THE
READING
LEAGUE
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2024

Curriculum Navigation Report

**Into Reading Structured Literacy K-2
(2023-2024)**

REPORT 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, p. 8)

Due to the popularity of the science of reading movement, the term "science of reading" has been used as a marketing tool, promising a quick fix for administrators and decision makers seeking a product to check a box next to this buzzword. 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)*

Accordingly, The Reading League's *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (CEGs)* (CEGs) is 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.

This resource is 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 (i.e., "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, while red flags specify any non-aligned practices in the following areas:

- Word Recognition
- Language Comprehension
- Reading Comprehension
- Writing
- Assessment
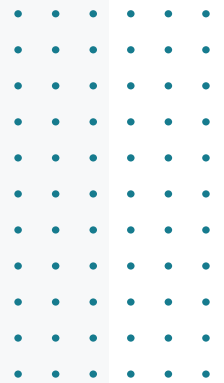
The CEGs have been used by educators, building and district leaders, local education agencies, and state education agencies as a primary tool to find evidence of red flags, or practices that may interfere with the development of skilled reading. This report was generated after a review of the curriculum using the March 2023 Curriculum

Evaluation Guidelines, which have been refined based on feedback, a lengthy pilot review, and have undergone an inter-rater reliability study with positive results. 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. 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 The evaluation on the following pages features the review of Into Reading's new foundational skill strand called Structured Literacy, which is part of the 2023-2024 version of Into Reading and was created for students in Grades K-2.

For this report, reviewers closely examined the updated teacher's editions; lesson materials, including precreated slide decks and blending boards; new student facing materials, including updated workbook pages; Sound Wall Cards; and other online materials.

Reviewers were selected based on their deep knowledge of the science of reading and knowledge of 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. 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.

01
Red Flag statement is False.

02
Red Flag statement is minimally True. Evidence is minimal or briefly mentioned.

03
Red Flag statement is mostly True. If applicable, evidence is in multiple places throughout the curriculum.

04
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, which are included in this narrative report.

For a more comprehensive description of the review process, visit The Reading League Compass's Curriculum Decision Makers page:
https://www.thereadingleague.org/compass/curriculum-decision-makers/

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

Into Reading's **word recognition** non-negotiables in the Structured Literacy strand are **"met."** The team found no evidence of use of the three-cueing system or student guidance to memorize any whole words without attending to sound/symbol correspondences. Additionally, the updated materials include a systematic scope and sequence as well as opportunities for student practice and review. The team did note, however, that the updated practice materials do not always encourage student use of learned strategies. For example, in a spelling practice worksheet from Grade K, Module 5, Week 1, the targeted spelling words are provided at the top of the page, so students just have to copy them instead of isolating the sounds to independently spell them.

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS	SCORE
1.7: Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) 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.	2

Into Reading's phonological and **phonemic awareness** practices in the Structured Literacy strand are **"mostly met."** Attention to individual phonemes begins right away in Grade 1 during the first week of Module 1. As students advance to Grade 2, instruction no longer includes larger units of phonological awareness as a part of instruction. Additionally, blends are presented as individual phonemes and graphemes throughout the program.

One feature that the team found to be especially helpful was the articulation resources available to educators. The teacher's guide provides a script for each sound, and the program includes articulation videos featuring children producing all 44 sounds. These materials are available in the Resources section of the online platform. Reviewers found the videos to be well crafted, clearly modeling accurate mouth movements. They did note, however, that there were two sounds that sounded inaccurate:
• /r/ - /er/
• /y/ - /ē/ /uh/

Following the review, the publisher corrected the inaccurate sounds within the videos.

Finally, while Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand offers teachers screening and diagnostic tools, it is not clear how students are monitored in daily instruction. Thus, educators must keep this in mind when using this curriculum and take extra steps to ensure that student progress is consistently tracked and addressed throughout the curriculum.

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
1.15: 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.	1
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/).	1
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.	1
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.	1
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.	1
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

Into Reading's **phonics and phonic decoding** practices in the Structured Literacy strand are **"mostly met."** Letter-sound correspondences are taught intentionally, and instruction is structured and sequential, building new lessons on concepts students have already learned. Instructional opportunities encourage students to apply their decoding skills, and memorization is not emphasized. Furthermore, segmenting and blending are explicitly taught and practiced daily during the phonological awareness warm-up, blending, and word building portions of the lesson plan.

