Core Knowledge Language Arts: Kindergarten

Developer/Publisher: Core Knowledge Foundation

[View Resource]

Review Year: 2017
This resource was reviewed by Washington educators with subject matter expertise and deep familiarity with the state learning standards. Note that this resource may have been updated since the review. Check the developer website to see if there is a more recent version available.

Format:
☒ online
☒ PDF
☐ editable document

Professional Development:
See the CKLA P–5 Implementation Resources Guide and FAQ on Core Knowledge Professional Development. More info in the Background from OER Project Team section on the next page.

Standards Correlation:
Read FAQ section on Alignment to CCSS: CKLA Kindergarten Unit-by-Unit CCSS Alignment

Reviewer Usability Feedback on Current and Adapted Use

- I would not use
- Supplemental material
- Portion of a unit
- Unit replacement
- Textbook replacement

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<tr>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Current Use</th>
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Number of reviewers:

Amount of work required to bring into CCSS alignment:
Minor – Moderate

Subject:
English Language Arts

Grade:
Kindergarten

Scope:
Full Course Curriculum

Duration:
School Year

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Learning and Teaching Department
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET):
learn more about IMET

High Quality Anchor Text 2.5
EB Discussion and Writing 2.2
Building Knowledge 2.3
Foundational Skills 2.4

Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) Overall Rating:
Exemplar if Improved (9.5) learn more about EQuIP

Alignment 2.5
Key Shifts 2.3
Instructional Supports 2.3
Assessment 2.5

Background from OER Project Team
Core Knowledge Language Arts™ (CKLA) is a comprehensive program for teaching skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. CKLA also builds students’ knowledge and vocabulary in literature, history, geography, and science.

Reviewers examined the CKLA curriculum in its entirety using the four “non-negotiable” categories from the Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET). The Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) rubric was used to take a deeper dive into the first two units of the materials.

Please note that CKLA materials reviewed here are first editions, developed for the EngageNY curriculum. CKLA materials available for purchase through Amplify are revised editions and were not considered in this review.

CKLA Publisher’s Background
Additional Info on Professional Development
There are many free professional development resources on the Core Knowledge website. These include turnkey professional development workshops with a facilitator’s and participants’ guides, as well as webinars. Please see CKLA P–5 Implementation Resources Guide.

The Foundation is happy to help with specific questions, which may be directed to CKLA@coreknowledge.org. The Foundation is also happy to provide onsite, customized PD for schools and districts. Contact above address for information on associated costs.

FAQ on Core Knowledge Professional Development

Reviewer Comments

Review 1

Strengths

- The CKLA curriculum provides a variety of very rich, high quality, relevant and grade level appropriate text the learners to listen and to read independently. Each Listening and Learning Domain has a multitude of specific text designed to fit within that unit. Text includes fiction and non-fiction. A variety of genre are included.
- The scripted discussion prompts in the teacher’s guide most definitely encourage classroom conversations that are deep and meaningful.
- Foundational skills are thoroughly developed throughout the kindergarten curriculum. The Skills strand scope and sequence is organized, systematic, and based on sound developmental research (basic code, frequent least ambiguous sounds, blending and segmenting, chaining activities).
- Recommended Trade book lists and other supplemental resources are consistent throughout the curriculum.

Challenges

- The Foundational Skill onset and rimes RF.K2 c is not present in CKLA.
- CKLA focuses on the individual phoneme as the unit of sound, not onset and rimes.
- L.K.4b - Use of frequently occurring affixes is not directly addressed as a teachable skill.
- The CKLA curriculum is very dense, and the lessons are strategically built upon one another. Teachers will have to work diligently to keep up the rigorous pace, and make a concerted effort and commitment to staying on track. The pacing guide that CLKA provides shows the materials in the curriculum span well beyond a typical 36 week school year.

Adaptations

- Teachers can add word family work to their daily practice.
- Teachers can address prefixes and suffixes as they introduce and teach the very rich variety of vocabulary presented in the Listening and Learning Domains.
- Classroom teachers would need to collaborate and make some choices as to how to make the curriculum fit within their school year parameters.
Ideal Use Case
The CKLA program would ideally be used in a General Ed classroom setting. I feel that either the Listening and Learning or the Skill strand could be used individually, but the best case scenario would be to implement them together. This however, would require two 60 minute literacy blocks daily. I think that, with support, resource room teachers could work together with the gen ed teachers to coordinate students’ IEP goals to flow with the scope and sequence of the program (especially in the development of Foundational Skills.) I believe that any teacher could use this resource. I think that novice teachers would benefit from the structure and massive amount of guidance, extension ideas, assessment tools, and from the scripted nature of the lessons. Seasoned teachers may might appreciate those things very much, or they may (in some cases) be resistant to some of the less “traditional” ways of teaching their students.

