GUIDEBOOKS 2.0 ELA

Pilot Feedback Report

INTRODUCTION

The goal for students in English language arts (ELA) is to read and understand complex, grade-level texts and express their understanding of those texts through writing and speaking. Students in Louisiana are ready for college or a career if they can read, understand, and express their understanding of complex, grade-level texts. This means students should be able to pick up any text, such as a picture book, newspaper article, or painting, understand what the text means, and be able to speak or write about the ideas they learned or challenge from the text and why.

The **ELA Guidebooks**, housed on LearnZillion, are classroom-ready daily lessons made by teachers for teachers to ensure all students meet the ELA goal. This work began in spring 2013 and teachers have continued to revise and improve upon the original foundation to provide teachers across the state with an ELA curriculum for whole-class instruction.

ELA Guidebooks 2.0 resulted from feedback that teachers wanted help with pacing and structuring the content of the units in Guidebooks 1.0. In the interest of continuing to gather feedback, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) engaged in a pilot of the guidebooks with districts from the Striving Readers' Comprehensive Literacy Program.

The purpose of this report is to identify feedback received from the pilot and LDOE next steps so that districts can make informed decisions about high-quality curricular materials and associated professional development.

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
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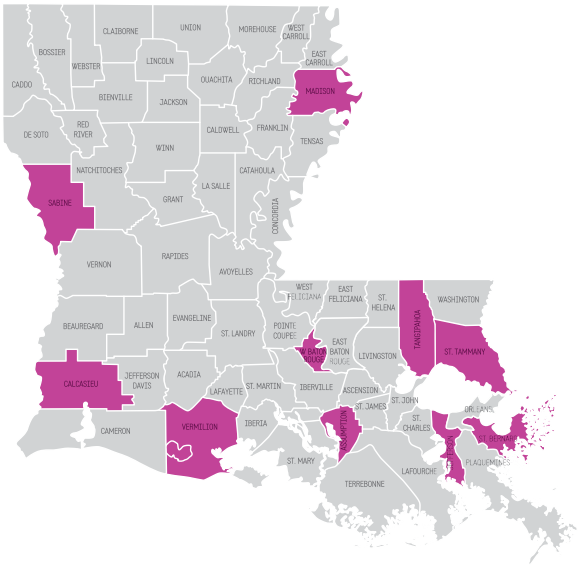
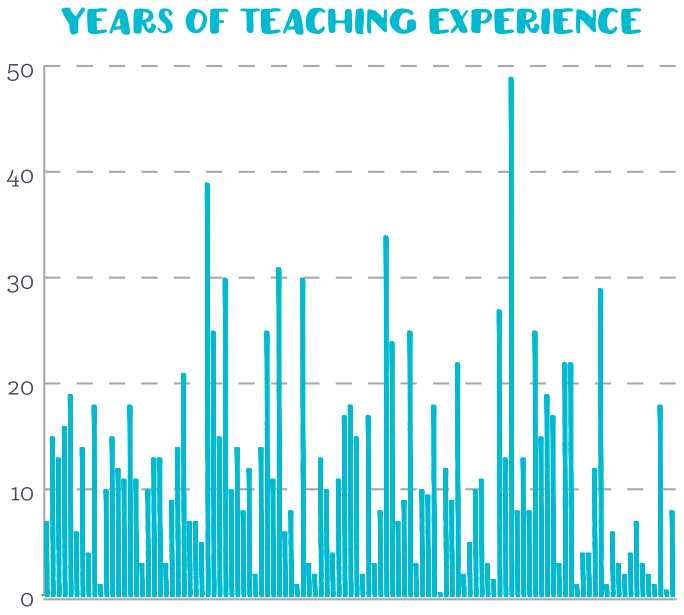
PILOT METHODOLOGY

Ten districts participated in the ELA Guidebooks Pilot: Assumption, Calcasieu, Jefferson, Madison, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, and West Baton Rouge.





Participating teachers at-a-glance:

THE MEDIAN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IS **10 YRS**

THE AVERAGE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IS **11.78 YRS**

UNITS WERE PILOTED IN **147 CLASSROOMS.**

3 MONTHS — RANGE OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE — **49 YEARS**

The pilot consisted of teachers 1) trying out these units and offering ongoing feedback, 2) being observed implementing these units, 3) answering questions in a focus group, and 4) completing a formal feedback survey.

Pilot Unit	Number of Pilot Teachers
Grade 3 - Louisiana Purchase	21
Grade 4 - American Revolution	16
Grade 4 - Lightning Thief	7
Grade 5 - The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	11
Grade 6 - Hatchet	15
Grade 7 - Memoir	7
Grade 8 - Tell-Tale Heart	20
Grade 8 - Flowers for Algernon	4
Grade 9 - Romeo and Juliet	26
Grade 10 - The Metamorphosis	9
Grade 11 - Our Town	5
Grade 12 - Hamlet	6

GUIDEBOOK OVERVIEW

Guidebooks are based on sets or collections of texts. Each text collection has a shared topic or concept, such as the American Revolution, special effects in film, or "the hero's journey." The units use a backwards design model, so that the lessons build toward three unit assessments:

1. **Culminating Writing Task**: Students synthesize the topics, themes, and ideas of the unit into a written essay.
2. **Cold-Read Task**: Students read a new text or two related to the unit topic and answer multiple-choice questions as well as write an essay.
3. **Extension Task**: Students extend what they have learned in the unit to make connections between their learning and their lives through a narrative or personal essay or between their learning and the world through research about a related topic.

