

The goal for ELA students is that they can read and understand grade-level texts independently, as demonstrated through writing and speaking about those texts. A strong ELA classroom is structured with the below components.



Title: **English 9 Common Core**

Grade: **9**

Publisher: **Apex Learning**

Copyright: **2015**

Overall Rating: **Tier III, Not representing quality**

Tier I, Tier II, Tier III Elements of this review:

STRONG	WEAK
1. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	2. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
	5. Text-Dependent Questions (Non-Negotiable)

Each set of submitted materials was evaluated for alignment with the standards beginning with a review of the indicators for the non-negotiable criteria. If those criteria were met, a review of the other criteria ensued.

Tier 1 ratings received a “Yes” for all Criteria 1-10.

Tier 2 ratings received a “Yes” for all non-negotiable criteria (Foundational Skills (as applicable), Complexity of Texts, Quality of Texts, and Text-Dependent Questions), but at least one “No” for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings received a “No” for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

Click below for complete grade-level reviews:

[Grade 9 \(Tier 3\)](#)



The goal of English language arts is for students to read, understand, and express understanding of complex texts independently. To accomplish this goal, programs must build students’ knowledge and skill in language, comprehension, conversations, and writing integrated around a volume of complex texts and tasks.¹ In grades K-5, programs must also build students’ foundational skills to be able to read and write about a range of texts² independently. Thus, a strong ELA classroom is structured with the below components.



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To evaluate each set of submitted materials for alignment with the [standards](#), begin by reviewing Column 2 for the non-negotiable criteria. If there is a “Yes” for all required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “Yes” in Column 1. If there is a “No” for any required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “No” in Column 1. (Note: If materials do not represent a full curricula, then some of Criteria 1 – 10 may not apply.)

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1 – 10.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Foundational Skills (as applicable), Complexity of Texts, Quality of Texts, and Text-Dependent Questions), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

¹ A volume of texts is a collection of texts written about similar topics, themes, or ideas.

² A range of texts are texts written at different reading levels.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES
I. Text Selection			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable</p> <p>1. COMPLEXITY OF TEXTS: Materials present a progression of complex texts as stated by Reading Standard 10.³</p> <p><i>(Note: In K and 1, Reading Standard 10 refers to read-aloud material, which is typically from grades 2+. Complexity standards for student-read texts are applicable for grades 2+.)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>1a) In grades 2-12, materials provide texts that are appropriately complex for the identified grade level according to the requirements outlined in the standards. Measures for determining complexity include quantitative and qualitative analysis.⁴ Poetry and drama are analyzed only using qualitative measures.</p> <p>In grades K-2, extensive read-aloud texts allow sufficient opportunity for engagement with text more complex than students could read themselves.</p>	Yes	<p>There are a wealth of texts from Appendix B including: "The Nose" by Nikolai Gogol, William Shakespeare's Macbeth and "Sonnet 73," President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, W.H. Auden's "Musee des Beaux Arts," A.E. Housman's "Loveliest of Trees," and Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis. While some texts would be considered low according to the Lexile range recommended for 9th grade, when one considers the qualitative analysis of the texts, they are appropriately complex for the grade level.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED</p> <p>1b) Texts increase in complexity as materials progress throughout the grade level and across grade bands. Read-aloud texts follow the same trend, although they may have greater variability because listening skills in elementary school generally outpace reading skills.</p>	Yes	<p>English 9 Common Core is structured so that texts gradually increase in complexity as the course progresses. The first reading of the first unit of Semester 1, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor (Semester 1: 1.1.6), is a short story chosen to illustrate the basic concepts of plot and suspense.</p> <p>The stories in Unit 2 are more challenging, illustrating more difficult concepts like character and symbol. The story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker (Semester 1:2.1.6) allows students to easily identify the family quilt as a symbol representing the three women's heritage, while challenging students to understand each character in relation to what she wants to do with the quilt. In Semester 2: 2.2.2, students are asked to read an essay on Magical Realism, followed by an example from this genre, "The Nose" by Nikolai Gogol.</p> <p>The next unit moves on to poetry, which is often more challenging than prose for students. The poetry unit begins with contemporary poets (such as Li-Young Lee)</p>

³ Grades 3-12 Example: Texts present vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose similar to exemplars in [Appendix B](#).

⁴ The process for determining quantitative and qualitative measures is available at <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/teacher-toolbox-resources/guide---how-to-determine-text-complexity-grades-k-12.pdf?sfvrsn=5> or the [Supplemental Information for Appendix A](#).

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			<p>whose language and word choice tends to be more straightforward, followed by the more sophisticated verse forms and diction of some earlier poets, for example Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 and A.E. Houseman's "Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now" (Semester 1: 3.2.6).</p> <p>The fourth unit focuses exclusively on the novella <i>The Metamorphosis</i> by Franz Kafka (Semester 1: 4.1.6 - 4.3.6), a complex text requiring students to put together all of the concepts mastered in the first four units (such as symbolism, conflict, point of view, and types of narration) in order to comprehend it.</p> <p>Semester 2 begins with Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i> (Semester 2: 1.1.6 - 1.3.6), and how reading drama differs from reading short stories or novels. In the second unit of Semester 2, students engage with many non-fiction readings. Students are exposed to <i>The Rhetoric of Argument</i> (Semester 2: 2.1.4), and how to detect biases in what they read, followed in the next unit by some of the speeches that changed the course of history, by Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Semester 2: 3.1.6 -3.3.6).</p>
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 2. QUALITY OF TEXTS: Texts are of sufficient scope and quality to provide text-centered and integrated learning that is sequenced and scaffolded to advance students toward independent reading of grade level texts and build content knowledge (ELA, social studies, science and technical subjects, and the arts). The quality of texts is high—they support multiple</p>	<p>REQUIRED 2a) 90% of texts provide rich opportunities for students to engage with tasks that allow them to meet the grade-level ELA standards using texts; the texts are well-crafted and authentic, representing the quality of content, language, and writing that is produced by experts in various disciplines (e.g., English language arts, history/social studies, science, technical subjects, and the arts).</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The multitude of introductory pieces and “front loading” of information that are referenced in the review do not support students in meeting grade level ELA standards. The materials routinely teach students about genre-based literary concepts in isolation of the well-crafted, authentic texts that are included in the materials. Students only engage with the quality texts to apply genre-based concept knowledge once the front-loading is done. Although the authentic texts lend themselves to rich opportunities, important information that would be integral to student understanding is underlined for them in the text, removing a layer of the process that students need to struggle through to understand and express</p>

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<p>readings for various purposes and exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>			understanding of complex texts.
	<p>REQUIRED 2b) Materials provide a coherent sequence or collection of connected texts that build vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about concepts, themes, and topics through reading, writing, listening and speaking.</p> <p>In grades K-2, the inclusion of read-aloud texts in addition to what students can read themselves ensures that all students can build knowledge about the world through engagement with rich, complex text. These texts as well must form a coherent sequence or collection of connected texts that build vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about concepts, themes, and topics through reading, writing, listening and speaking.</p>	No	<p>The materials are arranged by genres, not by texts connected in a meaningful way so that they build students' knowledge about topics, themes or ideas. For example, students are introduced to the building blocks of the short story, but do not explore short stories that "talk to each other" in order to build knowledge about the world. The unit on "The Metamorphosis" centers on translations and the author's life. It does not offer connected texts to support larger themes or ideas. The same is true for the unit on Macbeth. This unit is front-loaded with material on Shakespeare's language, life, and times, and then it centers on supernatural and the hero. At no point are other connected literary texts brought in to fully explore any of these concepts or ideas Skills are taught within texts; However, there is a deeper layer of understanding that is often left untouched.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 2c) Within a sequence or collection of texts, specific anchor texts of grade-level complexity, as determined in 1a, are selected for multiple, careful readings throughout the unit of study.</p>	No	<p>Although texts, such as "The Metamorphosis," offer opportunities for rereading and close-reading, the lessons are centered around readings of essays, short stories, and speeches, which are used to apply discrete literary concepts without the use of deliberate close-reading. Works such as "The Metamorphosis" and Macbeth serve as the main text of the unit, but no clear close-reading is done by the student. In the Metamorphosis unit, students only read the text in two lessons. Students are asked to cite evidence from the text in a variety of assignments. But, often, a close read or reread of the text is not prompted, nor required, to respond to the questions.</p>
	<p>2d) 90% of texts are previously published rather than "commissioned."</p>	Yes	There is no evidence of commissioned texts.

