

Common-Core Alignment Tool: Looking at Grade-Level Textbooks

By [Liana Heitin](#) on April 14, 2015

The toolkit for determining whether publishers' instructional materials are aligned to the Common Core State Standards has grown once again.

Yesterday, the Council of the Great City Schools [put out a series of rubrics, separated by grade level](#), to help schools and educators decide if the reading and [math curriculum materials](#) they're using meet the common core's expectations.

Here's a page from the [English/language arts rubric](#) for 3rd grade:

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
1c. Materials include a rich and diverse sampling of literary texts including, but not limited to: • Fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures • Stories, drama, and poetry • Multiple stories by the same author		☐ 4) extensive ☐ 3) sufficient ☐ 2) some ☐ 1) weak ☐ Rating Pending
1d. The range of informational texts include selections that: • Present historical events • Describe technical procedures • Present scientific ideas or concepts • Contain relevant visual representations of information • Contain at least two texts on the same topic		☐ 4) extensive ☐ 3) sufficient ☐ 2) some ☐ 1) weak ☐ Rating Pending
1e. Student reading materials contain a range of increasingly challenging selections that allow teachers to build students' ability to comprehend complex text and expand vocabulary throughout the school year.		☐ 4) extensive ☐ 3) sufficient ☐ 2) some ☐ 1) weak ☐ Rating Pending
OVERALL RATING: ☐ 4) extensive evidence ☐ 3) sufficient evidence ☐ 2) some evidence ☐ 1) weak evidence		
SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating): 		

The tool is based on another evaluation tool created by Student Achievement Partners,

the professional-development group founded by the common-core writers, that is used to **assess whole textbooks and textbook series**. The Council's new tool (known as the Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool, or GIMET) looks at each grade level separately. Teachers can use it to see where a textbook falls short and supplementary materials might be necessary.

Achieve, the nonprofit that helped launch the common standards, **also has a materials-vetting system called EQuIP**—but that one is for examining individual lessons and units.

The newest tool comes on the heels of a widely viewed release by **EdReports.org**, a website that purports to be the *Consumer Reports* of common-core classroom materials. (EdReports.org differs from GIMET in that it is not a rubric or tool but a set of completed evaluations.) The first round of reviews, which looked at K-8 math materials, found that **nearly all of the curricula by the major publishers were not aligned** to the common standards. The EdReports.org group has since **come under fire for its methodology**.