



Empowering Early Literacy

A Guide to TK–5 Instructional Materials for
California Districts

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Introduction

California educates nearly six million students, including multilingual learners (MLs),¹ students of color, and students with dyslexia and language-based learning differences.^{2,3} Though recent data has demonstrated that less than half of all California students read at grade level by third grade, with even poorer outcomes for the student groups named above,⁴ we know that California’s students have a wealth of assets and strengths they bring to the classroom, and the right approach to literacy instruction can help unlock their literacy trajectories.

As the state continues to roll out policies and initiatives emphasizing early literacy, educators and leaders need tools and guidance to make critical decisions for curriculum, instruction, programming, and professional development for teachers. This guide is designed for district instructional leaders looking to improve early literacy instruction for all transitional kindergarten (TK) through Grade 5 programs. The guide answers the question: **how should districts approach their early literacy instructional materials for California's unique population of students?**

Context and Process

In March 2023, Pivot Learning (now merged with UnboundEd) published [Narrowing Down to Find Common Ground](#), a working paper that focuses on big-picture agreements and remaining areas for discussion among California’s most prominent literacy experts, researchers, and advocates about the best ways for children to learn to read. In 2024, UnboundEd set out to expand on the agreements in the working paper and create practical guidance for California school districts that are looking to improve literacy instructional materials in their TK–5 programs. To do so, UnboundEd gathered an advisory council composed of experts on literacy, MLs, multidialectal learners, and district adoption processes. These advisors created a set of guiding principles for this guide and provided iterative feedback for its development. [UnboundEd](#), [CORE Learning](#), [EdReports](#), and [English Learners Success Forum](#) then formed a cross-organizational working group to develop this comprehensive guide based on the guiding principles, with iterative feedback from the advisory council. The guide was piloted by districts and charter schools in California, representing different geographies, student demographics, programs, and other contextual factors.

¹As defined in California Department of Education’s (CDE) “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students,” the term “multilingual learner (ML)” refers to “students who have developed or are developing proficiency in both English and one or more other languages, which may be their home language” (CDE, 2020, p. 32). CDE also uses the term “English learner (EL)” to refer to students who are formally (by federal civil rights law) identified as having a home language other than English and levels of English language proficiency that indicate they need programs and services that will support them in becoming English proficient. They are a federally protected class of students with the right to specialized services to become fully proficient in English and achieve grade-level standards. In this guide, we use “MLs” to signal both subgroups of students while emphasizing their language assets.

²California Department of Education. (2024). “Fingertip Facts on Education in California.” California Department of Education. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/ceffingertipfacts.asp>

³Buenrostro, Manuel. (2024). “The State of English Learners in California Public Schools” Californians Together. <https://californiantogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/The-State-of-English-learners-in-California-Schools-5.30.24-digital-.pdf>

⁴CAreads. (n.d.). (2024) Five facts. <https://www.careads.org/five-facts>

The following advisors have signed on to demonstrate their support for this guide:

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- Dr. Dale Webster, CORE Learning
- Dr. Maryanne Wolf, University of California, Los Angeles

We encourage you to read additional considerations for implementing this guide from advisors noted with * [here](#).

The guide seeks to lay out what is needed in instructional materials to support literacy development for all students. This guide emphasizes features of materials that address the assets and needs of linguistically varied classrooms that include English monolingual students, MLs, students who speak an English language variety other than General American English⁵ (i.e., multidialectal students), students with language-based learning differences, (e.g., dyslexia), and [developmental language disorders](#).

This guide makes instructional practices for MLs central in instructional materials rather than as separate additions. There is a research-based consensus that instructional strategies that benefit MLs also benefit learners in general. However, there are also important differences in learning to read and write for MLs, who need explicit attention to their English language development (ELD). Their needs include intentionally building their cognitive background knowledge of their home language as it is relevant to support literacy development in both English and in another language. This is true at all levels of literacy development, from beginning foundational literacy skills through advanced literacy.⁶

For MLs and multidialectal students, the guide positions a student’s home language and culture, whether it be a world language or an English language variety (e.g., African American English,

Chicana/Chicano English), as an asset that should be valued and nurtured because of its intrinsic value and because it can enhance language acquisition and literacy development.⁷⁸ The user will see throughout the guide how materials should leverage students’ linguistic knowledge and promote [cross-linguistic connections](#) to support literacy development. Cross-linguistic connection is a construct incorporated throughout the guide to indicate how materials should provide systematic guidance and practice opportunities to support students in making explicit comparisons between English and their home language whenever possible at all levels of language and literacy. This guide posits that students should have access to opportunities to build metalinguistic awareness and models of instructional strategies that extend their knowledge of the similarities and differences between languages at all levels. Indeed, by addressing each of these essential components of language and literacy, instructional materials contribute to the very fluency and comprehension needed in integrating what is known in each language of the learner and propel any areas of literacy that are less developed. The guide also highlights the role of multilingualism in literacy development and instruction and the considerations and caveats for students learning to read and write in English as a new language and should be used in conjunction with the [California English Language Arts/English Language Development \(ELA/ELD\) Framework](#).

⁵ General American English is one variety of English, often used in reading, writing, educational contexts, commerce, and the media. See article by Dr. Julie Washington and Dr. Mark Seidenberg: https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2021/washington_seidenberg

⁶ See August, D., and Shanahan, T. (eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

⁷ Language variety refers to any variety of a language that is shared by a group of speakers, including but not limited to dialects.

⁸ Joint Statement on the Science of Reading and English learners/emergent ... The Reading League. (2023). [Joint Statement on the Science of Reading and English Learners/ Emergent Bilinguals](#)

Guide Limitations

Given its focus, the guide has some limitations that users will need to consider:

- The guide focuses specifically on literacy development and the interconnected role of the five language domains (phonology, orthography, morphology, semantics, and syntax) rather than English Language Arts as a whole.
- To fully support the early language and literacy development of our youngest students, this guide should be used in tandem with the language and literacy standards identified in California’s [Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations](#).
- The guide addresses integrated ELA/ELD instruction primarily in core ELA classrooms where the language of instruction is English, except in areas focusing on dual language settings, as noted. Designated ELD is an essential component of a comprehensive approach for MLs and English Learner students and requires its own set of materials review criteria to illuminate how ELD instruction should be provided beyond the literacy block to ensure that students have protected time to support their language development. This guide notes where core ELA materials should indicate alignment and coherence with Designated ELD materials, marked with **D-ELD**.
- The guide is not designed to be a comprehensive framework for materials intended for biliteracy and dual language classrooms; districts with a dual language immersion program should conduct a separate full review of their dual language materials. In California, where a near majority of young children speak a home language other than English, educators are encouraged to expand dual language options and to provide materials that specifically embrace a biliteracy pedagogy for literacy instruction.

Although no current set of instructional materials has all indicators listed in this document, the principles in this tool can guide users to look for evidence-based practices in materials necessary for a more comprehensive and effective literacy program.

How to use this guide

No matter where your district is in its instructional materials journey, our guide offers an entry point to improving literacy instruction. Whether you're looking at new instructional materials (e.g., adoption), looking to improve your existing program (e.g., implementation), or simply collecting information, the guide is designed to support your investigation into whether your literacy materials meet your students' needs. If you are preparing for an adoption, ask publishers both about the quality of their evidence base (e.g., peer-reviewed journals) and how their program incorporates the principles delineated in this guide.

Like other instructional materials evaluation tools, this resource provides indicators to use in reviewing your instructional materials. It does not use a point system to generate ratings and instead asks you to document strengths and weaknesses to inform adoption or implementation. The evidence you gather will help you develop guidance for teachers as they use the materials, determine what aspects of the materials need to be enhanced and adapted to serve your students better, and inform what you need to emphasize in professional learning. Your findings from a review of the materials should inform how your system determines and adjusts pacing, the resources and time allocated for lesson preparation and instructional time, professional learning opportunities, and collaboration with coaches and colleagues.

DISTRICT LEADERS AND EDUCATORS CAN USE THIS GUIDE TO:

- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of instructional materials to develop literacy proficiency for students of different linguistic backgrounds.
- Investigate what areas are missing in materials and need to be supplemented through materials and their implementation.
- Inform the development of curriculum adoption criteria for literacy materials.

DISTRICT LEADERS AND EDUCATORS CANNOT USE THIS GUIDE TO:

- Review instructional materials for alignment with standards, usability, and other aspects typically relevant to curriculum adoption.
- Generate ratings of instructional materials for curriculum adoption.

The guide includes bookmarks for easy access to different sections. The indicators and look-fors should be applied to one grade level of materials at a time. Each section has a column to take notes for each indicator. Noting details and specifics, such as unit names and page numbers, will help to facilitate discussion among the team. As you review, your team can differentiate your notes and findings regarding the following:

- What is in the materials themselves
- How teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials
- How teachers might be enhancing or supplementing in order to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of their specific students

Options for Reviewing Your Instructional Materials

Each district has unique areas of need and priorities; consider the best process aligned to your context to use this guide for materials investigation:

Option A: Comprehensive Review

If time permits and it is warranted based on your district's needs, conduct a thorough investigation of your materials from beginning to end using each section of this guide within a specific time frame.

Option B: Focused Review

Based on your district's landscape analysis and areas of need that have already been elevated, you might focus your investigation only on specific sections or select indicators within each section of the guide. For example, you have many MLs at the Emerging level of English proficiency and need to place a strong emphasis on oral language development. Your district focuses on the Speaking and Listening section of the guide.

This option is advisable only if your district has already assessed the strengths and weaknesses of your materials in the categories that you are not reviewing. Otherwise, you will be left with an incomplete picture of the extent to which your materials support literacy development.

Option C: Distributed Review

Your district assigns sections of the guide to different team members to review. Team members document and share their findings.

OR

Your team calendars time to review materials one section at a time over the year.

Before you begin

As you utilize the guide, consider the following conditions that set up an ideal state for this instructional materials review. The ideal conditions are listed on the left of the table below, and recommendations for what to do if these conditions still need to be put in place are on the right of the table.

IDEAL CONDITIONS

Your district has an [instructional vision](#), a language development approach, and a theory of change for literacy that is responsive to the unique needs of your students and families.

Your district is ready to bring Special Education, ELD, and bilingual professionals together in collaboration with reading specialists and English Language Arts (ELA) content specialists for a cross-functional process that results in organizational coherence.

Your district has conducted a [data and root cause analysis](#) to understand the key barriers to literacy achievement for specific student groups. This analysis elevates the voices and perspectives of the students and families you serve. It includes an informed understanding of the obstacles faced by subgroups of students and families in your system.

Your district is positioned to support teachers after this review has been conducted by allocating sufficient resources, professional learning, and time in their schedules to enhance and adapt materials based on the gaps surfaced by your review.

IF IDEAL CONDITIONS ARE NOT YET IN PLACE

Conduct the materials investigation using this guide and use your district team’s analysis of the instructional materials as a starting point to develop an instructional vision and theory of change for literacy.

If full cross-functional collaboration is not yet possible, consider who can be at the table and to what extent their time can be dedicated to offering critical perspectives so that the investigation of the materials is conducted in a way that reflects the needs of priority student groups.