While the updated materials provide educators with access to keywords within each lesson, there was not a stand-alone document to access this. When requested, Into Reading provided the review team with a document including the images and their related patterns. However, it was difficult to tell what the images referred to. For example, the e-e pattern was represented by a person at bat. When the team looked it up in the corresponding lesson, they found the keyword was "athlete." Thus, the team felt it would be helpful to make a separate resource with full sized images for educator access. Hearing this feedback, the publisher developed this resource and has made it available to all users.

The materials also include Alphafriend Cards that provide a character that begins with the target sound along with a grapheme. Each character also takes on the shape of the letter they represent. There are two types of Alphafriend Cards. The first shows the grapheme embedded in the Alphafriend character and the other depicts the Alphafriend alone. For example, "Ethel the Elephant" is posed in the shape of lowercase

"e." In one image, a purple lowercase "e" is superimposed on Ethel, while in the second image, the purple lowercase "e" is removed. The names of the Alphafriends serve as keywords and align with the pure, most common phoneme. The only Alphafriend that posed an issue was "X-ray Fox," which the team felt had the potential to be confusing for students. Reviewers also noted that all Alphafriends feature names/keywords that are two to three words in length, ranging from "Good-Guy-Gopher" to "Umbie Umbrella." Most of these words are multisyllabic, which can make it challenging to focus on the target sound. Additionally, Into Reading uses the Alphafriend Songs to support students in mastering the vowels. However, these songs included many sounds, making it challenging to identify and focus on the target sound. It can be confusing to determine when to use words suggested by the Alphafriends resource and when to use other key words. The publisher clarified that the keywords are, in fact, those listed on the slide decks and teacher scripting and that the Alphafriends Cards serve as a supplementary resource.

The Structured Literacy strand uses the Heart Word method to teach irregular words. This strategy teaches students to use their phoneme knowledge to decode regular word parts, while irregular ones must be "known by heart." Thus, students are taught to analyze irregular high-frequency words for both regular and irregular word parts once sound spellings have been taught. The team, however, was not sure how irregular words are taught in Grade K. The scope and sequence indicates irregular words are taught in Grades K-2 during the Irregular Words portion of the lesson. This information is included in the Heart Word Instructional

Routine document, which is listed at the beginning of the lesson as a resource, and in the online platform it is linked in the Teacher eBook.

Decodable passages are included as a part of the Structured Literacy materials. The reviewers questioned the routine as the teacher reads the entire passage first while the students follow along. This approach may limit students' opportunities to engage in active decoding and practice their word attack skills independently. Additionally, the Start Right Reader Decodable Texts are available as web-based interactives and printables and are suggested as resources to reinforce a previously taught skill. The interactive option can also be read aloud to students. However, the purpose of the read aloud option was not clear to reviewers as decodable texts are intended to be used to practice newly learned and cumulative skills.
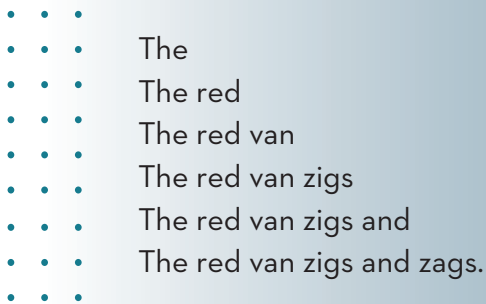
Finally, the team also noted that while students are offered practice opportunities within the Teach and Practice section of the lesson plan, this primarily focuses on encoding rather than decoding. Although additional decoding opportunities are provided in the slide deck, these words need to be explicitly incorporated into the lesson to ensure sufficient decoding practice.

1D: Fluency

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

RED FLAG 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.	2
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

Into Reading's **fluency** practices in the Structured Literacy strand are **"mostly met."** To begin, the program's fluency instruction does not focus on silent reading, and both reading accuracy and automaticity are emphasized as the hallmarks of fluent reading. Pyramid reading is the primary means of fluency instruction, which uses sentences from decodable texts. In this exercise, each line in the "pyramid" adds a new word, with the bottom line containing the full sentence. An example of this taken from the Grade 1, Module 9, Week 2, Lesson 9, teacher's edition (p. 74) is shown in the following box:

The

The red

The red van

The red van zigs

The red van zigs and

The red van zigs and zags.