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<p>3. RANGE AND VOLUME OF TEXTS: Materials reflect the distribution of text types and genres suggested by the standards: Text types and genres generally reflect the definitions provided on page 31 (grades K-5) and page 57 (grades 6-12) of the standards and included in the text of the standards (e.g., RL.K.9, RI.1.9, RI.2.3, RL.2.9, RL.9-10.6, RI.7.7, or RI.11-12.9).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 3a) In grades K-12, ELA materials seek a balance in instructional time between literature and informational texts. (Reviewers will consider the balance within units of study as well as across the entire grade level using the ratio between literature/informational texts to help determine the appropriate balance.)</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	<p>REQUIRED 3b) Materials include texts of different formats (e.g., print and non-print, including film, art, music, charts, etc.) and lengths (e.g. short stories and novels).</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	<p>3c) Materials include many informational texts with an informational text structure rather than a narrative structure. In grades 6-12, materials include literary nonfiction (e.g. speeches, biographies, essays).</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	<p>3d) Additional materials increase the opportunity for regular, accountable independent reading of texts that appeal to students' interests to build reading stamina, confidence, motivation, and enjoyment and connect to classroom concepts or topics to develop knowledge.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
II. Foundational Skills (grades K-5 only)			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable* 4. FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS: Materials provide instruction and diagnostic support in concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, development, syntax, and fluency in a logical and transparent progression. These foundational skills are necessary and central components of an effective, comprehensive reading program</p>	<p>REQUIRED *Indicator for grades K-2 only 4a) Materials follow a sequence of foundational skills instruction indicated by the standards and beginning on page 17 of Appendix A, while providing abundant opportunities for every student to become proficient in each of the foundational skills.</p>	N/A	
	<p>REQUIRED 4b) In grades K-2, materials include student texts that allow for systematic, regular and frequent practice of foundational skills as they are introduced. In grades 3-5, materials demand knowledge of grade-level</p>	N/A	

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<p>designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>*As applicable (e.g., when the scope of the materials is comprehensive and considered a full program)</p>	<p>phonic patterns and word analysis skills.</p>		
	<p>REQUIRED 4c) In grades K-2, materials provide instruction and practice in word study including pronunciation, roots, prefixes, suffixes and spelling/sound patterns, as well as decoding of grade-level words by using sound-symbol knowledge and knowledge of syllabication and regular practice in encoding (spelling) the sound symbol relationships of English. <i>(Note: Instruction and practice with roots, prefixes, and suffixes is applicable for grade 1 and higher.)</i></p> <p>In grades 3-5, materials provide instruction and practice in word study including systematic examination of grade-level morphology, decoding of multisyllabic words by using syllabication, and automaticity with grade-level regular and irregular spelling patterns.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>REQUIRED 4d) Materials encourage students to use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, directing students to reread purposefully to acquire accurate meaning.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>REQUIRED 4e) Opportunities are frequently built into the materials that allow for students to achieve reading fluency in oral and silent reading, that is, to read a wide variety of prose and poetry at students' reading level with accuracy, rate appropriate to the text, and expression.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>REQUIRED 4f) Materials guide students to read grade-level text with purpose and understanding and to make frequent connections between acquisition of foundation skills and making meaning from reading.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>4g) *Indicator for grades K-2 only Materials provide opportunities for educators to monitor student progress on every aspect of the foundational skills through diagnostic assessments offered at regular intervals.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	

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	Monitoring must also allow for students to receive regular feedback on their oral reading fluency in the specific areas of appropriate rate, expressiveness and accuracy.		
	4h) Submissions provide abundant and easily implemented materials so teachers can readily provide more time, attention and practice for those students who need it.	N/A	
III. Questions and Tasks			
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 5. TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS: Text-dependent questions and tasks reflect the requirements of Reading Standard 1 by requiring use of textual evidence in support of meeting other grade-specific standards.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 5a) At least 80% of all questions in the materials are text-dependent questions; student ideas are expressed through both written and spoken responses.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Many questions in the units are not text-dependent. Examples include, but are not limited to:</p> <p>1.1 Think of the last suspenseful movie you watched — one that made you feel nervous about what might happen to the characters. Can you remember how the movie created that suspense? Think about the music, the lighting, the camera angles, and how quickly or slowly the plot moved along. Write at least half a page reflecting on how the movie built that suspense.</p> <p>2.1 What are the most important aspects of your identity? Your gender, race, skills, relationships with family members, or something else? Are some aspects of your identity more important than others? Why?</p> <p>3.1 Have you ever written a poem or song lyrics? If you have, do you remember why you chose that form to express your thoughts? If you haven't, think about something that might inspire you to write a song.</p> <p>4.1 Have you ever imagined waking up as someone or something other than yourself? What would that feel like? What benefits and challenges would you instantly experience?</p> <p>Furthermore, when beginning the writing process, students are prompted to brainstorm for their own narrative with non text-dependent M/C questions, such as "What would you be most likely to go after,</p>

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			<p>even if it meant doing something wrong? (Check one.)"</p> <p>Although the reading guide questions are text-dependent questions, many are surface-level and do not allow students to express ideas about texts. Examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the most exciting thing that happened to you this year? 2. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? 8. In Act I, scene iii, what is the witches' prophecy about Banquo? 9. Once the witches vanish, Macbeth and Banquo start wondering (understandably!) if that really just happened — are they nuts? In Act I, scene iii, what happens moments later that makes them take the odd occurrence much more seriously? 10. What is an aside? <p>Additionally, underlining pieces of the text for students diminishes the understanding that students will gain when try to analyze and make meaning from text. The thinking and analyzing is done when text is underlined for students.</p> <p>Questions, such as 2.2.8 Discuss: In Gogol's "The Nose," the loss of a nose symbolizes the loss of power., 4.3.8 Discuss: Grete's metamorphosis in the story is as significant as Gregor's., and 7.2.8 Discuss: Hardin's argument is racist. elicit a broader response to the text, but do not require students to unfold layers of meaning.</p>