Review what your district knows about students who face the most significant barriers to literacy achievement and require more support. Determine what your existing data tells you about the barriers for specific groups of students that can inform your materials investigation. Ensure that educators are familiar with the heterogeneity and specific challenges that different students face in developing literacy, such as students with dyslexia.

Make a plan to conduct a [data and root cause analysis](#) as a team that includes input from students and families, particularly from communities that are identified as needing additional support in your system.

After using this guide to determine your instructional materials’ specific strengths and gaps, align your professional learning resources, systems, and structures to address the gaps. Consider the priority areas to address and develop focused approaches to address the gaps within your existing constraints.

Architecture of the Guide

The graphic below illustrates how the guide is organized to best reflect the **dynamic process of literacy development**, with **Reading Comprehension** and **Written Expression** as the ultimate goals for instruction facilitated by instructional materials:



The very nature of the intrinsically interconnected processes of oral language, reading, and writing over time and development prepares the way for our ultimate goals: engaged, proficient, deeply comprehending readers and writers who find both knowledge and joy in literacy (i.e., in reading comprehension and written expression.) This interconnectedness is apparent through some redundancy found throughout the descriptions in each section, as explained below:

1. The guide begins with the **Text** section because the selection and sequencing of text (e.g., core text or anchor text) anchors all literacy activities and learning in a set of instructional materials.
2. Instructional materials must cover and coherently integrate all four language skills to facilitate literacy development: **Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing**:
 - a. **Listening and Speaking** sections appear first in the guide to illustrate the primacy of [oral language](#) development as the foundation of reading and writing for all hearing and speaking students. The ability to use oral language, particularly a first language, is generally acquired through interaction and communication with others who speak the language. Extensive research documents how explicit spoken language practice (expressive and receptive) is the precursor to reading. Notably, the academic form of any language (“the specialized language, both oral and written, of academic settings that facilitates communication and thinking about disciplinary content,” p. 92)⁹ must be taught explicitly and has a symbiotic relationship with vocabulary and background knowledge development in the language. Instructional materials should facilitate language development through explicit teaching and practice of spoken and academic language in conversations. They should foster a reciprocal process between oral language development and reading comprehension as students discuss complex texts, even before students can decode through read alouds, which increase both oral language and knowledge of orthographic conventions in print.
 - b. The intricacies of written language — in a first or new language — must also be taught, learned, and practiced. To that end, the **Reading** section includes the necessary components of word recognition reading skills that incorporate oral language processes like semantic and syntactic knowledge, as well as metacognition and comprehension processes for all students. These competencies enable readers to decode a text and also grasp the meaning of what they read and connect it to their own thoughts — the ultimate goal of deep reading at any age. A solid foundation in reading empowers writers to organize their thoughts, select appropriate vocabulary, and construct coherent sentences, thereby enhancing their ability to express ideas effectively in writing. Additional language comprehension strategies in the Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections indicate how materials should engage students in text sensemaking and comprehension through talking and writing about the texts they are reading.

⁹Arredondo, M.M., Hu, X., Seifert, E., Satterfield, T., Kovelman, I. (2018). “Bilingual exposure enhances left IFG specialization for language in children.” Cambridge University Press.

- c. The **Writing** section includes how instructional materials develop reading comprehension skills as students consolidate their understanding of texts in written tasks and assignments. It includes indicators and look-fors that speak to the need for dedicated instruction to support the skills required for written expression.
- d. Finally, the guide examines **Early Literacy Program Design** and **Alignment for Dual Language Programming**, which are essential aspects of effective instructional materials implementation. The **Early Literacy Program Design** section describes how instructional materials provide comprehensive guidance for teachers, helping them effectively implement modules, units, and lessons throughout the academic year. This section also includes indicators and look-fors that instructional materials provide strategies for differentiating instruction for the varied linguistic and academic levels of students, including targeted support for students who may need additional help with content mastery.

Overview of Indicators

TEXT

Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features
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LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGN

Guidance for Implementation	Student Supports
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COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
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Text

Review Guidance: Apply the indicators and look-fors in this section to one grade level of materials at a time. In the notes section, capture findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the materials themselves. If needed, create separate sections in the notes regarding how teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials or how teachers are enhancing or supplementing the materials in your context.

TEXT			
Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features

Instructional materials: (e.g., Wonders/Maravillas [2017])	
Grade level: (e.g., 1st grade)	

INDICATOR: TEXT ANALYSIS		
Indicator description: Core or anchor texts have the appropriate level of complexity for the grade according to documented quantitative analysis and relationship to their associated student task. Documentation should also include a rationale as to why the text was selected for educational purposes and placement in the grade level.		
	Look-Fors	Notes
Text Complexity	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to listen to texts read-aloud that are more complex than what they can read independently.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in read-alouds of complex texts and makes clear what the objective of the read aloud is, whether it is to develop oral language, vocabulary, or and content knowledge.	
	K–2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to listen to texts read-aloud that are more complex than what they can read independently and do not include the use of predictable or decodable texts as <u>read-alouds</u> .		
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in read-alouds of complex texts to develop oral language, vocabulary, and content knowledge through modeling.		

TEXT

Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Text Complexity	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include core or anchor texts that are appropriately complex for the grade-level. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in complex texts to develop oral language, vocabulary, and content knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide a text analysis document that explains quantitative aspects of the text. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide text analysis document that explains qualitative features of each text, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uncommon vocabulary or unfamiliar domain-specific vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Cognates <input type="checkbox"/> Text structure <input type="checkbox"/> Language features: sentence complexity, text cohesion, noun groups, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Meaning, including figurative language or dialectal variations <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge demands <input type="checkbox"/> Audience and purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Text features that are specific to the genre <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a notable and gradual increase in text complexity across units. 	
Text Quality	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include read aloud texts that reflect children’s interests and backgrounds. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include read aloud texts that are well-crafted and content rich. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include read aloud texts that collaboratively expand the breadth and depth of students’ vocabulary knowledge. 	
	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include core/anchor texts that consider a range of student interests. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include grade-level core/anchor texts that are well-crafted and content-rich. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a text set of core/anchor texts that collaboratively expand the breadth and depth of students’ vocabulary knowledge. 	

TEXT

Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Genre Analysis	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a variety of text types and genres that provide opportunities for students’ active engagement and interaction with the text.	
	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials reflect the distribution of text types and genres required by the standards for each grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials reflect a balanced mix of 50 percent informational and 50 percent literary text.	
Knowledge Building	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include content-rich texts that expose students to academic vocabulary, content knowledge, syntax, and expressions connected to the language of various disciplines.	
	TK–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include content-rich texts that cohesively build knowledge across a range of topics in history, social studies, science, the arts, and literature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> They expose students to academic vocabulary, content knowledge, syntax, and expressions connected to the language of various disciplines. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include text sets that address the same topic over an extended period (e.g., a unit.) <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide text sets in English and the home language for students’ independent reading to support the development of background knowledge related to topics and themes covered in the grade-level texts.	

TEXT

Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features
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INDICATOR: AFFIRMING AND MEANINGFUL MATERIALS

Indicator description: Materials allow students to actively contribute their cultural and experiential knowledge (including the literacy culture in L1 or L2) to learning activities, challenging the idea that learners are passive participants. This includes recognizing and valuing students’ cultural knowledge and integrating students’ “funds of knowledge” with academic expectations to enhance learning opportunities.¹⁰

Unlike other indicators in this document, the guidance encompasses TK-5 as a whole because it addresses necessary aspects of the core and anchor texts regardless of grade level.

Look-Fors		Notes
Meaning	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include texts that offer differing perspectives on a topic, including characters with varied backgrounds, conflicting viewpoints, symbolism, and historical context, fostering rich discussions. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a strong representation of authors and illustrators of color in the texts students read or are read aloud. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include texts that provide abundant opportunities to read about how people from various historically underrepresented social groups have contributed to knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer guidance on how to implement the curriculum in a way that elevates student assets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: A curriculum guidebook that offers guidance on classroom discussions that provide opportunities for every student to participate and contribute their perspectives; prompts for helping students to see the value in their linguistic and cultural assets. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include texts that offer differing perspectives on a topic, including characters with varied demographics and physical characteristics, conflicting viewpoints, symbolism, and historical context, fostering rich discussions. 	
Structure	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include texts containing a structure that thoughtfully portrays causal relationships, avoiding harmful representations of students’ identities or communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: The curriculum features first-person narratives or biographies of immigrants from various cultural backgrounds. These stories emphasize the resilience, strength, and achievements of immigrant individuals and families, highlighting their contributions to their new communities. The texts explain the historical causes and effects of migration and show how migration can bring both challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the agency of immigrant communities in shaping their new environments. 	

TEXT			
Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features
		Look-Fors	Notes
Social Content	TK–5		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include content warnings to balance creating a supportive environment with engaging honestly and respectfully with complex topics in critical literacy. ¹¹		
Knowledge	TK–5		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include texts that value differing knowledge beyond Eurocentric norms, acknowledging and incorporating various perspectives to provide a more holistic representation of human experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Multiple texts that explore fictional and real stories of different communities, including those within your school community. These texts should also represent the linguistic variety of your school community.		
Use of home language texts	TK–5		
	<p>For authentic materials that are provided in the home language, see the section on Dual Language immersion. For materials that provide translations of English texts used in ELA:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Translations accurately convey meaning. They do not water down the sophistication or nuance of the meaning so that students can develop conceptual understandings and language skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials aid students in making cross-linguistic connections between the language in the translations and the content they are learning in English through text features, text-dependent questions, text-embedded glossaries, and definitions. <input type="checkbox"/> Translated materials are used within structured conversations and tasks that involve the sense-making of texts in both languages.		

¹¹ For more information, see [social content review criteria from the department of Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Materials \(CA Dept of Education\)](#).

TEXT			
Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features

INDICATOR: RANGE AND VOLUME

Indicator description: Materials provide opportunities for students to engage in a range and volume of reading in grade level text, including accountability structures for independent reading.

	Look-Fors	Notes
Range and Volume	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to listen to and engage with a broad and cohesive range of texts read aloud. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to listen to multiple readings of a text in a variety of settings, including whole group, small group, and independent reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate strategies for increasing reading volume in read-alouds to foster a rich reading environment and reinforce the connection between regular reading practice and improved literacy outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Examples: Daily read-aloud time, interactive read-alouds, shared reading 	
	K–2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in reading through multiple re-readings of text in a variety of settings, including read-aloud, paired reading, and independent reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate strategies for increasing reading volume in read-alouds to foster a rich reading environment and reinforce the connection between regular reading practice and improved literacy outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Examples: Daily read-aloud time, interactive read-alouds, shared and partnered reading <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide structured opportunities for daily independent and guided reading (as appropriate to grade level), promoting sustained reading practice and helping students build fluency through frequent exposure to different types of texts. 	
	3–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in reading through multiple re-readings of text in various settings, including read-aloud, paired reading, and independent reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate strategies for increasing reading volume, such as read-alouds, partner reading, and book discussions, to foster a rich reading environment and reinforce the connection between regular reading practice and improved literacy outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide structured opportunities for daily independent and guided reading (as appropriate to grade level), promoting sustained reading practice and helping students build fluency through frequent exposure to different types of texts. 	

