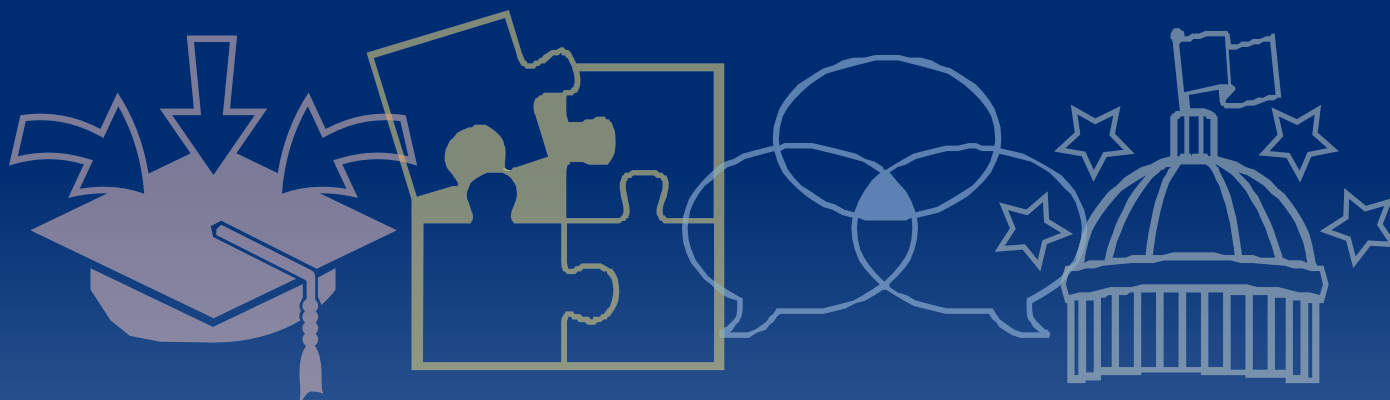




JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

Institute for Education Policy



ELA Knowledge Map™



MY FATHER'S WORLD®

*A unique analytic resource enabling
policymakers, school leaders, and parents to
better understand the strengths and weaknesses
of the My Father's World Grades 3-12 English language
arts curriculum.*

Winter 2022



The achievement gap is, in large part, a knowledge gap. Compelling research strongly affirms that students' reading levels – particularly from fifth grade onwards – relate deeply to their level of background content knowledge.ⁱ Students in more affluent systems demonstrate more success in skill-based English language arts (ELA) assessments not only because they are better at “recognizing main ideas,” but also because they are far more likely to know more about the subject matter discussed in any given text. Research from around the world shows the same: [Most democracies around](#) the world require all schools to teach a standard body of knowledge; and a comprehensive, content-rich curriculum is a signature feature of [high-performing education systems](#). Despite the research record, a large number of the United States' ELA curricula treat texts not as a source of building knowledge, but merely as a site for attempting to hone abstract reading skills.

Determining whether a particular ELA curriculum is “standards aligned” is a helpful step, but it does not tell us about the knowledge-building capacity of that curriculum.ⁱⁱ For example: Instructional materials may use publisher-written texts that satisfy the standards-based requirement for “textual complexity,” but if the materials fail to offer students a sequenced, knowledge-rich learning experience they miss a critical opportunity to build reading fluency. Merely drilling students on “finding the main idea” will never help them become better readers. Instead, they need to understand what the text is really about - something that can only be achieved by acquiring the background knowledge.

The Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy (Institute) has developed the ELA Knowledge Map™, a tool with which to evaluate an ELA curriculum in terms of the knowledge it offers students, both about the world (mainly through nonfiction texts) and about psychology and the human condition (through both nonfiction and fiction texts). The Institute conducts this analysis by “mapping” the knowledge domains implicit in the selection of the documents to be read, while also evaluating each text's quality and the coherence of the unit in which is taught. To measure coherence, we assess the degree to

which supporting materials in a unit amplify and deepen the specific knowledge offered in the anchor text.

Each review generates two visual reports: *Knowledge Heat Maps* and *Unit Coherency Maps*.¹ The maps depict the fields of knowledge opened and those missed, in each grade and cumulatively, and with what quality of texts.

The Knowledge Map™ is a one-of-a-kind analytic resource that enables policymakers, school leaders, and parents to better understand the overall strengths and weaknesses of a given curriculum; instructional leaders to “fill in gaps” that might exist; and publishers to continuously improve the materials they offer the public.

For the present project, the Institute evaluated the My Father’s World ELA curriculum for Grades K-12. It is important to note at the outset that this ELA curriculum is designed to provide copious choices for teachers and students. Therefore, the Institute’s review team read and evaluated a representative sample of material.

METHODOLOGY

- The Institute maps all items in the evaluated grades on three initial dimensions and at different grain sizes of coverage. For example, a letter by abolitionist Thomas Garrett about Harriet Tubman would be categorized like so:
 - **Domain:** U.S. History to 1865
 - **Topic:** Slavery/Abolition
 - **Subtopics:** Harriet Tubman; Underground Railroad
- The Institute evaluates the quality of every student-facing resource both individually and in the broader context of the unit.
- The Institute constructs a vertical mapping of the knowledge domains at each level, first by grade and then across multiple grades.
- The Institute creates a coverage report that visually illustrates the depth of emphasis a given domain receives across the grades.

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

My Father’s World offers generally high-quality materials and, as such, stands out from other religious curriculum providers. There is a clear attempt to provide intellectual rigor, which is a signature component of high-performing schools and school systems around the world.

Note that My Father’s World is designed around entire novels, rather than the more common, but not necessarily more effective, *unit approach*. The unit approach, used by the majority of ELA curricula, selects four or five novels per year and scaffolds them with supplemental materials that address the historical or cultural backdrop of the texts (novels). When done well, the unit approach builds very strong background knowledge. When done poorly, the unit approach results in a variety of eclectic

¹ Unit coherency maps will only be generated if the curriculum materials enable that form of analysis.

materials that do not relate to one another and that therefore fail to provide a sequenced and coherent approach to academic content.

