

“Teachers desire to have a classroom of students who can understand a text so deeply that they can generate their own questions, form opinions, and discuss the text with others as well. Wit & Wisdom encouraged all of these things.”

—Grade 4 Teacher, Buncombe County, North Carolina

“[W]hen I came to school and we started reading these books, I would look at the cover of the book and literally think it was the most boring book I would ever read, but then after we got into the book, you notice there are some things you never learned before, like you would want to learn even more about and read it closely.”

—Grade 5 Student, Nashville, Tennessee

A curriculum focused on excellent, knowledge-building texts is one of the most important tools in a community’s effort to build lifelong learners. At Great Minds, the creators of *Wit & Wisdom*, we believe all students deserve rich, rigorous content. We know that a coherent curriculum—one that builds knowledge from one year to the next through the deep study of important topics—compels students to inquire, debate, discuss, and write about what they know. History, science, literature, and fine art texts, organized in a curated sequence, generate thinking within and beyond the classroom.

The work of the EdReports.org team is essential to empowering leaders, teachers, students, and communities with insight into curriculum design. The EdReports.org analysis supports decision-makers in the choice of curricula to challenge all learners, students and teachers alike. The EdReports.org indicators are pillars of *Wit & Wisdom*—a curriculum created by teachers, for teachers who believe in the value of choosing quality texts and teaching those texts based on the shifts of the standards. Great Minds teacher-writers focused on building knowledge with carefully selected and sequenced texts, through time spent on vocabulary worth teaching and tasks that support students with explicit writing and speaking opportunities. The teachers who created the curriculum are grateful for the near-perfect scores the curriculum received at all grades. We hope readers of the reports will note the many illustrative examples the EdReports.org team highlighted. These relevant, thoughtfully selected examples provide a window into the curriculum’s depth.

The EdReports.org review team captured the intentions of our curriculum design: to build deep knowledge and empower students with tools to articulate their knowledge in speaking and writing. As indicated in the helpful EdReports.org feedback, *Wit & Wisdom* creates opportunities for engaging in excellent content by spending time reading, rereading, and questioning worthy texts. In reviewing the text quality and the alignment of the teaching and learning to the standards, the reviewers also noted the intentionality of our decision to include no formal foundational skills component in *Wit & Wisdom*. As noted in the assessment of Criterion 1o–1q, *Wit & Wisdom* has ample opportunities for word recognition, morphology, vocabulary, syntax, and reading fluency in a research-based progression—but no instruction in the foundational skill area of phonics (letter-sound correspondence and syllabication patterns).

Because teaching in the earliest grades is focused on both learning to read and reading to learn, we recommend that educators use *Wit & Wisdom* in companion with a proven, research-based foundational skills program, such as *Wilson Foundations*[®]. A research-based foundational skills program is the best choice for teaching students to read through systematic instruction. The team at Great Minds is expert in building students' knowledge—alongside their reading, writing, and communicating skills—through deep exploration of curated, content-rich, excellent texts. Together, a foundational skills program in the early grades, combined with the content and tasks in *Wit & Wisdom*, provide the most effective system for teaching students to read and to learn. *Wit & Wisdom*, partnered with a high-quality foundational skills program, can impact students' early reading experiences as they build knowledge in history, science, visual art, and literature while enforcing sound-spelling patterns in context.

While it is rewarding to examine how *Wit & Wisdom* meets the criteria of the evaluation tool, we are most interested in the thoughtful analysis of ways in which we can improve the curriculum. The feedback from the EdReports.org team augments ongoing discoveries we make while working closely with schools and districts currently implementing *Wit & Wisdom*. Some areas where we are focused for improvement and growth include making the content available in varied, interactive digital formats to provide more opportunities for students and teachers to collaborate using digital tools.

As a nonprofit provider of instructional materials and professional development, the core of our mission is focused on helping every teacher and student realize what we know to be true: that every child is capable of greatness. We are grateful to the EdReports.org team for helping to accelerate our efforts to enrich the lives of students and teachers with a book-based, integrated curriculum so that young minds can meet a worthy, engaging challenge every day.