The guidebooks contain up to five units for whole-class instruction in grades 3-12. Each unit contains approximately 40 classroom-ready daily lessons on an online platform. The lessons include student-facing slides, teaching notes with questions and student look-fors, handouts, example student writing, and tasks that integrate knowledge and skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language grounded in complex texts.

PILOT LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Guidebooks are a useful guide for whole-class instruction**. The guidebooks help teachers identify quality texts at their grade level, guide students to make meaning of those texts through questions and prompts, and know through the rubrics, exemplars, and student look-fors what it looks and sounds like when a student understands a text.
2. **Guidebooks help teachers teach kids, not programs**. The guidebooks support teachers by allowing them to focus their planning time on customizing the lessons and scaffolding instruction for all students, rather than on developing materials from scratch.
3. **As the guidebooks are revised, they need to continue to account for diverse learners**.

Based on these takeaways and the following feedback, the LDOE plans to engage in these next steps to ensure the guidebooks remain a high-quality curricular option for districts:

1. Continue to **build out units** and revise pilot units according to feedback
2. Create plans for developing guidebook support for diverse learners, such as students who struggle with reading and students classified as English Language Learners
3. Work with vendors to provide high-quality **professional development packages** to support teachers as they implement the ELA Guidebooks

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The following is a summary of feedback we received from all pilot engagement opportunities. In addition to the feedback opportunities listed below, the Department hosted office hours for teachers and districts to call in for instructional support with the guidebook units. Access the forms used and raw data from these engagement opportunities in the appendices.

- **Immediate feedback**
- **Classroom observations**
- **Focus groups**
- **Formal feedback survey**
- **Student feedback**
- **National expert review**

PACING: Most classrooms found the pacing to be ambitious, especially for students reading below grade level. Teachers of students performing at or above grade level (e.g., honors or AP) indicated the content was not as rigorous as their own plans. Pacing was an issue depending on the configuration of the class time, such as a 100 minute block, a 90 minute block, or a 4 X4 schedule.

"I did slow down. I am not following the pace. I find that the deeper we are going the better they are doing. I am seeing progress."

"I have two resource classes and a high level class. I can get through with the high level, with the resource class it is taking over twice the time."

"We worked together to help with pacing."

"What the Guidebooks are asking of the students is so rich, it will take more time."

"Sometimes they need more time and sometimes less."

"Pacing is ambitious. We made center activities so kids could catch up."

"As long as we have the autonomy to adjust, we will use them."

"I adjusted something almost daily. Time was an issue with block. Some days we accomplished things quickly and some days were more difficult, more dense lessons, and I was grateful for more time and the block."

SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS: The participants in the pilot indicated the guiding questions and prompts and student look-fors in the teaching notes were useful. They also indicated they felt comfortable making adjustments to fit the needs of their students, such as developing mini-lessons to fill gaps in student skills or modeling how to complete a task. Most participants asked for more support options for students who struggle and who perform above grade level.

"My inclusion groups needed more scaffolding like the independent reading and writing. I had to break that up, especially in the beginning."

"I broke the lessons down some and they are spot on. Because it is exactly what they need. It is integrated with everything they need to do a good job of filling the gaps for the struggling students."

"Loved the Student Look Fors. The Student Look Fors let me know what students were working toward. Those and the guided questions were amazing."

"We even printed a lot of the charts on poster size paper to do as a class and hang in the room."

"For my ESL kids, it was concrete. They were able to break it down and get it."

"It forces them to work with the texts. It made a difference for me because I have a lot of old fashioned ways. It helped me have structure. I used to just go on and now I realize they weren't getting it. This forces me to come back."

"We have a lot of hearing impaired students and it was hard for the interpreters to keep up."

"In general, the things that the students were expected to know and do was at a higher level than my students were. I had to add a lot more modeling than were even in the examples."

"In the teaching notes, it said to read and ask the question. I knew some kids wouldn't answer. I added a 'show me board.'"

"Hatchet is mostly independent read and partner read, but with struggling readers there needs to be more whole-class reading. Wish we had more read aloud."

"There is a lot of preparation going in and especially looking to see where you will need to differentiate."

"The very first lesson had to read most of the text, so we had to chunk it. The guidebooks make assumptions about the level of students. There is not a lot of differentiation for the low students."

"I have classes with SPED, 504, and GT all in one class. Different strategies or links to other strategies would be helpful."

"I saw the most progress with my remedial students."

"I only gave the sentence frames to higher students who I knew could handle it."

MATERIALS EASE OF USE: Teachers like the platform for the English Language Arts Guidebooks 2.0 with LearnZillion. Many participants indicated the design of the lessons supported students. They also stated there are a few tweaks they want made to the functionality of the platform or the use of the handouts to make it easier to use. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the responses from the pilot teachers indicated in the final survey that the teacher's notes were useful.

"It is really accessible and user-friendly."

"When you are trying to support all teachers...experienced and new. It has a lot more direction that the original guidebooks. It allows experienced teachers flexibility but new teachers structure."

"You have to plan ahead."

"It is nice to have something that shows you step by step what it should look like."