Fluency pyramids are presented throughout the curriculum and were noted within the following activities including Fluency with Decodable Text: Phrasing and Intonation (Grades 1 and 2), Fluency with Decodable Text: Accuracy and Self Correction (Grade 1), and Fluency with Decodable Text: Expression (Grade 2). While this activity allows students to focus on one new word at a time while repeating the other words, learners would benefit from the addition of other activities to develop accuracy and automaticity at the word level. The publisher noted that students practice word-level reading daily in the Warm Up Blending Review portion of the lesson located within the slide decks. This can be found at the beginning of every daily lesson, which states, "Have children review previously taught sounds by decoding graphemes and blending sounds together to read words with automaticity." This is primarily decoding practice, but again, students would benefit from multiple readings of a word to develop accuracy and automaticity at the word level. For text-reading fluency, the curriculum recommends the use of choral and repeated readings and provides teachers with instructional routines and practice activities within the Editable Weekly Plans. Teachers must consult these resources in addition to the Teacher's Guide to optimally structure practice activities.

Finally, fluency assessment, through the use of an oral reading fluency (ORF) measure, is available in the curriculum's screening materials as well as the end-of-module inventories. The measure counts words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) and does not allow for the acceptance of incorrectly decoded words for any reason.

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 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.	
2-4.2: (LC, RC, W) Students are not exposed to rich vocabulary and complex syntax in reading and writing materials.	
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.	
2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.	
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level thinking skills.	

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand non-negotiables for **language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing** are **"not applicable."** The Structured Literacy strand was created as an explicit, systematic, program to address students' foundational word-reading skills. As such, the curriculum focuses mainly on word recognition, including phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition as well as fluency. Aspects connected to language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing are addressed within the core Teacher's Guide and materials. That being said, reviewers felt it important to note that the term Structured Literacy encompasses both word recognition and language comprehension skills and that the program's title may be confusing to educators as it suggests

a comprehensive approach. The program would also benefit from increased clarity regarding the implementation of the core Teacher's Guide and connected materials as they relate to the Structured Literacy strand. This additional guidance would help support educators to integrate all necessary components effectively.

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

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **background knowledge** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum's main focus is teaching students to acquire accurate and automatic decoding skills, and as such, practices for building background knowledge are not emphasized. The team did note that occasionally a gray box will appear next to the decodable text script that contains content knowledge related to the topic of the decodable text. For example, in Grade 1, Module 9, Lesson 8, teacher's edition (p. 66), students are tasked to read a decodable passage about boats. Here the gray box includes questions and scripting related to the decodable story's content including the following:

• What kind of boats have you seen?
• What would you like to do on a boat?

Again, while the Structured Literacy strand's primary purpose is to build learner word recognition skills, the team felt these opportunities to build and connect student background knowledge could be expanded upon to enhance comprehension and make the learning experience more engaging and meaningful.

2C: Vocabulary

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

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR VOCABULARY	SCORE
2.7: Vocabulary worksheets and activities are used with little opportunity for deep understanding of vocabulary words.	
2.8: Instruction includes memorization of isolated words and definitions out of context.	
2.9: Tier 2 words are not taught explicitly and practiced; students are not given opportunities to use them in their speech, see them in print, and use them in writing.	2
2.10: Students are not exposed to and taught Tier 3 words.	
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.	2

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **vocabulary** are **"mostly met."** Vocabulary activities are included in the Know It, Show It independent practice workbook. These activities, however, offer students limited opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of targeted vocabulary. For instance, in Grade 2, Module 9, students are tasked to read sentences and choose a word from the box that means the opposite of a given underlined word. One sentence featured on the worksheet reads, *"A wide truck drove down a _____ tunnel."* To complete this activity correctly, students should select the antonym "narrow" from the box at the top of the page and write it on the line. The review team noted that the majority of the Know It, Show It vocabulary activities were of a similar format and didn't allow students to develop a breadth of vocabulary knowledge. The Structured Literacy strand is not a standalone curriculum but rather a part of the comprehensive Into Reading curriculum. This evidence shows that as such, adopters of the curriculum must tap into all core components to ensure students are receiving robust language instruction and seek opportunities on their own to connect instruction when delivering the program. It is important to note that when words are introduced for decoding instruction, meaning is not addressed. It will be important for educators to consider whether or not students, particularly multilingual

learners, know the meanings of the words they are decoding. For example, in Grade 1, Module 12, Lesson 3, students read the word "haul" and then engage in word chaining to create the words "Paul" and "pause." However, this is a pure decoding exercise, and word meaning is not discussed. Reviewers also noted several examples of robust, Tier 2 words used during the decoding portion of the lesson, including *zags, chant, stump, flush,* and *wade* (in Grade K) and *myth, pretended, extended, limited, planks, pitched,* and *quilted* (in Grade 1). Adding activities and strategies that deepen knowledge of these terms would only strengthen student understanding of these high-utility words and would better reflect the structured literacy approach which addresses not just decoding but semantics as well.