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	<p>REQUIRED 5b) Coherent sequences of questions and tasks focus students on understanding the text and its illustrations (as applicable), expressing the knowledge students have built about concepts, themes, or ideas presented in the texts, and making connections among the texts in the collection.</p>	No	<p>There is minimal connection between texts in a unit based on skill or topic, not developing understanding or theme across texts. There are opportunities through which students may answer questions about several texts; however, the questions are surface-level questions. The questions do not make connections to support student understanding of themes between texts.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 5c) Questions and tasks include the language of the standards, and assess the depth and complexity required by the standards at each grade-level over time to advance and deepen student learning. (<i>Note: not every standard must be assessed with every text.</i>)</p>	No	<p>Most of the reading guide questions and quiz questions do not use the language of the standards or assess the depth and rigor of the standards. See reading guide questions above. For example quiz questions such as: “What warning does the first apparition give Macbeth?” and “Why does Malcolm lie about himself to Macduff?” ask students to identify character interactions from multiple choice options, but do not ask students to analyze how these interactions advance the plot or develop the theme. For a “quiz” they fall short of assessing whether students meet the standards. There is concern regarding the gap of understanding that will occur due to day to day questions and tasks that do not use the language of the standards being the preparation for writing assignments that do use the language of the standards.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 5d) Questions and tasks support students in examining the language (vocabulary, sentences, and structure) of texts measured by Criteria 1, 2, and 3 to determine meaning; questions and tasks also focus on engaging students with multiple repetitions of words in varied contexts (e.g., reading different texts, completing tasks, engaging in speaking/listening).</p>	No	<p>Vocabulary, including meaning and author's choice of language, is addressed throughout the course; However, there is minimal work with sentences and structure. There are missed opportunities for students to analyze language to develop the theme of the text. For example, the activity listed for 3.1.11 does not ask students to examine the language of texts to determine meaning. Students determine the theme of a poem, search for images that illustrate this theme, write an explanation about how the images illustrate the theme, and then create a presentation. Student directions do</p>

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			not ask them to examine how the language of the poem serves to develop the theme. Instead they are asked to write down images that the poem made them think of and then look outside the text for ways to illustrate them.
6. ASSESSMENTS: Materials offer assessment opportunities that genuinely measure progress and elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the assessed grade-specific standards with appropriately complex text(s). <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 6a) Measurement of progress via assessments should include gradual release of supporting scaffolds for students to measure their independent abilities.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 6b) Aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines (such as scoring guides or student work exemplars) are included and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 6c) Materials use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	6d) Materials assess student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
IV. Scaffolding and Support			
7. SCAFFOLDING AND SUPPORT: Materials provide all students, including those who read below grade level, with extensive opportunities and support to encounter and comprehend grade-level complex text as required by the standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 7a) Pre-reading activities and suggested approaches to teacher scaffolding are focused and engage students with understanding the text itself. Pre-reading activities should be no more than 10% of time devoted to any reading instruction.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 7b) Materials must have the goal of students gaining full comprehension of complex text (through read-aloud in grades K-1) and do not confuse or substitute mastery of strategies for full comprehension of text; reading strategies support comprehension of specific texts and focus on building knowledge and insight. Texts must not serve as platforms to practice discrete strategies.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.

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	REQUIRED 7c) Materials regularly direct teachers to return to focused parts of the text to guide students through rereading, discussion and writing about the ideas, events, and information found there.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 7d) The materials are easy to use and well organized for students and teachers. The reading selections are centrally located within the materials and obviously the center of focus.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	7e) Appropriate suggestions and materials are provided for supporting varying student needs at the unit and lesson level (e.g., alternate teaching approaches, pacing, instructional delivery options, suggestions for addressing common student difficulties to meet standards, remediation strategies or suggestions for supporting texts, suggestions for more advanced texts for extension, etc.).	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	7f) The content can be reasonably completed within a regular school year and the pacing of content allows for maximum student understanding. The materials provide guidance about the amount of time a task might reasonably take.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
V. Writing to Sources and Research			
8. WRITING TO SOURCES: The majority of written tasks are text-dependent and reflect the writing genres named in the standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED *Indicator for grades 3-12 only 8a) A vast majority of written tasks at all grade levels require students to demonstrate the knowledge they built through the analysis and synthesis of texts, and present well-defended claims and clear information, drawing on textual evidence to support valid inferences from text.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 8b) Materials include multiple writing tasks aligned to the three modes of writing (opinion/argumentative, informative, narrative) as outlined by the standards at each grade level. In grades 3-12, tasks included blended modes (i.e., analytical writing); narrative prompts decrease in number and increase	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.

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	in being based on text(s) as student progress through the grades, e.g., narrative description (text-based, chronological writing) rather than imaginative narratives.		
	REQUIRED 8c) Writing opportunities for students are prominent and varied in length and time demands (e.g., notes, summaries, short-answer responses, whole-class shared writing/formal essays, on-demand and process writing, etc.).	N/A	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 8d) Materials build in opportunities for connections between writing, speaking and listening, reading, and the language standards. For example, in grade 1, students listen to a text being read, work collaboratively to develop a plan for writing, write independently filling out an answer frame, and then share their writing with a peer who reviews the writing against a word wall to ensure high frequency words are spelled correctly. For example, in grade 6, students read a text, work collaboratively to develop a plan for analyzing or emulating the text, write a response, and then share their writing with a peer who reviews the writing against using a peer review checklist.	N/A	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED *Indicator for grades K-2 only 8e) Submissions address grade-level foundation standards that require students in the early grades to know their letters, phonetic conventions, sentence structures, and spelling.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	8f) *Indicator for grades K-2 only Materials provide opportunities for educators to monitor student progress in the development of these foundational skills and respond to the needs of individual students. This monitoring should include attention to invented spelling as appropriate for its diagnostic value.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.

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	8g) Materials engage students in many shared (grades K-2) or short research projects annually to develop the expertise needed to conduct research independently.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
VI. Speaking and Listening			
9. SPEAKING AND LISTENING: Oral tasks must be text-dependent and materials for speaking and listening must reflect true communication skills required for college and career readiness. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 9a) Speaking and listening questions and tasks use the texts measured by Criteria 1, 2, and 3.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 9b) Materials demand that students engage effectively (as determined by grade-level standards) in a range of conversations and collaborations with peers about texts.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 9c) Materials build in frequent opportunities for connections between speaking and listening, reading, writing, and the language standards. For example, in grades K-12, materials build in frequent opportunities for discussion about texts and, through directions and modeling, encourage students to use academic language and grade-appropriate oral language conventions. In grades 3-12, materials require students to gather and use evidence to orally present findings from research.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	9d) Materials develop active listening skills, such as taking notes on main ideas, asking relevant questions, and elaborating on remarks of others to develop understanding of complex texts and tasks.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
VII. Language			
10. LANGUAGE: Materials must adequately address the Language standards for the grade, including through	REQUIRED 10a) Materials address the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards at each grade level and build on those standards that build from	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.