"[Students] figured out the structure of the lesson. They know if they do the work, when they get to the last page they will have to write something. They figured out that if they do the work the writing will be easy."

"That's the best thing about the guidebook, everything builds and connects."

"You have so many different skills in one lesson, reading, vocabulary, compare/contrast, and writing."

"Reduce the number of graphic organizers; some they can just do in their journals."

"I like how it gives a framework to go by. Before it was just guidance. It gives me a little more confidence."

"A lot of the worksheets have wasted space around in and enough space to write. Had to remake and revise so that students would have enough room to write."

"If there could be a number on the notes that matches the slides. That would help."

"It would also be nice to be able to print the Teaching Notes with the slide."

"A workbook would be nice."

"It would be good to be able to print the teaching notes and the additional materials all at one time."

"Downloads could be in Word, not PDF, so we can adjust them."

"I liked it. It was stressful to work against a timeline, but I think it really prepares students for LEAP formatting and testing. It was also difficult to change routine on the kids mid-year. I think if it would have been used since the beginning of the year and the kids were used to the formatting, we would have seen more results."

TEXTS: Most participants saw how the texts fit together in the units. They indicated that the students for the most part enjoyed the texts. They did cite a few texts that didn't work for the students due to the difficulty level of the text. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the responding pilot teachers indicated that the students were interested in the selected texts.

"They love the texts; they are engaged and excited."

"The text were great, they align up so well."

"The Secret Garden was too long and not worth the fight with the students. Maybe an excerpt to get to the robin part. We did like not having to find the passage."

"The language in Bowling Alone was very difficult."

"One of the best things about the pilot is including nonfiction, connecting it to the nonfiction really speaks to getting ready for college and career. Maybe adding more nonfiction."

"The pilot helped them to discuss. When they have the teenage brain nonfiction, it helped to scaffold their thinking."

"We can see the overall sense of the unit, but the students don't see it as much, so they don't want to leave the anchor text."

"My kids love The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."

"The independent reading of Romeo and Juliet should be moved to later in the unit."

"The texts were very useful in getting the unit focus across. The students were very interested in the texts and I appreciated how the texts gave different perspectives of the sides of the American Revolution."

"Students enjoyed the stories. The close reading process always begins to lose their attention toward the end because students are looking at the text so closely. Although, students may not have wanted to write all assignments, I believe that it did a good job of preparing them for testing."

"One student purchased the book on her own because she wanted to read it at home too."

"The students did not like all the starting and stopping during reading."

"It was interesting for some. The text was too complex for others. It was so broken down that spaced out that I don't think the students could grasp the whole picture. "

"The students enjoyed the variety of texts that were used."

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS: Generally, there were two concerns. First, participants indicated their district's grading policy as well as administrator and parent expectations of the type of assessments used to calculate a student's grade seemed to contradict the approach taken in the guidebooks. Some districts helped teachers develop rubrics to grade the Express Understanding tasks in the guidebooks, which helped teachers meet the grading policy requirements. Those districts did not have grading concerns. Second, participants asked for more short, weekly quizzes and Part A/Part B multiple-choice questions.

"I have seen children doing things and talking about text in ways I have never seen. Even a student who used to never speak, but now he is talking about text as an adult would. It is amazing."

"It ensures that students think at a critical level. Some of the questions require more thinking. It hits to the depth and rigor of the standards that might not be met in the classroom otherwise."

"Almost everything we made a rubric for...writing, charts, notebooks, etc. I give it to them so they know what I am looking for when I grade."

"I've seen real growth in my students."

"More PARCC aligned questions Part A and Part B. There is not enough of it. They need more repetitive practice with it. "

"For the assessments, more rubrics and exemplars for the assessments."

"Practice with multiple choice on formative assessments in addition to the writing."

"We are required to do 9 comprehension assessments, so we had to add them. And 4 writing."

"We have to have 18 grades...and it has to be so many major assessments. If they do not do the graphic organizers independently, we don't want to take that up."

"I like the idea of assessing in that format and having them apply it to another text."

"Assumed teachers would use daily tasks for a grade, but when you have 60 students, you can't grade all of these along the way."

"I have them put it in their notebook. They leave them out for PE and I check them for understanding."

"I would like to see more multiple choice because of the EOC and ACT."

"It doesn't give enough time for student self assessment. They don't have enough time to peer edit, either."

"Need student-facing rubrics."

"Weekly assessments that would cover what we went over that week."

Appendix A

As they taught the units, pilot teachers had the opportunity to provide immediate feedback on the form below. They could provide general feedback (i.e. typo, grammatical error) or feedback on a certain lesson within the unit (i.e. another text suggestion, another activity suggestion). They could use the form multiple times. Ninety-seven responses were submitted during the pilot. The Romeo and Juliet unit (9th grade) had the most submissions, followed by the Hamlet unit (12th grade) and the American Revolution unit (4th grade). Any errors submitted were corrected quickly during the pilot since the units are in digital format. Suggested content edits will be considered as the pilot units are updated.

Guidebooks 2.0 Pilot Feedback Form

Your feedback is important so that we develop units that lead students to understand, talk, and write about complex texts.

Capture your thoughts on this form as you pilot the unit. You do not have to answer all the questions. You can use this form multiple times.

***Required**

Give feedback on a specific lesson.