In My Father's World, students often encounter quite challenging books and essays. The intellectual "stretch" involved in some of the texts is therefore robust. Students are exposed to high-quality units at each grade level. Two grade levels, grades 1 and 5, scored above 80% for quality, and eight additional units scored above the 70% quality threshold. These text sets ensure that My Father's World students have access to strong texts throughout their academic career. Overall, the My Father's World curriculum for ELA average quality scores for each grade band are fairly similar and very high: 78.3% for elementary K-5, and 72.8% for secondary 6-12.

A potential downside of the focus on novels is that teachers and parents must look outside of the ELA curriculum to find adequate supplemental materials to deepen and extend the background knowledge implicated in the core texts. For example, Unit 1 of Grade 1 achieves a high-quality score of 91.67%, but three out of the five core topics in the key text are not supported by supplemental materials.

The curriculum itself is designed from a Protestant, Evangelical perspective. No curriculum can be values-neutral, and the Institute's review neither commends nor critiques the theological or philosophical lens through which a curriculum's texts are selected. However, the framework does sometimes impact the scope and/or quality of the curriculum in a way that school leaders and parents may, in some circumstances, want to address.

Specifically, the ELA curriculum arguably includes some offerings that are not rigorous and offer very limited, culturally-contingent models of engagement. Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth am I Here For?*, for instance, may be an excellent devotional or inspirational book for young people, but it is not particularly well-written or well-edited. Given some of the higher-quality texts included in My Father's World, students should be able to manage time-tested inspirational books instead, such as Augustine's *Confessions*, Bonhoeffer's letters from prison, or classic commentaries on culture (such as James Davison Hunter's *To Change the World* (2010)), which places modern evangelicalism in dialogue with sociology.

School leaders and parents who are considering adoption of My Father's World should also be aware that the distinctive religious framework forecloses debates about issues such as evolution vs creationism; does not provide robust windows into other religions; does not engage in a meaningful way with non-Evangelical hermeneutics. This may be part of the appeal for some parents and schools. Others, however, will want to introduce an intellectual release in the later grades, such that exposure to alternative viewpoints occurs in the first instance during years spent at home, rather than in freshman year of college or in the public square.

INSTITUTE RECOMMENDATIONS

My Father's World is a strong curriculum. For some school leaders and parents, however, it could be rendered stronger by the following changes:

- Consider scaffolding novels with historical or cultural background material to reinforce the texts' knowledge-building capacity. For instance, to *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, both of which are included in Grade 9, could be added a credible account of Schliemann's "discovery" of Troy;
- Replacing contemporary devotional texts with the early church fathers, writings from persecuted believers, or ethical ruminations such as those offered by Phillip Hallie on the role of Swiss Protestants in instinctively protecting Jewish refugees during World War II; and
- Introducing alternative viewpoints on important cultural issues, such as same-sex orientation or libertarian ethics. Reading and engaging with a wide variety of viewpoints is something that many democracies require of all students, even as those systems also fund religious schools. For instance, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom fund Catholic, Jewish, Anglican, Islamic, Montessori, and secular schools (to name a few); they also require all of these schools to undertake serious academic work in all subjects. This means that schools teaching creationism as truth must also ensure that students learn key concepts of evolutionary theory, on which they are assessed, even if they reject those theories on religious grounds. As another example, most OECD countries require all students to engage with comparative religion and ethics every year in the K-12 journey, even as these countries fund a wide variety of religiously and philosophically distinctive schools.

The first section of this report covers the specific findings of the Knowledge Map™ exercise, followed by quality and coherence findings in the second section.

MY FATHER'S WORLD KNOWLEDGE/HEAT MAPS: GRADES K-5

A critical gateway question covers how much exposure children receive to each important domain of knowledge and topics within them. The heat maps measured coverage at the topical level, based upon Institute expert extrapolation of the Common Core standards in English language arts. The maps then generalize these standards to findings in the curriculum's elementary grades in order to determine which domains achieve strong, moderate, and weak ratings.

Each heat map expresses the findings visually using a color-coding scheme, as shown in Figure 1. Lighter blue squares represent fewer knowledge-building texts, such as one to four; while darker blue squares represent more knowledge-building texts, such eight or more. The text analysis results for each of twenty-two topical domains for grades 3-5 appear in the charts below. The knowledge domains represent the Institute's interpretation of the Common Core Standards and therefore, do not include error analysis.

A mere mention of a topic does not necessarily indicate exposure to that topic. The Institute tags a topic only when the text's presentation of it is robust enough for a student to convey specific facts about it. This metric considers the context of age and grade level.



Figure 1. Heat map color-coded rating scheme of knowledge building, where lighter blue indicates fewer texts and darker blue indicates a larger number of texts.

Strong Knowledge-Building Domains

The curriculum presents robust knowledge building in several domains and many topics (shown below alphabetically). Strong knowledge-building domains appear in the heat maps as dark blue, indicating many texts address the topic (the heat map categories of 8+ Texts or 5-7 Texts, for instance). Prevalence analysis divides the number of strong heat map ratings on a topic at grade level (number of darker blue squares) by the entire knowledge domain (total number of squares).

The knowledge domain of Social-Emotional (Figure 2) presents the highest prevalence of strong knowledge-building texts, relative to the entire curriculum. Note that prevalence analysis numbers are mathematical averages. The heat maps below appear in alphabetical order.

The Social-Emotional knowledge domain exhibits patterns of strength in specific topics across grade bands. One pattern presents large numbers of texts on a topic in 100% of grades (n= 6 of 6) across a band. The Relationship Skills and Society (Figure 2) demonstrates this pattern. A second pattern presents large numbers of texts across domain topics within an individual grade band. For example, Grades 4 (n=8 of 9 topics) and 5 (n=7 of 9 topics) both have strong heat map ratings (Figure 2). These patterns indicate that students receive regular reinforcement of the topics within this knowledge domain throughout their elementary education.

