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Prepare to teach Amplify ELA:

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Learn about Amplify ELA

Follow these four steps to learn more about the pedagogy, features, and structure of Amplify ELA.

Step 1. Read an overview of the curriculum
Step 2. Take a guided tour of the curriculum
Step 3. Log in and explore the curriculum
Step 4. Read about skill instruction and practice
Step 1. Read an overview of the curriculum

Gain an understanding of the focus and intensity of the curriculum.

To create Amplify ELA, we assembled educators from across the country and invited them to join forces with the leading experts in adolescent literacy, language development, science of learning, neuroscience, motivation and other non-cognitive skills, and curriculum design. Then, we invited some of today’s leading thinkers of literature and history to join our creative process and help us make sure that our ideas about texts and language were truly state of the art. Finally, we added the innovative visions of great game designers, animators, moviemakers, and digital artists who have their own ways of engaging today’s kids and teachers but have rarely been a central part of core curriculum development.

The result is a new kind of English Language Arts curriculum. But we didn’t just bring these great minds together and take their word for it—we tested everything we created with real teachers, real students, and in real classrooms. We learned that a lot of our most promising ideas needed to be revised or discarded, and we learned that sometimes more minor ideas became the centerpiece of great learning experiences.

**A rigorous curriculum**

Teachers will recognize that we have preserved a core focus on the ancient and essential activities of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and forming a literate community. They will recognize that the program gives students a lot of opportunity to think in solitude, to concentrate without distraction, to figure things out by themselves and with their peers. These essential activities are helped along by technology, but at their heart, they are about the time-honored, proven project of learning from and about texts. The program often suggests that there be nothing on the screen, except the text and a box for student work—just like a book and a sheet of paper. The texts are complex but accessible. The work students do is rigorous, text dependent, analytical, and deep.

**A riveting curriculum**

In addition to the many familiar aspects of the program, teachers will see multimedia and technology used in new ways to engage students and to inspire them to read more, write more, discuss with their peers more actively, and think harder. The curriculum speaks to digital natives by being thoroughly interactive, by enabling real-time communication with peers and with the teacher, by giving students new, interactive formats in which to gather evidence, solve problems, and explore mysteries. Sometimes a game or an animation will be the way into a challenging text, but we never let the game or animation obscure the reading and writing. Audio supports, visual supports, and personalization technology help learners with varying needs access texts in differentiated ways.
Based on open, accessible technology
Amplify ELA is primarily digital and is at its best when students and teachers have devices that are connected through a network. Teachers and students interact and share work in a classroom platform where students do their reading, writing, and skills practice, and teachers can see their progress and support their needs, in real time.

The curriculum is one big website—or rather, an interconnected system of websites that seems to the user to be one big website. Because it lives on the web, it can be accessed by any device that has a modern web browser—on a laptop, desktop, or tablet. Teachers, students, and parents don’t need any proprietary device to access the curriculum.

Igniting a passion for reading and writing
Our carefully sequenced digital lessons provide a year’s worth of instruction that allows teachers to:

- Engage students’ innate curiosity in great texts, without sacrificing rigor.
- Improve writing skills while helping students think analytically and independently and communicate original ideas and opinions.
- Swiftly and efficiently narrow the vocabulary gap by helping students learn academic words in the context of reading.
- Push students to dig more deeply into texts and extend their understanding through curriculum-embedded apps, not worksheets.
- Inspire students to read in and outside the classroom with hundreds of texts from our virtual Library.

A deeper connection to students and their individual needs
With the tools included in Amplify ELA, teachers can keep a close eye on student activities and progress throughout the day, and they can better understand and respond to the needs of each student. Our program provides teachers with:

- **Classroom orchestration tools** that allow teachers to guide individual students to activities that are appropriate for them, as well as manage group discussion and interaction.
- **Feedback tools** that allow teachers to provide targeted and immediate support to improve students’ skill development in real time.
- **Integrated assessments**, including embedded progress monitoring and formative and summative assessments.
Step 2. Take a guided tour of the curriculum

This automated tour will show you the structure and flow of the curriculum.

Go to amplify.com/amplify-ela-demo to get started.
Step 3. Log in and explore the curriculum

Now it is your turn to explore. Use the navigational guide below to steer your exploration.

Go to learning.amplify.com/pd

START TRIAL

AmplifyELA

Grade 6  Grade 7  Grade 8

Unit 7A  Unit 7B  Brain Science 7C  [...]

Phineas Gage  Sub-Unit 2  Sub-Unit 3  Sub-Unit 4

Lesson 1  [...]

Activity 1  Activity 2  Activity 3  [...]

Cards

Lesson 6  [...]

Lesson 13

Activity 15
Log in

Log in at: www.learning.amplify.com/pd

1. Click on Start Trial
2. Click on Global Navigation icon
3. Click on AmplifyELA
Basic navigation

1. Find your Grade Level and Unit
Select your grade level by clicking on the arrow displayed. All the units in a grade level are displayed.
Select the unit you are working on. Read the unit overview by clicking on READ FULL OVERVIEW. The unit overview provides essential information about the whole unit.

2. Select Your Sub-Unit
Click on the X on the top right or Collapse at the bottom to collapse the Unit Overview.
Select your sub-unit by clicking on it.
Read the sub-unit overview by clicking on READ FULL OVERVIEW. The sub-unit overview provides a more detailed overview of the sub-unit.

3. Select Your Lesson
Select the lesson that you are working on.
Navigation within a lesson

1. Lesson Map
Each lesson provides a Lesson Map that displays the sequence and type of activities in the lesson. The arrow at the end of the lesson map alerts you that there are more activities in a lesson than what is shown. Click on the arrow to see the icons for these activities, if applicable.

2. The Lesson Brief provides valuable information to support teachers.
   1. Lesson Overview
   2. Additional preparation required
   3. Materials provided
   4. Vocabulary to emphasize
   5. Differentiation within lesson
   6. Standards and skills addressed in lesson

Activities in the Lesson Map are numbered to help students navigate through the lesson. Icons displayed in the color orange are teacher-only icons and are not included in the student version. They are not numbered.

Click SEE MORE to expand each of the sections in the Lesson Brief.

Read the full Lesson Overview. The Lesson Overview provides specific details about the lesson including lesson objectives, key lesson activities, and connections to other lessons in the sub-unit.

Click on the X on the top right to collapse the Lesson Overview.
LESSON 6 | Revising to Go Deeper
Revising

Students experiment with their writing by including additional, relevant details and by saying more about how those details develop their ideas. (12 min)

Card 1: Students practice adding details to their writing in order to develop an idea they have about the text.
Card 2: Students look at their writing before and after they added these details to see which version they like better.

1. Introduce Revision Assignment - WHOLE CLASS

In the last lesson you wrote about why Ji-hi struggled to write danzi-bao about her teachers. Today you’re

3. Vocabulary Activity
Links to the Vocabulary app.

4. Teacher-Only Icons
Orange icons are “teacher-only” and will not display on the student view of the program.

5. Icons indicate independent, pair, or group activities.

6. The lightbulb icon indicates class activities.

7. Instructional Guide/Teacher Notes
Click on the upside down teardrop to open the INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE for each lesson activity. The screenshot shows the teacher instructions in the open position.

HINT: The icon is orange when closed and gray when open.
Click on MY NOTES to add your own instructional notes about an activity.