Regarding morphology, there is a scope and sequence for Grades 1 and 2 that moves from simple to complex to teach inflectional suffixes and common prefixes. Inflectional suffixes are taught starting in Grade 1, Module 7, Lessons 11 through 14, where the suffixes -s and -es are introduced. The suffix -ed is then taught in Grade 1, Module 8, Lessons 1 through 4. Students later learn the common prefixes un-, re-, pre-, in-, dis-, and mis- in Grade 2, Module 12, Lessons 6-12.

The review team found that the prefixes are explicitly taught and practiced through an "I do, We do, You do" approach to decipher word meaning. For example, in Grade 2, Module 12, Lesson 7 (pp. 420-421), students learn that un- "is a prefix that means not or opposite." They then break down and discuss the meaning of "unhappy," "unwell," "unlock," and "untie." The team also noted that explicit connection to meaning is not the case with the inflectional suffixes targeted, which would strengthen the quality of understanding of the words learned.

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

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **language structures** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum's main focus is teaching students to acquire accurate and automatic word recognition skills, and as such, sentence comprehension work is not emphasized. The team noted that although student work with language structures is not explicitly covered in the instructional materials of the Structured Literacy strand, it is, however, assessed in every unit assessment. The publisher clarified that the Structured Literacy strand is not a standalone curriculum but rather a part of the comprehensive Into Reading curriculum; therefore, the assessments cover all literacy strands explicitly taught across each week and module. Adopters of the curriculum will need to tap into all core components when delivering Into Reading.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

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

RED FLAG 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).	
2.27: Students do not practice inference as a discrete skill.	

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **verbal reasoning** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum's main focus is teaching students to acquire accurate and automatic word recognition skills, and as such, inferencing is not emphasized. The program does include limited activities to tap into student understanding. For example, after reading a decodable text, students are asked to draw and write about their favorite part of the story as a means to show what they learned. However, inferencing is not practiced as a discrete skill. The publisher clarified that the Structured Literacy strand is not a standalone curriculum but rather a part of the comprehensive Into Reading curriculum; therefore, verbal reasoning is taught as a part of the reading comprehension strand in the core curriculum and Teacher's Guide. Again, while the Structured Literacy strand's primary purpose is to build learner word recognition skills, the team felt that opportunities to foster student inferencing abilities could be expanded. Doing so would enhance comprehension instruction and make the connection between word recognition and language comprehension more explicit.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

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

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

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **literacy knowledge** are **"not applicable."** The team noted that both fiction and nonfiction texts are used within the program; however, they are not referred to with genre-specific terminology nor are their features explicitly taught. The publisher clarified that the Structured Literacy strand is not a stand-alone curriculum, and that explicit instruction on genre, text types, and their corresponding features and signal words are addressed in the Reading & Vocabulary strand of the Into Reading curriculum. As mentioned previously, the team felt that opportunities to foster student literacy knowledge could be expanded within the Structured Literacy strand to further student understanding of genre types and features.

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).	
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.	
3.3: Emphasis on independent reading and book choice without engaging with complex texts.	
3.4: Materials for comprehension instruction are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts.	
3.5: Students are not taught methods to monitor their comprehension while reading.	

The majority of Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **reading comprehension** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum's main focus is helping students develop accurate and automatic decoding skills. As such, instruction is mainly teacher directed and students are not asked to independently select and read books. The review team did note that students read decodable texts only which offers them opportunities to practice their decoding skills with text. When reading decodable texts students are prompted to monitor for meaning. For example, when reading the decodable text, "The Bike Ride," the teacher's edition asks educators to model mispronouncing a word and then self-correcting after they've highlighted the error. However, this was the only time when this type of self-monitoring was emphasized, providing students with limited opportunities to practice and internalize this essential skill. The publisher clarified that the Structured Literacy lessons are used in conjunction with the core Teacher's Guide where the practice of reading comprehension strategies as well as self-monitoring occur. Again, while the Structured Literacy strand's primary purpose is to build learner word recognition skills, the team felt that opportunities to foster student reading comprehension within the Structured Literacy strand could be expanded to enhance the connection between word recognition and language comprehension.