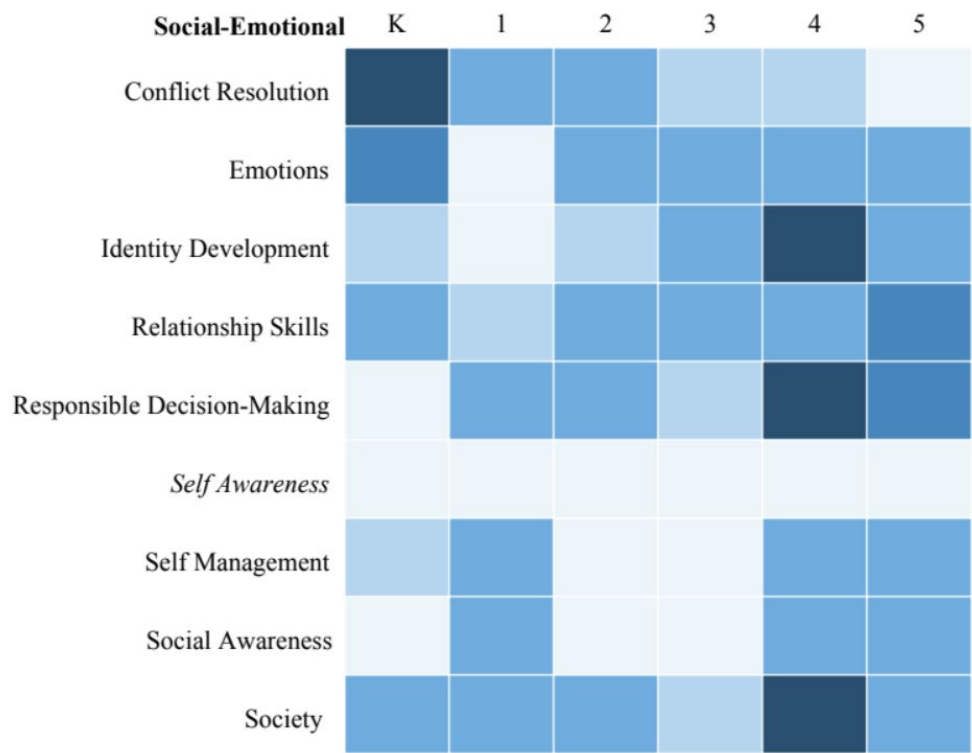


Figure 2. Heat map analysis of the Social-Emotional knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

Moderate Knowledge-Building Domains

The curriculum presents several moderate knowledge-building domains and topics. Moderate knowledge-building domains appear in the heat maps as mixed blue, indicating few-to-some texts addressing the topic (the heat map category of 2-4 Texts, for instance). Prevalence analysis divides the number of moderate heat map ratings on a subject at grade level (number of medium blue squares) by the entire knowledge domain (total number of squares).

Text analysis indicates that two knowledge domains present moderate prevalence of knowledge-building texts in all domain topics. Namely, these patterns are present in the American Literature (Figure 3) and Science (Figure 4) domains.

Specific patterns of moderate knowledge building arise within specific topics across grade bands. One pattern presents moderate coverage in topics across grade levels. An example of this pattern includes the Fiction topic within the knowledge domain of American Literature (n=4 of 6 grades, Figure 3), as well as the topics Animals (n=6 of 6 grades, Figure 4) and Taking Care of the Earth (n= 5 of 6 grades, Figure 4) within the Science domain. A second pattern presents moderate numbers of texts on a topic within individual grade levels. An example appears in Grade 1 in both American Literature (n=2 of 3 topics, Figure 3) and Science (n=10 of 20 topics, Figure 4). Here, the curriculum presents moderate knowledge-building in many topics within individual grade levels, even if these patterns do not persist through the entire curriculum.

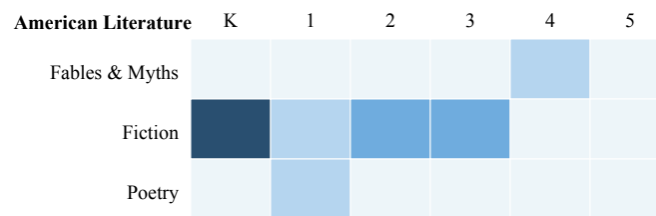


Figure 3. Heat map analysis of the American Literature knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

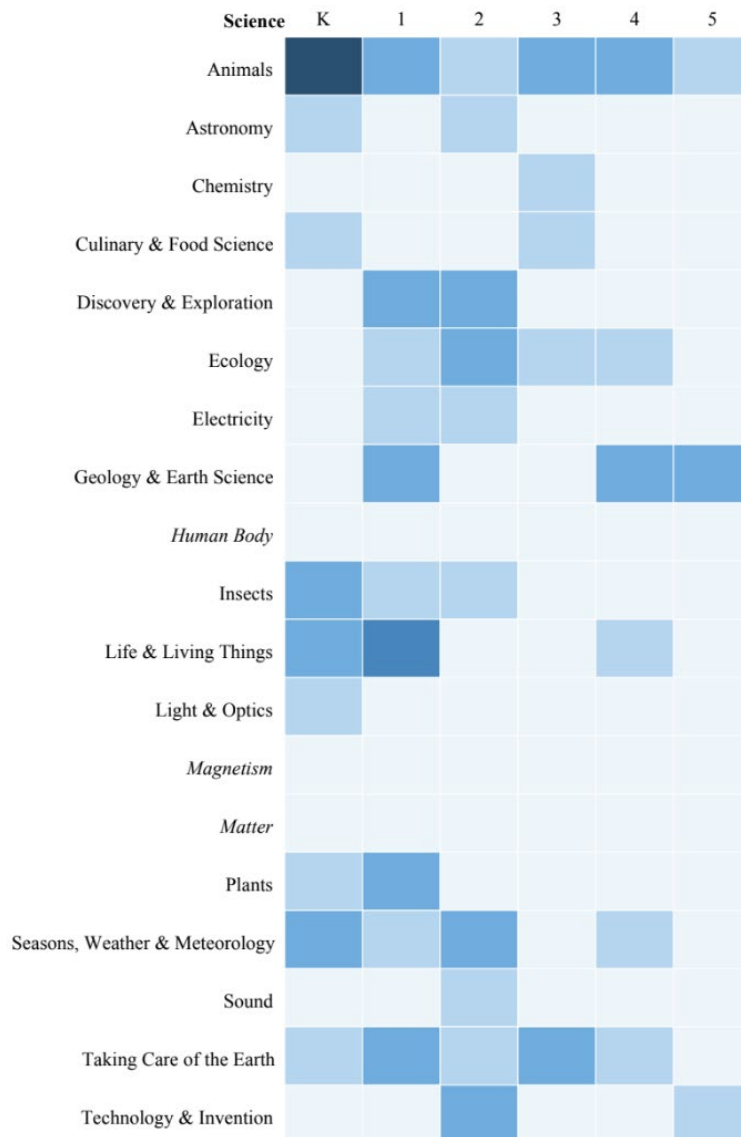


Figure 4. Heat map analysis of the Science knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

Weak Knowledge-Building Domains

The curriculum presents insufficient or weak knowledge-building in multiple knowledge domains and topics. Weak knowledge-building domains appear in the heat maps as light blue or gray, indicating 1 or no texts address the topic. The Institute does not perform prevalence analysis on weak domains because there is not enough data to be meaningful. However, domains with 60% or more of the topics showing no or 1 text are included in the Weak category.