Note: Most teachers close the Instructional Guide when they are displaying the lesson for the class. When the Instructional Guide is closed, the display looks like the student display. Some teachers use a second device so that they can still see the Instructional Guide as they circulate around the room.
8. Suggestions for teachers to conduct over-the-shoulder conferences (OTSCs) for supporting all students as they write.

HINT: The icon is orange when the OTSCs are available.

9. Polls
Some lessons have polls. Click the poll to display the results.

HINT: The icon is orange when an activity has a poll.

10. Multiple steps within a lesson activity
Some lesson activities have several “cards” or steps that students will complete. Remind students to click NEXT > until they have completed all lesson activities.

11. Students click the HAND IN button when they have completed an assignment. The work is transferred into the student’s My Work folder and into the teacher’s Gradebook.

Note: The image above shows the teacher view. The HAND IN button is only in the student view.

12. Student Status Screen
The Student Status screen can be accessed using the icon in the top right corner of all screens within a lesson. This screen allows you to see in real time which students are on which activities in the lesson and which students have handed in their work for an activity.

You will use this button at the beginning of lessons to START CLASS and at the end to END CLASS.

Use the EYES UP button on the Student Status Screen to display a message on student tablets: Eyes On Teacher.
Differentiation within a lesson

**Extra Writing Prompts**

These extra Writing Prompts ask learners to read a new text and can be found after the Solo in many lessons. They are additional Writing Prompts that can be used for enrichment, re-teaching, practice with skills from the lesson, or practice writing to multiple texts.

**Differentiated Activities**

Many non-writing activities also contain alternate versions for purposes of differentiation. These differentiated activities are indicated by the inclusion of a + sign with the icon. Teachers assign each student to the version of the activity that provides the needed level of support or challenge.

**Differentiated Writing Activities**

Core writing activities are indicated by a pencil icon.

Along with many core writing activities are alternative writing activities. These activities are meant to be done instead of the core writing activity. They offer additional writing scaffolds for ELLs or struggling students, or alternative prompts enriched for accelerated students.

**Differentiation Overview in Lesson Brief**

In the Differentiation section of each Lesson Brief there is a detailed description of alternate activities or modifications that can be made to support various types of learners in each activity.

**Select Text: Highlighting and Writing**

This alternate activity provides more explicit instructions and directs students to examine specific quotes from the text. (10 min)

Excerpt from Chapter 3 in Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution by Ji-li Jiang

**Writing Da-Zi-Bao**

In her da-zi-bao, Yin Lan-lan described herself as a “victim” (15) of the educational system.
Using tools in the global navigation menu

» **Global Navigation** menu includes many components needed to teach and administer Amplify, including those selected below.

» **Gradebook**: allows teachers to view, comment on and assess student work.

» **Reporting**: digital tools that provide teachers with reports on student productivity, skill progress, and teacher feedback.

» **Quests**: a multi-day experiential simulation in which students work together using evidence and ideas they have learned from their reading to solve a problem or experience a narrative.

» **Various apps**: digital apps that allow students to explore unit-specific texts in visual, collaborative, and creative ways.

» **Amplify Library**: a digital library of more than 600 texts across reading levels of interest to middle-schoolers, including some in Spanish.

» **Spotlight**: an app that allows teachers to project, highlight, and celebrate student writing within the classroom.

» **Help**: quick link to the Amplify Resources website.

» **Live Chat**: quick access to contact the Amplify ELA Help team with technical or content questions.
Gradebook: Accessing student work

Click on the **Gradebook** icon in the Global Navigation to open Gradebook.

This will take you to a lesson level view. Click on **HANDED IN** to see a student’s work.

This takes you to the student’s work where you can view, comment on, and assess student work.

Note: You will need to click **NEXT >** to get to the student work.
Gradebook: Giving feedback on student work

Make **comments** on student work.

Give **Revision Assignments** on student work.

Copy excerpts from student work to use in **Spotlight**. This tool allows the teacher to use student work to model effective use of skills, motivate reluctant writers, and share successes.
Gradebook: Assessing student work

Assign grades to student work.

Score daily writing using the Rubric.
Click on the Assess Skill button to reveal the scale for skill assessment.
To access the skills rubric click on the symbol of the ①.
If you use this rubric to score student work, the results will be displayed in Reports. You will have access to analytical data that tells you what instruction your class needs the most, and you will have easily accessible data for grouping students for more targeted instruction.

Sample from the Criteria for scoring using the Daily Writing Rubric.

4  EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS
Almost all sentences are complete and punctuated correctly.

3  PROFICIENT
Most sentences are complete and punctuated correctly. Errors might distract the reader, but do not impede the reader's ability to understand the writing.

2  DEVELOPING PROFICIENCY
Most sentences are complete. Errors DO impede the reader's ability to understand the writing.

1  NO PROGRESS TOWARD PROFICIENCY
There are many fragments and/or run-ons that prevent the reader from understanding the writing.
Score unit essays using the **Essay Rubric**:

A detailed rubric for scoring essays is provided on the Amplify Resources website under Summative Assessments in the Table of Contents:


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**Sixth grade**

Tom & Sherlock essay

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<th>Logical Structure: Paragraphs</th>
<th>Conventions: Punctuation and Citation of Direct Quotes</th>
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<td>Use of Evidence: Describing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Evidence: Explaining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical Structure: Introduction</td>
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Have you ever read a story that kept you kind of confused right up to the very end? Well, “The Red-Headed League” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a tricky story that keeps you guessing about the case. In fact, all the details about the Red-Headed League in the story are red herrings to make you predict a different ending than the author wants you to.

The first false clue I noticed in “The Red-Headed League” was the whole story of the league itself. It seemed really strange to me that there would be this great-paying job for red-leaded men who are sound in body and mind and above the age of twenty-one years.

It seems odd for anyone to hire people just based on their hair color and this makes it seem like the red hair is important to the job. The red hair seems even more important when Doyle talks about all the men who showed up to try and get the job. He says “Fleet Street was closed with red-leaded folk. Every shade of colour they were straw, lemon, orange, brick, Irish-setter, liver, cay.”

Seeing all this detail about the different colors of red hair makes me predict that whatever this person wants these people to do, their hair was to look just right. It makes me think that the color is important to the character's job and not just their appearance.

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- The student writes an engaging lead that is closely connected to the overall idea and a clear statement that skillfully articulates one overall idea.
- The student includes several pieces of textual evidence, describes what he notices in each piece, and explains the connection between each piece and his idea.
- Each paragraph focuses on a clearly defined idea and builds on and refers to the ideas in the other paragraphs.
- All quotes are punctuated and cited according to the Guidelines for Citing and Punctuating a Direct Quote.
Navigating gradebook

Gradebook shows you student work at a lesson level. To change to a new lesson or view another section of students, click the **Change** button in the upper right corner.