Be sure to indicate the lesson number.

Provide general observations.

Check the ELA Guidebook unit you are piloting. *

- ☐ Grade 3 – Louisiana Purchase
- ☐ Grade 4 – American Revolution
- ☐ Grade 4 – Lightning Thief
- ☐ Grade 5 – The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
- ☐ Grade 6 – Hatchet
- ☐ Grade 7 – Memoir
- ☐ Grade 8 – Tell-Tale Heart
- ☐ Grade 8 – Flower for Algernon
- ☐ Grade 9 – Romeo and Juliet
- ☐ Grade 10 – Metamorphosis
- ☐ Grade 11 – Our Town
- ☐ Grade 12 – Hamlet

Other:

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Appendix B

Sixty-two teachers were observed during the pilot. The purpose of the classroom observations was to gather information on the effectiveness of the materials, teaching notes, and lessons found in the ELA Guidebooks 2.0. The observation was not used for teacher evaluation.

Observation Sheet

ELA Guidebook 2.0 Unit _____

Observer's Comments

Lesson Logistics • Did the materials seem adequate for the classroom? Consider the quantities and quality (e.g., suggested number texts, way text is delivered, etc.) • Were the materials easily/smoothly facilitated? Consider logistics (e.g., transitions, locating and distributing materials, etc.)	
Lesson Content • Does the lesson "flow" an make sense to teachers, students, observers? • How adaptable was the lesson content (e.g., directions, questions, prompts, handouts) when necessary? • Was the pacing right and were adjustments made when necessary? • What evidence of student learning is demonstrated in the lesson? Does it meet intended expectations of the lesson content?	
Note any adjustments made, if any.	

Appendix C

72% of pilot teachers participated in a focus group to provide feedback on what worked and what didn't work during the pilot. Assumption Parish was scheduled to participate, but was unable to participate due to inclement weather. Direct quotations from the focus groups are included in the feedback summary of this report.

Focus Group Questions

1. Describe the overall process you used to implement the pilot unit you are teaching.
    a. After first getting access, what did you do to prepare?
    b. Once you were implementing the lessons, what process did you follow the week before/the night before?
2. At what points in the unit did you find yourself adjusting/adding/filling in gaps because something didn't work for the students or your context?
    a. What evidence did you use to determine the need to adjust/add/fill in gaps?
    b. Is that something you'd like to see added to the guidebooks? Anything else you want added?
    c. Did anything not "work" for the students? Did anything not "work" for you? How would that best be fixed? Is there anything you would have deleted? Why?
3. Were the sections of the teacher notes useful?
    a. Were the directions clear?
    b. Did Guiding Questions and Prompts help you meet the specific needs of your students?
    c. Did Student Look-Fors support your daily assessment of student learning?
    d. Is there any other type of information or support you would like to see in Additional Notes?
4. Would you recommend the guidebook to a colleague? Why or why not?
5. What was your overall experience with the guidebooks? What was your students' overall experience with the guidebooks?

Focus Group Process

Pilot districts selected teachers to participate in the Focus Group Discussion. A staff member from the Department asked the questions while another staff member transcribed the conversation. Due to the number of pilot teachers, some districts had two focus groups.

Appendix D

Pilot teachers were asked to complete a final survey at the end of the pilot. While the original intent was for teachers to complete the survey after they were done teaching the unit, many teachers were still not done teaching the pilot unit by the time they were expected to complete the survey.

In the end, 58.5% of the pilot teachers responded to the survey (86 responses out of 147 pilot teachers). Results from the survey were generally positive. For example:

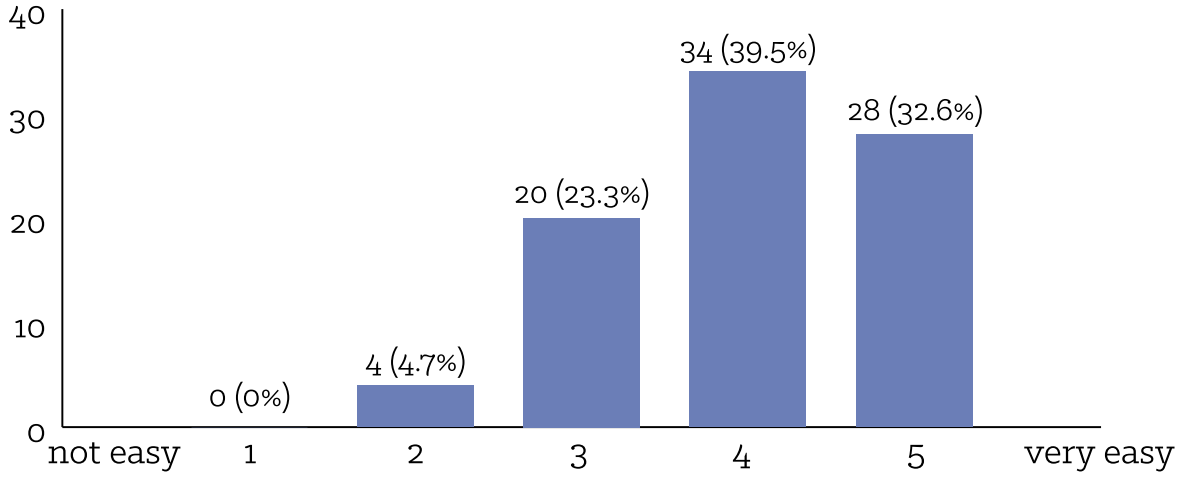
- 72% of the teachers found the platform easy or very easy to use.
- 70% of the pilot participants would recommend the guidebook to a colleague.
- Results from the open-ended questions are incorporated into the feedback summary of this report.