Several specific knowledge domains present weak knowledge-building across all domain topics. These domains include American History and Geography (Figure 5), Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness (Figure 6), Global Literature (Figure 7), Mathematics (Figure 8), Music & Performing Arts (Figure 9), Public Institutions (Figure 10), Visual Arts (Figure 11), and World History & Geography (Figure 12). Of

these domains, Visual Arts (n=4, Figure 11) is by far the weakest, demonstrating minimal texts at every grade level.

Apart from these generally weak domains, all other knowledge domains demonstrate specific weaknesses. One pattern that appears is the absence of texts across grade levels. Numerous examples of this pattern exist, including topics such as Algebra within Mathematics (Figure 8), Listening within Music & Performing Arts (Figure 9), Zoos & Aquariums within Public Institutions (Figure 10), and Slavery within World History & Geography (Figure 12). Similarly, many knowledge domains show only a few texts in the entire K-5 curriculum, such as Music & Performing Arts (Figure 9) and Visual Arts (Figure 11).

An additional pattern of weakness presents as a lack of domain coverage within a grade band. A visual scan of the Knowledge Map™ reveals this pattern as empty columns beneath individual grade levels. For example, Mathematics (Figure 8) is a weak domain partly because grades K-3 contain no texts on any topic in the domain. Likewise, Music & Performing Arts (Figure 9) and Public Institutions (Figure 10) are not covered by any texts at nearly every grade level. Such absence may reflect curricular progression decisions and other factors, but significant knowledge gaps may still be worth examining.

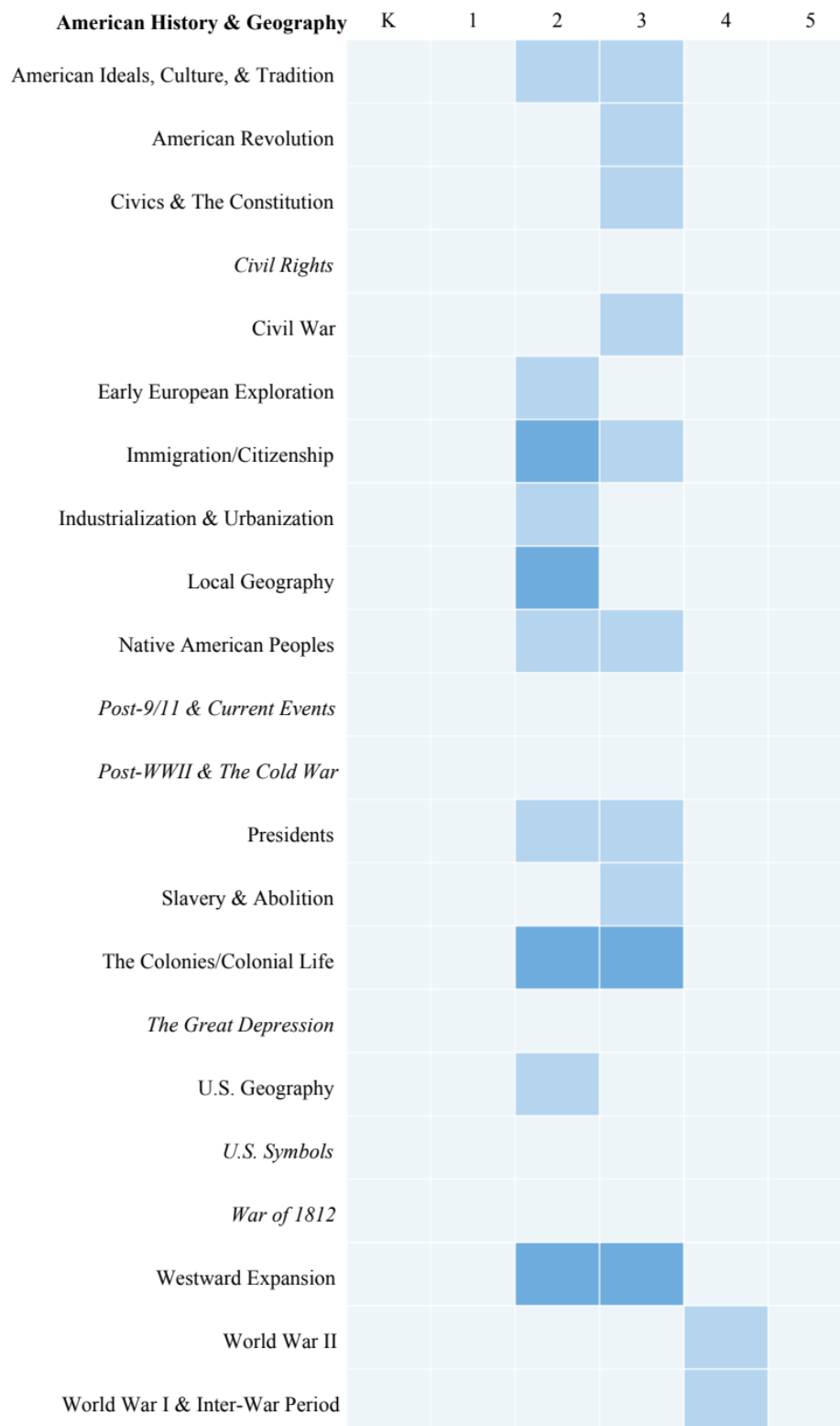


Figure 5. Heat map analysis of the American History & Geography knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