4A: Writing — Handwriting

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

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

nto Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **handwriting** are **"met."** Handwriting is explicitly taught and is viewed as a critical part of instruction, not an isolated add-on. Handwriting instruction follows the sequence of letter learning, starting in kindergarten. The program features its own lined paper, and letter formation, posture, and grip are all taught. Students start letter formation by writing straight lines including vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines in both directions. From here all uppercase letters with straight lines are taught. Then students practice circles and curves, and learn uppercase letters such as O, C, G, Q, D, R, and B. Additionally, proper grip is taught and reinforced throughout. The Write and Reveal instructional routine is used for the transcription of uppercase and lowercase letters, sound spellings, high-frequency words, and words for dictation. Students are asked to listen to the task (e.g., "Write the letter that makes the sound /m/ as in mop"), write their answer, and then reveal their answer for teacher inspection.

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, 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.	1
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).	2
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 graphemes/phonemes.	1

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **spelling** are **"mostly met."** There is a clear scope and sequence for explicit spelling instruction, closely aligned with the phonics scope and sequence. Spelling patterns are also taught in a systematic way, ensuring that learners build these skills progressively. There are some instances where multiple spelling patterns are taught at one time; however, it is done in a systematic way as shown in the following list of patterns taught in one lesson:

Grade 1, Module 11, Lesson 11: ew, ui, ue: /ū/
Grade 1, Module 12, Lesson 1: au, aw: /aw/
Grade 2, Module 6, Lesson 6: ow, oa, oe: /ō/

Some students will benefit from additional practice opportunities to allow automaticity with individual graphemes/phonemes.

The team found that the Structured Literacy strand provides consistent use of phoneme segmentation to support spelling instruction, but were only able to locate minimal evidence of phoneme-grapheme mapping for Tier I instruction prior to second grade. The publisher clarified that mapping activities occur within the teacher slide decks and small group resources so educators must be mindful to integrate all of the Structured Literacy strand's resources when planning.

Finally, the team noted lessons where students must color the sounds in given high-frequency words, similar to rainbow writing. The worksheets do include opportunities for students to tap out the phonemes using circles that are provided for them. The number of circles does not align with the number of phonemes in the word, so scaffolding will be necessary to ensure that students are leveraging this for phoneme-grapheme mapping and not relying on memorization of spelling words.

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.	
4.18: Writing is primarily unstructured with few models or graphic organizers.	
4.19: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure are not explicitly taught and practiced systematically (i.e., from simple to complex) with opportunities for practice to automaticity; instead they are taught implicitly or opportunistically.	
4.20: Writing instruction is primarily narrative or unstructured choice.	
4.21: Students are not taught the writing process (e.g., planning, revising, editing).	
4.22: Writing is taught as a standalone and is not used to further reading comprehension.	

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand practices for **composition** are **"not applicable."** For the majority of this curriculum, learners are not asked to engage in written composition beyond the dictation of words and sentences. However, this curriculum is promoted as a foundational reading program that primarily addresses student development of reading, spelling, and handwriting only. The publisher clarified that the Structured Literacy strand is not a standalone curriculum, but rather integrated with the vocabulary, reading, writing, and grammar strands within the core curriculum and Teacher's Guide. Therefore, it is essential for adopters of the curriculum to tap into all core components when delivering Into Reading.

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 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.	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.	3
5.11: Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessments are not used.	1
5.12: The suite of assessments does not address aspects of language comprehension (e.g., vocabulary, syntax, listening comprehension).	1
5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	4

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand non-negotiables and practices for **assessment** are **"mostly met."** The assessments included measure varied aspects of reading (e.g., phonics, phoneme awareness, decoding, encoding, fluency) and not just comprehension. Additionally, assessments include a testing protocol that utilizes accurate miscue analysis. While decoding skills are assessed, there is limited assessment with nonsense words. In fact, nonsense word fluency is only included during screening in Grades K and 1. Module assessments, however, do not include any nonsense words and focus on real words only.