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unpacking the vocabulary and syntax of text(s) (indicator 5e) as models of language use. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	previous grade levels, as indicated by pages 30 and 56 of the standards .		
	REQUIRED 10b) Materials create opportunities for students to discover accurate usage patterns, compare them to their own (oral and written), and develop proficiency in usage and language conventions.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 10c) Selected vocabulary focuses on words critical to the meaning of the texts included in Criteria 1, 2, and 3. Materials also require students to model their own writing after texts measured by Criteria 1, 2, and 3 as a way to develop more complex sentence structure and language usage.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 10d) Vocabulary study emphasizes advancing depth of word knowledge through determining word meaning and relationships among words (e.g., concept- and thematically-related words, word families, etc.).	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	REQUIRED 10e) Materials build in frequent opportunities for connections between the language standards, writing, reading, and speaking and listening. For example, through directions and modeling, materials encourage students to use grade-appropriate language conventions when speaking and writing about texts.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
	10f) Materials provide real-world activities for student practice with natural language (e.g. mock interviews, presentations).	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES
FINAL EVALUATION			
<i>Tier 1 ratings</i> receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1 – 10.			
<i>Tier 2 ratings</i> receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Foundational Skills (as applicable), Complexity of Texts, Quality of Texts, and Text-Dependent Questions), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.			
<i>Tier 3 ratings</i> receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.			
Compile the results for Sections I-VII to make a final decision for the material under review.			
Section	Criteria	Yes/No	Final Justification/Comments
I: Text Selection	1. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	There are a wealth of texts from Appendix B. While some texts would be considered low according to the Lexile range recommended for 9th grade, when one considers the qualitative analysis of the texts, they are appropriately complex for the grade level. English 9 Common Core is structured so that texts gradually increase in complexity as the course progresses.
	2. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	The multitude of introductory pieces and “front loading” of information that are referenced in the review do not support students in meeting grade level ELA standards. The introductory materials routinely teach students about genre-based literary concepts in isolation of the well-crafted, authentic texts that are included in the materials. Students only engage with the quality texts to apply genre-based concept knowledge once the front-loading is done.
	3. Range and Volume of Texts	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
II: Foundational Skills	4. Foundational Skills (Non-Negotiable*)	N/A	
III: Questions and Tasks	5. Text-Dependent Questions (Non-Negotiable)	No	Many questions throughout English 9 are not text-dependent. Additionally, underlining pieces of the text for students diminishes the understanding that students will gain when try to analyze and make meaning from text. There is no evidence of student-spoken response observed in materials.
	6. Assessments	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES
IV: Scaffolding and Support	7. Scaffolding and Support	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
V: Writing to Sources and Research	8. Writing to Sources	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
VI: Speaking and Listening	9. Speaking and Listening	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
VII: Language	10. Language	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.
FINAL DECISION FOR THIS MATERIAL: <u>Tier III, Not representing quality</u>			

*As applicable (e.g., when the scope of the materials is comprehensive and considered a full program)

Appendix I.

Publisher Response

The goal for ELA students is that they can read and understand grade-level texts independently, as demonstrated through writing and speaking about those texts. A strong ELA classroom is structured with the below components.



Title: **English 9 Common Core**

Grade: **9**

Publisher: **Apex Learning**

Copyright: **2015**

Overall Rating: **Tier III, Not representing quality**

Tier I, Tier II, Tier III Elements of this review:

STRONG	WEAK
1. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	2. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
	5. Text-Dependent Questions (Non-Negotiable)

Each set of submitted materials was evaluated for alignment with the standards beginning with a review of the indicators for the non-negotiable criteria. If those criteria were met, a review of the other criteria ensued.

Tier 1 ratings received a “Yes” for all Criteria 1-10.

Tier 2 ratings received a “Yes” for all non-negotiable criteria (Foundational Skills (as applicable), Complexity of Texts, Quality of Texts, and Text-Dependent Questions), but at least one “No” for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings received a “No” for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

Click below for complete grade-level reviews:

[Grade 9 \(Tier 3\)](#)



The goal of English language arts is for students to read, understand, and express understanding of complex texts independently. To accomplish this goal, programs must build students’ knowledge and skill in language, comprehension, conversations, and writing integrated around a volume of complex texts and tasks.¹ In grades K-5, programs must also build students’ foundational skills to be able to read and write about a range of texts² independently. Thus, a strong ELA classroom is structured with the below components.



Title: **English 9 Common Core**

Grade: **9**

Publisher: **Apex Learning**

Copyright: **2015**

Overall Rating: **Tier III, Not representing quality**

Tier I, Tier II, Tier III Elements of this review:

STRONG	WEAK
1. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	2. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)
	5. Text-Dependent Questions (Non-Negotiable)

To evaluate each set of submitted materials for alignment with the [standards](#), begin by reviewing Column 2 for the non-negotiable criteria. If there is a “Yes” for all required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “Yes” in Column 1. If there is a “No” for any required indicators in Column 2, then the materials receive a “No” in Column 1. (Note: If materials do not represent a full curricula, then some of Criteria 1 – 10 may not apply.)

Tier 1 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1 – 10.

Tier 2 ratings receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Foundational Skills (as applicable), Complexity of Texts, Quality of Texts, and Text-Dependent Questions), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.

Tier 3 ratings receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.

¹ A volume of texts is a collection of texts written about similar topics, themes, or ideas.

² A range of texts are texts written at different reading levels.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
I. Text Selection				
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 1. COMPLEXITY OF TEXTS: Materials present a progression of complex texts as stated by Reading Standard 10.³</p> <p><i>(Note: In K and 1, Reading Standard 10 refers to read-aloud material, which is typically from grades 2+. Complexity standards for student-read texts are applicable for grades 2+.)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 1a) In grades 2-12, materials provide texts that are appropriately complex for the identified grade level according to the requirements outlined in the standards. Measures for determining complexity include quantitative and qualitative analysis.⁴ Poetry and drama are analyzed only using qualitative measures.</p> <p>In grades K-2, extensive read-aloud texts allow sufficient opportunity for engagement with text more complex than students could read themselves.</p>	Yes	<p>There are a wealth of texts from Appendix B including: "The Nose" by Nikolai Gogol, William Shakespeare's Macbeth and "Sonnet 73," President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, W.H. Auden's "Musee des Beaux Arts," A.E. Housman's "Loveliest of Trees," and Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis. While some texts would be considered low according to the Lexile range recommended for 9th grade, when one considers the qualitative analysis of the texts, they are appropriately complex for the grade level.</p>	
	<p>REQUIRED 1b) Texts increase in complexity as materials progress throughout the grade level and across grade bands. Read-aloud texts follow the same trend, although they may have greater variability because listening skills in elementary school generally outpace reading skills.</p>	Yes	<p>English 9 Common Core is structured so that texts gradually increase in complexity as the course progresses. The first reading of the first unit of Semester 1, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor (Semester 1: 1.1.6), is a short story chosen to illustrate the basic concepts of plot and suspense.</p> <p>The stories in Unit 2 are more challenging, illustrating more difficult concepts like character and symbol. The story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker (Semester 1:2.1.6) allows students to easily identify the family quilt as a symbol representing the three women's heritage, while challenging students to understand each character in relation to what she wants to do with the quilt. In Semester 2: 2.2.2, students are asked to read an essay on Magical Realism, followed by an example from this genre, "The Nose" by Nikolai Gogol.</p> <p>The next unit moves on to poetry, which is often more challenging than prose for students. The poetry unit begins with contemporary poets (such as Li-Young Lee)</p>	

³ Grades 3-12 Example: Texts present vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose similar to exemplars in [Appendix B](#).

⁴ The process for determining quantitative and qualitative measures is available at <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/teacher-toolbox-resources/guide---how-to-determine-text-complexity-grades-k-12.pdf?sfvrsn=5> or the [Supplemental Information for Appendix A](#).