This will expand the Gradebook navigation and allow you to select a different section and/or different lesson.
## Icon cheat sheet

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<tr>
<td>☰</td>
<td><strong>Global Navigation</strong> - Opens Global Navigation side panel</td>
<td>All screens (top left corner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗</td>
<td><strong>Close</strong> - Collapses back to original screen</td>
<td>Top right corner of screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🔍</td>
<td><strong>Student Status Screen</strong> - Displays student activity status during class, includes Start Class and Eyes Up button</td>
<td>Lesson Brief, Activity, Card screens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎓</td>
<td><strong>Eyes Up</strong> - Locks students’ screens</td>
<td>Student Status screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📊</td>
<td><strong>Poll Results</strong> - Displays student poll results</td>
<td>Activity, Card screens</td>
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<tr>
<td>📍</td>
<td><strong>Instructional Guide</strong> - Displays teacher instruction</td>
<td>Activity, Card screens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🛡</td>
<td><strong>Over-the-Shoulder Conferences (OTSCs)</strong> - Guidance for teachers based on student work</td>
<td>Activity, Card screens</td>
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<td>📖</td>
<td><strong>Units</strong> - Links to all of the units in a grade</td>
<td>Sub-units</td>
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<td>📝</td>
<td><strong>Clipboard</strong> - Links to Lesson Brief</td>
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<td><strong>Teacher-Only Activity</strong> - Orange icon indicates a teacher-only activity</td>
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<td>📚</td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong> - Indicates a Vocabulary Activity</td>
<td>Lesson Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🤔</td>
<td><strong>Activity Number</strong> - Indicates the activity and the order of its placement</td>
<td>Lesson Map</td>
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Step 4. Read about skill instruction and practice

Now that you have an overview of the curriculum and have seen the way it works, read about the underlying pedagogy of Amplify ELA.

Skills instruction and practice: A targeted approach to skills

The Amplify program tracks progress with various formative assessments and end-of-the-unit essays to ensure that students are making progress towards mastery. Amplify’s classroom testing suggests that on a daily basis, teachers can respond more effectively to data by focusing on a smaller set of skills that describe the various cognitive experiences students need to practice day in and day out with increasingly complex text.

Thus, the Amplify program calls out a set of skills essential for ELA/Literacy that enable the teacher to focus instruction, track student progress, and respond quickly to data with instructional solutions that will accelerate progress for all students every day. By targeting essential skills, teachers can measure daily progress and ensure that every student is mastering the key metrics, such as the ability to independently comprehend and write about complex text, that are most directly linked to success on year-end state tests, and most importantly, on high school level work and beyond.

Amplify tracks skills daily in the following areas:

**Reading in three categories:**

1. **The analytic cycle**
   - Select, describe, explain, connect

2. **Understanding**
   - Level 1: literal, level 2: implicit

3. **Foundational capacities in reading**
   - Background knowledge of the world and the word: Vocabulary
   - Grammar and sentence mechanics
   - Logical structure and rhetoric
   - Fluency
   - Reading habits

**Writing in two categories:**

1. **Writing skills**
   - Focus
   - Showing
   - Use of evidence
   - Logical structure
   - Conventions

2. **Writing habits**
   - Produce writing
   - Observe
   - Share
   - Respond
   - Revise
Reading skills

These lessons teach the foundational moves that readers make in order to read with accuracy, engagement, and insight. Since almost all reading requires us to integrate these skills (much the way climbing a stairway requires us to coordinate a number of physical, visual, and cerebral maneuvers), they rarely occur in a specific order, or in isolation from one another. It is helpful, though, to consider these reading moves one by one, in order to become better equipped to give students targeted reading practice that can accelerate growth.

When, how, and what do students read?

Other sections of this guide describe the sorts of activities students do with texts to gain practice in these reading skills and to make measurable progress. These reading activities are varied so that students can enlist all sorts of other interests and capacities—dramatic, artistic, physical, social, and expressive—to enrich their analysis of complex text. Significantly, students are also given regular formative assessments in which they face a complex text cold along with multiple choice questions to find out if they are progressing in terms of their reading comprehension (defined below as the skills of “understanding”). The actual texts that students read have been selected with care because the program assumes that students will spend a significant amount of time and energy reading and rereading these important works. Amplify’s strategy for choosing texts and sequencing them is also described in its own section below.

Categories of reading skills

The program divides the reading skills into three categories: The first category, “the analytic cycle,” includes those skills that students practice and improve on with each increasingly complex text they encounter; the second category, “understanding,” is a relatively simple measure of whether or not students comprehend a given text at particular moments and then, implicitly, in its entirety; and the third, “foundational capacities and habits,” includes the knowledge and habits that students accumulate over time that enhance their ability to tackle complex text—like background knowledge and an understanding of syntax.

An analytic cycle

A basic cycle of reading instruction in these lessons asks students to:

1. Select specific details from the text,
2. Describe what they see in those details, and
3. Explain what those observations might signify.
4. Connect moments in the text to build an idea about what a larger part of the text or, the whole text, means.

At first, the lessons constrain students to select and focus on just one moment in the text in order to push their powers of observation in their descriptions and to push their powers of insight in their explanations.

While seemingly counterintuitive, not letting students make connections to other parts of the text actually helps students develop the skills to describe and explain to the point at which they can fully
Amplify’s lessons return over and over again in every unit to asking students to describe and explain their ideas based on very close observations of the text so that students make connections across a text and between two or more texts. In this way, they can develop more complex ideas that are truly their own with those fundamental building blocks—and don’t have to resort to sterile formulas.

**Understanding**

Amplify’s program distinguishes between two levels of understanding or reading comprehension:

**Level 1:** comprehension of what the text says explicitly

**Level 2:** a deeper understanding of what the text means implicitly

Amplify calls out “understanding” or comprehension as a skill that is separate from analysis and the associated skills discussed above because students are often able to proceed through the analytic cycle described above with only partial understanding.

If students are confident they can keep analyzing the text even while they don’t fully understand, then they will be able to continue to work with a text until they do have this understanding. If we make understanding a gating first step, students will be blocked from the very sort of exploration that will enable them to—eventually—understand even the most complex text.

In practice, this means that Amplify’s instruction asks students to first analyze the text by noticing discrete elements instead of asking them to summarize it. For example, to focus in on various qualities of the language or on contradictions in the text’s presentation of a topic, before asking students to step back and show understanding of the gist of the piece.
While using the students’ practice with the analytic cycle to build reading comprehension, the program continuously checks students’ level of comprehension by presenting new sections of text along with multiple choice questions. Data from that daily formative assessment helps the teacher know how to support the analytical work in class, know whether or not the students’ ability to comprehend independently is progressing, and know whether or not the teacher should provide additional supports with fluency practice to accelerate progress.

**Foundational knowledge and habits**

In order to increase students’ ability to apply these key reading skills to complex text, the Amplify program explicitly teaches students the content and habits required in the following areas:

1. **Vocabulary**: Build background knowledge of the world and word
2. **Grammar and sentence mechanics**: Understand, apply, and analyze in text and in speech
3. **Logical structure and rhetoric**: Understand, apply, and analyze in texts and in speech
4. **Fluency**: Read aloud increasingly complex text with expressiveness to show understanding
5. **Reading habits**: Use key tools to persist with complex text

**Reading skills and habits as seen in Amplify’s lessons**

**The analytic cycle**

**Select**

Students pick out specific parts of the text—sometimes because these are the details that interest them, sometimes because the teacher has asked them to choose a specific kind. For example:

- In a lesson about Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart,” students read the scene where the narrator claims to hear the sound of a heart beating from under the floorboards, and they highlight only the actions of the policemen who are interviewing him.
- In a lesson from the unit on *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, students read “The Red-Headed League” and select those details they consider “suspicious.”

