā/ sound and its spellings (ey, a_e, ay, ai, a), the initial instructional activity is Sort It, during which students read and categorize words by spelling pattern. Although teachers are expected to monitor, coach, and correct errors, the materials do not provide explicit teacher dialogue for direct instruction of the new spellings. Following the sorting activity, students read portions of a text containing these spelling patterns (Grade 1 Student Materials, p. B-150). A key sentence is provided to represent the long /ā/ sound (e.g., "They came to play with the train on the table."). However, explicit teacher modeling or guided instruction for introducing these spelling patterns is limited prior to student application.

1D: Fluency

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

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

In Reading Simplified, students are tasked to read aloud daily during the Guided Oral Reading portion of the lesson plan. During this time, the students read aloud, while the teacher provides coaching and corrective feedback as needed. Teachers are also reminded that, "When in small groups, have students take turns so you can be sure each student is challenged and given individualized feedback" (Teacher Manual, p. 101). Additionally, the Teacher Manual emphasizes rereading for fluency as "It improves reading, speed, accuracy, and prosody" (Teacher Manual, p. 43). Repeated reading also occurs daily during the Guided Oral Reading portion of the lesson plan, and features text that is not patterned and is mostly decodable. However, reviewers did note that the vast majority of passages are narrative texts, poems, or songs.

Reading Simplified emphasizes accuracy, and the teacher is always prompted to provide error correction if necessary. The program provides a one-page guide for educators that includes tips for word-level errors. This resource offers teachers prompts to correct errors based on the type of error made. Additionally, word-level fluency practice occurs within the Make It Stick activities. This features a page of words that follow a targeted phonics pattern. Teacher directions prompt educators to have students read all the designated words in one minute (Grade 1, Student Materials, B328).

Finally, Reading Simplified does not include formal fluency assessments. The program recommends using an outside, well-validated ORF measure for formal fluency assessment and progress monitoring.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING

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

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

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING	SCORE
2-4.1: (LC, RC, W) In early grades, the instructional framework is primarily a workshop approach, emphasizing student choice and implicit, incidental, or embedded learning.	1
2-4.2: (LC, RC, W) Students are not exposed to rich vocabulary and complex syntax in reading and writing materials.	n/a
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.	n/a
2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.	n/a
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level questioning skills.	n/a

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Non-Negotiables for Language Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Writing are largely not applicable. However, reviewers acknowledged that the curriculum is not a workshop approach and does not emphasize student choice.

As a foundational reading program, Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency—but it does not address the non-negotiables for language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing components of skilled reading. For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to provide systematic instruction in vocabulary, background knowledge, syntax, inference, literacy knowledge, and writing. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

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).	n/a
2.2: Opportunities to bridge existing knowledge to new knowledge is not apparent in instruction.	n/a
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.	n/a

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Background Knowledge are not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. As such, it does not emphasize knowledge-building through read-alouds or other structured opportunities designed to construct and bridge background knowledge. Approximately 80% of student reading materials consist of simple narrative texts, poems, and songs aligned to targeted phonics patterns. The program includes a small number of Decoding Discoveries passages that present STEM, history, and fictional or simulated scenarios, such as maps or cooking directions, written in interactive formats (e.g., recipes) to support decoding practice (Grade 1 Student Materials, pp. B-393–B-395). Students are offered some exposure to informational text. For example, in Grade 1, students encounter three short informational passages about animals (e.g., *Big, Bigger, and Biggest*; Grade 1 Student Materials, pp. B-247–B-249) and biographies of Martin Luther King, Jr. (pp. B-115-121) and Frederick Douglass (pp. B-165-168). For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to provide students with opportunities to build and integrate background knowledge. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

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.	n/a
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.	n/a
2.10: Students are not exposed to and taught Tier 3 words.	n/a
2.11: Explicit instruction in morphology is not present and/or not taught according to a scope and sequence (i.e., simple to complex) consistently throughout K–5 instruction.	1

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Vocabulary are largely not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency, However, some vocabulary instruction is embedded within recurring routines. The program also provides educators with a picture dictionary as a resource to teach difficult words and instructs teachers to "provide a brief preview of unfamiliar words or concepts to support comprehension" as necessary (Teacher Manual, p. 101). It is important to note that texts do not offer students exposure to Tier 3 words as they mostly consist of simple narratives and poetry, so additional support in vocabulary development is necessary to ensure comprehensive literacy instruction.