Ease of Use
I feel that this resource is very user friendly. The curriculum, however, is quite hefty, and if teachers were to want to have it in hard copy form, it would take a lot of binders! With 12 distinct Listening and Learning Domains, and 10 Skills Units the amount of space it would take up in a teacher’s classroom would be great. The curriculum is easy to access online. The individual unit and domain guides are clean and simple, with crisp print and adequate number of illustrations to make it easy to locate what you are seeking. The lessons are well organized.

Support of Balanced Literacy
I do believe this resource very much provides a balanced literacy approach if used in its entirety The kindergarten foundational skills determined in the CCSS can almost all be mastered using the Skills Units. The Listening and Learning Domain units do an excellent job of providing the means for teachers to meet standards in Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Language. Although somewhat daunting, the breadth of this resource is quite impressive.

Additional Comments
One of my favorite aspects of this resource is the interesting selection of topics and themes covered in the Listening and Learning Domains. Kindergarten children will begin their school experience with vast array of Nursery Rhymes and Fables. They will be exposed to so many wonderful learning experiences throughout the year.

Review 2

Strengths
• Materials provide opportunities to build student content knowledge in history and science.

Challenges
• Writing instruction is taught as a skill rather than a language activity. The instruction does not align with the rigor of the CCSS.
• All read aloud texts are unique to CKLA. These read alouds are presented to students as images only. No trade books are used for instruction.
• Lack of above grade level extensions/more advanced texts.

Adaptations
• Integrate reading and writing learning activities. Include explicit writing instruction to include narrative, opinion, and informative forms of writing.
• Embed lessons using high quality, complex anchor texts.
• Embed extensions that are above Kindergarten grade level expectations.
Ideal Use Case
Experienced teachers would be ideal due to the need to supplement with additional resources.

Ease of Use
Navigating the curriculum resources is workable once familiar with the overall organization of the program.

Support of Balanced Literacy
No, however it does have some components of a balanced literacy program.

Review 3

Strengths
- Regular practice with complex texts encourage close reading. Systematic introduction of text vocabulary, engaging students in text-dependent questioning and performance extensions evident in every unit.
- Building knowledge through content rich nonfiction texts. Connections evident across multiple academic areas, including: History, Geography, Science, Music, and Art. Of the 12 Listening and Learning Units, 10 are based on nonfiction, cross curriculum texts.
- Systematic and clear progression of building foundational skills. Foundational skill progression is evident. Author’s notes and videos include research based philosophy.

Challenges
- Small Group instruction materials and decodable readers do not begin until Unit 6. From this model, I conclude that students will spend half of their year receiving whole group instruction only. This limits differentiated activities, inhibits stamina and application opportunities, and will induce a major shift in instructional styles mid-year.
- Some anthology vocabulary and content is beyond the schema of a kindergartner making it difficult to access the text. Students will spend a great amount of time building background skills to make the text meaningful and relevant.
- Writing instruction is integrated, but limited. When incorporated, it is often shared writing, not independent writing. Students should engage in independent or shared writing activities daily to achieve mastery. Direct instruction on CCSS writing standards (narrative, opinion, informational, conventions) are incorporated UP TO four times per unit.
- Student independent reading time is teacher selected, not student selected. Students should have opportunity to select personal interest books, at a variety of levels, and learn how to select "good fit books".

Adaptations
- Recommend small group instruction begin earlier to provide differentiated activities, promote building stamina, and provide students more application opportunities.
- Trade books and Supplemental Guide offer some support and modifications. I would suggest that teachers preview and select the most appropriate texts for their students and modify/review as necessary to promote mastery.
- Supplemental writing instruction required to meet CCSS.
- Suggest incorporating lessons on selecting appropriate texts and building in independent reading time for student selected texts.
Ideal Use Case
CKLA has a clear and systematic approach coupled with specific instructions and activities, permitting easy access for new or seasoned teachers. Notes: This resource will require supplemental materials to address CCSS Writing standards. Although CKLA provides supplemental resources, teachers will require some experience level to identify lesson extensions and modifications to meet the needs of diverse learners. Daily lessons total 110 minutes. Teachers may need to become effective at eliminating activities to meet time constraints.

Ease of Use
CKLA is divided into two strands; the Skills Strand and the Listening and Learning Strand. Teachers will reference two teachers manuals for one daily lesson. Overall organization is manageable, once you understand the structure. Additional resources, supplemental guides, and author’s narratives can make navigation time consuming.

Support of Balanced Literacy
CKLA meets the needs of a balanced literacy approach incorporating components of foundational skills and engaging literature.

Additional Comments
Kindergarten CKLA is primarily a whole group instructional model. It has limited small group instruction time, totaling 20 minutes a few days a week, for the second half of the year. This model inhibits much of the instruction that enables differentiation, substantial time with decodable texts, and the promotion of building stamina with student selected texts and independent activities. The decodable texts provided for small group instruction are limited in range. Differentiating small group lessons for learners will require supplemental resources.