Both printable and online assessments for 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. Into Reading also offers its Spanish program, *¡Arriba la Lectura!*™ However, the team did not review this program as a part of the investigation.

FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

Overall, the **reviewed components** for Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand were found to **"mostly meet"** most criteria for Grades K-2. This means there was minimal 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

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand's scope and sequence moves from simple to more complex. This progression allows students to build a solid foundation in basic skills before moving onto more challenging material. By mastering simple concepts first, students can develop the competence and confidence necessary to tackle more complex reading tasks and learn new concepts efficiently.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand provides educators with articulation resources that are well made and offers teachers both useful information and scripting as well as a series of videos featuring students producing all 44 sounds. This combination of instructional materials paired with actual demonstrations helps educators to better support students in mastering these essential speech sounds.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand also uses the Heart Word approach for teaching irregular high-frequency words. This approach draws student attention to both regular and irregular sounds and helps them identify which parts are decodable and which parts must be "known by heart."

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand's handwriting materials provide students with direct instruction in handwriting that is integrated into core curricular activities. Additionally, the Write and Reveal instructional routine provides educators with a solid template when asking students to write uppercase and lowercase letters, sound-spellings, high-frequency words, and words for dictation.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand offers a variety of high-quality, student-facing materials. Premade curricular materials, like slide decks to guide classroom lessons and blending boards for student use, are thoughtfully designed to streamline teacher instruction and engage students.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand's keywords lacked cohesiveness. Reviewers first had difficulty locating the program's keywords and recommended the creation of a standalone teacher resource to streamline the process of locating them and their corresponding letter sounds. Furthermore, it was difficult to understand whether keywords were consistent across grade levels due to the inclusion of the Alphafriend Cards resource. The publisher did clarify that the keywords are, in fact, those listed on the slide decks and in the teacher scripting; however, this may serve as an area of confusion for educators.

While word blending is taught and practiced, Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand would benefit from additional opportunities to practice fluency at the word level. Additionally, guidance on how to structure student practice opportunities overall would be beneficial. For example, teachers are told to use choral and/or echo reading as practice activities; however, there is little to no guidance on how to do this. Thus, clearer guidelines on how to structure student practice would provide educators with the tools they need to facilitate these activities more effectively.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand is designed as an explicit, systematic program to build students' foundational word-reading skills, focusing on word recognition, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. While language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing are addressed in the core Teacher's Guide, reviewers noted that the program would benefit from increased clarity regarding the implementation of the core Teacher's Guide and connected materials as they relate to the Structured Literacy strand. This additional guidance would help support educators to integrate all necessary components effectively.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand could be enhanced by adding activities and strategies that deepen student knowledge of the high-utility, Tier 2 words used for decoding instruction. Additionally, connections to morphology and meaning could be deepened to support learners in making meaningful connections between word structure and comprehension.

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand's title may cause some confusion as the "structured literacy" approach encompasses foundational decoding skills, morphology, semantics, and syntax, which are not all represented within this strand. As such, it is essential that adopters of Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand tap into all of the curriculum's core components to deliver a comprehensive reading program that supports students' development across all areas of literacy.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE

Into Reading Structured Literacy K-2 (2023-2024)

HMH's Responses to The Reading League's Curriculum Evaluation of
HMH Into Reading Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills

Introduction

HMH is dedicated to providing educators with high-quality instructional materials. We deeply value evidence-based literacy instruction, which is why we ensure our HMH Into Reading program aligns with best practices, is responsive to the latest research on how students learn, and has a positive impact on student learning. In that spirit, in 2023, HMH released Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills to all Into Reading users free of charge within our online platform, Ed. With this release, HMH provided implementation support on how to incorporate these lessons alongside the other literacy strands for a comprehensive literacy solution.

HMH appreciates the opportunity to have HMH Into Reading Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills reviewed by The Reading League (TRL) to ensure our alignment and continued commitment to the Science of Reading.

HMH is committed to research on the efficaciousness of our programs with ongoing research for Into Reading through third-party research studies, including a QED efficacy research study from 2021-2022 demonstrating that Into Reading significantly improved students' reading skills 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 County School District 55's success as outlined here.

HMH Into Reading has become a leading choice for districts across the country. 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.