Reviewers noted that morphology instruction is addressed through the Morph It activity, which is designed to build students' morphological awareness. Practice opportunities within this routine include word sorts, spelling and writing tasks, reading activities paired with targeted questions, and an advanced Morph It variation. These components are embedded within instruction based on teacher judgment and identified student need for morphology instruction. Additional Morph It activities are included in the student materials. For example, in Grade 1, students complete a practice page that asks them to add "-s," "-ing," and "-ed" to words like "jump" and "count." These activities are offered once students are in the "blending by chunk" phase, and the focus is more on decoding than meaning. For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to provide students with opportunities to build a depth of vocabulary knowledge. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Language Structures are largely not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. As such, lessons in grammar and syntax are not present within the program's materials. Students are expected to write complete sentences in dictation activities, and teachers are asked to correct or coach them when errors occur, but there is no explicit instruction in syntax or grammar. Teachers are reminded to draw student attention to a basic list of principles regarding punctuation and mechanics. This includes beginning a sentence with a capital letter, capitalizing the pronoun "I," and so forth (Teacher Manual, p. 105). However, reviewers observed no evidence of explicit teacher modeling related to sentence formation or grammar use. As noted previously, Reading Simplified does not emphasize memorization, and students are not expected to memorize parts of speech. That said, reviewers also found that parts of speech are not explicitly introduced or discussed within the instructional materials. For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to provide students with opportunities to work with the conventions of print, syntax, and grammar. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

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).	n/a
2.27: Students do not practice inference as a discrete skill.	n/a

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Verbal Reasoning are not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. As such, the program does not focus on teaching inference strategies or their connection to background knowledge. During Guided Oral Reading, teachers are tasked with monitoring learner comprehension. The Teacher Manual states the following:

> As students take turns reading, monitor their comprehension. For instance, if the text is short and they laugh at a funny part, then that may be enough demonstration to indicate they are comprehending. Or, if you don't observe any student comments or non-verbals that cue you that they understand the text, pause once or twice and ask a comprehension monitoring question. (p. 102)

However, beyond this general guidance, the materials provide no direction for explicit comprehension instruction, including inference modeling. For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to teach students inferencing strategies and provide students with opportunities to practice inferring as a discrete skill. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Literacy Knowledge are not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. As such, instruction in genre types and text features is not the focus of this program. Outside of the Decodable Discovery materials, the program's texts are mainly narrative stories, poems, or songs, and the inclusion of informational text is very limited. For instance, in Grade 1, the team observed three informational texts, all of which featured the descriptive text structure (Grade 1 Student Materials, B247-B249). Furthermore, there is no scripting or assistance for teachers or students on how to work with specific text structures and their corresponding signal words. For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to explicitly teach students about the varying genre types and text structures, as well as their corresponding signal words. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

SECTION 3: Reading Comprehension

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

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Reading Comprehension are largely not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. As such, students are not taught to use comprehension-monitoring strategies such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, noting text structure, inferencing, and fix-ups. They also do not practice these strategies throughout the year using a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do). Reviewers noted that while the main idea is mentioned in the Teacher Manual on page 102 and students are encouraged to monitor for meaning as they read, no explicit instruction of this or other comprehension strategies was observed.

Students practice reading text centered on a particular phonics skill or pattern; however, these texts do not build knowledge connected to a main topic or theme. For example, in Grade 1, when learning about the /oo/ sound, students will read "Boom, Boom, Ain't It Great to Be Crazy" (song), "Clues at the Zoo" (rhyme), "Jellyfish Stew" (silly poem), "It Just Takes Practice" (poem), and The Rooster and the Fox (short narrative passage). These texts are not text sets centered around a common idea or geared toward building learner knowledge.

Reviewers noted that students do not engage in independent reading as part of the daily lessons, and program texts are neither predictable nor leveled. However, materials for comprehension instruction are not part of this program. Instead, teachers are encouraged to help students monitor their comprehension while reading by retelling what the story is mostly about, which the Teacher Manual states "is the most important comprehension skill that we need to ensure everyone develops" (Teacher Manual, p. 102). For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to explicitly teach students ways to monitor their reading comprehension. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers.

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 is an isolated add-on.	n/a	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified addresses handwriting instruction by prioritizing free-form letter writing and limited use of tracing. The program suggests teaching handwriting by starting with a stroke and including a daily handwriting drill. The Teacher Manual directs students to "write as many lower case letters of the alphabet [as they can] in one minute, starting back at 'a' after they reach 'z'" (Teacher Manual, p. 145). However, explicit teacher scripting or guided language to support letter formation is not provided. Instead, the program suggests that schools may use their existing handwriting programs to support this component. Finally, additional support for handwriting instruction and letter names is available through the Reading Simplified Academy. This resource is designed to be used alongside any reading program and is applicable across grade levels, including preK and kindergarten (Student Materials, p. A-iv). The publisher clarified that a more comprehensive handwriting resource is now available.