Survey Questions

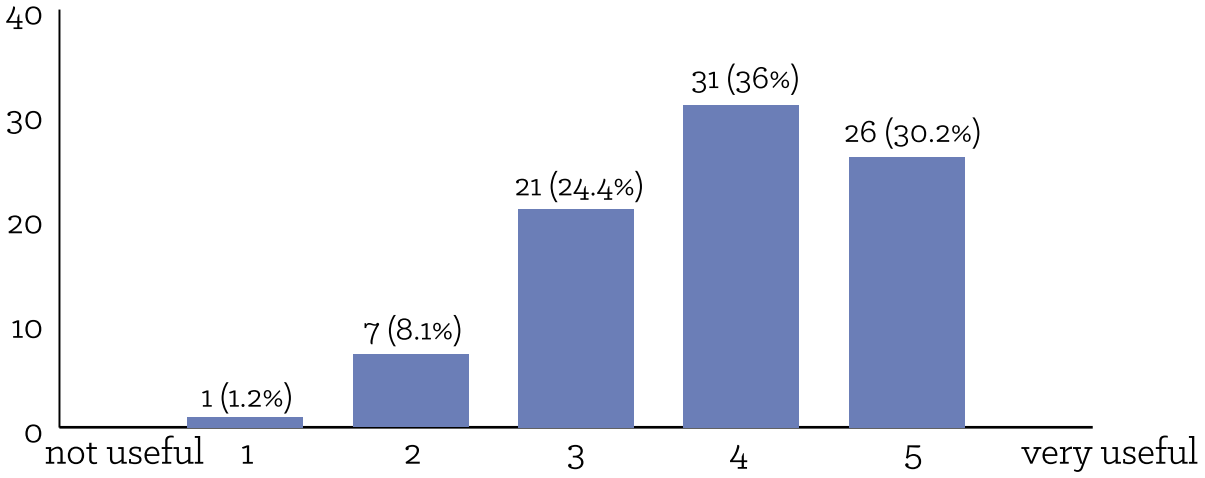
1. In which SRCL Pilot district do you teach? *(Open ended)*
2. Check the ELA Guidebook unit you piloted.
3. How easy was the platform to use? *(1, not easy and 5, very easy)*
4. How useful were the teaching notes for classroom instruction? *(1, not useful and 5, very useful)*
5. How useful were the handouts and graphic organizers in this unit? *(1, not useful and 5, very useful)*
6. Tell us more about the handouts and graphic organizers. *(Open ended)*
7. How well did the assessments measure students' understanding? *(1, did not measure and 5, measured accurately)*
8. Tell us more about the unit assessments. *(Open ended)*
9. How engaged were students with the presentation of the lessons? *(1, not engaged and 5, very engaged)*
10. How interested were students in the selected unit texts? *(1, not interested and 5, very interested)*
11. Tell us more about the unit texts. *(Open ended)*
12. How well did the unit lessons help your students understand the unit texts? *(1, did not understand and 5, completely understand)*
13. How well did the handouts/graphic organizers help students build knowledge and skill? *(1, not helpful and 5, very helpful)*
14. Would you recommend the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 to a colleague? *(1, wouldn't recommend and 5, highly recommend)*
15. The pacing for the unit was _____. *(Fill-in-the-blank)*
16. In this unit, I wanted more _____. *(Fill-in-the-blank)*
17. In this unit, I wanted less _____. *(Fill-in-the-blank)*
18. My greatest success using this unit was _____. *(Fill-in-the-blank)*
19. My biggest concern using this unit was _____. *(Fill-in-the-blank)*

Survey Results

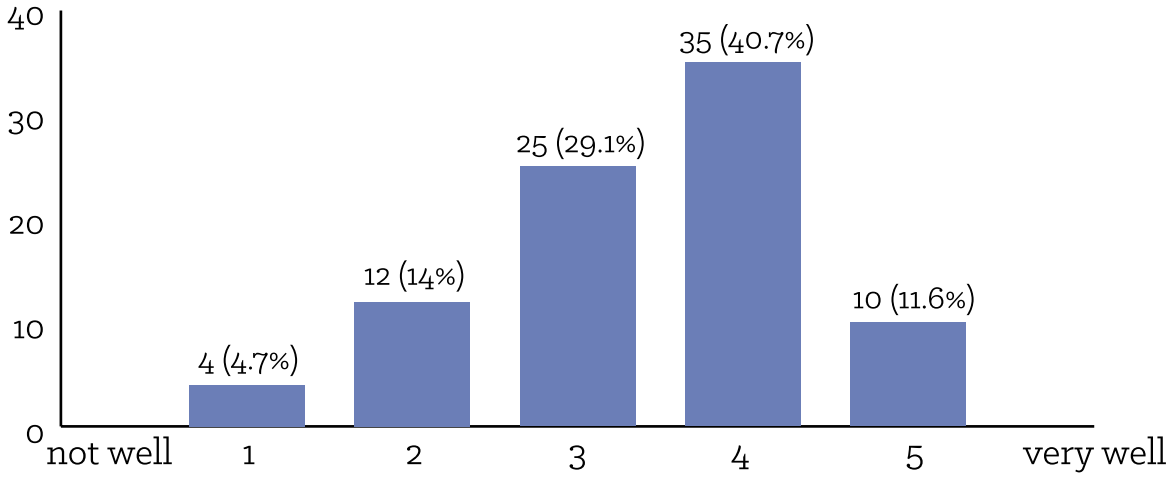
How easy was the platform to use? (86 responses)