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
			<p>whose language and word choice tends to be more straightforward, followed by the more sophisticated verse forms and diction of some earlier poets, for example Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 and A.E. Houseman's "Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now" (Semester 1: 3.2.6).</p> <p>The fourth unit focuses exclusively on the novella <i>The Metamorphosis</i> by Franz Kafka (Semester 1: 4.1.6 - 4.3.6), a complex text requiring students to put together all of the concepts mastered in the first four units (such as symbolism, conflict, point of view, and types of narration) in order to comprehend it.</p> <p>Semester 2 begins with Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i> (Semester 2: 1.1.6 - 1.3.6), and how reading drama differs from reading short stories or novels. In the second unit of Semester 2, students engage with many non-fiction readings. Students are exposed to <i>The Rhetoric of Argument</i> (Semester 2: 2.1.4), and how to detect biases in what they read, followed in the next unit by some of the speeches that changed the course of history, by Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Semester 2: 3.1.6 -3.3.6).</p>	
<p>Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 2. QUALITY OF TEXTS: Texts are of sufficient scope and quality to provide text-centered and integrated learning that is sequenced and scaffolded to advance students toward independent reading of grade level texts and build content knowledge (ELA, social studies, science and technical subjects, and the arts). The quality of texts is high—they support multiple</p>	<p>REQUIRED 2a) 90% of texts provide rich opportunities for students to engage with tasks that allow them to meet the grade-level ELA standards using texts; the texts are well-crafted and authentic, representing the quality of content, language, and writing that is produced by experts in various disciplines (e.g., English language arts, history/social studies, science, technical subjects, and the arts).</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The multitude of introductory pieces and “front loading” of information that are referenced in the review do not support students in meeting grade level ELA standards. The materials routinely teach students about genre-based literary concepts in isolation of the well-crafted, authentic texts that are included in the materials. Students only engage with the quality texts to apply genre-based concept knowledge once the front-loading is done. Although the authentic texts lend themselves to rich opportunities, important information that would be integral to student understanding is underlined for them in the text, removing a layer of the process that students need to struggle through to understand and express</p>	<p>Students are often provided with information through underlining in reading and study guides, as these are meant to be some of the student's first experiences with the text and thus provide them with a little more support. In later discussion and essay assignments however, students are expected to grapple with the text independently in a way that allows them to meet the rigor of the 9-10 standards. In almost every discussion, major writing assignment at the end of each lesson (last Study and Practice/Project assignments), and unit/semester exam, students are required to critically think about and engage with a text that meets the grade level standards. .</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
<p>readings for various purposes and exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>			understanding of complex texts.	
	<p>REQUIRED 2b) Materials provide a coherent sequence or collection of connected texts that build vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about concepts, themes, and topics through reading, writing, listening and speaking.</p> <p>In grades K-2, the inclusion of read-aloud texts in addition to what students can read themselves ensures that all students can build knowledge about the world through engagement with rich, complex text. These texts as well must form a coherent sequence or collection of connected texts that build vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about concepts, themes, and topics through reading, writing, listening and speaking.</p>	No	<p>The materials are arranged by genres, not by texts connected in a meaningful way so that they build students' knowledge about topics, themes or ideas. Students are introduced to the building blocks of the short story, but do not explore short stories that "talk to each other" in order to build knowledge about the world. The unit on "The Metamorphosis" centers on translations and the author's life. It does not really offer connected texts to support larger themes or ideas. The same is true for the unit on Macbeth. This unit is front-loaded with material on Shakespeare's language, life, and times, and then it centers on supernatural and the hero. At no point are other connected literary texts brought in to fully explore any of these concepts or ideas.</p>	<p>As described more in-depth in our original response, within each unit, materials are presented to provide a coherent sequence of connected readings, as well as to build on knowledge of concepts, themes, and topics. As students move through a lesson and each unit, they go from an introduction to the text and its concepts/themes to a larger, more in-depth understanding and analysis. While texts may not be revisited or connected outside of their units, the concepts and themes taught with each are. For example, literary concepts like figurative language, characterization, identifying how historical and cultural context impacts a text, and how structure or form adds to meaning of a text (to name a few) are all studied and explored repeatedly throughout the course.</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 2c) Within a sequence or collection of texts, specific anchor texts of grade-level complexity, as determined in 1a, are selected for multiple, careful readings throughout the unit of study.</p>	No	<p>Although texts, such as "The Metamorphosis," offer opportunities for rereading and close-reading, the lessons are centered around readings of essays, short stories, and speeches, which are used to apply discrete literary concepts without the use of deliberate close-reading. Works such as "The Metamorphosis" and Macbeth serve as the main text of the unit, but no clear close-reading is done by the student. In the Metamorphosis unit, students only read the text in two lessons.</p>	<p>While students may only do the actual reading assignment in two lessons, they are expected to reread and perform close-readings in order to complete various other assignments throughout the units, for both the larger texts and short stories, essays, and speeches. For example, students first read the text, completing a reading guide of questions that require a careful, close reading of the text, looking for specific details in it. Following that, students complete a short multiple choice quiz that requires another look at the text. After that is a discussion activity in which students are required to use evidence and examples from their text to support their argument or opinion in each discussion. This is another assignment that requires students to read through the text again. Following, students complete a Study lesson that takes them even further into the text, for a deeper analysis of key concepts, as well as another multiple choice quiz. Finally, students complete a formal writing assignment (usually an essay), in which they must once again read through the text to find support for their</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
				writing. By the end of the lesson, students have had to read and closely explore the text over 6 different times. This process is repeated with the same text through multiple lessons for the larger texts (Units 4 and 6). So while students may only be doing the actual reading assignment in two lessons, they are required to reread and closely examine each text throughout multiple activities.
<p>3. RANGE AND VOLUME OF TEXTS: Materials reflect the distribution of text types and genres suggested by the standards: Text types and genres generally reflect the definitions provided on page 31 (grades K-5) and page 57 (grades 6-12) of the standards and included in the text of the standards (e.g., RL.K.9, RI.1.9, RI.2.3, RL.2.9, RL.9-10.6, RI.7.7, or RI.11-12.9).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 3a) In grades K-12, ELA materials seek a balance in instructional time between literature and informational texts. (Reviewers will consider the balance within units of study as well as across the entire grade level using the ratio between literature/informational texts to help determine the appropriate balance.)</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 3b) Materials include texts of different formats (e.g., print and non-print, including film, art, music, charts, etc.) and lengths (e.g. short stories and novels).</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>3c) Materials include many informational texts with an informational text structure rather than a narrative structure. In grades 6-12, materials include literary nonfiction (e.g. speeches, biographies, essays).</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>3d) Additional materials increase the opportunity for regular, accountable independent reading of texts that appeal to students' interests to build reading stamina, confidence, motivation, and enjoyment and connect to classroom concepts or topics to develop knowledge.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
II. Foundational Skills (grades K-5 only)				
4. FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS:	REQUIRED *Indicator for grades K-2 only 4a) Materials follow a sequence of foundational skills	N/A		

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
<p>Materials provide instruction and diagnostic support in concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, development, syntax, and fluency in a logical and transparent progression. These foundational skills are necessary and central components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>*As applicable (e.g., when the scope of the materials is comprehensive and considered a full program)</p>	<p>instruction indicated by the standards and beginning on page 17 of Appendix A, while providing abundant opportunities for every student to become proficient in each of the foundational skills.</p>			
	<p>REQUIRED 4b) In grades K-2, materials include student texts that allow for systematic, regular and frequent practice of foundational skills as they are introduced.</p> <p>In grades 3-5, materials demand knowledge of grade-level phonic patterns and word analysis skills.</p>	N/A		
	<p>REQUIRED 4c) In grades K-2, materials provide instruction and practice in word study including pronunciation, roots, prefixes, suffixes and spelling/sound patterns, as well as decoding of grade-level words by using sound-symbol knowledge and knowledge of syllabication and regular practice in encoding (spelling) the sound symbol relationships of English. <i>(Note: Instruction and practice with roots, prefixes, and suffixes is applicable for grade 1 and higher.)</i></p> <p>In grades 3-5, materials provide instruction and practice in word study including systematic examination of grade-level morphology, decoding of multisyllabic words by using syllabication, and automaticity with grade-level regular and irregular spelling patterns.</p>	N/A		
	<p>REQUIRED 4d) Materials encourage students to use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, directing students to reread purposefully to acquire accurate meaning.</p>	N/A		
	<p>REQUIRED 4e) Opportunities are frequently built into the materials that allow for students to achieve reading fluency in oral and silent reading, that is, to read a wide variety of prose and poetry at students’ reading level with accuracy, rate appropriate to the text, and expression.</p>	N/A		