4B: Writing — Spelling

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR SPELLING	SCORE	
4.5: There is no evidence of explicit spelling instruction, no spelling scope and sequence, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics/decoding scope and sequence.	1	
4.6: There is no evidence of phoneme segmentation or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	1	
4.7: Patterns in decoding are not featured in encoding/spelling; spelling lists are based on content or frequency of word use and not connected to decoding/phonics lessons.	1	
4.8: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	1	
4.9: Spelling patterns for each phoneme are taught all at once (e.g., all spellings of long /ā/) instead of a systematic progression to develop automaticity with individual graphemes/phonemes.	4	

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's phonics and spelling scopes and sequences are closely aligned. When students are introduced to a phonics skill for reading, they are also expected to spell it. Daily lessons include a Read It or Sort It component focused on decoding, along with a *Write It* activity that targets encoding of the same pattern.

During the *Switch It* routine, students use grapheme tiles to build and manipulate words while vocalizing the sounds associated with each grapheme. The activity functions similarly to word chaining, requiring students to manipulate individual phonemes to create new words. For example, Grade 1 students may build a sequence such as *step* → *stop* → *slop* → *slip* → *skip* (Teacher Resources, p. 30).

Decoding and spelling patterns remain aligned throughout instruction. Word lists for encoding practice are provided in the Write It resources, and additional words and sentences for dictation are included in the scope and sequence located in the back of the Teacher Manual (pp. 90–93). As noted previously, students are not directed to memorize whole words; rather, they are consistently expected to articulate the sounds of target phonemes as they write corresponding graphemes.

Reviewers observed that the scope and sequence introduces multiple spellings for long vowel sounds simultaneously. For example, long /ō/ spellings (e.g., ow, oa, o, o_e, oe) are introduced within a single lesson (Grade 1 Student Materials, p. B-77). Although students continue to practice these spellings in subsequent lessons, the initial introduction occurs all at once, and this instructional approach is consistent across long vowel patterns. The publisher clarified that this approach is intentional to the program's design; see the Publisher's Response for more information.

4C: Writing — Composition

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

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

Reading Simplified's practices for Writing Composition are not applicable. Reading Simplified focuses on the word recognition components of skilled reading, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. As such, writing composition is not the focus of this program, and student writing only occurs during dictation and writing tasks. For that reason, adopters must ensure that additional high-quality materials are in place to explicitly teach students writing composition skills. Without a complementary program, students will not receive the full range of instruction necessary to develop into skilled, proficient readers and writers.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT

SECTION 5: Assessment

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

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

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

Evidence from the curriculum materials indicates the following:

As a foundational skills program, Reading Simplified's assessments focus exclusively on word recognition skills, including phoneme awareness, phonics, reading of nonsense and high-frequency words, student frustration level with independent reading, spelling, and sentence reading and writing. Teachers are directed to target a student's "most pressing need" or the skill that, when strengthened, will lead to the greatest overall progress (Teacher Manual, p. 111). Teachers are also guided to use the first few weeks of school to determine students' areas of need based on results from the San Diego Quick Assessment, the Snapshot Informal Assessment (which evaluates decoding and blending), DIBELS (or other universal screeners), and listening to students read aloud. Additionally, misread words are consistently counted as errors every time they occur.

While Reading Simplified makes reference to a student's "overall reading level," this seems to be based on the San Diego Quick Assessment, a word-identification test (Teacher Manual, p. 112). This assessment determines which Pathway learners will begin in. Reviewers noted that the program recommends most students start in Step 1 of the Streamlined Pathway; however, older students may begin at a more advanced step based on their performance on the San Diego Quick assessment. Assessments do not result in benchmarks according to a leveled-text gradient (e.g., levels "A" to "Z"). After determining a student's overall reading level (or grade level) for the Streamlined Pathway, teachers are then asked to determine a student's need based on diagnostic assessment data, such as phonics skills. For example, the Snapshot Informal Assessment is used to determine what phonics skills are needed (Teacher Resources, p. 161). Additionally, the Streamlined Pathway includes check-in assessments to make sure students have mastered target Pathway skills.