TEXT

Text Analysis	Affirming and Meaningful Materials	Range and Volume	Text Formatting and Features
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INDICATOR: TEXT FORMATTING AND FEATURES

Indicator description: Text is intentionally formatted to amplify, rather than simplify, the language of a text through additional [linguistic clues](#) and text features that make reading a complex text manageable and support meaning-making and comprehension.

	Look-Fors	Notes
Text Engineering	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Texts use text engineering, formatting, and features, to support meaning-making and comprehension, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional chunking of text into meaningful units. <input type="checkbox"/> Headings or subtitles that support the purpose of reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Focus questions that are positioned next to the text to guide reading and alert readers to critical information. <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures and graphics to support background knowledge for the text they are reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Text features that elaborate on new terminology or academic words, such as captions, synonyms in parentheses, translated words, or cognates, are used. 	

Listening and Speaking

Review Guidance: Apply the indicators and look-fors in this section to one grade level of materials at a time. In the notes section, capture findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the materials themselves. If needed, create separate sections in the notes regarding how teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials or how teachers are enhancing or supplementing the materials in your context.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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Instructional materials: (e.g., Wonders/Maravillas [2017])	
Grade level: (e.g., 1st grade)	

INDICATOR: LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

Indicator description: Materials promote language comprehension by integrating explicitly modeled language, background knowledge, vocabulary, verbal reasoning, syntax, and strategy application while enhancing word recognition and reading skills aligned with the themes of instruction outlined in the CA ELA/ELD framework.^{12 13}

Look-Fors		Notes
Background Knowledge	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include read-alouds that have a content focus, e.g., science, social studies, to develop students' background knowledge. Materials provide teacher guidance to support students to have content-related discussions that encourage spoken language practice of vocabulary and language structures used in the text. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to ask open-ended questions that encourage students to respond and generate language using their personal experiences (e.g., What are all the toys you like to play with? What did you play with after school yesterday?). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to structure centers or interest areas that focus on a specific experience, giving children a range of choices. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials use basic props from home and community environments to encourage students to create their own play scenarios with the intention of creating spaces for students to engage in spontaneous conversation. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include teacher guidance for connecting content to students' existing knowledge and experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include multiple opportunities for students to engage in content that engage multiple ways of understanding. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Background Knowledge	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide clear instructions for oral language activities, which involve prompting students to share their background knowledge and facilitating discussions to clarify misconceptions and build upon each other's understanding orally. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include oral language activities grounded in authentic, and relevant texts and topics about different backgrounds, languages, interests, and life experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include read-alouds that have a content focus, e.g., science, social studies, to develop student's background knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide teacher guidance to support students to have content-related discussions that encourage spoken language practice of vocabulary and language structures used in the text. 	
Vocabulary Knowledge	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include strategies for expanding vocabulary breadth, enhancing precision in word usage, and creating links between new vocabulary and students' existing knowledge through spoken exchanges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Think-Pair-Share, dialogic reading, vocabulary visuals, word maps, story creation, word comparisons, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials introduce new vocabulary systematically, within the context of familiar readings, and through instruction in language structures, as well as how to use vocabulary in syntactical context orally. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include attention to specific words from listening to multiple readings of rich, interesting narrative and expository texts, offering "student-friendly explanations of words" (explanations with wording and examples within the preschool child's grasp rather than a more formal definition from a dictionary). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In addition, materials promote and suggest ways for students to actively engage with the target vocabulary in various contexts, e.g., short, playful, and lively opportunities for students to interact with words and process their meanings right away. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage teachers to join students as they explore learning environments to ask what they are noticing, to help them notice and wonder more, and to use new vocabulary (e.g., tree, flower, sun, moon, ocean, mountain) in authentic conversations with the children. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
	K–5	
Vocabulary Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials center on explicitly teaching academic language, prompting students to adapt and differentiate their speech using new, academic, and content-specific vocabulary in various contexts in the target language with scaffolding as appropriate to ELD levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Tasks that require students to adapt language use for different audiences through writing and speaking tasks (formal scientific language as a scientist vs. simpler explanations for peer audiences); Tasks that require students to express vocabulary knowledge in different formats (public service announcement, formal letter, blog/social media post) <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide activities that reinforce vocabulary through spoken language using repetition and application in various contexts, such as discussions and storytelling. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include attention to specific words from listening to multiple readings of rich, interesting narrative and expository texts, offering “student-friendly explanations of words” (explanations with wording and examples within the child’s grasp rather than a more formal definition from a dictionary). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In addition, materials promote and suggest ways for students to actively engage with the target vocabulary in various contexts, e.g., short, playful, and lively opportunities for students to interact with words and process their meanings right away. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include strategies for developing sight recognition of high-frequency and familiar words through oral language activities, such as chanting, word walls, and verbal repetition, along with visual cues and practice so that students recognize and use these words effectively. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials promote the use of and provide scaffolds for differing levels of ELD for collaborative conversations and multiple exchanges for students to produce complete sentences, utilizing a variety of words and phrases, recounting and paraphrasing texts, and providing details to clarify comprehension. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials guide teachers to make cross-linguistic connections to the new vocabulary they are teaching, such as highlighting cognates and shades of meaning in words. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Language Structures	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to ask questions that invite students to orally provide critical information for the listener to develop narrative and social conversation skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: “You said your shoe fell off? Where were you when your shoe fell off? Why did it fall off?” <input type="checkbox"/> Materials promote multiple reads and discussions of a single text to internalize language structures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Explicit prompting for teachers to highlight language structures during read-alouds (e.g., The big dog ran = The + adjective + noun + verb); interactive read-alouds with repetitive phrases (e.g., Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?); activities like Total Physical Response and Realia to concretize abstract language concepts; post-reading discussions and interactive think-alouds to apply an understanding of language structures (e.g., I see a _____. Where is the _____? What is the _____ doing?) 	
	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials guide students in orally creating coherent sentences using specific language structures, such as subject-verb agreement, or sentence types. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt students to adapt speech to various media formats, using structures that contribute to the overall meaning of their message for different audiences and purposes. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer performance descriptors related to linguistic complexity, language conventions, and vocabulary usage across different levels of discourse, sentences, and individual words/phrases to guide students’ development in speaking and listening tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Language-specific rubrics (or rubrics with descriptors that are specific to language functions and features and vocabulary usage), student sample responses, and model responses for oral and written tasks. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Verbal Reasoning ¹⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to ask questions that invite students to orally provide critical information for the listener to develop narrative and social conversation skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: “You said your shoe fell off? Where were you when your shoe fell off? Why did it fall off?” <input type="checkbox"/> Materials promote multiple reads and discussions of a single text to internalize language structures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Explicit prompting for teachers to highlight language structures during read-alouds (e.g., The big dog ran = The + adjective + noun + verb); interactive read-alouds with repetitive phrases (e.g., Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?); activities like Total Physical Response and Realia to concretize abstract language concepts; post-reading discussions and interactive think-alouds to apply an understanding of language structures (e.g., I see a _____. Where is the _____? What is the _____ doing?) 	
	TK	
Literacy Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials engage students in oral language activities like storytelling and dramatic play to develop narrative and language skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to explicitly address the practice of reading, teaching the patterns of book structure and handling and the general ways that print works. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to offer explicit comments for students to learn more about the features of books, predictable structures (e.g., setting, characters, problems, and resolutions), to support and shape the stories they create, orally and written. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: This is the title of the book (underlining the title as it is read). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage the use of nonsense rhyme to music that requires clear enunciation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Model the syllables for students with great exaggeration and have them say the rhyme together, exposing children to a variety of high-interest and different speech adaptations. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage teachers to help children learn conventional grammatical forms by repeating what children communicate, using forms appropriate to the English language (e.g., “Oh, I see. Your brother broke your scooter. I’m sorry. How did it happen?” 	

¹⁴ For more information, see <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/spoken-language-disorders/language-in-brief/>.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Literacy Knowledge	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support teachers in helping students understand how the English language works, focusing on the structure and function of language using language development approaches aligned to the CA ELA/ELD framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Students reflect on and talk about language itself (e.g., syntax, phonology, word choice/precision); Teacher facilitates guided discussions (e.g., Why do you think the author used the word “glistening” instead of “shiny” to describe the river?); Teacher engages students in a think-aloud using examples from the text (e.g., I notice that the author starts this sentence with _____. This shows me that _____.) <input type="checkbox"/> Materials promote oral language development through activities focusing on speaking and listening, providing opportunities for students to engage with subject matter and build knowledge interactively. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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INDICATOR: CONNECTIONS TO READING AND WRITING

Indicator description: Materials incorporate activities in primary grades to enhance the interplay between oral language, reading, and writing aligned with the themes of instruction outlined in the CA ELA/ELD framework. They foster literacy skills development while boosting reading comprehension, fluency, and critical thinking.

Look-Fors		Notes
Interplay: Oral Language, Reading, and Writing	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials invite students to engage using words, signs, and pictures. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage students to play with the sounds of language in preparation for the conventional reading and writing that come later (e.g., creating marks that approximate letters and to learn how to write their own name; singing silly songs and reciting poems with surprising endings). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide scripts or guidance for teachers to share their thinking and describe their actions (e.g., “To write the letter K, you start with a long vertical line like this, and then you draw a short diagonal line like this, and then another short diagonal line from here down to here.”). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide story stems (e.g., “The silliest thing that happened to me was . . .”). 	
	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support accurate and fluent reading and language development, providing scaffolds to help students meet increasing oral and written language demands as they progress through school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Open sentence frames for written and oral expression; strategic peer/grouping strategies based on task; multimodal input (audio and visual resources); bilingual resources; choral/peer/independent fluency reads; graphic organizers; formative, in-time, actionable feedback. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials integrate oral language development with other literacy skills, such as reading and writing. For example, materials might intentionally pair speaking activities with reading comprehension or writing assignments and vice versa. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Tasks are designed to concurrently bridge oral language skills with literacy, such as shared reading, discussions, reader’s theater, story retelling, or book discussions. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Interplay: Oral Language, Reading, and Writing	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction in how English writing is structured and consistent opportunities for student writing to support automaticity in spelling and transcription aligned to the CA ELA/ELD framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Tasks make explicit connections between spellings and spoken words, stressing the importance of readers stopping to pronounce unfamiliar words for effective orthographic mapping, ensuring the words enter memory. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials help students improve listening comprehension by focusing on understanding texts' main ideas, structure of stories and texts, grammar in context, and decoding to make meaning. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support students rapidly developing their oral language but facing obstacles regarding transcription or productive language (e.g., age-appropriate, effective assistive tools and alternative, flexible writing formats like digital and multimedia mediums). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer embedded ELD supports that explicitly address how English works and the language demands of oral and writing tasks. This ensures that assistance is directly aligned with the tasks and texts rather than providing generic, text-agnostic support. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING			
Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications

INDICATOR: TEXT-BASED DISCUSSIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Indicator description: Materials include text-based discussions and protocols to advance students’ oral language development by fostering comprehension, critical thinking, new vocabulary acquisition, enhanced language fluency and expression, and preparation for collaborative academic and real-world communication opportunities. These opportunities are designed to support language development in alignment with the CA ELA/ELD framework.

