

April 2019

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Response to EdReports Evaluation
***Common Core CodeX* Grades 6-8**

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on EdReports' review of *Common Core CodeX*, Grades 6–8. While we are confident that the efficacy of *Common Core CodeX* speaks for itself, we would like to shed new light on a few criteria that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt stands behind wholeheartedly but that EdReports has reviewed with mixed favorability.

Common Core CodeX challenges students to read, think, analyze, synthesize, question, cite evidence, debate, and write every day. It is built on a model that integrates authentic, complex grade-level text, whole- and small-group teaching models, classroom routines for developing academic discourse, instruction to meet students at different levels, and rigorous writing tasks and projects.

- *CodeX* was built specifically to address the rigorous demands of the Common Core State Standards using a research-based model that addresses the “how” as well as the “what” when implementing the instructional shifts of the CCSS. Each grade offers a comprehensive Scope and Sequence which details exactly where and how *CodeX* hits each standard.
- The program focuses on vocabulary, language, comprehension, writing, and performance tasks designed to engage students in close reading and daily writing about complex nonfiction and literature.
- *CodeX* equips teachers with explicit instructional routines to ensure all students can engage with text and equally participate in academic discourse, both in classroom discussions and in their writing.
- Each unit is built around an engaging concept, an essential question, and an enduring understanding worth reading to cater to students' interests and mindset and keep them engaged in their learning through close reading.
- Through close, sustained reading, students study shorter, challenging texts that present increasing challenges in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, and text organization. This approach helps students become deep readers and measured writers who can translate these skills into success, both in assessments and in life.
- Students are systematically and explicitly assessed throughout *CodeX* to ensure they are mastering the key instructional shifts of the Common Core State Standards using three types of assessments modeled on the Next Generation Assessments: Formative Assessment, Written Unit Performance Tasks, and Next Generation Practice Assessments.
- *CodeX* developers identified five principles that represent the key shifts in curriculum and instruction within the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Content Area Literacy,

and the program uses these principles as the framework for instruction to support teachers to have the greatest impact on student learning.

- **Range and Quality of Texts:** *CodeX* texts are engaging, content-area focused, diverse, and complex.
- **Text Complexity:** Teachers use Text Complexity Rubrics to guide close reading instruction. These rubrics highlight key aspects of text that may make it challenging, such as purpose, structure, levels of meaning, language choices, and knowledge demands.
- **Text-Dependent Questions and Tasks:** Reading instruction in *CodeX* focuses on deep reading of the words, phrases, and details in each text and gathering evidence to use in writing assignments.
- **Focus on Academic and Domain-Specific Vocabulary:** To build students' knowledge and understanding, *CodeX* focuses on academic vocabulary, words with abstract or multiple meanings or uses, and domain-specific terms, and words that are part of a word family or semantic network.
- **Writing and Research:** Students compose both on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time). They will become proficient with key writing types driven by the CCSS requirements (informative essay, argument essay, and narrative writing). Teachers are provided structured approaches to teaching writing including explicit modeling of lexical and grammatical expectations with written texts to ensure writing success for all.

In short, *Common Core CodeX* is a high quality, research-based approach to teach literacy in an engaging and effective way that aligns with the CCSS through deepening students' cognitive processes, introducing new aspects of content and skills, and extending knowledge and skills to a wide range of content.

HMH respects and supports EdReports.org's goal of providing educators with a comprehensive understanding of Common Core State Standards alignment across the academic materials their districts are considering for adoption. We hope that educators will fully consider the information provided here regarding *Common Core CodeX*.