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
	REQUIRED 4f) Materials guide students to read grade-level text with purpose and understanding and to make frequent connections between acquisition of foundation skills and making meaning from reading.	N/A		
	4g) *Indicator for grades K-2 only Materials provide opportunities for educators to monitor student progress on every aspect of the foundational skills through diagnostic assessments offered at regular intervals. Monitoring must also allow for students to receive regular feedback on their oral reading fluency in the specific areas of appropriate rate, expressiveness and accuracy.	N/A		
	4h) Submissions provide abundant and easily implemented materials so teachers can readily provide more time, attention and practice for those students who need it.	N/A		
III. Questions and Tasks				
Tier 1 and 2 Non-Negotiable 5. TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS: Text-dependent questions and tasks reflect the requirements of Reading Standard 1 by requiring use of textual evidence in support of meeting other grade-specific standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 5a) At least 80% of all questions in the materials are text-dependent questions; student ideas are expressed through both written and spoken responses.	No	Many questions in the units are not text-dependent. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1.1 Think of the last suspenseful movie you watched — one that made you feel nervous about what might happen to the characters. Can you remember how the movie created that suspense? Think about the music, the lighting, the camera angles, and how quickly or slowly the plot moved along. Write at least half a page reflecting on how the movie built that suspense. 2.1 What are the most important aspects of your identity? Your gender, race, skills, relationships with family members, or something else? Are some aspects of your identity more important than others? Why? 3.1 Have you ever written a poem or song lyrics? If you have, do you remember why you chose that form to express your thoughts? If you haven't, think about something that might inspire you to write a song.	The first examples used in the reviewer's response (1.1, 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1) are from Journal assignments which are not meant to be text-dependent, they are meant to just get students thinking about the topics and concepts they are about to study in the texts. It was also noted that most of the questions are surface-level and point students to underlined portions of the text that detracts from student analysis. We'd like to point out that each of the discussion and formal writing assignments (the last Study assignment and the Practice or Project assignments in each lesson) are text-dependent questions that require students to think critically, and perform an in-depth analysis of the text(s) on their own. Examples of these types of questions include: 1.2.11: Write an explanatory essay about how setting affects character development in John Steinbeck's short story "The Chrysanthemums."

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
			<p>4.1 Have you ever imagined waking up as someone or something other than yourself? What would that feel like? What benefits and challenges would you instantly experience?</p> <p>Furthermore, when beginning the writing process, students are prompted to brainstorm for their own narrative with non text-dependent M/C questions, such as "What would you be most likely to go after, even if it meant doing something wrong? (Check one.)"</p> <p>Although the reading guide questions are text-dependent questions, many are surface-level and do not allow students to express ideas about texts. Examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the most exciting thing that happened to you this year? 2. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? 8. In Act I, scene iii, what is the witches' prophecy about Banquo? 9. Once the witches vanish, Macbeth and Banquo start wondering (understandably!) if that really just happened — are they nuts? In Act I, scene iii, what happens moments later that makes them take the odd occurrence much more seriously? 10. What is an aside? <p>Additionally, underlining pieces of the text for students diminishes the understanding that students will gain when try to analyze and make meaning from text. The thinking and analyzing is done when text is underlined for students.</p> <p>There is no evidence of student-spoken response</p>	<p>2.1.11: Write an argument about who gains the most (emotionally and symbolically) by the end of the story "Everyday Use."</p> <p>2.2.8 Discuss: In Gogol's "The Nose," the loss of a nose symbolizes the loss of power.</p> <p>2.3.11: In this assignment, you'll write an explanatory essay about how Edgar Allan Poe creates suspense in his chilling gothic tale of murder and madness, "The Black Cat."</p> <p>3.3.11: Write an argumentative essay about which of the two poems best represents the themes of Ovid's "The Story of Daedalus and Icarus" and Brueghel's painting Landscape with the Fall of Icarus.</p> <p>4.3.8 Discuss: Grete's metamorphosis in the story is as significant as Gregor's.</p> <p>7.2.8 Discuss: Hardin's argument is racist.</p> <p>7.2.11: Write an argument including a counterclaim from Garrett Hardin's controversial essay "Lifeboat Ethics," doing research of your own to find alternative solutions to the problems Hardin describes.</p> <p>Those are just some examples. Additionally, students are required to given spoken responses in theses discussion assignments, as well as in their presentation for Assignment 8.2.11.</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
			observed in materials.	
	<p>REQUIRED 5b) Coherent sequences of questions and tasks focus students on understanding the text and its illustrations (as applicable), expressing the knowledge students have built about concepts, themes, or ideas presented in the texts, and making connections among the texts in the collection.</p>	No	There is minimal connection between texts in a unit based on skill or topic, not developing understanding or theme across texts. There are opportunities through which students may answer questions about several texts; however, the questions are surface-level questions. The questions do not make connections to support student understanding of themes between texts.	While themes may not be explored across texts, literary concepts and ideas are. As mentioned in a previous response, students explore concepts such as how genre and historical/social contexts impact a text, how structure adds to meaning, etc., all throughout the course with multiple texts.
	<p>REQUIRED 5c) Questions and tasks include the language of the standards, and assess the depth and complexity required by the standards at each grade-level over time to advance and deepen student learning. <i>(Note: not every standard must be assessed with every text.)</i></p>	No	Most of the reading guide questions and quiz questions do not use the language of the standards or assess the depth and rigor of the standards. See reading guide questions above. For example quiz questions such as: "What warning does the first apparition give Macbeth?" and "Why does Malcolm lie about himself to Macduff?" ask students to identify character interactions from multiple choice options, but do not ask students to analyze how these interactions advance the plot or develop the theme. For a "quiz" they fall short of assessing whether students meet the standards.	<p>While there are plenty of questions throughout the course that are more informal and casual, with everyday language that does not reflect the language of the standards, that does not discount that there are also many that do. Examples:</p> <p>Words like analyze, determine, cite, compare and contrast, produce and develop are also used in the instructions for all of the assignments and tasks. For instance, in the activity Study: Understand Setting, Character and Dialogue (Semester 1: 1.2.4) students are asked to "cite strong and thorough evidence" from their reading to support their claims about John Steinbeck's short story "The Chrysanthemums." Students are reminded to back up their arguments with both "what the text says" and "inferences drawn from the text." This language is directly quoted from the first CCR Reading Standard (Key Ideas and Details) for ninth graders.</p> <p>The language of the common core standards is clearly evident in the questions that accompany each activity. For example, in Study: Analyze How Artists Build on Source Material (Semester 1: 3.3.9), the Reading Guide asks questions like "analyze the representation of a subject in two different artistic mediums," in this case, a painting and two poems. This language is taken</p>

CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF SUPERIOR QUALITY	MEETS METRICS (Yes/No)	JUSTIFICATION/ COMMENTS WITH EXAMPLES	PUBLISHER RESPONSE
				<p>directly from CCR Reading Standard 7 (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas).</p> <p>Similarly to the issue with questions not reflecting the language of the standards, the presence of assessment questions that do not meet the rigor of standards does not discount all those that do. The review seems to only highlight multiple choice quiz questions, but does not reflect on any of the positive, higher-level, critical analysis that is done in much of the other assessment opportunities for students, including those in the formal writing assignments at the end of each lesson (Practice/Projects), as well as discussion activities, and of course the Exams at the end of each unit and semester. Each of these serves to assess students at the level of rigor that the standards demands and many of these were highlighted in our original response, but not commented on. They are copied below:</p> <p>Not only is the language of the standard expressed, but so too are the depth and complexity that the standard calls for. In Semester 1: 3.3.11, students must, "Write an argumentative essay about which of the two poems best represents the themes of Ovid's "The Story of Daedalus and Icarus" and Brueghel's painting Landscape with the Fall of Icarus." This assignment directly assesses student's for the RL 9-10.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Brueghel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).</p> <p>Another example of students being assessed at the depth and complexity required by the Common Core standards is Semester 1: 2.3.11: Study: Explore Essay Writing: Clarity. Throughout this lesson, students have</p>

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				<p>studied the elements (specifically structural) of gothic literature that allow an author to create tension, suspense, or mystery. Now they must write an explanatory essay about how Edgar Allan Poe creates suspense in his chilling gothic tale of murder and madness, "The Black Cat." This essay assesses students on standard RL 9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</p> <p>For activities that include writing assignments, such as Explore Essay Writing: Speeches (Semester 2: 3.1.11), students are consistently asked to "produce clear and coherent writing" in which the development, organization and style "are appropriate to task, purpose and audience." This language comes from CCR Writing Standard 4 (Production and Distribution of Writing) for grade 9-10.</p> <p>The lessons on writing a research paper such as Explore Essay Writing: Research Paper (Semester 2: 4.2.11) use language explicitly from CCR Writing Standard 8 (Research to Build and Present Knowledge). Phrases in the instructions for each step of writing the paper, such as "gather relevant information," use "advanced searches effectively," and "assess the usefulness" of each source, come straight from this standard..</p>
	<p>REQUIRED 5d) Questions and tasks support students in examining the language (vocabulary, sentences, and structure) of texts measured by Criteria 1, 2, and 3 to determine meaning; questions and tasks also focus on engaging students with multiple repetitions of words in varied contexts (e.g., reading different texts, completing tasks, engaging in</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The examples given do not support the indicator. Writing a line in your own words does not constitute examining the vocabulary, sentences or structure of the text. The activity listed for 3.1.11 does not ask students to examine the language of texts to determine meaning. Students determine the theme of a poem, search for images that illustrate this theme, write an explanation about how the images illustrate the theme, and then</p>	<p>The reviewer's response does not seem to reflect what was in our original response. The reviewer discusses activity 3.1.11, but that assignment was never used in our response. Our original response did however provide the following example:</p> <p>"Apex Learning's English 9 Common Core course employs questions and tasks that support students in</p>

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	speaking/listening).		create a presentation. Student directions do not ask them to examine how the language of the poem serves to develop the theme. Instead they are asked to write down images that the poem made them think of and then look outside the text for ways to illustrate them.	<p>examining the language of texts to determine meaning. Every reading assignment is accompanied by a list of key terms, and the reading guides for each includes questions asking students to define other words used in the text. An example of this is the reading guide that accompanies the story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker (Semester 1: 2.1.6). It asks students to define the words furtive, mercilessly, and oppress. Understanding the meaning of these words is key to understanding the conflict of the story.</p> <p>Many of the questions throughout the course also ask students to focus on the types of sentences or structure the author uses throughout his or her text. Study and reading guide questions, as well as many quiz questions, often direct students to a specific word or section underlined in the text, asking students to examine its meaning and purpose. For instance, in Semester 1: 3.1.6: Read: Three Poems, questions #1-3 in the reading guide each point students to an underlined section of the poem and then ask them to examine and analyze the author's word choices and structure. The questions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is it possible to tell just from the pacing and word choices here what kind of day it is? What do you guess the weather is like, and why? 2. Why does Lee choose this word to describe peaches piled up in bins? 3. What effect does the repetition of the words "from" and "comes" have on the pacing and feeling of this part of the poem? <p>Key terms are also repeated frequently within the questions and tasks themselves. For instance, the key term symbol is first introduced in An Essay on Symbols and Artifacts (Semester 1: 2.1.2). But the term appears</p>

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				<p>over and over again in several other units regarding different texts (Shakespeare's Sonnet 73, Kafka's The Metamorphosis, Macbeth, The Gettysburg Address).</p> <p>They are also expected to use this vocabulary in discussions with their classmates. Using the discussion from the unit mentioned above, Semester 1: 3.1.8 Discuss: Effective Language, students must respond to this statement: Literal language is more effective for communication than figurative language. In responding to the statement, students must first understand the terms "literal and figurative language" and then be able to present several key phrases or vocabulary examples from the text as support for their arguments."</p> <p>In addition to our original response, other examples of analysis of language include:</p> <p>1.2.6 Reading Guide Question 13. What do Elisa's words, and the way she says the words, tell us about her emotional state here?</p> <p>1.3.6 Reading Guide Question 20. Why might Gilman use this word in particular? What effect does it have on the narrative?</p> <p>2.2.6 Reading Guide Question 11. Define droshky. Hint: This is an old word that may not appear in some dictionaries — but you may not need to look it up to figure out what it means. Look at the context (the words around it) to figure out the meaning.</p> <p>2.3.6 Reading Guide Questions 4. Why does Poe use the word "mere" here? What do you think of the narrator once you read the next sentence? 6. The word "mere" pops up again, and again it's used strangely, isn't it? What are you learning about this narrator in this sentence? 11. Poe structures the last long sentence of the paragraph so that the words "hung it"</p>

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				<p>are repeated at the start of each phrase (or sentence fragment). Why does he use this repetition?</p> <p>7.2.6 Reading Guide Questions 6. What metaphor does Hardin begin building in this paragraph? 18. What metaphor for humanity does Hardin say Alan Gregg believed in? Have you heard this same metaphor used anywhere else more recently?</p> <p>8.1.6 Reading Guide Questions 2. What effect does this use of abstract, poetic language have on you as you read? 5. How does this phrase strengthen the point Anthony is making in this sentence?</p> <p>8.2.6 Reading Guide Question 13. Here, King makes up two new words: "isness" and "oughtness." What do you think these words mean? What point is King making about the differences between how humankind is and how he thinks it ought to be?</p> <p>9.1.6 Reading Guide Questions 9. How does this line increase the tension and suspense of the story? 19. What effect does this description have on you as a reader? What are you feeling as you read it?</p> <p>These are just a few of the examples of questions that fill the reading guides and writing assignments that require students to analyze different elements of language.</p>
<p>6. ASSESSMENTS: Materials offer assessment opportunities that genuinely measure progress and elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the</p>	<p>REQUIRED 6a) Measurement of progress via assessments should include gradual release of supporting scaffolds for students to measure their independent abilities.</p>	<p>Not Evaluated</p>	<p>This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.</p>	
	<p>REQUIRED 6b) Aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines (such as scoring guides or student work exemplars) are included and provide</p>	<p>Not Evaluated</p>	<p>This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.</p>	