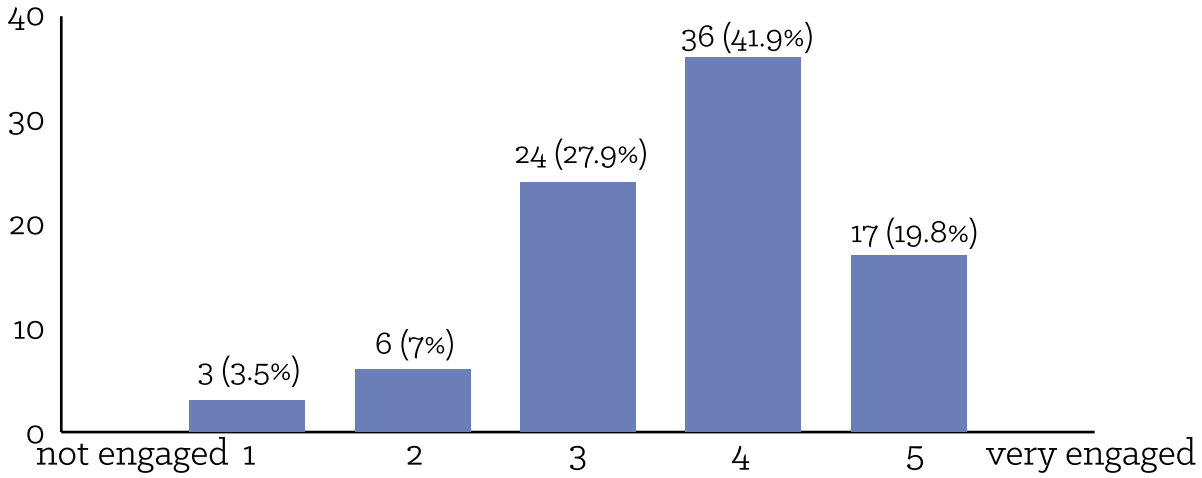
How useful were the handouts and graphic organizers in this unit? (86 responses)



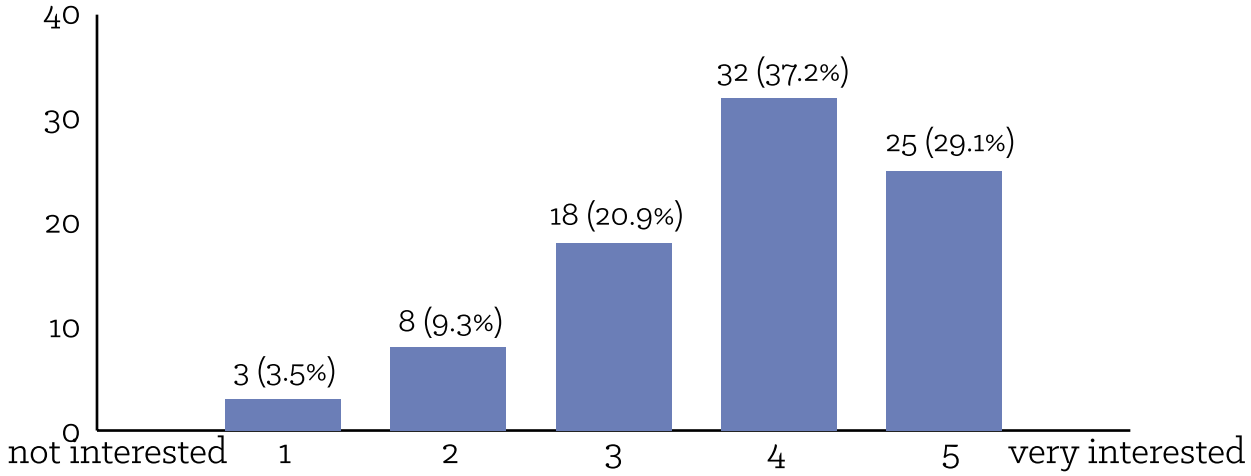
How well did the assessments measure students' understanding? (86 responses)