**Describe**

Students spell out what they see in the details they’ve selected and the connections they’ve identified. For example:

- In the unit on Roald Dahl’s *Boy*, students regularly annotate their nightly reading by marking what grabbed their attention and describing which words and phrases had an impact on them.
- In the lessons on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, students discuss the language with which Twain shows off Tom’s trickiness to figure out whether or not he seems likeable.
**Explain**
Students unpack the details they’ve selected and described.

For example:
- In a lesson about *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, students draw together the patterns that run through Tom’s behavior at different points in the story in order to draw conclusions about his character traits.
- In one of the *A Raisin in the Sun* lessons, students infer what lies unstated beneath the play’s last scene, wrestling with why Walter decides to accept the money he had previously refused.

**Connect**
Students consider how individual details interact with each other, create patterns, and develop themes, either within a larger section of the text or across the entire text.

For example:
- In a lesson about Roald Dahl’s *Boy*, students first explore three small parts of a scene in isolation, and then describe the connections they see between those parts to figure out what Dahl is trying to say about who is the source of trouble, adults or kids.
- In a lesson about *A Raisin in the Sun*, students begin by selecting the different things that Walter does in a scene—and then trace out the way those details connect together into a complex attitude toward assimilation.
- In a lesson on *Phineas Gage*, students look back at a moment earlier in the book to figure out what Gage’s doctor left unproven among the medical community in order to understand why he digs up Gage’s body decades after he died.

**Understanding**
Students make sense of the text, both explicitly and implicitly.

**Level 1: Explicitly**
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.

For example:
- Every time a unit introduces a new text, students are first challenged to read that text independently with multiple choice questions that check for comprehension. This way, both teacher and student can tell if the student is becoming a stronger, more independent reader of complex text—or whether he or she needs more practice.
- In one of the lessons on Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart,” students create a digital storyboard to capture exactly the account the narrator gives of how events occurred.
- When reading *Romeo and Juliet*, students try to paraphrase particular phrases from the play in a way that loses none of the specific meaning of Shakespeare’s original language.
Level 2: Implicitly
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

For example:
• At the end of the *Red Scarf Girl* unit, students wrestle with the question: Why do you think Ji-li Jiang wrote *Red Scarf Girl*?
• After closely reading “The Raven,” students watch an animated version of the poem and articulate the ways in which their sense of the poem differed from the one that informs the film.
• Students compare the *Gettysburg Address* and Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* in terms of the texts’ effectiveness in getting the reader to rethink the United States’ commitment to equality.

Foundational knowledge and habits

1. Background knowledge of the world and the word
Students build their knowledge of the world and language by encountering texts that have been carefully curated to expose them to diverse domains of knowledge and relevant academic vocabulary.

• The vocabulary program moves students through embedded vocabulary activities around a small list of academic words from the text they are currently reading, steadily developing a working knowledge of those words.
• In the Brain Science unit, students pull together information from a number of sources to build a working understanding of the key parts of the brain and their functions.
• Close-reading activities often focus on iconic texts or parts of texts, for example: unpacking Juliet’s “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” or Langston Hughes’s “Harlem.”

2. Grammar and sentence mechanics
Students develop their understanding of how sentences work through the process of close reading and when learning grammar explicitly.

For example:
• In one of the Boy lessons, students explore how Dahl uses complex sentence structure to create different kinds of relationships between particular actions.
• During Grammar Flex Days, students complete grammar Revision Assignments that ask them to apply what they know about specific grammatical structures to one of their completed pieces of writing.
• During Grammar Flex Days, teachers can provide direct instruction with grammar concepts, and/or direct the students to work on self-guided grammar activities that target key skills needed to strengthen their understanding of syntax and conventions.
3. Logical structure and rhetoric
Students trace the ways that authors coordinate claims, reasons, and evidence within a point and across an essay to build a solid argument. They also explore the range of moves that authors make to build a persuasive argument.

For example:
• When working with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, students paraphrase Tom’s speech, compare the impact of their paraphrases to the impact of Twain’s original language, and then search out the rhetorical moves Twain makes to achieve this impact.
• When reading the *Declaration of Independence*, students notice the way the argument changes as the authors revise each draft.
• When reading *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass, students notice the different devices he uses to get across his argument against slavery and consider the power of his various approaches.

4. Fluency
Students learn to read the text smoothly, with feeling, and with emphasis that helps them express a particular interpretation.

For example:
• Students regularly listen to professionally-read audio versions of the reading while following along with the written text.
• In one of the *Red Scarf Girl* lessons, students consider the question of how to read a text with feeling. They critique an especially lifeless reading of *Cinderella*, then try a version of their own.
• Students often “act out” sections of dialogue within texts that are not written as plays, in order to capture different characters’ speech patterns and reveal traits.

5. Reading habits
Lessons establish the routines by which students utilize these tools to be more effective readers of complex text.

• **Reread:** Students often reread because Amplify has selected texts that reward rereading with new discoveries. But, just in case students miss this opportunity, Amplify’s lessons structure activities that show students how their understanding of the text unfolds over the course of several readings.
• **Annotate and highlight:** Amplify’s digital eReader has been built for academic work—enabling students to make the most of their work marking up the text. Notes, highlights, and bookmarks can be coded and searched and, uniquely in Amplify’s reader, even show up in the “scrubber” on the side of the screen when the student is searching through pages of text.
• **Define words from context:** Amplify’s texts and vocabulary activities challenge students to figure out the meaning of words from the context in which they are used. Only by seeing words in multiple contexts, and noticing how their meaning changes slightly, will students internalize their own meaning of a word. One tool in particular encourages students to define words in context as they read: Amplify’s eReader contains a Reveal Tool that highlights the key words students need to understand, but might not know. The number of dots over those words indicate how difficult they are to figure out from context. One dot suggests that the student doesn’t have to look far to figure out what that word means—he or she should take some time to try to figure it out for him or herself. Three dots over a word suggest that the student may want to tap on the word and get a contextual definition because the word’s meaning may be very difficult if not impossible to figure out from context. Some of these three dot words are also words that might look very familiar to students but are being used in a very unfamiliar way. Tapping on the word brings up a simple contextual substitution for the given word, displayed right above the word, instead of the usual abstract dictionary definition found in most digital eReaders.

• **Integrate information from graphic elements such as charts and diagrams:** Students work with graphic elements in every unit, often because the texts themselves incorporate visual elements (examples of this include scientific texts like Phineas Gage, a Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science, or literary texts like the graphic novel of Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein by Gris Grimly). If the text itself does not incorporate visual elements, Amplify has created graphic elements to challenge students to “work visually.” Sometimes these are as simple as a table that helps students compare their paraphrase of a line with that of another student. Other times, they are digital apps like the one in which they visually track the characterization of Tom Sawyer in six different scenes, in order to get a graphic representation of how his character changes and stays the same throughout the book. Other times, Amplify has commissioned talented artists to interpret texts, such as in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Poetry* and Poe, and *Liberty and Equality* to see how others “work visually” with text—and compare the visual interpretation to students’ own readings.

