

# Instructional Materials Decision Guide

## Has your district provided instructional materials to support instruction in your content area?

To find out, review the curriculum and instruction resources on your district website. You can ask district staff involved in curriculum and instruction or your school leader.

Yes

No

### Are the materials provided aligned with college and career readiness standards?

Aligned materials in ELA/Literacy allow for regular practice with complex text and its academic language; reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational; and building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

Aligned materials in Mathematics focus strongly where the Standards focus; think across grades and link to major topics within the grade; and, in major topics, pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity.

To find out if your materials are aligned, consult the ELA/Literacy and Mathematics curriculum reviews published by EdReports and the [Louisiana Department of Education](#). If your materials haven't been reviewed, you can use a vetted rubric,\* like Student Achievement Partners' [Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool](#) (IMET) or Achieve's [EQuIP Tools and Protocols](#) to evaluate your materials.

*\*Note: Evaluating materials can be time-consuming and complex. Ask your school leader or district staff involved in curriculum and instruction to find out if the materials have already been reviewed using one of these tools. If not, we recommend reviewing the materials together with a group of colleagues.*

### 1. Prepare for instruction using strong, open-source instructional materials.

We recommend using instructional materials that have been rated favorably by EdReports and the [Louisiana Department of Education](#) and are available for free online,\* including:

- **ELA:** [EL Education K-5](#), [Core Knowledge Language Arts K-5](#), [Engage NY/ Expeditionary Learning 6-8](#), [Louisiana Guidebooks 3-12](#), [Odell Education Literacy Curriculum 6-12](#).
- **Math:** [Illustrative Mathematics 6–8](#), [Engage NY/ Eureka Math K-12](#).
- Other resources available through [Open Up Resources](#).

### 2. Advocate for the adoption and purchase of high-quality, standards-aligned materials in your district.

You can advocate for better materials by:

- Contacting your district superintendent and board of education to share the key findings from [The Opportunity Myth](#).
- Pointing district leaders to the reviews of curriculum materials published by EdReports and the [Louisiana Department of Education](#) and emphasizing the importance of a coherent knowledge-building experience within and across grades.
- Enlisting other teachers and families in your school or community to support your advocacy efforts on behalf of students.

*\*Note: While these materials can be accessed for free online, there are costs associated with purchasing texts and making copies for students. If using those instructional materials is not feasible, be sure to compare the unit or lesson materials you do use to [examples of strong student assignments](#), either independently or with your peers.*

Yes

No

### Do the materials provided by your district reflect the cultures, languages, and lived experiences of the students in your classroom community?

Examine your instructional materials for evidence of bias through multiple lenses and consider intersectionality.

If applicable, examine your instructional materials using the [Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](#) or the [Windows and Mirrors](#) framework or to assess whether they allow students to explore the unfamiliar (windows) and see their own lives and experiences validated and valued (mirrors).

### 1. Supplement or adapt your district-provided instructional materials to better reflect the demands of college and career readiness standards.

Use the curriculum material reviews published by EdReports and the [Louisiana Department of Education](#) to identify the gaps and weaknesses in your materials.

Once you've identified the gaps, use Student Achievement Partners [textbook adaptations](#). If textbook adaptations aren't available, set aside the less effective portions of the materials and devote more attention to high-value texts and activities.

Address gaps in your materials by supplementing with open-source resources available through:

- [Achieve the Core](#)
- [Unbounded](#)
- [Illustrative Mathematics](#)
- [Open Up Resources](#)
- [Achieve](#)

Be sure to compare the unit or lesson materials you use to examples of strong student assignments, either independently or with your peers.

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### Supplement or adapt your district-provided instructional materials to ensure they validate and consider students' cultural, linguistic, and racial identities.

Plan to:

- Research additional, different, or opposing perspectives.
- Confer with your colleagues and other stakeholders to solicit additional perspectives.
  - Include students in critiques of course materials and/or revise lesson materials to address bias:
  - If absent, supplement the materials to provide resources that reflect the cultures, languages, and lived experiences of the students in your classroom.
  - If representations of diverse cultural and linguistic groups are poor or inaccurate, reconstruct or replace existing presentations of issues and situations.

Start with the following high-quality sources:

- Loyola University's list of [multicultural/ culturally-responsive texts](#).
- Stanford University's [teaching resources](#) that exemplify high-quality instruction for English Language Learners.
- The classrooms resources available from [Learning for Justice](#).

Yes

No

### Use your high-quality instructional materials to prepare for instruction.

Teaching from high-quality materials may require a different kind of preparation than you may be used to. Take the time and steps needed to build deep trust in and understanding of your materials, and prepare to teach them with integrity, creativity, and professional judgement. This means both knowing the materials well and knowing your students well.

#### 1. Spend time familiarizing yourself with the design principles that informed your materials, how the materials are organized, and the content and routines in the materials.

#### 2. Engage in cycles of unit preparation. Consider the following:

- What will my students learn during this unit? Why is this content important?
- How will my students demonstrate their learning at the end of the unit? What do my students need to know and be able to do? Where might they struggle? [Draft an exemplar student response.]
- How will the daily learning experiences in this unit build student understanding and skill?

#### 3. Engage in cycles of lesson preparation. Consider the following:

- How will students demonstrate their learning at the daily level? What do my students need to know and be able to do? [Complete all of the tasks that will be assigned to students.]
- Where might my students struggle?
- How will I support student understanding?

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