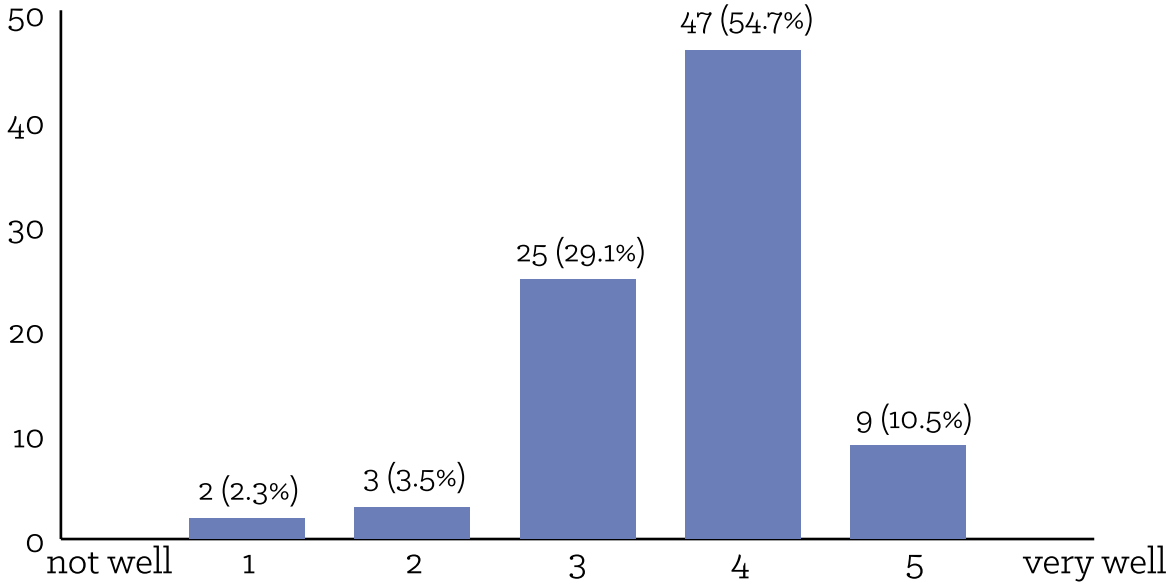
How engaged were the students with the presentation of the lessons? (86 responses)



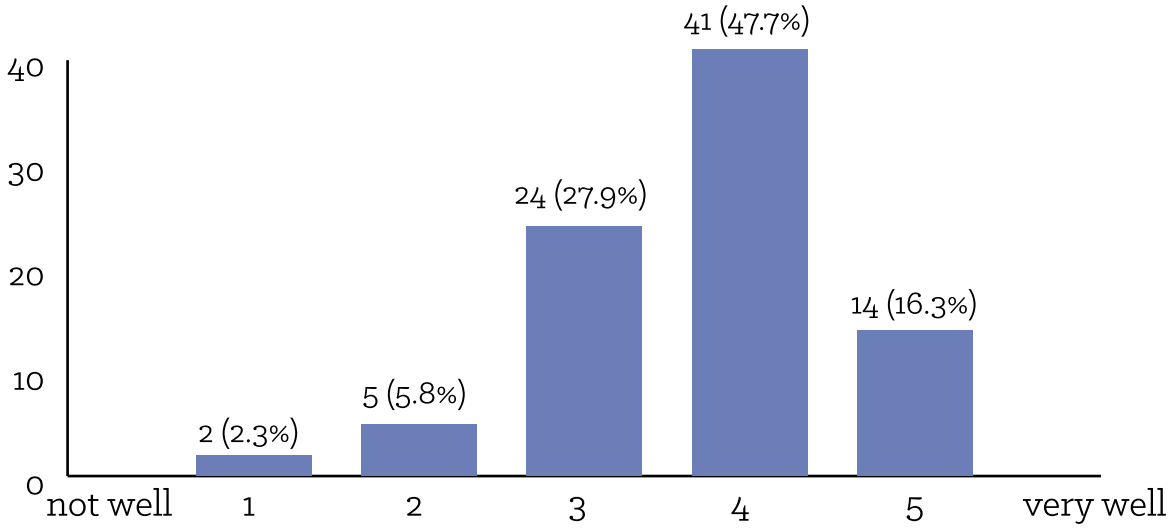
How interested were students in the selected unit texts? (86 responses)



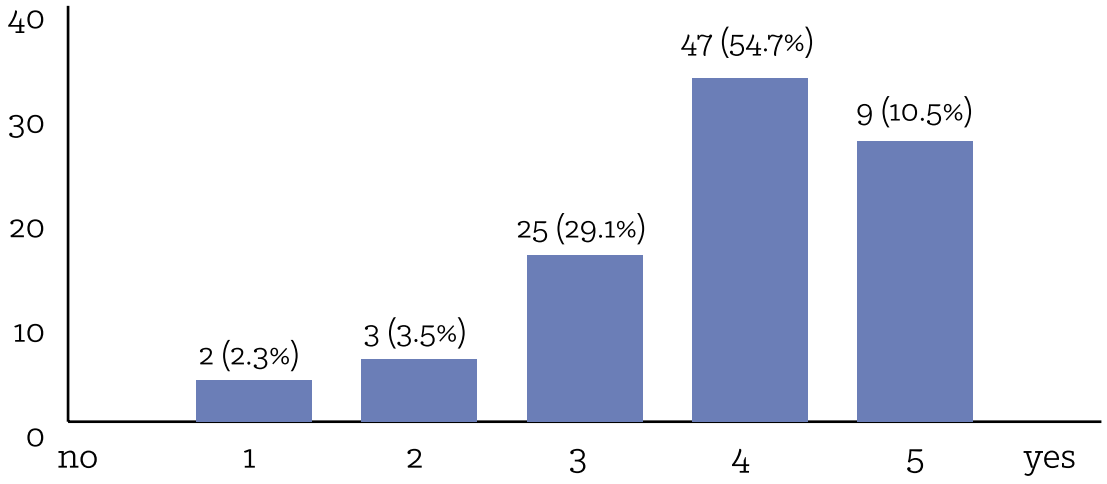
How well did the unit lessons help your students understand the unit texts? (86 responses)



How well did the handouts/graphic organizers help students build knowledge and skill? (86 responses)



Would you recommend the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 to a colleague? (86 responses)



Appendix E

The Department received anonymous feedback from students who participated in the pilot. Examples of student feedback are provided below.