• **Paraphrase:** It turns out that the simple act of trying to put the text into one’s own words, leaving nothing out and adding nothing, is one of the most powerful close reading tools we can offer our students. Amplify incorporates this tool carefully, though, because students can come to really hate it if they don’t understand why they are doing it—or how they are supposed to do it correctly (without being sloppy and without plagiarizing). One trick is to make sure students paraphrase sentence by sentence; it makes it possible to compare apples to apples. The most important part of the paraphrase routine takes place when students compare their paraphrases and try to come to consensus about which one is closer to what the author really meant. When students read great stylists like Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, paraphrases also help them consider why the author chose his or her particular words and syntax instead of using what might look like more direct statements in the students’ paraphrases.
Writing skills

In order to write in a way that’s clear and convincing, writers need to work hard to find just the right words, sentence structure, and logical sequences. So, whether they’re writing about their own experience or the book they’re reading, students in the Amplify program are always writing to figure out what they’ve seen, what they’ve felt, and what they’ve thought about a subject that matters to them—trying to find just the right words to show their readers what they really mean.

What do students write about?

The earliest lessons in each unit give students the chance to feel what it’s like to come up with something interesting to say—and to see how people respond when they share it. And the lessons that follow are sequenced to draw students into more complex work with text, building on fundamental skills like focus so that students can move from focusing on a moment in experience to focusing on a moment in text. Students move from unit to unit, building momentum and understanding, because they do not need to learn a whole new set of skills. They might, for example, start by writing about one moment from their experience when they felt uncomfortable, and soon shift into writing about one specific passage from a Sherlock Holmes story in which he seems to know something that Watson does not—without feeling that they’re starting from scratch with a new set of tools.

Students begin learning about writing as an opportunity to express a particular point of view, to “show” a reader how they observe the world. Very quickly though, in the first unit, Amplify’s writing instruction transitions students to describe precisely what someone else, the author of a text, seems to be suggesting about the world. Of course the two modes of writing are not in opposition: The student most often writes about what he or she thinks the author means.

In what format are students writing?

(A)lmost daily Writing Prompts: It is not easy to explain what the author means in a precise way, maybe even point out something original, and tie it back to the text in a smooth sentence. That is why Amplify’s lessons, typically about two times a week, ask students to spend 10-15 minutes practicing this sort of writing and producing at least 120 words during this time period in sixth grade, 130 in seventh and 140 in eighth. In the early lessons of a unit, students typically use that whole time to explore just one moment in the text and in later lessons, they consider connections between multiple moments in one text and among two or more texts.

When students are responding to these almost daily Writing Prompts, they make quick progress in the “Writing Skills” described in the following sections. The format stays the same, so students don’t waste time wondering if they are following directions properly and can, instead, focus on the text and their ideas about it. Teachers can easily compare one piece of writing to another and track progress—looking for patterns in several pieces of work, instead of making snap decisions based on only one performance.

Essays: This regular practice of responding to these prompts enables students to produce paragraphs that can then serve as the building blocks of the end-of-unit essays. The essay sub-units then focus instruction on the additional challenge of producing a sequence of body paragraphs around the same topic or theme, sequencing and connecting body paragraphs, formulating transitions between them, writing introductions that capture their logic, and creating conclusions that capture the meaning of it all.
Categories of writing skills

Unlike the reading skills, the writing skills are sequenced—with some skills and habits being taught as prerequisites to others. This sequence has been developed over two decades of testing with students and teachers to figure out the most efficient route to making progress. Teachers don’t have to memorize the descriptions that follow. The lessons direct teachers to introduce the skills in the most efficient order. However, it is helpful for teachers to understand the sequence so that they will feel comfortable with the instruction and so that if students struggle later on, they can consider that an earlier skill may not have been sufficiently developed.

The most important and first prerequisite writing skill or habit, of course, is to produce writing. No one will become a better writer unless he or she practices a lot. Most teachers report lack of productivity as their number one frustration with student writing. And, frankly, it is impossible to be sure whether students have mastered a skill if they are only producing a few sentences. Thus, the first ten days of instruction in Amplify’s program are designed to set up the habits and routines of a productive classroom community—most essentially, making sure that every student can produce 120-140 words (depending on the grade) in 10-15 minutes. Because the program is digital, students and teachers can easily see whether or not the goal is being met, and in case anyone is in doubt, Amplify produces visualizations daily that show the teacher what percentage of her class is meeting the goal. The sequence of ten lessons that leads to success in this goal for every student has been refined over two decades and establishes a unique foundation for accelerated progress throughout the rest of the Amplify curriculum.

An overview of the skills are described below, but to gain a more thorough understanding, please see descriptions in the unit, sub-unit, and lesson briefs—particularly in the first unit.

Like the reading skills, the writing skills are organized into categories. The writing skills are measurable capacities that teachers can track in students’ daily writing using Amplify’s rubrics. They are also skills for which Amplify has designed simple and effective interventions to respond to reports on students’ progress.

The “habits” are behaviors that Amplify’s lesson routines will help teachers and students establish in the classroom and continue to use during independent work beyond the classroom. These regular behaviors enable students to practice the writing skills and to make accelerated progress during independent work and within the writing community of the classroom.

Writing skills:
1. **Focus:** To write exclusively about one moment or idea in order to fully develop it (developed as a precursor to working on the skill of “logical structure”)
2. **Logical structure:** The organization of sentences, paragraphs, and sections to strengthen and clarify the sequence of events, the focus of the paragraph, the overall argument, and/or the desired impact on the reader
3. **Showing:** To use descriptive details and precise verbs to create a vivid picture in the reader’s mind (developed as a precursor to working on the skills of “use of evidence”)
4. **Use of evidence:** Selecting, describing, and explaining quoted or paraphrased details from a text to develop and support an idea
5. **Conventions:** Use of grammar and sentence mechanics to control the clarity and power of sentences
Writing habits:

1. **Produce writing:** Write regularly for 12–15 minutes in response to a prompt
2. **Observe:** Note the details of what catches your attention
3. **Share:** Present a piece of writing to an audience
4. **Respond:** Comment on one specific part of a piece of writing by identifying what worked and describing the impact it made
5. **Revise:** Add, delete, or reorganize a piece of writing

Writing skills and habits as seen in Amplify's lessons:

1. **Focus:**
   Students select one specific moment or idea, and develop this moment or idea exclusively.
   
   For example:
   - Throughout the unit on Roald Dahl’s Boy, students practice slowing down to write about a single, small moment that really grabbed their attention—instead of skimming quickly through a list of moments.
   - In one of the *A Raisin in the Sun* lessons, students explore just one thing a character wants in a particular scene, instead of trying to cover all of the many things that are going on.

2. **Showing:**
   Students use descriptive details and precise verbs to create a vivid picture in the reader’s mind.
   For example:
   - In one of the personal narrative lessons, students write a scene where one character has to communicate a particular emotion through dialogue and physical description, without ever naming the emotion.
   - In another personal narrative lesson, students choose verbs that will describe not only what the character does, but will also convey how he or she feels.

3. **Use of evidence:**
   Students select and describe quoted or paraphrased details from a text to develop and support an idea.
   For example:
   - In one of the *A Raisin in the Sun* lessons, students select specific details from the play that reveal how a character feels about his or her situation; in their writing, they identify that feeling and then explain how those details illustrate that specific feeling.
   - In a lesson on Edgar Allan Poe’s "The Tell-Tale Heart," students practice reasoning with evidence, using the same few sentences from the story, but placing emphasis on distinct details in order to develop two very different ideas about the character.
4. **Logical structure:**
Students organize sentences, paragraphs, and sections to strengthen and clarify the sequence of events, the focus of the paragraph, the overall argument, and/or the desired impact on the reader.