Look-Fors	Notes
TK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include prompts that support students with staying on the topic and turn-taking. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prompt teachers to find everyday moments to enrich and elevate language and literacy use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: The student is playing in the house area and grabs a can labeled “Tomato Soup.” They pretend to pour it into a pan. The teacher notices and says, “I see you’re making tomato soup! Let’s look at the label. It says ‘Tomato Soup.’” <input type="checkbox"/> Materials utilize songs (e.g., “When You’re Happy and You Know It”) that indicate movements to embed language use into routines to attend to and encourage language use. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage a balance between modeling language for students and fostering authentic language use for student-centered language experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include interesting materials that create specific areas in the indoor and outdoor learning environments, prompting children to talk, explore, build, draw, paint, move, inquire, and enact roles in pretend play. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include picture symbols that encourage students to initiate or respond to questions to practice skills needed for fluent conversations. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage varied, engaging learning experiences to give students opportunities to learn important language and content for literacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Set up pretend storefronts outside with items like toy fruit, vegetables, or pretend tools. Provide paper, markers, and string for children to make price tags for their items. 	
Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	<div style="background-color: #e0e0ff; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">K–5</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include clear language objectives for expressive (writing, speaking) and receptive (listening, reading) communication aligned with text and task and intentionally sequenced from simpler to more complex language use over time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Students will be able to use key vocabulary and sentence structures to express their thoughts and opinions about a topic in both spoken and written formats. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials frequently offer students opportunities to engage in meaningful communication through pair and group activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: discussions, role-plays, productive and sustained academic discussions to ask and answer questions about grade-level text or content, and collaborative projects.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include structured guidance on completing tasks, with clear examples and incremental steps to build confidence and competence in oral language use. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer modeled examples of effective listening and speaking, followed by guided practice to help students apply these skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials address skills for participating in conversations, such as turn-taking, asking and answering questions, and providing appropriate responses. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to present information or ideas to others, helping them practice organizing their thoughts and speaking clearly. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate opportunities for students to use and build upon their first language in social interactions and oral activities, recognizing that facility with oral language is often acquired naturally through conversational practice and immersion with other speakers. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials elevate discussion practices from various cultures and linguistic backgrounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Materials may incorporate Indigenous language traditions or other language traditions. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate opportunities for MLs to engage in extended oral expression and make valuable contributions to classroom discussions related to content through the use of home language and other ways to participate based on their language development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The discourse predominantly centers on formulating and substantiating arguments using evidence drawn from textual sources across disciplines. <input type="checkbox"/> Tasks enable students to demonstrate their capacity to articulate thoughts extensively on a subject, employing appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures while establishing coherent connections between ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide exemplars for students, demonstrating the length and complexity of effective speech at their level and serving as a benchmark for language use. 	

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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INDICATOR: SCAFFOLDING VS. MODIFICATIONS

Indicator description: Materials differentiate between scaffolding and modifying language instruction to effectively support skill development by offering structured support while maintaining task complexity to foster critical thinking and skill advancement, promoting deep engagement and mastery of essential oral language skills. Scaffolding for language development is designed to support all aspects of ELA/literacy and ELD instruction outlined in the [CA ELA/ELD framework](#).

	Look-Fors	Notes
Rigor and Productive Struggle	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include high-quality, formative assessments that provide guidance for teachers to adapt recommended teaching strategies and learning experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include teacher guidance on organizing the environment, including using multiple learning contexts, such as centers, small and large groups, and individual experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer lesson- and text-specific scaffolds that support a range of language proficiencies, including vocabulary building (academic and social), understanding new concepts in English and home languages, cross-linguistic connections (e.g., cognates), and high-leverage supports (e.g., visuals, concrete materials, sentence stems). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include activities tailored to different language proficiency levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Differentiated tasks that cater to emerging, developing, and expanding proficiency levels, increasing task complexity to help students progress from basic to more advanced oral language use <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include supports such as visual aids, sentence frames, culturally relevant literature, and interactive resources to assist students in honing their academic reasoning abilities. 	
	K–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include assessments designed to measure language proficiency levels and inform instruction. Look for tools that assess both speaking and listening skills at various stages of language development. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include formative assessments and checkpoints to monitor progress over time. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer lesson- and text-specific scaffolds that support a range of language proficiencies, including vocabulary building (academic and social), understanding new concepts in English and home languages, cross-linguistic connections (e.g., cognates), and high-leverage supports (e.g., visuals, concrete materials, sentence stems).

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Language Comprehension	Connections to Reading and Writing	Text-Based Discussions and Protocols	Scaffolding vs. Modifications
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	Look-Fors	Notes
	K–5	
Rigor and Productive Struggle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include activities tailored to different language proficiency levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Example: Differentiated tasks that cater to emerging, developing, and expanding proficiency levels, increasing task complexity to help students progress from basic to more advanced oral language use. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include tools and strategies for providing constructive feedback on oral language use, helping students understand areas for improvement, and celebrating their progress. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own speaking and listening skills, encouraging self-awareness and self-improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials prioritize individualized accommodation decisions, steering clear of assuming universal suitability and advocating for next-steps based on each student’s literacy needs, learning differences, or English language proficiency level. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include supports such as visual aids, sentence frames, culturally relevant literature, and interactive resources to assist students in honing their academic reasoning abilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include recasting prompts for corrective feedback, particularly in activities emphasizing either language form or meaning, to encourage students to actively utilize their language skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials encourage students to practice strategies like correcting or changing their language and seeking assistance in conversations for more precise communication. 	

Reading

Review Guidance: Apply the indicators and look-fors in this section to one grade level of materials at a time. In the notes section, capture findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the materials themselves. If needed, create separate sections in the notes regarding how teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials or how teachers are enhancing or supplementing the materials in your context.

READING				
Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension

Instructional materials: (e.g., Wonders/Maravillas [2017])	
Grade level: (e.g., 1st grade)	

INDICATOR: ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE		
Indicator description: Materials and instruction provide systematic and explicit instruction and practice for letter recognition.		
	Look-Fors	Notes
Scope and Sequence	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a sequence for letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) that outlines the beginning instruction for letter recognition to include at least half of the alphabet.	
	K–1	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a defined sequence for letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) instruction that can be completed in a reasonable time frame over the school year. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a defined sequence for letter formation, aligned to the scope and sequence of letter recognition, to be completed in a reasonable time frame over the school year.	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Explicit Instruction	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain systematic and explicit instruction for students to recognize (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) many lowercase and uppercase letters, both in and out of order.	
	K–1	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain systematic and explicit instruction for students to recognize (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) all 26 lowercase and uppercase letters, both in and out of order. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include clear directions for the teacher on how to explain and model correctly forming each of the 26 letters (uppercase and lowercase).	
Student Practice	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include sufficient practice opportunities for students to recognize (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) many lowercase and uppercase letters accurately and automatically. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate various activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) alphabet knowledge, including methods that support foundational skills for MLs outlined in the CA ELA/ELD framework.	
	K–1	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include sufficient practice opportunities for students to recognize (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) all 26 lowercase and uppercase letters accurately and automatically. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials incorporate various activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) alphabet knowledge, including methods that support foundational skills for MLs outlined in the CA ELA/ELD framework. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include frequent opportunities for students to practice forming all 26 uppercase and lowercase letters.	

READING				
Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension

Look-Fors		Notes
Assessment ¹⁵	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials regularly and systematically provide assessment opportunities over the course of the year to demonstrate students’ progress toward mastery and independence of letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound). <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide teachers and students with information concerning students’ current skills/level of understanding of letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support teachers with instructional suggestions for assessment-based steps to help students progress toward mastery in letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound). 	
Assessment ¹⁵	K–1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials regularly and systematically provide assessment opportunities over the course of the year to demonstrate students’ progress toward mastery and independence of letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) and letter formation. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide teachers and students with information concerning students’ current skills/level of understanding of letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) and letter formation. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support teachers with instructional suggestions for assessment-based steps to help students progress toward mastery in letter recognition (letter name, shape, and common associated sound) and letter formation. 	

¹⁵ Please note that universal screeners need to be part of a MultiTiered System of Supports (MTSS) approach. Recognizing that most materials will not include screeners, they are not covered in this guide, yet are a crucial part of a larger-scale plan for promoting literacy development over time. All California LEAs will begin screening K–2 students for reading difficulty in SY25–26; see more information here: https://www.scoe.net/media/tannt04t/sb114_overview.pdf.

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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INDICATOR: PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Indicator description: Materials include explicit, systematic instruction and student practice opportunities in [phonological awareness](#) (TK–early Kindergarten) and [phonemic awareness](#) as appropriate to the orthography of the language students are learning to read with a research-based scope and sequence. These opportunities are designed to support the development of phonological awareness in alignment with the CA ELA/ELD framework.

	Look-Fors	Notes
Scope and Sequence	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain a clear, evidence-based explanation for the expected sequence for teaching phonological awareness skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials have a cohesive sequence of phonological awareness instruction based on the expected hierarchy to build toward students’ immediate application of the skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a contrastive analysis document describing phonology and phonemes based on English and home languages of students. 	
Scope and Sequence	K–1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain a clear, evidence-based explanation for the expected sequence for teaching phonological awareness skills. (early Kindergarten) <input type="checkbox"/> Materials have a cohesive sequence of phonemic awareness instruction based on the expected hierarchy to build toward students’ immediate application of the skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain a phonemic awareness sequence of instruction and practice aligned to the phonics scope and sequence. <input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness lessons are brief and phase out as students acquire phonics and decoding skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a contrastive analysis document describing phonology and phonemes based on English and home languages of students. 	
Explicit Instruction	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include systematic and explicit instruction in phonological awareness. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include systematic and explicit instruction in phonemic awareness that includes isolating initial sounds and recognizing and blending sounds. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide the teacher with examples for instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include teacher guidance for corrective feedback when needed for students. 	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Explicit Instruction	K–1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include systematic and explicit instruction in phonological awareness. (early Kindergarten) <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness that progresses from simple to complex — e.g., isolating (initial, final, medial), segmenting and blending, manipulating (initial, final, medial). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide the teacher with examples for instruction in sounds (phonemes). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include teacher guidance for corrective feedback when needed for students. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include pairing of phonemic awareness with letter-sound and beginning phonics instruction. 	
Student Practice	TK	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a variety of activities for students to develop phonological and phonemic awareness skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include daily, brief interactive lessons in phonological awareness. 	
	K–1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Daily phonemic awareness instruction correlates to the phonics portion of the lesson and includes letters (i.e., grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC)). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to practice connecting sounds to letters. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include directions to the teacher for demonstrating how to pronounce each phoneme (articulation/mouth formation). 	