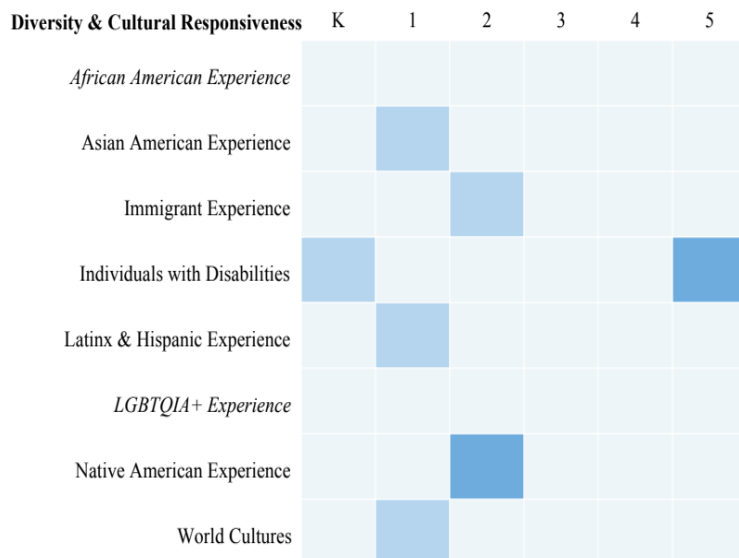


Figure 6. Heat map analysis of the Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness knowledge domain in Grades K-5.



Figure 7. Heat map analysis of the Global Literature domain in Grades K-5.

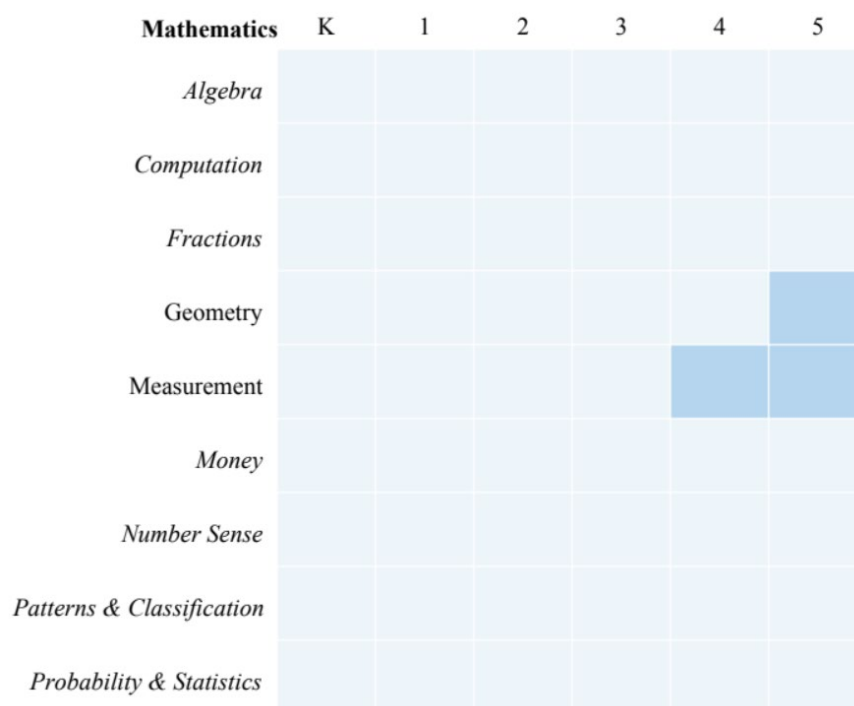


Figure 8. Heat map analysis of the Mathematics knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

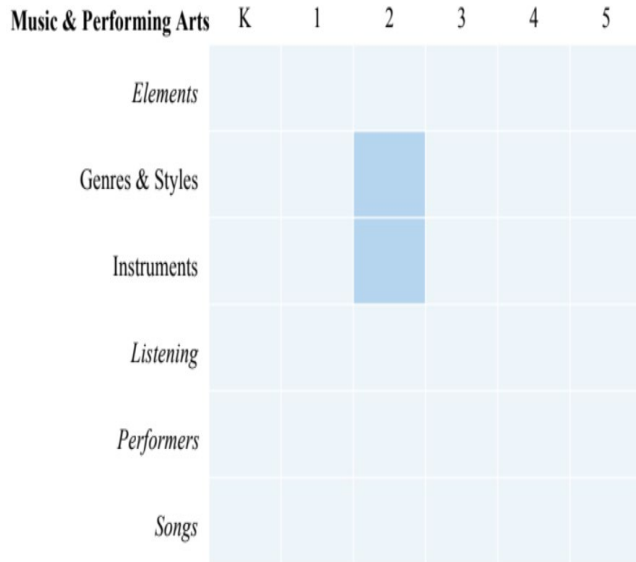


Figure 9. Heat map analysis of the Music & Performing Arts knowledge domain in Grades K-5.



Figure 10. Heat map analysis of the Public Institutions knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

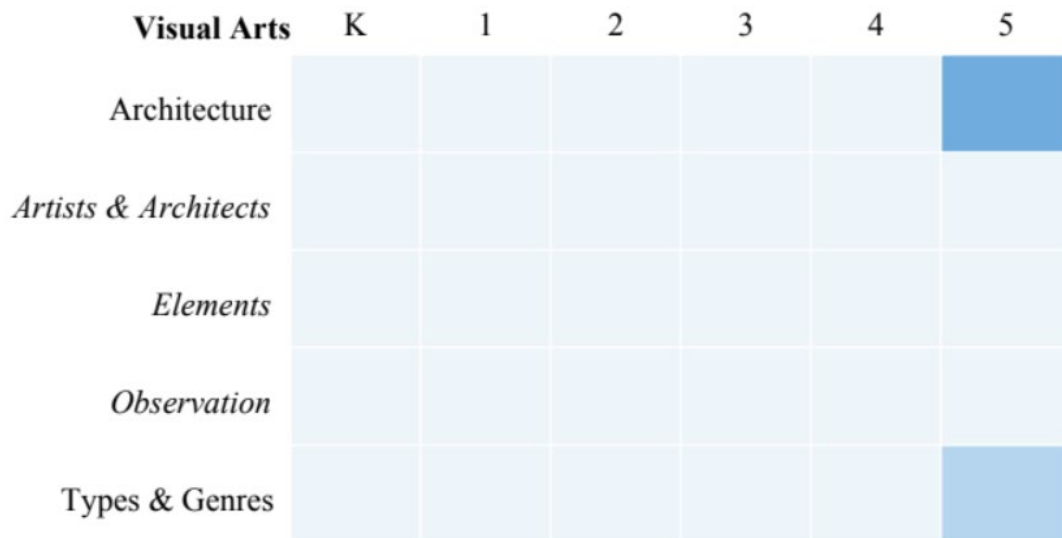


Figure 61. Heat map analysis of the Visual Arts knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