For example:
- When writing culminating essays, students first develop their idea in the body of their essay before drafting an introduction in which they need to be able to express this idea clearly.
- Students write essays at the end of each unit. The essays that students write in the early units focus on developing convincing and clear body paragraphs and compelling introductions. Students become so practiced in these parts of the essay that they internalize the logic and do not have to follow a formula; later essays focus on writing effective conclusions so that by the end of each year, students are writing compelling and complete essays that are not formulaic.

5. **Conventions:**
This set of skills involving grammar and sentence mechanics enables writers to control how clearly and powerfully their sentences communicate what they mean.

For example:
- During Grammar Flex Days, students complete grammar Revision Assignments that ask them to apply what they know about specific grammatical structures to one of their completed pieces of writing.
- During Grammar Flex Days, teachers can provide direct instruction with grammar concepts, and/or direct the students to work on self-guided grammar activities that target key skills needed to strengthen their understanding of syntax and conventions.
Strategic use of technology and multimedia

Amplify ELA uses technology—not for technology’s sake—but rather to foster more human interaction than what occurs in ordinary classrooms. The technology we use is designed—not to shrink the classroom experience onto the screen—but rather to expand what is possible for teachers and students to experience in a classroom. We expand the teacher’s capacity to lead a class, to engage students, to provide targeted feedback, and to foster collaboration. We expand students’ opportunities to close read, to argue from evidence, to participate in academic discourse, to make sense of complex literary and informational texts, to collaborate with peers, and to express themselves in a community.

Amplify ELA is built upon a set of core principles about the potential for technology to improve education. We believe that technology should:

• **Empower teachers** to extend their reach and expand their impact.
• **Engage students** with dynamic learning experiences that are rigorous and riveting.
• **Build community** by sparking rich discussions and meaningful collaborations.
• **Fit seamlessly** into existing classroom rhythms through an intuitive user experience.
• **Differentiate** the level and approach to learning across students with different needs.
• **Support accessibility** of learning experiences for all students.
• **Use real-time data** to give students constructive feedback and help teachers respond to student needs.

By enabling teachers to track progress and comment on student work with digital tools, Amplify ELA provides an ongoing sense of where students are during the lesson. Students are consistently prompted to share, discuss, and problem-solve—and the results of these activities are available to the teacher in real time. Often a sequence of lessons culminates in a multimedia-rich Quest—a social, collaborative performance task in which students play roles, solve mysteries, and interact with characters from their reading. Again, the technology supports teachers in knowing where each student is in the flow of these activities and in giving students differentiated supports.

In Amplify ELA, students are challenged to gather evidence and to assess its validity; to comprehend, compare, and enjoy texts and media from a wide-range of sources; to make videos and prepare multimedia presentations; and to express and publish information and opinions using digital media and technology.
Prepare to teach Amplify ELA

Follow these four steps to get ready to teach Amplify ELA.

Step 1. Read about teaching with technology
Step 2. Review the first four weeks at a glance
Step 3. Look beyond your first four weeks
Step 4. Read the first core texts
Step 1. Read about teaching with technology

Ideas on how to set up your classroom to teach Amplify ELA.

Planning for your Amplify digital classroom

Classroom layout
Many teachers have reported that the key to successfully using technology in the classroom is classroom layout flexibility. Depending on the lesson, students may need to work independently, with a partner, in small groups, or together as a class. Set up desks and tables in your classroom to facilitate small group work or with a U-shape layout, which will allow you to monitor as many screens as possible. Most teachers find that when using technology successfully, they are at the front of the room far less, and it is much more effective to circulate among the students during lessons. We recommend that teachers set up classrooms in a way that allows for easy viewing of screens as he or she moves around the classroom.

Projection and teacher device
In setting up the classroom, consider the projector and how you will set up to project the curriculum. It is possible to log into the curriculum on more than one device at the same time, and many teachers find it most successful to log in on both their projection computer, as well as a second device that they can roam the classroom with, such as an iPad or Chromebook. Be sure to “start class” from only one device though. In this way, teachers can privately monitor student progress and check teacher notes and guides on one device and project video, images, or activity directions with the second device.
Classroom management and routines

Set expectations

Begin the year by setting clear expectations with your students about the usage of technology and the Amplify ELA curriculum within your classroom before distributing devices. Attempting to discuss expectations after students have devices in front of them is far less effective with most students. Teach students that the usage of devices is a privilege and should be treated as such. Many schools have found success in having students sign usage agreements, while other schools simply review rules and consequences. Either way, be certain that your students are familiar with expectations and consequences and be consistent with your follow through on any such rules. Following are some examples of successful expectations other teachers have set. Of course, each school may have more specific guidelines for using technology.

→ Handle technology with care

Teach students that devices should be cared for and treated with ease. It helps to have students take ownership of certain devices. Knowing that one will use the same device each day can be a powerful incentive to take care of a device.

→ Stay on task

Students who use other websites or apps during instruction should be immediately redirected. Bad habits can be hard to let go of once they’re set in. Many schools utilize software to easily monitor students’ screens. Of course, the simplest way to monitor students is to roam among them while teaching.

→ All work can be completed non-digitally

Make it clear to students that the usage of technology is a privilege and that alternatives, such as paper and pencil, are always an option as well. Most students will want to avoid jeopardizing the ease, benefits, and fun of using devices.

Create routines

In classrooms that will have a cart model, be sure to have a plan for distributing devices. Many teachers find that assigning one or two students to distribute the devices and care for their return is easier than having many students going to and from the cart. Other teachers allow students to get their device upon entering the classroom, in a naturally staggered manner, often with the teacher monitoring them. Either way, it’s important that students are assigned a particular device. Many schools number devices and assign students to a number so that students can be monitored by device. This method also aids in assuring students can cache certain information for faster load times.

In classrooms that have a one-to-one model (where each student has his or her own assigned device), routines are still important to maintain. Be sure that students understand when and how devices should be used within the classroom environment, as well as routines for when students are missing their devices or haven’t properly charged them. Often, teachers have extra desks set up near outlets. Other classrooms have one or two extension cords for student use. If neither of these is possible within your classroom, consider having these students complete lessons via paper.
Introduce Amplify ELA
Most teachers find it effective to start Amplify with a soft launch the day before they plan to start using the curriculum. During this time, introduce Amplify ELA, cover any routines and expectations for technology, and teach students how to log in to the Amplify ELA curriculum.

The “Welcome” lessons at the beginning of each grade’s Unit A are specifically designed to further facilitate in discovery of the Amplify platform. These lessons allow students to complete a scavenger hunt through some of the elements in the curriculum and provide an excellent way for students to learn about the platform in a low-stakes manner. Be sure to utilize the “Eyes on Teacher” button and have students practice turning in work. By reviewing many of these basics ahead of time, students and teachers save time during the core lessons.

Solo assignments
Have a plan for how students will complete Solo assignments within lessons. Solo assignments are independent work at the end of most lessons. They allow for students to have productive struggle with text and provide teachers with reading comprehension data. Solo assignments typically take about 30 minutes to complete. Here are some examples of how teachers have students complete Solo assignments:

➔ At home digitally
Students who have Internet access at home, either with their 1:1 devices, or with other devices (computers, mobile phones, tablets) complete their Solos as homework.

➔ At home without access to a digital device
Students who do not have Internet access at home may complete Solos using the Solo Workbooks. Then, the student would enter their Solo work into the Amplify platform the next time they have access. This extra step allows teachers to easily review all students Solo work in one place—the platform. Solo work is also the data that informs the reading comprehension report.