READING				
Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension

Look-Fors		Notes
Assessment	TK	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials regularly and systematically provide various assessment opportunities over the year to demonstrate students’ progress toward mastery and independence in phonological awareness. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide teachers and students with information concerning students’ current skills/level of understanding of phonological awareness. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support teachers with instructional suggestions for assessment-based steps to help students progress toward mastery in phonological awareness.	
	K–1	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials regularly and systematically provide various assessment opportunities over the year to demonstrate students’ progress toward mastery and independence in phonemic awareness. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide teachers and students with information concerning students’ current skills/level of understanding of phonemic awareness. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support teachers with instructional suggestions for assessment-based steps to help students progress toward mastery in phonemic awareness.	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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INDICATOR: PHONICS, SPELLING, AND WORD RECOGNITION

Indicator description: Materials include explicit, systematic instruction and student practice opportunities in phonics with a research-based scope and sequence. These opportunities are designed to support the development of phonics, spelling, and word recognition in alignment with the ELA/ELD framework. Materials and instruction support students in learning and practicing regularly and irregularly spelled words.

Look-Fors		Notes
Scope and Sequence	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain a clear, evidence-based explanation for the expected sequence for teaching phonics skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials clearly delineate a scope and sequence with a cohesive, intentional sequence of phonics instruction, from simpler to more complex skills, and practice to opportunities to apply what was learned. <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics instruction begins with high utility patterns and most common phonics generalizations (e.g., cvc, cvce, cvvc and progress to less common, irregular spelling pattern and multi-syllabic words). 	
Explicit Instruction	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain explicit instructions for systematic and repeated teacher modeling of newly taught phonics patterns. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons include blending and segmenting practice using structured, consistent blending routines with teacher modeling. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons include dictating words and sentences using the newly-taught phonics pattern(s). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include spelling instruction that emphasizes explicit teaching of most common patterns and generalizations. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials teach the structure of language and provide guidance for the teacher in key components of English orthography, including the language of origin, morphology and part of speech, position of a phoneme or grapheme in a word, letter order, and sequence patterns. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include guidance for students to use orthographic mapping, then associating meaning to mapped words in order to build an increasing bank of words recognized at sight. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include teacher guidance for corrective feedback when needed for students. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include detailed lesson plans for repeated readings of decodable texts to address the acquisition of phonics skills and in particular orthographic mapping with associated meaning to build sight vocabulary. 	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Explicit Instruction	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include systematic and explicit instruction in identifying the regularly spelled part and the <u>temporarily irregularly</u> spelled part of words with a consistent instructional routine. Students are explicitly taught how to commit to memory the irregular letter/letters. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include teacher modeling of the spelling and reading of high-frequency words, including connecting the phonemes to the graphemes. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain explicit instructions for syllable types that promote the decoding and encoding of words. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain explicit instruction in morpheme analysis to decode unfamiliar words. <input type="checkbox"/> Students are taught how morphological knowledge supports word recognition, understanding word meanings, and accurate spelling. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a contrastive analysis outlining similarities and differences in morphemes and cognates between English and other languages. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include guidance on how to support language development by helping children connect the meaning and/or language patterns of words in context. 	
Student Practice	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons provide students with frequent opportunities to decode words with taught phonics patterns. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons provide students with frequent opportunities to encode words individually and with text dictation using taught phonics patterns. <input type="checkbox"/> Student-guided and independent practice of blending sounds using the sound-spelling pattern(s) is varied and frequent. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include sufficient opportunities for students to engage in word-level decoding practice focused on accuracy and automaticity. <input type="checkbox"/> As accuracy and automaticity develop, students are encouraged, using instructions, modeling, and feedback, to read fluently with appropriate prosody. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include spelling instruction connected to phonics instruction, where students learn to spell independently using sounds of the alphabet, and knowledge of letter-sound associations taught in three and four-letter words and multi-syllable words based upon the decoding sequence of instruction. 	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Student Practice	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explanations for the spelling of specific words or spelling rules. <input type="checkbox"/> Etymological information is embedded in phonics instruction when it supports accurate decoding and encoding (e.g., words of French origin that include the /sh/ sound may be spelled with ch) and semantics (understanding word meanings and semantic associations based on their origins, e.g., helicopter and pterodactyl). <input type="checkbox"/> Students have sufficient opportunities to practice spelling rules and generalizations. <input type="checkbox"/> Decodable texts contain grade-level phonics skills aligned to the program’s scope and sequence. <input type="checkbox"/> Student practice decoding high-frequency words in isolation. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons provide students with frequent opportunities to encode high-frequency words in tasks, such as sentences, to promote the automaticity of high-frequency words. <input type="checkbox"/> Students are provided with multiple and varied opportunities throughout the year to learn, practice, and apply word analysis strategies to use words in meaningful contexts. 	
Assessment	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials regularly and systematically provide various assessment opportunities over the year to demonstrate students’ progress toward mastery and independence in phonics, word recognition, and analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide teachers and students with information concerning students’ current skills/level of understanding of phonics, word recognition, and analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support teachers with instructional suggestions for assessment-based steps to help students progress toward phonics, word recognition, and analysis mastery. 	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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INDICATOR: READING FLUENCY

Indicator description: Materials provide systematic and explicit instruction and practice in reading fluency for Grades 1–2. For Grade 2, reading fluency practice should vary (decodable and bridging to fluently reading complex, grade-level texts). It is important that the various processes that contribute to oral and written reading fluency are included and include increasing automaticity in orthographic letter patterns, semantic and syntactic knowledge, and the critical role of morpheme knowledge to fluency. Approaches to developing reading fluency are designed in alignment with the CA ELA/ELD framework. Materials for Grades 3–5 include reading and making meaning of grade-level, complex text.

	Look-Fors	Notes
Explicit Instruction	Grades 1–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit, systematic instruction to develop automaticity within and between the underlying reading fluency skills of syntax, semantics, and morphological analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials allow students to hear fluent reading of grade-level text by a model reader. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a variety of resources for explicit instruction in oral reading fluency (e.g., decodable texts, poetry, readers’ theater, paired reading). 	
Student Practice	Grades 1–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Over the course of the year, varied, frequent opportunities are provided for students to gain accuracy and automaticity (at word and text levels), and prosody and to read with purpose and understanding. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide practice opportunities for oral reading fluency in various settings (e.g., repeated readings, dyad or partner reading, continuous reading). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include guidance and corrective feedback suggestions to the teacher for supporting students’ gains in oral reading fluency. 	
	Grades 3–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to read grade-level, complex texts fluently at a manageable pace, reinforcing various grammatical constructions and the multiple meanings and semantic associations underlying words. 	

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Assessment	Grades 1–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple assessment opportunities, including diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, are provided regularly and systematically over the year for students to demonstrate progress toward mastery and independence of oral and written reading fluency. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide the teacher and students with ongoing information about students' current skills/level of understanding of oral reading fluency. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support the teacher with instructional adjustments to help students progress toward mastery in oral and written reading fluency. Instructional suggestions align with Oral Reading Fluency Norms.¹⁶ 	

¹⁶ Hasbrouck, J. and Tindal, G. (2017). An update to compiled ORF norms (Technical Report No. 1702). Eugene, OR. Behavioral Research and Teaching, University of Oregon.

READING

Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension
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INDICATOR: METACOGNITION AND READING COMPREHENSION

Indicator description: Materials provide routines and direct, explicit instruction on how to unlock the meaning of complex texts and develop reading comprehension and metacognition to support reading.

	Look-Fors	Notes
Text and Task	Grades 1–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension instruction and comprehension strategy instruction are grounded in complex, grade-level texts and include explicit emphases on the development of background knowledge, empathy/perspective-taking, inference, and critical thinking. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include an instructional purpose for student reading of the text, including conceptual understandings and ideas the text helps students to understand new knowledge, all the while connecting it to the student’s own background knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction in reading routines that include teacher modeling with specific purposes aligned to the qualitative complexities of complex texts to increase student comprehension. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials identify the qualitative complexities of texts and provide support that aligns with ELD standards to facilitate MLs’ access to text, ensuring targeted assistance that addresses specific language demands in learning how written English works. 	
Explicit Instruction	Grades 1–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit and systematic instruction of before, during, and after reading comprehension strategies. These strategies include evidence-based approaches for questioning, monitoring, clarifying understanding, inferencing, summarization, and metacognition, as well as emphasizing how the text elicits their own insights and connects to their background knowledge (that is particularly important for MLs and multicultural students). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include guidance for teachers in modeling comprehension strategies and how to clarify and resolve confusion when reading a difficult text, as well as explicit evocation of student’s own insights into text (helping all students learn that reading is meant not only to give an author’s knowledge and insights, but also to propel their own). 	

READING				
Alphabet Knowledge	Phonological Awareness	Phonics, Spelling, and Word Recognition	Reading Fluency	Metacognition and Reading Comprehension

Look-Fors		Notes
Student Practice	Grades 1–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide tools and routines that help students extract meaning and information from complex texts (e.g., note-taking routines, graphic organizers, clarifying bookmarks). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide tools and routines that support students to build and apply vocabulary knowledge while reading a complex text. Explicit emphases should be placed on the multiple meanings (polysemy) and associations that are underlying the surface of words. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide routines and procedures to help students deconstruct complex language structures used in complex texts and analyze relationships within and across sentences. These include deconstructing sentence structures, analyzing cohesive devices across a text, and recognizing and analyzing anaphora. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to integrate understandings across multiple texts through discussion activities, promoting deeper comprehension and synthesis of information. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer discussion prompts and questions that require students to analyze and evaluate the use of various aspects that underlie language and other information in the text, fostering students’ ability to infer and summarize meaning from what is explicitly and implicitly stated and comprehend complex ideas within and across texts. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to develop literacy knowledge through discussions about the associated audiences and purposes within the genre and text type of what they are reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide individual and collaboratively constructed writing tasks and assignments that build students’ reading comprehension of grade-level texts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> E.g., written and verbal summarization, text reformulation, discussing and writing formal and informal constructed responses to text-based questions, and constructing complex sentences that explain the text’s meaning. 	

Writing

Review Guidance: Apply the indicators and look-fors in this section to one grade level of materials at a time. In the notes section, capture findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the materials themselves. If needed, create separate sections in the notes regarding how teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials or how teachers are enhancing or supplementing the materials in your context.

WRITING							
General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding

Instructional materials: (e.g., Wonders/Maravillas [2017])	
Grade level: (e.g., 1st grade)	

INDICATOR: GENERAL ELEMENTS OF WRITING INSTRUCTION	
<p>Indicator description: Effective writing instruction typically includes several key components to help learners develop their writing skills comprehensively. Materials and instruction provide systematic and explicit instruction and multiple opportunities for students to practice, including ways to support effective written expression as outlined in the CA ELA/ELD framework.</p>	
Look-Fors	Notes
TK	
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in written composition, focusing on foundational literacy skills, creativity, and expressing ideas through drawing, dictation, and early writing.	
Scope and Sequence	K–5
	<input type="checkbox"/> There is a defined sequence for all components of writing instruction aligned to the grade level standards to be completed in a reasonable time frame over the school year. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to address different text types of writing (year-long) that reflect the distribution of the standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a cohesive, year-long plan for students to achieve grade-level writing proficiency by the end of the school year through an aligned curriculum, explicit instruction, practice and feedback, assessment and reflection, and differentiation and support.