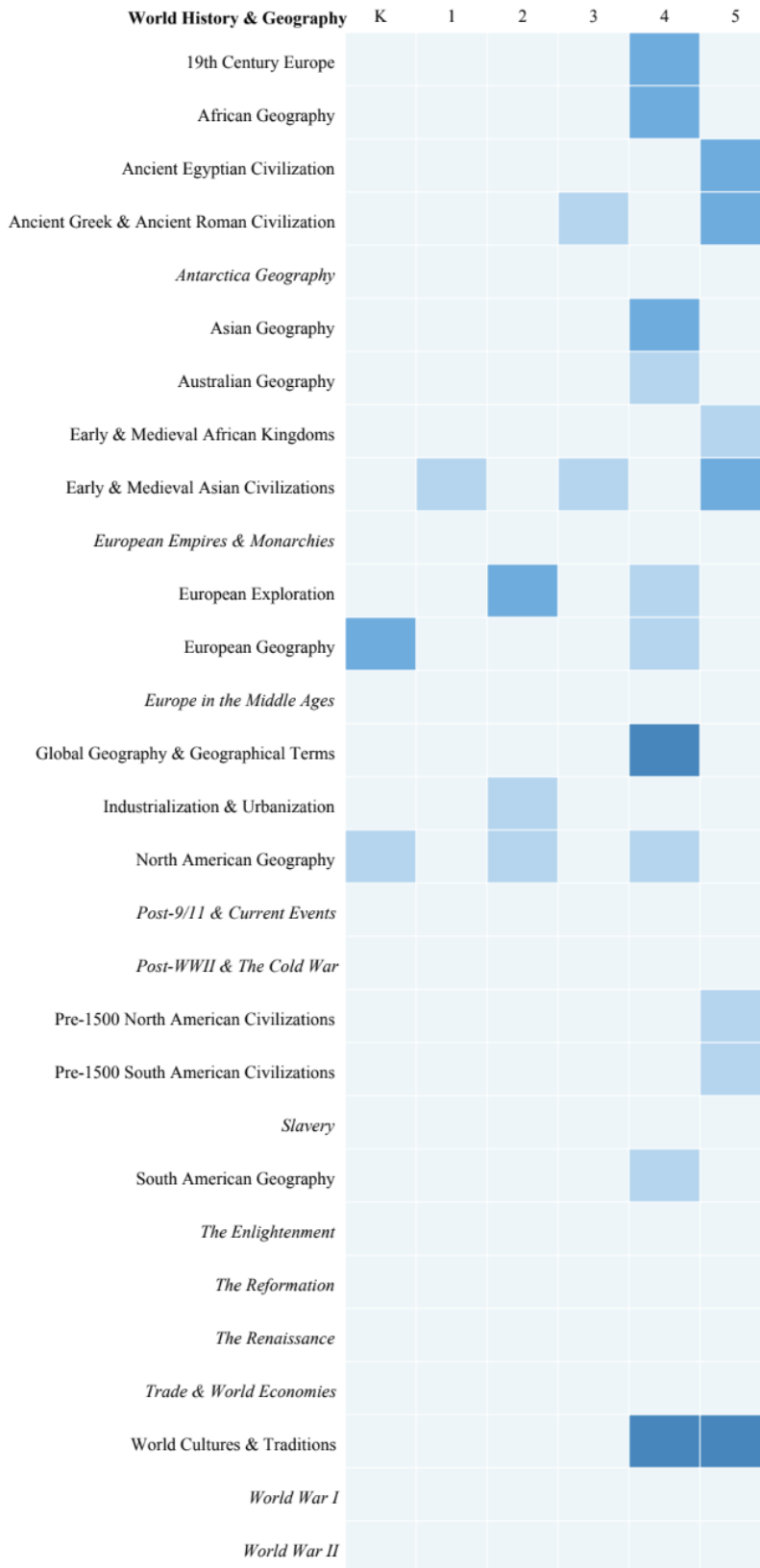


Figure 12. Heat map analysis of the World History & Geography knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

DIVERSITY AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DOMAIN: GRADES 3-5

Culturally responsive texts represent a spectrum of positive, neutral, and negative aspects of a cultural group's experience in the United States. Quality texts rated Culturally Responsive illustrate both strengths and challenges relevant to each group. Materials evaluated for diversity and cultural responsiveness range from picture books to documentary films. The Institute reviewed 81 texts for cultural relevance across grades K-5 and found 9 that address the topics shown in Figure 5.

The knowledge domain of Diversity 7 Cultural Responsiveness parses into specific topics of cultural experience shown in Figure 6 below: Individuals with Disabilities (n=3 or 3%), Native American Experience (n=2 or 2.5%), Asian American Experience (n=1 or 1.2%), Immigrant Experience (n=1 or 1.2%), Latinx & Hispanic (n=1 or 1.2%), and World Cultures (n=1 or 1.2%). The smallest shares of Culturally Relevant materials relate to African American Experience and LGBTQIA+ Experience, where no materials represented these topics.

The prevalence and distribution of Culturally Relevant materials vary across the K-5 elementary curriculum. Most grades include some culturally responsive materials, depicted as a heat map in Figure 6. Grades 2 and 5 contain the most culturally relevant texts, each with up to five texts marked Culturally Relevant. By comparison, grades 3 and 4 contain no culturally relevant texts.