➔ In school
Some schools have students complete independent Solo work directly after lessons (if there is still class time) or at another time during the school day.
Troubleshooting

Backup for no technology
Amplify ELA has a variety of print resources for use as backup during times when technology isn’t accessible in the classroom. The Unplugged Guide provides teachers with the essential activities of a lesson so the students can continue to read the text and practice needed skills until technical issues are resolved. Print Anthologies contain the text reading for the lessons. Understanding how these resources work and establishing a routine around their use is a useful part of preparing to teach this curriculum.

If the Internet is down, but devices are still working, students should still complete writing activities via word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. This allows students to easily copy and paste their work into the Amplify platform once the Internet is back up, and it ensures their work is preserved within the platform for later lessons.

Missing devices
Be sure to set the expectation that students will complete classwork, even if they forget their device. If one or two students are without devices on a particular day, have them complete that day’s lesson using the Unplugged Guide version of the lesson on paper. While the Unplugged version of the lesson does not perfectly mirror any given lesson, most students can still follow along easily, especially while sitting next to a partner or watching the projector screen. These students will also need their Print Anthology to complete the daily reading.

As with Solos that are completed on paper, have students input any work done on paper into the digital platform once they have their devices. Writing and other work is often used in later lessons and is automatically pulled into those lessons as needed. Student work is also the data used to generate reports of student progress and skill development, and any work done on paper will not be included in these reports.

Troubleshooting during class
If at any time during a lesson, one or two students are having issues loading or using content, have them follow the steps below, which will resolve most issues. Be sure to have students check after each step to see if the problem is resolved.

1. Reload the page
2. Clear the browser cache
3. Restart the browser
4. Log out and log back in
5. Restart the device

If the issue is widespread, you may want to switch to a non-digital plan and use the Unplugged Guide provided for each lesson. Be sure to report any such problems to Amplify at elahelp@amplify.com, as well as to your building technology officer.
Step 2. Review the first four weeks at a glance

Get an overview of the skills, habits, and routines you and your students will be focusing on at the start of the school year.

The overall objectives for the first four weeks are:

1. Can my students successfully navigate the digital lesson and work with the routines and habits I establish around the digital devices?

2. Can my students use a 12-minute writing time and meet the word count expectation when writing in response to a narrative prompt?

3. In writing, can my students focus on one moment, develop key details to show (as well as tell) that moment?

4. Can my students read their writing clearly and fluently to a peer audience?

5. Can my students respond to a peer writing by commenting on one specific item in the writing that was effective?
WEEK 1
During the first week of instruction, you will be—

**Establishing various routines:**
- Tech routines
- Writing habits and routines
- Sharing routines

**Developing your own Amplify teaching routines:**
- Giving students written feedback
- Creating Spotlights on student work
- Supporting students as they write and work with over-the-shoulder-conferences (OTSCs)

**Your students will be focused on...**
- navigating the curriculum.
- narrative writing.
- writing productivity.
- writing skill: focus on a moment.

WEEK 2
During the second week of instruction, you will be—

**Continuing to establish various routines:**
- Tech routines
- Writing habits and routines
- Sharing routines

**Further developing your own Amplify teaching routines:**
- Giving students written feedback
- Creating Spotlights on student work
- Supporting students as they write and work with over-the-shoulder-conferences (OTSCs)
- Assessing student work

**Your students will be focused on...**
- narrative writing.
- writing productivity.
- writing skill: focus on a moment.
- writing skill: showing and telling in narrative writing.
- revising.
WEEK 3
During the third week of instruction, you will be—

**Continuing to establish various routines:**
- Tech routines
- Writing habits and routines
- Sharing routines
- Close reading and text discussion routines

**Further developing your own Amplify teaching routines:**
- Giving students written feedback
- Creating Spotlights on student work
- Supporting students as they write and work with over-the-shoulder-conferences (OTSCs)
- Assessing student work

**Your students will be focused on...**
- narrative writing.
- writing productivity.
- writing skill: focus on a moment.
- revising.
- close reading and text discussion.
- writing in response to text.
- reading comprehension Solos.

WEEK 4
During the fourth week of instruction, you will be—

**Further establishing various routines:**
- Tech routines
- Writing habits and routines
- Sharing routines
- Close reading and text discussion routines

**Further developing your own Amplify teaching routines:**
- Giving students written feedback
- Creating Spotlights on student work
- Supporting students as they write and work with over-the-shoulder-conferences (OTSCs)
- Assessing student work
- Using reporting data

**Your students will be focused on...**
- writing productivity.
- writing in response to text.
- writing skill: focus on one moment in the text.
- close reading and text discussion.
- reading comprehension Solos.
- reading skill: selecting and describing evidence.
Step 3. Look beyond your first four weeks

Look at the yearlong Grade Overview to see the scope and sequence for your grade level.

**GRADE 6 OVERVIEW**

### 6A Dahl & Narrative
- **Sub-Unit**
  - 6A.1 Welcome!
  - 6A.2 Get Started
  - 6A.3 Boy: Tales of Childhood by Roald Dahl
  - 6A.4 Write an Essay
- **Character & Narrator**
  - Observe how an author creates a character
- **Writing**
  - Focus on a moment in the text and develop a unique perspective about it
- **Text Structure**
  - Sensory and figurative language
- **Content**
  - Early 20th century British boarding school experience

### 6B Tom & Sherlock
- **Sub-Unit**
  - 6B.1 The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain
  - 6B.2 “The Speckled Band” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
  - 6B.3 “The Red-Headed League” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
  - 6B.4 Write an Essay
- **Quest**
  - Tom Sawyer, Treasure Hunter
- **Character & Narrator**
  - Describe how a character builds across many scenes
- **Writing**
  - Make connections between two or three moments in the text to show change
- **Text Structure**
  - Figurative language and dialect; plot development
- **Content**
  - 19th century rural America; 19th century London

### 6C The Chocolate Collection
- **Sub-Unit**
  - 6C.1 Information Literacy
  - 6C.2 Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research
  - 6C.3 Argumentative Writing and Collection Research
  - 6C.4 Debate and Internet Research
  - 6C.5 Write an Essay
- **Character & Narrator**
  - Identify various sources’ perspectives on a topic
- **Writing**
  - Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument
- **Text Structure**
  - Various types of historical and cultural documents
- **Content**
  - The evolving economic and cultural significance of a product in societies
GRADE 6 OVERVIEW

6D The Greeks
- Quest: Myth World
- Sub-Unit:
  - 6D.1 Prometheus
  - 6D.2 Odysseus
  - 6D.3 Arachne
  - 6D.4 Write an Essay
- Character & Narrator: Analyze what symbolic characters show about human nature
- Writing: Argue a claim about the fairness of a character’s decision
- Text Structure: Multiple tellings of a tale in different genres
- Content: Ancient Greece

6E Reading the Novel
- Sub-Unit:
  - 6E.1 M.C. Higgins, the Great by Virginia Hamilton
  - 6E.2 Write an Essay
- Character & Narrator: Analyze a complex character’s growth across a multi-layered novel
- Writing: Trace patterns of consistency and inconsistency throughout the novel
- Text Structure: Narrative with temporal shifts and ambiguous resolution
- Content: Mid-20th century Appalachia; strip-mining and environmental destruction