WRITING							
General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding

Look-Fors		Notes
Explicit Instruction	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit, systematic teaching of specific writing skills, strategies, and techniques. This involves breaking down tasks and processes into clear steps and providing direct instruction on each component of writing (e.g., handwriting, sentence and paragraph composition, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include mentor texts to support students in examining how language works through model responses and lesson sequences where teachers demonstrate proficient writing by modeling the writing process themselves. This can include thinking aloud while writing, showing how to revise and edit, and providing examples of different writing genres and styles. 	
Student Practice	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a mix of on-demand and process, grade-appropriate writing (e.g., grade-appropriate revision and editing), and short, focused projects, incorporating digital resources where appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include ample opportunities for students to write regularly across various genres and for different purposes to develop, practice, and reinforce their writing skills. <input type="checkbox"/> To capture the iterative process of writing, students are given multiple opportunities to revisit, review, and revise their writing throughout the year to work as they progress toward mastery. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to write in their home language and transition to writing in English as they construct texts individually, with peers, or with the teacher. 	

WRITING							
General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding

Look-Fors		Notes
Assessment	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment is anchored to important learning objectives and provides the basis for instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials regularly and systematically provide various formative and summative assessment opportunities over the year to demonstrate students' progress toward mastery and independence in writing at the sentence and paragraph level. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide guidance and instruction on providing timely and constructive feedback on student writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide guidance and instruction on providing constructive feedback based on knowledge of students' home language and how cross-linguistic differences might influence writing in English. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide guidance and instruction on facilitating peer review of student writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment materials provide teachers and students with information concerning students' current skills and level of understanding of various components, including handwriting, syntax, and composition. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment involves multiple genres and various writing tasks (to determine strengths and patterns of difficulties). 	

WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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INDICATOR: ROLE OF ORAL LANGUAGE IN WRITING FOR ALL STUDENTS

Indicator description: Oral language plays a fundamental role in writing instruction. The more developed one's oral language, the more developed reading and writing are likely to be. It is the foundation upon which many writing skills are built, facilitating a smoother transition from spoken to written communication. Materials support oral language development and effective written expression using methods aligned to the CA ELA/ELD framework.

Look-Fors

Notes

TK

- Oral language development is a critical component of early childhood education, particularly in TK, which bridges preschool and kindergarten. Teachers should model rich and varied language throughout the day, using descriptive words and expressive intonation in addition to reading aloud and providing time for interactive activities such as discussion and role-playing. By prioritizing oral language development in TK, teachers lay a strong foundation for future literacy and academic success.

Vocabulary

K–5

- Materials include explicit instruction of key words, multiple exposures to words in varied contexts, and active engagement with words in meaningful ways.
- Materials expose students to various words and phrases, and provide discussion prompts using academic and content area vocabulary, expanding their ability to comprehend and write about increasingly complex texts.

Syntax

K–5

- Materials include opportunities for students to engage in oral language activities to expose them to increasingly complex sentence structures and to enhance their understanding of how words and phrases are organized in sentences.
- Materials include opportunities for students to consider how similarities and differences in expression and syntax affect the meaning, tone, and style of their writing and make deliberate choices to improve their sentences.

WRITING							
General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
Look-Fors						Notes	
Idea Generation and Elaboration	K–5						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in conversations and discussion before writing about topics, allowing them to expand upon their ideas and receive feedback from peers.						
Discussion	K–5						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to read complex text aloud and discuss key points in the text, increasing the rigor of students' written responses to text-based prompts.						
Peer Review and Collaborative Writing	K–5						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to read complex text aloud and discuss key points in the text, increasing the rigor of students' written responses to text-based prompts.						

WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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INDICATOR: WRITING CONNECTED TO READING

Indicator description: Reading is a vital tool for inspiring and informing writing. Writing about what students read helps them process and internalize information, leading to a deeper understanding of the text. Reading also exposes students to various writing styles, genres, and vocabulary, which they can emulate and incorporate into their writing.

TK Considerations: In TK, connecting writing to reading is essential for developing literacy skills. Young children begin to see the relationship between the spoken and written word, which lays the foundation for future reading and writing proficiency.

	Look-Fors	Notes
TK		
<input type="checkbox"/> In TK, connecting writing to reading is essential for developing literacy skills. Young children begin to see the relationship between the spoken and written word, which lays the foundation for future reading and writing proficiency.		
	K–5	
Mentor Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include mentor texts from several different genres or formats that demonstrate specific writing skills or techniques that students are learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Students have opportunities to read a variety of topics in multiple texts, including fiction, nonfiction, and articles, to build a wide-ranging knowledge base that is used as the foundation of their writing.	
	K–5	
Summary Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction in retelling and/or summary writing as tools to improve student understanding of the material and to express complex ideas succinctly and accurately. <input type="checkbox"/> Retelling and summary writing is used as a formative assessment tool to gauge student understanding of key ideas in the text.	
	K–5	
Writing Based on Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide writing prompts that are directly related to the texts that students are reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include story maps and graphic organizers to help students plan their writing based on texts they have read..	

WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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INDICATOR: CRITICAL THINKING

Indicator description: Students engage in critical thinking as they think about what they want to communicate through their writing and build an awareness of the writing process (i.e., organizing, drafting, writing, revising).

	Look-Fors	Notes
TK		
<input type="checkbox"/> In TK, students engage in critical thinking through teacher-guided writing opportunities.		
Explicit Instruction	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> The writing process is taught as a recursive process where students repeat and revisit the stages in the writing process as they develop a piece of writing.	
Summary Writing	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a variety of tools and strategies to support students in the pre-writing process, including explicit instruction on how to analyze a writing prompt, read about a topic, use note-taking strategies, and develop visual representations of ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction on organizing ideas into a cohesive plan for writing.	
Text Production	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction in writing various text types, including narrative, informative, and opinion/argumentative with cross-linguistic connections where relevant.	
Revising	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials explicitly develop teacher and student knowledge as to how to modify and improve their writing during the revision process.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include multiple opportunities for students to revisit and revise their own writing with peers and individually, based on feedback or focused on specific writing skills to improve writing quality.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials build opportunities for students to analyze and evaluate their own writing and/or the writing of peers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide guidance and instruction on how to facilitate peer review of student writing.		
Text Production	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Students are explicitly taught editing skills using authentic text.	

WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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INDICATOR: SYNTAX

Indicator description: Materials and instruction support students in developing syntactic awareness as they learn the correct use and relationship of words in sentences through direct, explicit, systematic instruction focused on building sentence skills, including activities such as sentence elaboration, sentence combining, sentence fluency, and sentence boundaries. These opportunities are designed to support the development of effective written expression in alignment with the CA ELA/ELD framework.

Look-Fors

Notes

TK

- In TK, syntactic awareness is taught through oral language activities such as interactive read-alouds, teacher modeling and recasting, songs and rhymes, language games, storytelling and retelling, and interactive writing activities. Speaking tasks help students understand the syntactic structures that will be found in text.

Scope and Sequence

K–5

- Materials include a defined sequence for teaching syntax appropriate to grade level standards to be completed in a reasonable time frame over the school year integrated with knowledge and content building.

Explicit Instruction

K–5

- Syntax is taught within the text selections that students are currently reading. Exemplar sentences contain clear, varied, and rich examples of sentence structure.
- Materials include explicit instruction, teacher modeling, and practice in the use of complete, coherent sentences when speaking and writing.
- Materials include explicit instruction on grade-level grammar and usage standards, with opportunities for authentic application in context.
- Materials include explicit instruction in sentence writing during targeted lessons, or by guidance as to how to help students correct and improve their sentences during the revision stage of writing.

WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Explicit Instruction	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include lessons, models, and strategies for explicit instruction in the four sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory, including the related capitalization and punctuation marks. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include lessons for explicit instruction in sentence-building skills such as sentence elaboration, sentence combining, sentence fluency, and sentence boundaries appropriate to the grade level.	
Text Production	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials integrate syntax lessons with knowledge and content building to support students in applying the rules of grammar and sentence structure within the context of meaningful and content-rich writing.	

WRITING

General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding
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INDICATOR: TEXT STRUCTURE

Indicator description: Text structure is a system unique to written language. Knowing about text structure helps students to organize their thoughts and ideas logically, which will ensure that their writing is coherent and easy to follow. Materials incorporate opportunities designed to support understanding of text structure in alignment with the goals of effective written expression outlined in the CA ELA/ELD framework.

Look-Fors	Notes
TK	
<input type="checkbox"/> Text structure is introduced in TK to help students understand how different texts are organized. Understanding text structure provides a framework for teachers to support children in organizing their thoughts and ideas in guided writing activities.	
Narrative, Informational, and Opinion Text Structure	<p style="text-align: center;">K–5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Materials include an even distribution of writing types in the primary grades: informational, opinion, and narrative, and informational, narrative, and argumentative writing in the intermediate grades.</p>
Paragraph Structure	<p style="text-align: center;">K–5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Materials include lessons that provide explicit instruction in the analysis of and the development of well-constructed paragraphs for each of the text types.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient time is spent on the instruction and practice of each text type before moving on to a new text type.</p>
Patterns of Organization	<p style="text-align: center;">K–5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction in the different patterns of organization for narrative and informational text appropriate to grade level. Patterns include description, explanation, sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, and problem and solution.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient time is spent on the instruction and practice of each pattern before moving on to a new pattern.</p>
Linking and Transition Words or Phrases	<p style="text-align: center;">K–5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a variety of transition words and phrases to signal connections between sentences, paragraphs, or sections in writing that are directly taught using mentor texts as examples.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide multiple opportunities for students to practice linking words and phrases in authentic writing appropriate to the grade level.</p>

WRITING							
General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding

INDICATOR: WRITING CRAFT

Indicator description: Writing craft refers to the various techniques, tools, and methods that writers use to convey their ideas effectively and create engaging, compelling texts.

Look-Fors	Notes
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TK

<input type="checkbox"/> The writing craft is modeled via teacher modeling and “think-alouds” and in shared writing activities.	
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Task, Audience, and Purpose	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction on identifying the task, audience, and purpose for each writing prompt and using this to support the development and organization of their writing.	

Elements of Writing Craft	K–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction for the teacher on how to help students develop Writer’s Voice through the choice of language used in drafting and revising written text. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction and practice opportunities for students to develop first-person, second-person, and third-person points of view in narrative text. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include targeted vocabulary instruction to help students choose the most effective words for conveying the meaning and tone of their writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include explicit instruction in literary devices using mentor texts to illustrate the device and provide examples, practice in analyzing literary devices, and instruction and practice in incorporating literary devices into written text.	

WRITING							
General Elements of Writing Instruction	Role of Oral Language in Writing for All Students	Writing Connected to Reading	Critical Thinking	Syntax	Text Structure	Writing Craft	Scaffolding

INDICATOR: SCAFFOLDING

Indicator description: Scaffolding refers to the educational technique of providing successive levels of temporary support that help students achieve higher levels of understanding and skill acquisition. Materials incorporate scaffolding to develop effective written expression aligned to the CA ELA/ELD framework so that English language development is incorporated into strengthening students’ writing abilities.