Like	Didn't Like
"I like all the group work and interactive assignments."	"The format is somewhat confusing."
"Much easier to read and understand; do the same things so we can understand it."	"I don't like that all we do is read and write because it doesn't feel like we are learning anything."
"I became used to the routine, and I wasn't feeling as anxious when I was on my way to English class."	"I didn't like having to write all the summaries. I'd rather just talk together as a class about it."
"It increased my vocabulary."	"Too much writing."
"I wasn't hard to understand the dialogue like other books."	"I did not understand the overall theme/lesson of the stories we read."
"It helped me expand my writing skills and allowed me to work on it throughout the day."	"I don't like this unit because no one can work at their own pace and it's like we can't put in our own opinion."
"We wrote quite a bit, and wrote down vocab words we didn't know. Improving our writing skills, vocab, and reading."	"Most parts of the unit seemed unnecessary. The teacher is not involved enough with the lesson. I felt like PowerPoint was 'taking over'."
"The approach to how the concept will be taught (miniature activities, evaluation sessions) were good ways of creating better understanding."	"I don't like how we do the same thing every single day. I don't feel like we were learning anything new, or learning anything that will help us on the EOC."
"Reading one book and doing lessons on it I feel is better than reading multiple short stories."	"This lesson was kind of hard to understand, and I didn't understand the lesson learned from it."
"Every lesson connects back to one main objective. Each lesson is specific about what will be done that day."	"We would talk about what today would consist of, and then the rest of the day was quiet and independent. I believe lesson should be interactive; not just for the students, but for the teacher as well."
"I liked the consistency of knowing what to expect."	"It's frustrating because we have to keep stopping and reading other things which leads to forgetting what has happened."
"We go into detail and can relate to other pieces of literature. We change a lot of tasks daily to keep it interesting."	"It's very difficult. We don't have near enough time that we need to finish the assignments with the little bit of time assigned."

Appendix F

The Department also solicited feedback from national curriculum and English language arts experts. The group participated in an overview webinar to learn about the design and approach of the ELA Guidebooks. They then reviewed a sample of the guidebook units and offered feedback in writing and via a conference call.

Sample Feedback

Content

- There seems to be ample opportunity to build writing and vocabulary, and the grammar guide is useful as well. As noted in the general feedback below, it may be useful to frame the unit with some introductory front matter, which calls attention to how these are integrated in the unit (a feature of aligned instruction and materials).
- There are opportunities for close reading; however, I'm not sure if anything is made explicit to students about what they're doing, why, etc. It's all very guided. This guidance is good; however, when students get to the cold read, they may not be set up for success. As students gained content knowledge, they're likely more able to independently navigate the complexity in the cold read, which may be okay. That said, it could be helpful to build investment and rationale.
- There is close reading of "Flowers for Algernon," which is positive, but some of the other texts for close reading are so much higher on the lexile range that I wonder if they were the best choices for the activities.
- In the Our Town unit, the Cornell Notes structure offered solid sequences of questions to build students understanding of text. One thing to watch is how the questions build to the Summary question for the day. Would it be more effective to have students write to more nuanced prompts in place of or addition to the summary that better reflect the sequence of the class discussion questions? Though all of the questions are great, I don't really have an opportunity to write to the most essential elements of the text that set me up to write my essay. So, for example, "According to Putnam, what is the value of the community?"

Teacher Guidance

- The design is excellent.
- Consider a one-pager of the reading log entries for ease of use. These are really strong and important to look at cumulatively.
- A unit overview would be useful to outline the through lines in content as well as the "high value" instructional items. Working through the American Revolution unit, everything seemed to have equal value, but an overview could provide guidance for where to spend more time, or what texts may prove more challenging versus inserting to build knowledge/for a volume of reading.
- Key piece of feedback from my perspective is around vocabulary – I'd love to see the units call out specific vocab, terms, and language that is introduced so that students are encouraged to practice with that vocab regularly and ultimately "own" those words (e.g. irony in "Flowers for Algernon")
- There is excellent teacher guidance in each of the units we reviewed. The units are very easy to pick up and follow. Fleshing out the front matter for the units could be very helpful in helping teachers embark on instruction with a clear view of the essential understandings they want students to get from each text. It is possible (and maybe even tempting) to just start clicking through lessons without that appropriate preparation. Perhaps making the sample student culminating task in the Our Town unit more prominent, for example, would help teachers start with a clearer end-game in mind.
- There are a ton of charts and trackers. At what point do we expect students to take notes and determine the format for note taking that best fits the assignment/information they are gathering?
- The Grammar Guide's inclusion of anchor papers for each grade level is very helpful! Additionally, the annotations focused on grammar are helpful. It would be awesome to have similar annotations for writing, but it might be a nice-to-have in this resource.