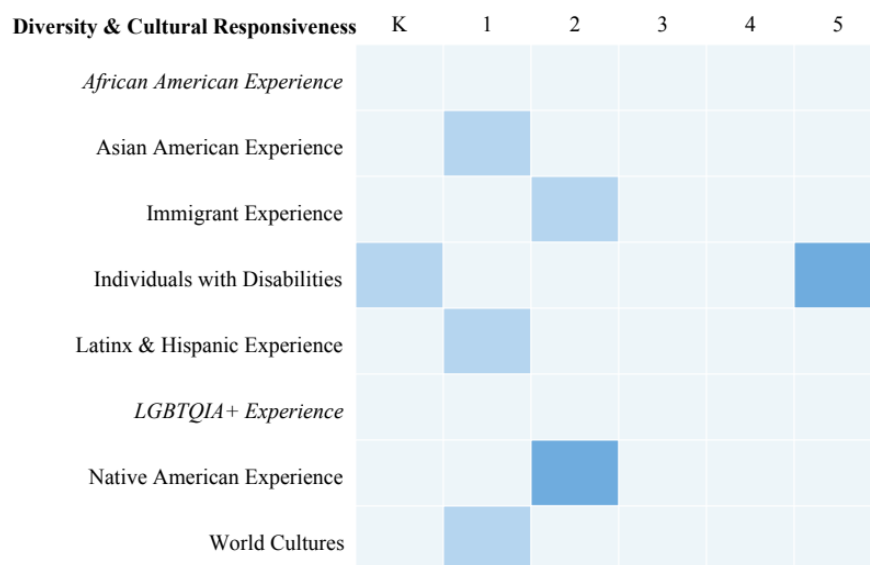


Figure 6 (repeated). Heat map analysis of the Diversity and Culturally Responsive knowledge domain in Grades K-5.

Further, the Institute performed a coherence analysis of texts concerning the Diversity & Cultural Responsiveness knowledge domain. The overall unit quality score represents the quality of texts within the units provided by the My Father's World curriculum.

MY FATHER'S WORLD KNOWLEDGE HEAT MAPS: GRADES 6-12

The Institute continued heat map analysis for grades 6-12 using the same criteria and processes as the prior analysis of grades K-5. Our findings of knowledge-building domains include strong, moderate, and weak ratings. Each heat map expresses the findings visually using a color-coding scheme, as shown in Figure 13. Lighter blue squares represent lesser numbers of knowledge-building texts, and darker blue squares represent greater numbers of knowledge-building texts. The results of text analysis for each of twenty-two topical domains for the 6-12 curriculum appear in Figures 14-33, below. The knowledge domains represent the Institute's interpretation of the Common Core Standards, and therefore, do not include error analysis.



Figure 73. Heat map color-coded rating scheme of knowledge building,, where light blue indicates fewer texts and darker blue indicates a larger number of texts.

Strong Knowledge-Building Domains

The curriculum presents strong knowledge building in several domains and many topics. Strong knowledge-building domains appear in the heat maps as dark blue, indicating many texts address the topic (the heat map categories of 8+ Texts or 5-7 Texts, for instance). Prevalence analysis divides the number of strong heat map ratings on a topic at grade level (number of darker blue squares) by the entire knowledge domain (total number of squares).

Specifically, one knowledge domain demonstrates a high prevalence of knowledge-building texts relative to the entire curriculum: Emotions, Being, & Personal Psychology (n= 31 of 54, Figure 14). Note that prevalence analysis numbers are mathematical averages.

Additional knowledge domains exhibit patterns of strength in specific topics across grade bands. One pattern presents large numbers of texts on a topic in 100% of grades (n= 7 of 7) across a band. Topics that demonstrate this pattern include the Human Condition, Love, and The Self (Figure 14). Another pattern presents large numbers of texts on domain topics within an individual grade level. For example, Grades 6, 8, 9, and 11 all boast strong heat map ratings for nearly all topics in the Emotion, Being, & Personal Psychology domain (Figure 14). Both patterns suggest that students receive regular reinforcement of these topics throughout their middle and high school education.