Responses

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

The Reading League's Rubric Indicators and Scores	
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

1.10: Phonological and phoneme awareness is not assessed or monitored.	2

HMH's Response

1.7
HMH Into Reading Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills moves to phoneme level at all grades. While phonological awareness activities extend into later modules, we also include activities at the phoneme level within earlier modules. The first lesson where the focus is on phonemic awareness rather than phonological awareness is found in Kindergarten Module 1 Week 3 Lesson 13 with isolating phonemes and blending phonemes. Kindergarten Module 1 Week 3 Lesson 14 teaches blending phonemes and segmenting phonemes.

1.10
Into Reading includes observational assessments during core instruction that enable teachers to monitor students' phonological awareness in real-time, capture insights into students' skill levels, identify areas that need targeted support, and track their progress. This allows teachers to adjust instruction within the context of the week/module and select activities from the Foundational Skill and Word Study Studio to provide additional practice. The Screening, Diagnostic, and Progress-Monitoring Assessments, included as part of Into Reading, formally assess phonological and phonemic awareness skills.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

The Reading League's Rubric Indicators and Scores

1.23: Few opportunities for word-level decoding practice are provided.	2

HMH's Response

1.23
Word-level decoding practice occurs daily in both the Warm Up and the Continuous Blending portions of the lesson. During the daily blending warm up, students practice word-level decoding with previously taught graphemes. This practice includes at least 10 words daily. During the continuous blending portion of the lesson, students practice word-level decoding through application of the new phonics focus skill of the day following a gradual release model. The Teacher's Guide provides full teacher scripting for the first word and then a list of words to continue decoding practice. The Teacher's Guide and Lesson Slides, (which include a slide for each word), are intended to be used together. Once students finish the decoding portion of the lesson, they move to encoding with the same phonics focus skill. All lessons include approximately the same number of words to practice decoding and encoding.

There is additional daily small-group practice on word-level decoding of the day's phonics focus skill.

HMH ♥ Into Reading®

1D: Fluency

The Reading League's Rubric Indicators and Scores	
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.	2
HMH's Response	

1.42
Students regularly engage in word-level instructional routines to build from phoneme-grapheme fluency to word-level reading. In the Warm-Up Blending Review portion of the lesson, students practice word-level reading daily. Additionally, small-group activity suggestions include word-level games/practice as well as the pre-reading pages of the Start Right Readers which contain word-level fluency practice prior to reading the text.

In fall of 2025, HMH will release a new decodable library free of charge to all Into Reading users within our online platform, Ed. Each decodable reader includes a Practice Words page in which students practice word-level reading. This library of 345 decodable texts will also be available in print.

1.43
HMH Into Reading does not include patterned text and the decodable texts are both fiction and nonfiction.

2C: Vocabulary

The Reading League's Rubric Indicators and Scores	
2.9: Tier 2 words are not taught explicitly and practiced; students are not given opportunities to use them in their speech, see them in print, and use them in writing.	2
2.11: 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.	2
HMH's Response	

2.9
HMH Into Reading is a comprehensive curriculum covering all the literacy strands. The Vocabulary strand is included in the Core Teacher's Guide. Students are engaged in lessons that deepen their understanding of Tier Two vocabulary words and are tasked to apply these words in new contexts, including their writing in response to text. Additionally, there are interactive vocabulary practice activities online where students demonstrate their

understanding of vocabulary words each week. To support ease of implementation, the practice workbook includes all literacy strands.

2.11
Morphology begins at the end of Grade 2 with instruction on common prefixes and suffixes. Morphology is a major instructional focus in Grades 3-5.

Section 4B: Writing - Spelling

The Reading League's Rubric Indicators and Scores	
4.10: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	2

HMH's Response
Into Reading Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills practice pages do not practice spelling by memorization or rainbow writing in the traditional sense of writing where each grapheme would be a different color like, coat. In the Know It Show It workbooks students are writing in different colors by sound, not letter. The focus of this activity is identifying the graphemes that spell the sound, as in coat.

Section 5: Assessment

The Reading League's Rubric Indicators and Scores	
5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	3
5.13: Multilingual Learners are not assessed in their home language.	4

HMH's Response
5.10 HMH recommends assessment of decoding nonsense words be given through Amira, a key component of Into Reading's comprehensive literacy suite. Additionally, for back to school 2025, there will be an Into Reading phonics survey assessment that will include nonsense word decoding items. 5.13 HMH is committed to best practices for multilingual students. An assessment accommodation for multilingual learners could be assessment in home language, but with this accommodation, an assessment in home language would not show students' proficiency in the target content foundational skill acquisition in English.