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<p>assessed grade-specific standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.			
	<p>REQUIRED 6c) Materials use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>6d) Materials assess student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
IV. Scaffolding and Support				
<p>7. SCAFFOLDING AND SUPPORT: Materials provide all students, including those who read below grade level, with extensive opportunities and support to encounter and comprehend grade-level complex text as required by the standards.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 7a) Pre-reading activities and suggested approaches to teacher scaffolding are focused and engage students with understanding the text itself. Pre-reading activities should be no more than 10% of time devoted to any reading instruction.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 7b) Materials must have the goal of students gaining full comprehension of complex text (through read-aloud in grades K-1) and do not confuse or substitute mastery of strategies for full comprehension of text; reading strategies support comprehension of specific texts and focus on building knowledge and insight. Texts must not serve as platforms to practice discrete strategies.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 7c) Materials regularly direct teachers to return to focused parts of the text to guide students through rereading, discussion and writing about the ideas, events, and information found there.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 7d) The materials are easy to use and well organized for students and teachers. The reading selections are centrally located within the materials and obviously the center of focus.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>7e) Appropriate suggestions and materials are provided for supporting varying student needs at the unit and lesson level</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	

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	(e.g., alternate teaching approaches, pacing, instructional delivery options, suggestions for addressing common student difficulties to meet standards, remediation strategies or suggestions for supporting texts, suggestions for more advanced texts for extension, etc.).			
	7f) The content can be reasonably completed within a regular school year and the pacing of content allows for maximum student understanding. The materials provide guidance about the amount of time a task might reasonably take.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
V. Writing to Sources and Research				
8. WRITING TO SOURCES: The majority of written tasks are text-dependent and reflect the writing genres named in the standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED *Indicator for grades 3-12 only 8a) A vast majority of written tasks at all grade levels require students to demonstrate the knowledge they built through the analysis and synthesis of texts, and present well-defended claims and clear information, drawing on textual evidence to support valid inferences from text.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	REQUIRED 8b) Materials include multiple writing tasks aligned to the three modes of writing (opinion/argumentative, informative, narrative) as outlined by the standards at each grade level. In grades 3-12, tasks included blended modes (i.e., analytical writing); narrative prompts decrease in number and increase in being based on text(s) as student progress through the grades, e.g., narrative description (text-based, chronological writing) rather than imaginative narratives.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	REQUIRED 8c) Writing opportunities for students are prominent and varied in length and time demands (e.g., notes, summaries, short-answer responses, whole-class shared writing/formal essays, on-demand and process writing, etc.).	N/A	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	REQUIRED 8d) Materials build in opportunities for connections between writing, speaking and listening, reading, and the language standards. For example, in grade 1, students listen to a text	N/A	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	

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	being read, work collaboratively to develop a plan for writing, write independently filling out an answer frame, and then share their writing with a peer who reviews the writing against a word wall to ensure high frequency words are spelled correctly. For example, in grade 6, students read a text, work collaboratively to develop a plan for analyzing or emulating the text, write a response, and then share their writing with a peer who reviews the writing against using a peer review checklist.			
	REQUIRED *Indicator for grades K-2 only 8e) Submissions address grade-level foundation standards that require students in the early grades to know their letters, phonetic conventions, sentence structures, and spelling.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	8f) *Indicator for grades K-2 only Materials provide opportunities for educators to monitor student progress in the development of these foundational skills and respond to the needs of individual students. This monitoring should include attention to invented spelling as appropriate for its diagnostic value.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	8g) Materials engage students in many shared (grades K-2) or short research projects annually to develop the expertise needed to conduct research independently.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
VI. Speaking and Listening				
9. SPEAKING AND LISTENING: Oral tasks must be text-dependent and materials for speaking and listening must reflect true communication skills required for college and career readiness. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	REQUIRED 9a) Speaking and listening questions and tasks use the texts measured by Criteria 1, 2, and 3.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	REQUIRED 9b) Materials demand that students engage effectively (as determined by grade-level standards) in a range of conversations and collaborations with peers about texts.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	REQUIRED 9c) Materials build in frequent opportunities for connections between speaking and listening, reading, writing, and the language standards. For example, in grades K-12, materials	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	

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	<p>build in frequent opportunities for discussion about texts and, through directions and modeling, encourage students to use academic language and grade-appropriate oral language conventions. In grades 3-12, materials require students to gather and use evidence to orally present findings from research.</p>			
	<p>9d) Materials develop active listening skills, such as taking notes on main ideas, asking relevant questions, and elaborating on remarks of others to develop understanding of complex texts and tasks.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
VII. Language				
<p>10. LANGUAGE: Materials must adequately address the Language standards for the grade, including through unpacking the vocabulary and syntax of text(s) (indicator 5e) as models of language use.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>REQUIRED 10a) Materials address the grammar and language conventions specified by the Language standards at each grade level and build on those standards that build from previous grade levels, as indicated by pages 30 and 56 of the standards.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 10b) Materials create opportunities for students to discover accurate usage patterns, compare them to their own (oral and written), and develop proficiency in usage and language conventions.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 10c) Selected vocabulary focuses on words critical to the meaning of the texts included in Criteria 1, 2, and 3. Materials also require students to model their own writing after texts measured by Criteria 1, 2, and 3 as a way to develop more complex sentence structure and language usage.</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	<p>REQUIRED 10d) Vocabulary study emphasizes advancing depth of word knowledge through determining word meaning and relationships among words (e.g., concept- and thematically-</p>	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	

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	related words, word families, etc.).			
	REQUIRED 10e) Materials build in frequent opportunities for connections between the language standards, writing, reading, and speaking and listening. For example, through directions and modeling, materials encourage students to use grade-appropriate language conventions when speaking and writing about texts.	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
	10f) Materials provide real-world activities for student practice with natural language (e.g. mock interviews, presentations).	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
FINAL EVALUATION				
<i>Tier 1 ratings</i> receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for Criteria 1 – 10.				
<i>Tier 2 ratings</i> receive a “Yes” in Column 1 for all non-negotiable criteria (Foundational Skills (as applicable), Complexity of Texts, Quality of Texts, and Text-Dependent Questions), but at least one “No” in Column 1 for the remaining criteria.				
<i>Tier 3 ratings</i> receive a “No” in Column 1 for at least one of the non-negotiable criteria.				
Compile the results for Sections I-VII to make a final decision for the material under review.				
Section	Criteria	Yes/No	Final Justification/Comments	
I: Text Selection	1. Complexity of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	Yes	There are a wealth of texts from Appendix B. While some texts would be considered low according to the Lexile range recommended for 9th grade, when one considers the qualitative analysis of the texts, they are appropriately complex for the grade level. English 9 Common Core is structured so that texts gradually increase in complexity as the course progresses.	
	2. Quality of Texts (Non-Negotiable)	No	The multitude of introductory pieces and “front loading” of information that are referenced in the review do not support students in meeting grade level ELA standards. The introductory materials routinely teach students about genre-based literary concepts in isolation of the well-crafted, authentic texts that are included in the materials. Students only engage with the quality texts to apply genre-based concept knowledge once the front-loading is done.	

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	3. Range and Volume of Texts	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
II: Foundational Skills	4. Foundational Skills (Non-Negotiable*)	N/A		
III: Questions and Tasks	5. Text-Dependent Questions (Non-Negotiable)	No	Many questions throughout English 9 are not text-dependent. Additionally, underlining pieces of the text for students diminishes the understanding that students will gain when try to analyze and make meaning from text. There is no evidence of student-spoken response observed in materials.	
	6. Assessments	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
IV: Scaffolding and Support	7. Scaffolding and Support	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
V: Writing to Sources and Research	8. Writing to Sources	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
VI: Speaking and Listening	9. Speaking and Listening	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
VII: Language	10. Language	Not Evaluated	This section was not evaluated because the non-negotiable criteria were not met.	
FINAL DECISION FOR THIS MATERIAL: Tier III, Not representing quality				

*As applicable (e.g., when the scope of the materials is comprehensive and considered a full program)

Appendix II.

Public Comments

There were no public comments submitted.