Additionally, Reading Simplified uses the Snapshot Informal Assessment and the program's Dynamic Assessment to collect student data. Teachers are encouraged to use the Dynamic Assessment daily to inform and tailor the following day's lesson based on students' needs. Phoneme awareness is embedded in both the Snapshot Informal Assessment and the Dynamic Assessment tools, and it's assessed daily during the program's Switch It activities. Nonsense Word Assessment is also part of the Snapshot Informal Assessment tool.

While one of the program's activities includes a timed measure of word reading, reviewers did not observe an oral reading fluency (ORF) assessment within Reading Simplified's assessment suite. Furthermore, vocabulary, syntax, and listening comprehension are not assessed. Teachers are directed to listen to students read and then use student reactions or brief check-in questions as indicators of comprehension. However, this approach provides limited data to systematically evaluate students' language comprehension. The publisher further clarified that Reading Simplified's internal assessment tools are intentionally focused on foundational reading skills and are designed to be used alongside the broader school's/LEA's assessment suite for language comprehension.

Finally, Reading Simplified does not include resources to assess multilingual learners in their home language. As such, educators would also need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that multilingual learners are assessed in their home language. However, the team noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.

Final Report Summary

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

STRENGTHS

The practice opportunities in Reading Simplified occur frequently, are cumulative, and place a strong emphasis on phonics mastery. Students engage in repeated word building, sorting, and encoding to reinforce target skills. Practice is distributed across routines, incorporates retrieval and interleaving, and revisits previously taught patterns to support retention and automaticity.

Overall, Reading Simplified's instructional routines are highly structured, skill-specific, and cumulative. Core routines such as Switch It, Build It, and Guided Oral Reading provide repeated practice aligned to phoneme manipulation and orthographic mapping.

Reading Simplified's curriculum is well-designed for one-on-one or small-group implementation. The program relies heavily on diagnostic responsiveness, individualized error correction, and hands-on manipulation of grapheme materials, all features well-suited to intervention contexts.

Reading Simplified demonstrates strong decoding and encoding instruction through its systematic phonics scope and sequence, explicit blending routines, and integrated Word Work activities. Students engage in cumulative practice across reading, spelling, and sentence writing, which supports orthographic mapping and automaticity.

Reading Simplified incorporates several embedded scaffolds within its instructional routines. Teachers are provided with guided blending prompts, error-responsive coaching strategies, and structured Word Work routines and activities that break decoding and encoding skills into manageable steps. Cumulative review further supports skill retention and transfer.

CHALLENGES

Reading Simplified includes an intentional scope and sequence as well as recurring routines and targeted corrective feedback. Feedback prompts are included for common spelling patterns, but for others, teachers are expected to supply the explanations, modeling, and corrective feedback based on their own knowledge of word recognition. As a result, implementation fidelity and student outcomes may vary depending on teacher expertise and training.

Reading Simplified's implementation support is built around a stable lesson architecture, diagnostic planning tools, and video modeling rather than traditional scripted lessons. While the program's instructional routines are a relative strength once learned, explicit step-by-step guidance for teachers within the core materials is limited. The review team did not have access to the optional online Reading Simplified Academy, an add-on service recommended by the publisher for additional instructional modeling and professional learning support.

Clear, explicit directions for the use of materials and instructional implementation were not consistently embedded within the program. Reading Simplified is designed to scale through diagnostically matched small group instruction within Tier I classrooms. While this approach has yielded positive results, especially with students with significant reading gaps, it may be challenging for schools that are new to this format to scale to whole-group instruction with fidelity.

Reading Simplified's decodables are not fully controlled texts, and phonics patterns sometimes appear in decodable texts prior to formal instruction within the program's scope and sequence. For instance, in the Grade 1 passage "The Hot Day," the instructional focus is CVC word review. However, the text includes words such as "very," "feels," "sees," and "cause," which contain vowel teams and advanced spelling patterns that are not introduced until later in the sequence. The publisher clarified that this is intentional according to the instructional design. Please see the Publisher's Response for more information.

Reading Simplified's handwriting programming provides opportunities for letter formation practice but relies heavily on external programs and teacher discretion for systematic instruction. As such, handwriting functions as an ancillary component rather than a central focus of the program. After the completion of the review, the publisher clarified that a more comprehensive handwriting resource is now available.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE



Reading Simplified, Grades K–3

Publisher's Response

To The Reading League's Curriculum Evaluation Report, May 2026

We are grateful to The Reading League for the time, care, and rigor they invested in evaluating Reading Simplified, and for the broader work of reviewing many of the country's most widely used reading programs. We share The Reading League's mission of advancing evidence-aligned reading instruction, and we are honored to be part of this effort. This response offers context on what the review found and how Reading Simplified fits into a comprehensive evidence-aligned literacy system.