A full suite of program assessments in Spanish are available in Arriba la Lectura, which is a parallel Spanish Language Arts program to Into Reading. Additionally, HMH provides universal and dyslexia screening in Spanish through Amira as part of our comprehensive biliteracy suite.

Final Report Summary- Challenges

Challenge #1

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand's keywords lacked cohesiveness. Reviewers first had difficulty locating the program's keywords and recommended the creation of a standalone teacher resource to streamline the process of locating the keywords and their corresponding letter sounds. Furthermore, it was difficult to understand whether keywords were consistent across grade levels due to the inclusion of the Alphafriend Cards resource. The publisher did clarify that the keywords are, in fact, those listed on the slide decks and teacher scripting; however, this may serve as an area of confusion for educators.

HMH's Response

Keywords are used consistently across K-2 within the Structured Literacy lessons and are located within the Teacher's Guide lessons and on the lesson slides. Alphafriends are an optional Kindergarten resource that can be used for engagement activities.

Challenge #2

While word blending is taught and practiced, Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand would benefit from additional opportunities to practice fluency at the word level. Additionally, guidance on how to structure student practice opportunities overall would be beneficial. For example, teachers are told to use choral and/or echo reading as practice activities; however, there is little to no guidance on how to do this. Thus, clearer guidelines on how to structure student practice would provide educators with the tools they need to facilitate these activities more effectively.

HMH's Response

In the Warm-Up Blending Review portion of the lesson students practice word-level reading daily. Additionally, small-group suggestions include word-level games/practice and pre-reading pages of the Start Right Readers contain word-level fluency practice prior to reading the text.

In fall of 2025, HMH will release a new decodable library free of charge to all Into Reading users within our online platform, Ed. Each decodable reader includes a Practice Words page in which students practice word-level reading. This library of 345 decodable texts will also be available in print.

Stepped out, explicit instructional routines are instrumental to the design of Into Reading. All routines are provided in an Instructional Routines resource that is linked throughout the Core Teacher's Guide within each lesson.

Challenge #3

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand is designed as an explicit, systematic program to build students' foundational word-reading skills, focusing on word recognition, including phonological awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency. While language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing are addressed in the core Teacher's Guide, reviewers noted that the program would benefit from increased clarity regarding the implementation of the core Teacher's Guide and connected materials as they relate to the Structured Literacy strand. This additional guidance would help support educators to integrate all necessary components effectively.

HMH's Response

Into Reading implementation support is provided to all users ensuring clear guidance on how best to implement Into Reading based on each district's unique needs. Current users have access to Teacher's Corner and Teacher's Success Pathways; both provide self-paced resources for implementation via our online platform, Ed. Additionally, we host free live topic-based events for all users to join to further support their implementation of *Into Reading*.

Coachly for HMH Into Reading also provides teachers unlimited access to a dedicated instructional coach through virtual coaching sessions and messaging.

Challenge #4

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand could be enhanced by adding activities and strategies that deepen student knowledge of the high-utility, Tier Two words used for decoding instruction. Additionally, connections to morphology and meaning could be deepened to support learners in making meaningful connections between word structure and comprehension.

HMH's Response

Into Reading's Structured Literacy Foundational Skills strand is intended to be used in tandem with the other strands of the program (Vocabulary, Comprehension, etc.). Connections to morphology and meaning are vital parts of Into Reading's vocabulary instruction, which focuses on the vocabulary words that are critical to making meaning from the program's texts. Some of the robust Tier Two words included in decoding instruction are also included in the Vocabulary instructional strand (for example, "pretend" and "limit" in Grade 1).

Challenge #5

Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand's title may cause some confusion as the "structured literacy" approach encompasses foundational decoding skills, morphology,

semantics, and syntax, which are not all represented within this strand. As such, it is essential that adopters of Into Reading's Structured Literacy strand tap into all of the curriculum's core components to deliver a comprehensive reading program that supports students' development across all areas of literacy.

HMH's Response

HMH agrees that the term "structured literacy" applies across all literacy strands. The title of the print Teacher's Guide is *Into Reading Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills* and online it is referenced as Structured Literacy Lessons: Foundational Skills to indicate it only covers foundational skills.

Structured Literacy: Foundational Skills is available only as part of the comprehensive HMH Into Reading program offering.