6F The Titanic Collection
- Sub-Unit:
  - 6F.1 Information Literacy
  - 6F.2 Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research
  - 6F.3 Passport and Collection Research
  - 6F.4 Socratic Seminar and Internet Research
  - 6F.5 Write an Essay
- Character & Narrator: Compare and contrast perspectives on a single event
- Writing: Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multi-media project
- Text Structure: Various types of historical and cultural documents
- Content: 20th century social and class structure revealed by a famous tragedy

6G Beginning Story Writing
- Sub-Unit:
  - 6G.1 Creating a Believable Character
  - 6G.2 Experimenting With a Second Character
  - 6G.3 Writing a Short Story
- Character & Narrator: Create a believable character
- Writing: Write an original short story
- Text Structure: Dialogue; plot structure
- Content: Creative writing
GRADE 7

OVERVIEW

7A Red Scarf Girl & Narrative
Sub-Unit
7A.1 Welcome!
7A.2 Get Started
7A.3 Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution by Ji-li Jiang
7A.4 Write an Essay
Character & Narrator
Examine the differences between a character’s thoughts and actions
Use revision to strengthen elaboration
Text Structure
Conventions of memoirs; propaganda
Content
Mid-20th century communist China

7B Character & Conflict
Sub-Unit
7B.1 A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
7B.2 “Harlem” by Langston Hughes
7B.3 Write an Essay
7B.4 “Sucker” by Carson McCullers
Quest
Black, White & Blues in Chicago (Required in California Edition)
Character & Narrator
Analyze a character’s unconscious motivations
Make thematic connections across genres
Text Structure
Literary devices; elements of plays and poetry
Content
Mid-20th century urban America and small-town American South

7C Brain Science
Sub-Unit
7C.1 Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science by John Fleischman
7C.2 “Demystifying the Adolescent Brain” by Laurence Steinberg
Quest
Perception Academy
Sub-Unit
7C.3 The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks
7C.4 Write an Essay
Character & Narrator
Compare and contrast different writers’ theories on a topic
Describe facts, explain concepts, and convince the reader of an opinion
Text Structure
Informational non-fiction; narrative elements in non-fiction
Content
Basic concepts of neuroscience

7D Poetry & Poe
Sub-Unit
7D.1 Poetry
7D.2 “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe
7D.3 “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe
Quest
Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?
Sub-Unit
7D.4 “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe
7D.5 Write an Essay
Character & Narrator
Evaluate the reliability of a fictional narrator
Compare and contrast characters’ perspectives on a narrative
Text Structure
Imagery; unreliable narrator; film adaptations of texts
Content
American Gothic literature
GRADE 7 OVERVIEW

7E Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet

Sub-Unit
7E.1 Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
7E.2 Write an Essay
7E.3 Summer of the Mariposas by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Character & Narrator: Connect characters’ development to a conceptual framework
Writing: Choose between contradictory positions and argue with evidence
Text Structure: Elizabethan English; sonnets; extended metaphor; journey narrative; mythic allusion
Content: 14th century Renaissance Italy; contemporary Mexican-American borderland

7F The Gold Rush Collection

Sub-Unit
7F.1 Information Literacy
7F.2 Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research
7F.3 Dear Diary and Collection Research
7F.4 Socratic Seminar and Internet Research
7F.5 Write an Essay

Character & Narrator: Explore how circumstances united a diverse group of historical characters
Writing: Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multi-media project
Text Structure: Various types of historical and cultural documents
Content: The social, political, and economic climate surrounding the California Gold Rush

7G Intermediate Story Writing

Sub-Unit
7G.1 Creating a Believable Character
7G.2 Experimenting With a Second Character
7G.3 Writing a Short Story

Character & Narrator: Create a believable character
Writing: Write an original short story
Text Structure: Dialogue; plot structure
Content: Creative writing
GRADE 8 OVERVIEW

8A Dahl, World War II & Narrative
Sub-Unit 8A.1 Welcome!
8A.2 Get Started
8A.3 Going Solo by Roald Dahl
8A.4 Write an Essay
Character & Narrator: Make inferences about a character’s values
Writing: Compare an author’s portrayal of two characters
Text Structure: Strong verbs and sensory details
Content: British colonial Africa and Middle East

8B Biography & Literature
Sub-Unit 8B.1 Benjamin Franklin
8B.2 Declaration of Independence
8B.3 Write an Essay
Quest: Declare Yourself!
Character & Narrator: Trace the development of a historical character’s ideas across time
Writing: Describe different sides of a character and reconcile his contradictions
Text Structure: Biography and autobiography; humor; persuasion
Content: Colonial America; founding democratic principles

8C Liberty & Equality
Sub-Unit 8C.1 Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass
8C.2 Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs
8C.3 The Boys’ War by Jim Murphy
8C.4 Gettysburg Address
8C.5 Write an Essay
Quest: The Emancipation Project (Required in California Edition)
Character & Narrator: Analyze a memoirist’s purpose in including or omitting details from his or her life
Writing: Evaluate which of two texts has a stronger impact on a reader
Text Structure: Texts that cross genre; poetry & prose
Content: American slavery, abolition, and the Civil War

8D Science & Science Fiction
Sub-Unit 8D.1 Gris Grimly’s Frankenstein by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly
8D.2 Write an Essay
8D.3 Poetical Science
Character & Narrator: Apply abstract concepts to an author’s portrayal of a character
Writing: Argue opposing claims about a character and resolve the contradiction
Text Structure: Graphic novels; 19th century British English
Content: 19th century scientific and technological developments
**8E The Frida & Diego Collection**

**Sub-Unit**
- 8E.1 Information Literacy
- 8E.2 Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research
- 8E.3 Descriptive Writing and Collection Research
- 8E.4 Socratic Seminar and Internet Research
- 8E.5 Write an Essay

**Character & Narrator**
- Identify various sources’ perspectives on a topic
- Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument

**Text Structure**
- Writing
  - Various types of historical and cultural documents

**Content**
- 20th century art world in Mexico and US

**8F The Space Race Collection**

**Sub-Unit**
- 8F.1 Information Literacy
- 8F.2 Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research
- 8F.3 Space Blogs and Collection Research
- 8F.4 Socratic Seminar and Internet Research
- 8F.5 Write an Essay

**Character & Narrator**
- Compare and contrast perspectives on a topic
- Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multi-media project

**Text Structure**
- Various types of historical and cultural documents

**Content**
- 20th century competition between US and USSR

**8G Advanced Story Writing**

**Sub-Unit**
- 8G.1 Creating a Believable Character
- 8G.2 Experimenting With a Second Character
- 8G.3 Writing a Short Story

**Character & Narrator**
- Create a believable character
- Write an original short story

**Text Structure**
- Dialogue; plot structure

**Content**
- Creative writing
Step 4. Read the first core texts

Make a plan to read the Unit A texts before the beginning of school (and feel free to read other texts in your grade level).

Grade 6 Unit A text: *Boy* by Roald Dahl
Grade 7 Unit A text: *Red Scarf Girl* by Ji-li Jiang
Grade 8 Unit A text: *Going Solo* by Roald Dahl

All the texts and text excerpts that students will read can be found in the Amplify digital Library.

To get to the Library:
1. Log in at learning.amplify.com/pd
2. Click on the Global Navigation in the upper left corner of the screen.
3. Click on the Library icon, and search for the book you want.