Look-Fors		Notes
Rigor and Productive Struggle	K–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include graphic organizers such as mind maps, Venn diagrams, story maps, and sequence charts to support students in organizing their thoughts, planning, and structuring their writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include sentence and paragraph frames and sentence starters to provide an initial structure for writers with unfinished learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include guidance on developing word banks, which include thematic words, transitional phrases, and subject-specific vocabulary lists. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include collaborative writing activities where students work with peers, share ideas, and receive feedback. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to build their skills incrementally, providing checklists and giving clear guidelines to make writing tasks less overwhelming. <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor texts include texts written by authors from various cultural backgrounds and feature characters of different backgrounds. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities for students to engage in discussion as a crucial element in each of the steps of the writing process. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include suggestions for integrated ELD, which ensures that as students engage in writing tasks, they receive the necessary language instruction to express their ideas effectively. 	

Early Literacy Program Design

Review Guidance: Apply the indicators and look-fors in this section to one grade level of materials at a time. In the notes section, capture findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the materials themselves. If needed, create separate sections in the notes regarding how teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials or how teachers are enhancing or supplementing the materials in your context.

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGN	
Guidance for Implementation	Student Supports
Instructional materials: (e.g., Wonders/Maravillas [2017])	
Grade level: (e.g., 1st grade)	

INDICATOR: GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	
<p>Indicator description: Instructional materials provide clear direction and guidance for students and educators — including to the point of scripting¹⁷ — to help facilitate high levels of student engagement to accomplish explicit learning objectives, appropriate differentiation of instruction, and effective implementation for all students. The guidance specifies how activities work in alignment with the CA ELA/ELD framework and address the ELD standards to support multilingual learners.</p>	
Look-Fors	Notes
TK–5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Time needed to prepare for full implementation aligns with time provided, structurally, to teachers. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include guidance documents for teacher implementation of modules/units and lessons across the academic school year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance documents provide comprehensive information to ensure full and effective implementation of all core materials throughout the year. <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance documents offer detailed support for the planning and preparation of modules and lessons, including pacing guides, key instructional strategies, and recommended adaptations for different learners. <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance documents contain targeted information to address specific aspects of implementation, such as reteaching and reassessing content students have not mastered, assessment strategies, differentiation techniques, and tools for monitoring student progress. 	
Teacher Guidance	

¹⁷ O'Brien, D. M., and Ware, A. M. (2002). Implementing research-based reading programs in the Fort Worth Independent School District. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 7(2), 167–195. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327671ESPR0702_4

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGN

Guidance for Implementation

Student Supports

	Look-Fors	Notes
Teacher Guidance	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide teacher guidance with useful annotations and suggestions for how to deliver instruction for student materials and ancillary materials to support students' literacy development. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a well-defined teacher resource for content presentation. <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher resource contains detailed information and instructional routines that help the teacher to effectively implement all the intended and expanded content. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials contain full, adult-level explanations and examples of the literacy concepts included in the program so teachers can improve their own knowledge of the subject, as necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed examples of the grade-level literacy concepts are provided for the teacher. 	
Lesson Design and Pacing	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> D-ELD The effective lesson design structure includes both whole group and small group instruction, as well guidance for Designated ELD instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons are well-designed and take into account effective lesson structure and pacing. Content can reasonably be completed within a regular school year, and the pacing allows for maximum student understanding. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans utilize effective, research-based lesson plan design for early literacy instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> The pacing of each component of daily lesson plans is clear and appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> The suggested amount of time and expectations for maximum student understanding of all content can reasonably be completed in one school year and does not require modifications. <input type="checkbox"/> For those materials on the borderline (e.g., approximately 130 days on the low end or 200 days on the high end), materials clearly explain how students would be able to master ALL the grade-level skills and standards within one school year. 	

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGN

Guidance for Implementation

Student Supports

INDICATOR: STUDENT SUPPORTS

Indicator description: The program includes materials designed for each child’s regular and active participation in grade-level/grade-band/series content.

	Look-Fors	Notes
Supports for MLs	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> D-ELD Materials feature Designated English language development activities that align with the CA ELA/ELD framework and the English Language Development standards. <input type="checkbox"/> D-ELD Guidance for how to align Designated ELD instruction with the ELA/literacy objectives, content, skills and standards (in alignment with the CA ELA/ELD framework) is included in each lesson and unit showing how to reinforce and amplify learning for MLs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Note: If a program offers separate Designated ELD materials designed to supplement the ELA core materials, the school/district should conduct a separate ELD review of these materials using criteria that are aligned to the CA ELA/ELD framework. <input type="checkbox"/> D-ELD The CA ELD standards are integrated into lessons and units to guide teachers’ implementation decisions based on individual student’s language development needs and extend instruction in Designated ELD. <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided around how to ensure optimal access to instruction for MLs during lesson activities with different levels of support depending on English language development. <input type="checkbox"/> Activities should foster an understanding of how the interconnected processes of the English language works, from the most common orthographic letter patterns to words with multiple meanings to the way English grammar works in sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance on ELD strategies, features of the English language, and cross-linguistic comparisons to home languages, are integrated into lesson materials and not only found in appendices or ancillary resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Resources are provided to help educators accelerate learning for MLs by leveraging cross-linguistic similarities and explicitly teaching language components that are different (e.g., lists of cognates by unit/lesson, transfer guides of language structures, and phonology.) 	

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGN	
Guidance for Implementation	Student Supports
Look-Fors	Notes
Supports for dialectal variations	TK–5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance about the importance of valuing and validating the dialectal variations students use at home and in the community (e.g., providing feedback that does not position General American English as superior to other dialects). <input type="checkbox"/> Information about unique features of dialectal variations of English, such as African American English, which teachers may need to know in order to support students in using General American English (e.g., variable use of plural and possessive S). <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided on how activities may be differentiated based on the need to ensure students using multiple dialects are adequately challenged and can experience success.
Supports for the use of home language	TK–5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide guidance to encourage teachers to draw upon students’ home languages to facilitate learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include a contrastive analysis document establishing cognates and/or discourse styles in more than one language. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide support for speakers of English language varieties. <input type="checkbox"/> General statements about speakers of English language varieties or strategies are noted at the beginning of a unit or at one place in the teacher resource. Teacher guidance is also provided for the implementation of English language variety instruction throughout the lessons.
Support for reading and writing difficulties and disabilities	TK–5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided on the heterogeneity of struggling readers and the need to identify areas of strength and of weakness, particularly in those processes that are involved in the acquisition and development of the expanded foundational skills (e.g., phonology, orthography, GPC rules, semantic, syntactic, and morphological development). This information is used to provide more targeted emphases on the areas of need and also to scaffold instructional tasks to support optimal access and participation (prompting, retrieval cues built in, a more gradual release, sentence frames, oral participation first, differentiated practice, built-in time management, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided on how activities may be differentiated based on the need to ensure students are adequately challenged and can experience success (additional practice, reduced length expectations, more frequent feedback, chunking, paragraph frames, spelling support, etc.).

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGN

Guidance for Implementation

Student Supports

Look-Fors		Notes
Support for reading and writing difficulties and disabilities	TK–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance on fully including students with reading and writing difficulties and disabilities is woven throughout the lessons with activities that elicit and allow recognition of their strengths (not only in an appendix or external resource). <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided to the teacher with additional resources so that students can receive additional support and explicit instruction in literacy skills in order to progress toward grade-level and accelerate learning.	
Supports for advanced reading & writing skills	TK–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided on how to challenge advanced learners during whole-group lessons (e.g., give them more complex or longer reading material, a focus on encoding or writing their responses, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided on what the “next steps” would be relative to a skill or concept being taught so that teachers know what to offer students who are already meeting the grade-level expectation. <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance is provided for educators around when to consider exempting students from some content because they have already demonstrated mastery. <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance on fully including students with advanced reading and writing skills is woven throughout the lessons (not only in an appendix or external resource).	
Balance of Representation	TK–5	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials and assessments provide a balance of images or information about people, representing various demographic and physical and cognitive characteristics. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials avoid stereotypes or language that might be offensive to a particular group. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide representations that show students that they can succeed in the subject, going beyond just showing photos of students of different backgrounds not engaged in work related to the context of the learning.	

Coherence and Alignment in Dual Language Programming

Review Guidance: Apply the indicators and look-fors in this section to one grade level of materials at a time. In the notes section, capture findings regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the materials themselves. If needed, create separate sections in the notes regarding how teachers are implementing specific aspects of the materials or how teachers are enhancing or supplementing the materials in your context.

COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
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Instructional materials: (e.g., Wonders/Maravillas [2017])	
Grade level: (e.g., 1st grade)	

The following is a short list of criteria for an initial investigation into whether materials in a Dual Immersion setting set students up for developing advanced levels of literacy in both languages (biliteracy). For a comprehensive set of criteria intended for biliteracy and dual language settings, see the [ELSF Spanish Language Arts Guidelines](#). Districts with a dual language immersion program should conduct a separate full review of their dual language materials. The section provides examples using the top languages spoken by students in California.

INDICATOR: COHERENCE WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Indicator description: Dual language materials promote a coherent instructional experience for students across English and target language so that students can develop concepts and skills in both languages.

	Look-Fors	Notes
	TK–5	
Text alignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Texts and trade books in each language connect to the same topics under study to provide access to a wide range of complex vocabulary and grammatical structures and information about a specific topic.	

COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
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Look-Fors		Notes
Knowledge building	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials in both languages are organized around important, interesting, and student-centered topics that build substantial content knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials are sequenced to deepen students' knowledge about a topic through multiple opportunities to read, write, discuss, and think deeply in both languages. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide text sets in both English and the target language for students' independent reading to support the development of knowledge related to topics and themes covered in the grade-level texts. 	
Standards Alignment	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials in both languages must be organized and aligned to the state's language standards for English and the target language. 	
Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional materials provide guidance and suggested amounts of time, pacing, and sequencing of units for both ELA and Dual Language curricula based on variations in language allocation and program models. 	

COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
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INDICATOR: BILITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Indicator description: Dual language materials promote advanced biliteracy development in the target language and in English.

Look-Fors		Notes
Foundational skills in the target language	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional materials guide teachers and students in the foundational aspects of literacy in the target language, based on the phonological, orthographic, semantic, morphological, and syntactic structures of the language. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish materials incorporate phonological awareness based on the structure of the Spanish language (rhyming, alliteration, syllabic awareness, language awareness, and phonemic awareness). <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support students in reading from left to right in English and right to left in Arabic. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials teach the tones of Chinese characters and Vietnamese words. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials support and make explicit cross-linguistic comparisons between sounds written in Chinese Pinyin and sounds in English. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials sequence early literacy instruction in all aspects of the language (orthography, phonology, semantics, morphology, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics) based on the orthography and varied linguistic aspects of the target language. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish materials introduce and teach vowel sounds first, then the most common consonant sounds, and finally, digraphs. Spanish materials use syllabic awareness and syllabification rules for the development of orthographic patterns. <input type="checkbox"/> Syllabification and accent marks are included in Spanish literacy lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional materials include an emphasis on morphology in Arabic to teach the rules that govern how letters in nouns and verbs are added, dropped, or changed to add meaning or significance. <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese instructional materials support students in developing sound-symbol correspondence to the Vietnamese alphabet and have opportunities to learn about Chũ Nôm in historical texts. 	

COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
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	Look-Fors	Notes
Advanced literacy in the target language	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials move beyond foundational literacy instruction and incorporate advanced literacy skills in the target language connected to grade-level content, texts, and tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials guide students throughout units in the formal uses of the target language in formal settings and in academic texts. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide ample opportunities to develop oral language in both languages throughout the units of study. 	

COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
--------------------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------

INDICATOR: HONORING THE TARGET LANGUAGE

Indicator description: Dual language materials must utilize original, authentic texts in the target language, both literary and informational, that reflect the content and focus of the lessons to provide modeling of target language structures and discourse styles appropriate to the genre.

Look-Fors		Notes
Linguistic Variation	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Texts and content reflect the varieties of the target language used in diasporic communities and in the United States. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish texts reflect the varieties of Spanish in the Spanish-speaking world, including texts by Latine authors in the United States who are writing in Spanish. <input type="checkbox"/> Texts in Chinese are provided in traditional and simplified characters. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide opportunities for students to learn about variations of the target language used in different parts of the world. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials include opportunities to learn about the different uses of Spanish used in the Spanish-speaking world, including how the context of the United States influences students' usage of Spanish. <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic texts provide students with a range of classical and Modern Standard Arabic literature. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials use texts and stories that reflect regional variations in the Vietnamese language. 	

COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Coherence with English Language Arts	Biliteracy Development	Honoring the Target Language	Bilingual Assessments
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INDICATOR: BILINGUAL ASSESSMENTS

Indicator description: Assessments are used to promote biliteracy development and avoid duplicative instruction. Assessment in bilingual classrooms should be responsive to the multiplicity of factors that affect teaching students who are developing abilities in both of their languages

Look-Fors		Notes
Content integration	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments help differentiate students’ progress in learning content from a student’s ability to perform in the target language. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials included varied possibilities for content-based assessment in both languages (i.e., portfolios, interviews, observations, student self-assessments, writing samples, performance-based tasks and projects, guided tasks, interviews with the child’s family and other significant individuals in the child’s life) 	
Biliteracy	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments are designed to inform instruction and capture students’ growth in both languages. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide multiple and varied opportunities for students to represent their understanding and thinking using their whole linguistic repertoire in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> i.e., the use of different languages and language varieties, the mixing of languages, and the use of nonverbal language to demonstrate language and literacy ability, skills, and knowledge. 	
Peer and self-assessment	TK–5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide regular opportunities for students to reflect and develop metalinguistic awareness of their growing bilingualism and biliteracy. <input type="checkbox"/> Materials provide regular, structured opportunities for students to provide feedback to their peers to develop metacognitive awareness. 	

Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Future Area of Exploration

Acknowledgements

About UnboundEd

References

Glossary of Terms

Anaphora is a rhetorical device identified by the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive sentences or clauses.

Cross-linguistic connections are the relationships or influences between two or more languages. These connections can manifest in various ways, including similarities in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or the way languages are learned and processed.

Chunking is a procedure for breaking up reading material into manageable sections. Before reading a “chunk,” students are given a statement of purpose, which guides them in looking for something specific in the text. This process is repeated until students complete the passage.

Decodable texts are reading materials specifically designed to align with the phonics skills and scope and sequence of a particular phonics program. These texts are carefully structured to include words that follow previously taught phonics patterns, making it easier for beginning readers to decode (sound out) and read them independently. The primary goal of decodable text is to reinforce the relationship between letters and sounds, supporting the development of reading accuracy, automaticity, and confidence.

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a condition characterized by difficulties acquiring and using language due to problems with language development. These difficulties can affect spoken, written, and other forms of language and are not attributable to other developmental issues, hearing loss, or neurological conditions.

Discourse is the use of language in spoken or written communication, encompassing a wide range of contexts, purposes, and structures. It goes beyond individual sentences to look at how language is used in texts, conversations, and various forms of communication to convey meaning and achieve specific effects.

Domain-specific vocabulary is the words and phrases that are specific to a particular field of study, subject, profession, or area of expertise. These terms are often essential for understanding and communicating within that domain and may not be commonly used outside of it.

Dyslexia is defined by the International Dyslexia Association as a “...specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluency word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.” (2002)

Indigenous oral language traditions are the ways in which Indigenous peoples transmit knowledge, culture, history, and values through spoken word rather than written text. These traditions include storytelling, songs, chants, rituals, proverbs, and other forms of oral communication. They play a vital role in preserving the heritage and identity of Indigenous communities and often reflect and embody their worldviews and values.

Informational text, also known as expository or non-fiction, provides factual information about specific topics. Examples of informational texts include autobiographies, biographies, directions, encyclopedias, historical texts, news articles, scientific reports, instruction manuals, textbooks, and websites.

Knowledge demands of text refer to the background information, familiarity with concepts, and prior understanding that readers need to effectively comprehend and engage with a given text. These demands can vary significantly based on the complexity and subject matter of the text, as well as the readers’ existing knowledge and experience.

Language comprehension are the component parts of reading comprehension and fluency that include background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge.

Language structures are the various systems and patterns that govern how language is organized and used. These structures include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, each playing a crucial role in how language conveys meaning and facilitates communication.

Linguistic clues are elements within language that provide hints or signals to the listener or reader about meaning, structure, and the relationship between different parts of the text or speech. These cues help interpret and understand language effectively.

Literary text, also known as narrative text, is primarily designed to entertain, tell a story, or express ideas, emotions, and themes creatively. Examples of literary texts are stories (fables, fairy tales, legends, myths, novels, realistic fiction, science fiction, short stories), plays, and poetry.

Morphological awareness is the ability to recognize, understand, and manipulate the smallest units of meaning in a language, called morphemes. Morphological awareness supports reading fluency because when students recognize morphemes in words they are able to process morphemic units as chunks, instead of decoding letter by letter which makes long words more accessible for readers and speeds up word recognition. Additionally, morphological awareness increases semantic knowledge as students are able to decode and understand the meanings of new words without direct instruction, understand the meanings of multiple related words from one root, and comprehend subtle word meaning and relationships. Morphological awareness also connects to syntactic markers because morphemes often provide grammatical information that helps individuals understand a word's role in a sentence.

Noun groups (also known as noun phrases) are groups of words that function together as a noun within a sentence. They typically consist of a main noun (the head noun) and its modifiers, which can include articles, adjectives, quantifiers, possessives, and other determiners. Noun groups provide additional information about the noun, specifying details such as which one, what kind, how many, or whose.

Oral language refers to the system of spoken words and verbal communication used to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings. It is a fundamental form of human communication that includes speaking and listening. The development of oral language occurs through intentional exposure, interaction, repetition and practice as children engage with their caregivers, peers, and environment. Although first language learning appears “natural” it follows a predictable sequence (in every language) and employs what researchers refer to as components of effective instruction. Students learning a second language will require more opportunities to engage in authentic conversations and ample opportunities for practice in the academic setting as they may not have the same constant and immersive exposure to their second language as they had to their first language.

Orthography is the conventional spelling system of a language, encompassing the rules and conventions for spelling, including the use of letters, diacritical marks, punctuation, and capitalization. It is concerned with the standardization of spelling and the representation of sounds and meanings through written symbols.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize, manipulate, and work with the smallest units of sound, called phonemes, in spoken language. Phonemes are the distinct sounds that differentiate words in a language. For example, the words “bat” and “cat” differ by only one phoneme, /b/ and /k/, respectively. Phonemic awareness is a crucial skill for learning to read and spell because it involves understanding that words are composed of these individual sounds and that these sounds can be manipulated to create new words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sound structures in spoken language. It is a critical foundational skill for reading and writing, encompassing a range of auditory skills that help individuals understand that words are made up of smaller sound units such as syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes. Phonological awareness develops gradually and is essential for learning to read, as it underpins the ability to decode and spell words.

Polysemy is a linguistic term that refers to multiple meanings that many English words possess and that are found in a vast number of primer-level words like bat, jam, track, etc. This conceptual knowledge about how English works helps all learners, but especially bilingual and MLs.

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that studies how context influences the interpretation of meaning in communication. It goes beyond the literal meanings of words and sentences to understand how language is used in real-life situations to convey messages, perform actions, and achieve various communicative goals. Pragmatics considers the relationships between speakers and listeners, the intentions behind utterances, and the effects of context on meaning.

Productive language refers to the ability to produce and use language actively to communicate ideas, thoughts, and emotions. It involves speaking and writing, where an individual generates language output as opposed to receptive language, which involves understanding and interpreting input (listening and reading).

Qualitatively complex text is written material that presents challenges to readers beyond simple word decoding due to its sophisticated structure, deep themes, abstract concepts, and nuanced language. Such texts demand higher-order thinking skills, extensive background knowledge, and the ability to understand and interpret subtle meanings.

Qualitative analysis of text involves the in-depth examination and interpretation of the content, themes, and meanings within the text. This approach focuses on understanding the underlying context, nuances, and subjective elements of the text.

Quantitative analysis of text refers to the systematic examination of text using numerical and statistical techniques. It involves measuring and analyzing aspects of the text that can be quantified, often to identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data.

Retrieval cues are a stimulus or hint that helps trigger the recall of information stored in memory. Retrieval cues can be anything that was present when the memory was encoded, such as a specific word, phrase, sound, smell, or context. They serve as a bridge between the current environment and the stored memory, facilitating the process of retrieving information from long-term memory.

Semantics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, and texts. It explores how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and communicated, focusing on the relationships between signifiers—like words, phrases, signs, and symbols—and what they stand for or represent. Semantic knowledge supports fluent reading because students with deep knowledge about a word are more automatic in both recognizing the word and retrieving its meaning.

Sentence complexity refers to the structural intricacy of a sentence, which can include factors such as the number and type of clauses, the use of conjunctions, the variety of sentence structures, and the inclusion of modifiers and other grammatical elements. Complex sentences typically convey more detailed, nuanced, or layered information compared to simple sentences.

Syntax is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language or dialect. It involves the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed, grammatical sentences. Syntax encompasses the rules for combining words into phrases, phrases into clauses, and clauses into sentences, ensuring that the resulting sentences convey clear and precise meaning. Knowledge of syntax helps readers make sense of how words are organized and how they function within a sentence, supporting prosody, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

Temporarily irregular words are seemingly irregular to the student because the student has not been taught a specific sound or pattern yet. Upon learning the sound or pattern, the words become regular for the student.

Word recognition is composed of three strands (phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition of familiar words), which work together as the reader becomes accurate, fluent, and increasingly automatic with repetition and practice.

Future Area of Exploration

This tool is designed to support many of California’s young learners, particularly hearing students who can benefit from specified literacy support (e.g., MLs and multidialectal students.) We have also consulted experts in deaf literacy and know that students who are deaf and hard of hearing require different literacy development supports, which are not currently captured in the scope of this tool. This is an area of future exploration to increase the scope of our guidance for all California school districts and charter networks.

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About UnboundEd

UnboundEd empowers educators to meet the needs of every single student through evidence-informed, engaging, affirming, and meaningful grade-level instruction. In 2022, UnboundEd [merged with Pivot Learning and CORE Learning](#).

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