Summary of Review Findings

The review's findings affirm that Reading Simplified is aligned with the science of reading across the foundational components central to our program's design:

Foundational Reading Components

Word Recognition Non-Negotiables—every criterion in this section was found as an evidence-aligned practice
Phonological and Phoneme Awareness—every criterion in this section was found as an evidence-aligned practice
Phonics and Phonic Decoding—nearly every criterion was found as an evidence-aligned practice
Fluency—every criterion was found as an evidence-aligned practice
Spelling—nearly every criterion was found as an evidence-aligned practice

Principles of the Learning Sciences

The review also affirmed that Reading Simplified incorporates key principles of the learning sciences, including deliberate and purposeful practice, retrieval practice, spaced and distributed practice, cumulative practice, interleaved practice, cohesion across program components, and materials that are intrinsically interesting and engaging for students.

Embedded Supports for Language and Vocabulary

Reading Simplified is a foundational reading program intended to be paired with a high-quality core ELA program. Even within that scope, reviewers acknowledged that the Reading Simplified system includes embedded scaffolds for vocabulary, comprehension, background knowledge, and connected reading—woven into our daily routines rather than treated as separate strands.

THE REVIEW ALSO NOTED THESE EXPLICIT STRENGTHS:

> *"A strong emphasis is placed on mapping phonemes to graphemes throughout the program."*

> *"The practice opportunities in Reading Simplified occur frequently, are cumulative, and place a strong emphasis on phonics mastery."*

> *"Reading Simplified's instructional routines are highly structured, skill-specific, and cumulative."*

> *"Reading Simplified demonstrates strong decoding and encoding instruction through its systematic phonics scope and sequence, explicit blending routines, and integrated Word Work activities."*

> *"Reading Simplified incorporates several embedded scaffolds within its instructional routines. Teachers are provided with guided blending prompts, error-responsive coaching strategies, and structured Word Work routines and activities that break decoding and encoding skills into manageable steps."*

On Suggested Areas for Refinement

Most of the suggested areas for refinement are areas we agree with. We, too, do not want teachers to learn Reading Simplified through reading a manual alone—and we haven't designed it that way. The review team, consistent with their established review process, did not have access to the *Reading Simplified Academy*, the online professional learning system where teachers actually learn and use our program. The Academy provides video demonstrations of every routine, expert-modeled case-study lessons, training in diagnostic thinking, and individualized coaching through our discussion board and Teachers' Lounge community. The Teacher's Manual, which was the only training support the review team had access to, is an offline companion to that system, not a substitute for it.

This design reflects decades of professional development research. Joyce and Showers (2002) found that theory and study alone (the equivalent of reading a manual) produces near-zero transfer to classroom practice, while combining demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching raises transfer rates to 95%. For this reason, the usability observations in the report actually reflect a deliberate design choice rather than a gap in support. Schools and districts adopting our program invest in **teacher learning alongside the curriculum**, and our outcome data show that this hybrid model accelerates progress, especially for students with significant reading gaps. We continue to refine the Teacher's Manual itself to make it still clearer for first-time readers, and we welcome the review's specific suggestions toward that end.

A fuller response to each finding, with page references and supporting research, is available at ReadingSimplified.com/TRL.

On the Research Base

Curriculum reviews are one important source of information for schools and districts. They are not the only source. Decision-makers should also weigh a program's underlying research base.

Reading Simplified was developed through years of classroom practice and research, including work connected to the IES-funded Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) at the University of North Carolina (later termed "Targeted Reading Instruction"). That 20-year body of work has been recognized by the **What Works Clearinghouse** and has one of the highest effect sizes on **Evidence for ESSA**. This research base helps explain why Reading Simplified emphasizes a streamlined yet flexible 3-component lesson, efficient instructional decision-making, responsiveness to student need, and accelerated movement toward accurate, fluent reading, rather than fixed, scripted, day-by-day plans.

On Continuous Improvement

We are grateful for The Reading League's exacting work and for the specific feedback offered in this report. Reading Simplified is continuously refined based on contemporary research, teacher feedback from our Academy community, and external review of the kind TRL has provided here. We remain committed to supporting schools and districts in delivering evidence-aligned reading instruction that accelerates progress for every student, especially those with the greatest reading gaps.

To learn more about The Reading League's curriculum evaluation work and access additional resources for adoption decisions, visit The Reading League Compass Curriculum Decision Makers page.