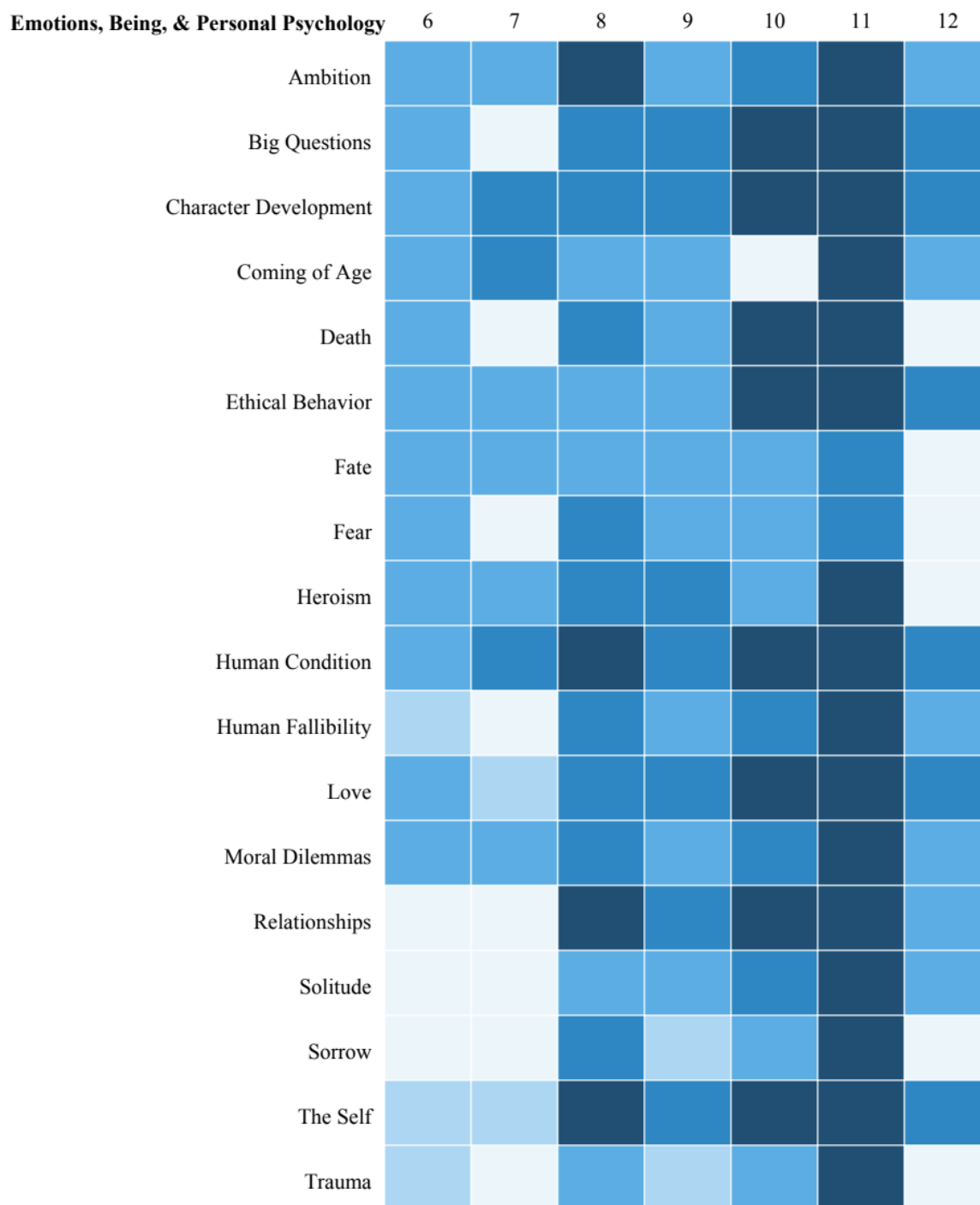


Figure 84. Heat map analysis of the Emotions, Being, & Personal Psychology knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

Moderate Knowledge-Building Domains

The curriculum presents several moderate knowledge-building domains and topics. Moderate knowledge-building domains appear in the heat maps as mixed blue, indicating few-to-some texts addressing the topic (for instance, the heat map category of 2-4 Texts). Prevalence analysis divides the

number of moderate heat map ratings on a topic at grade level (number of medium blue squares) by the entire knowledge domain (total number of squares).

Specifically, analysis presents two knowledge domains notable for moderate prevalence of texts in all domain topics, relative to the entire curriculum. Namely, these domains are Diversity and Religion (n=23 of 63, Figure 15), Social Sciences (n=65 of 210, Figure 16), and World History To 1600 (n=22 of 63, Figure 17). Note that prevalence analysis numbers are mathematical averages.

Many domains exhibit specific patterns of moderate knowledge building within specific topics across grade bands. One pattern presents moderate or vigorous coverage in at least six of the seven secondary grade levels. Examples of this pattern include Christianity and The Bible in Religion (Figure 15); and Community, Family, and Individual, State, Society in Social Sciences (Figure 16). The second pattern presents as moderate or strong numbers of texts on a specific topic within individual secondary grade levels. Examples include Grades 9, 11, and 12 in Social Sciences (Figure 16); and Grades 6 and 10 in World History to 1600 (Figure 17). These patterns indicate that moderate knowledge building is present in many topics across several domains.

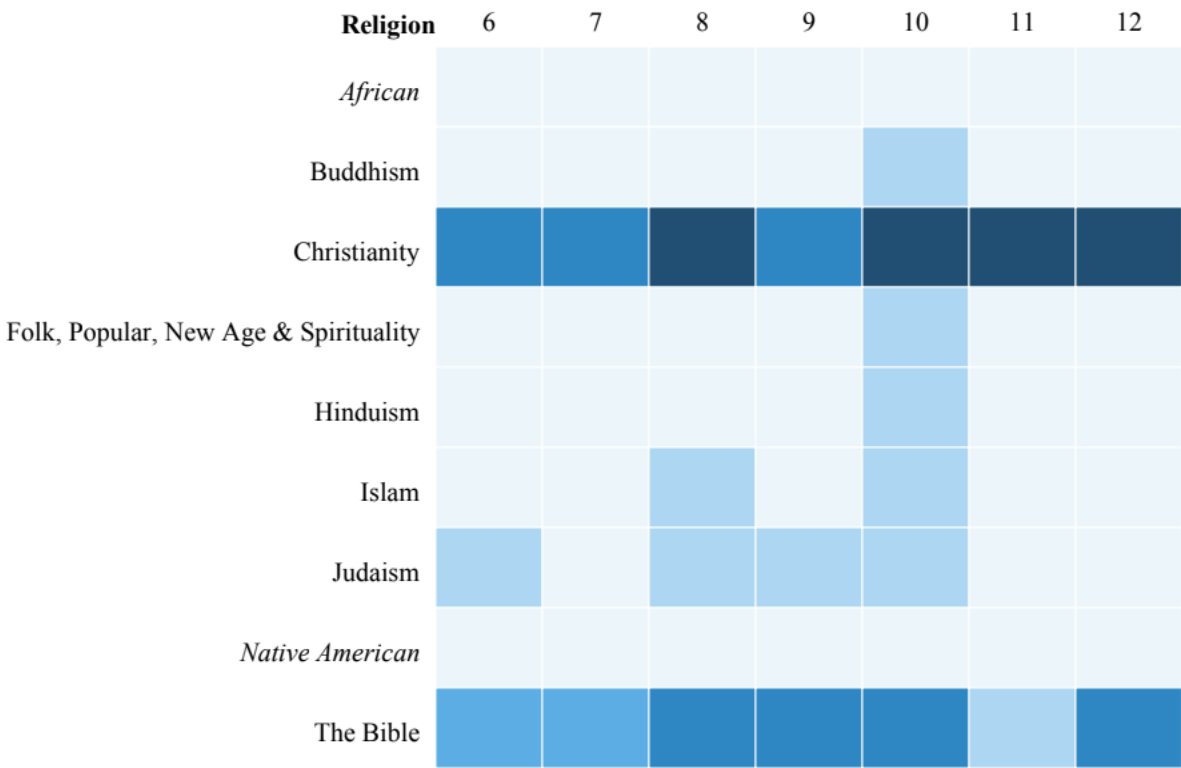


Figure 9. Heat map analysis of the Religion knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

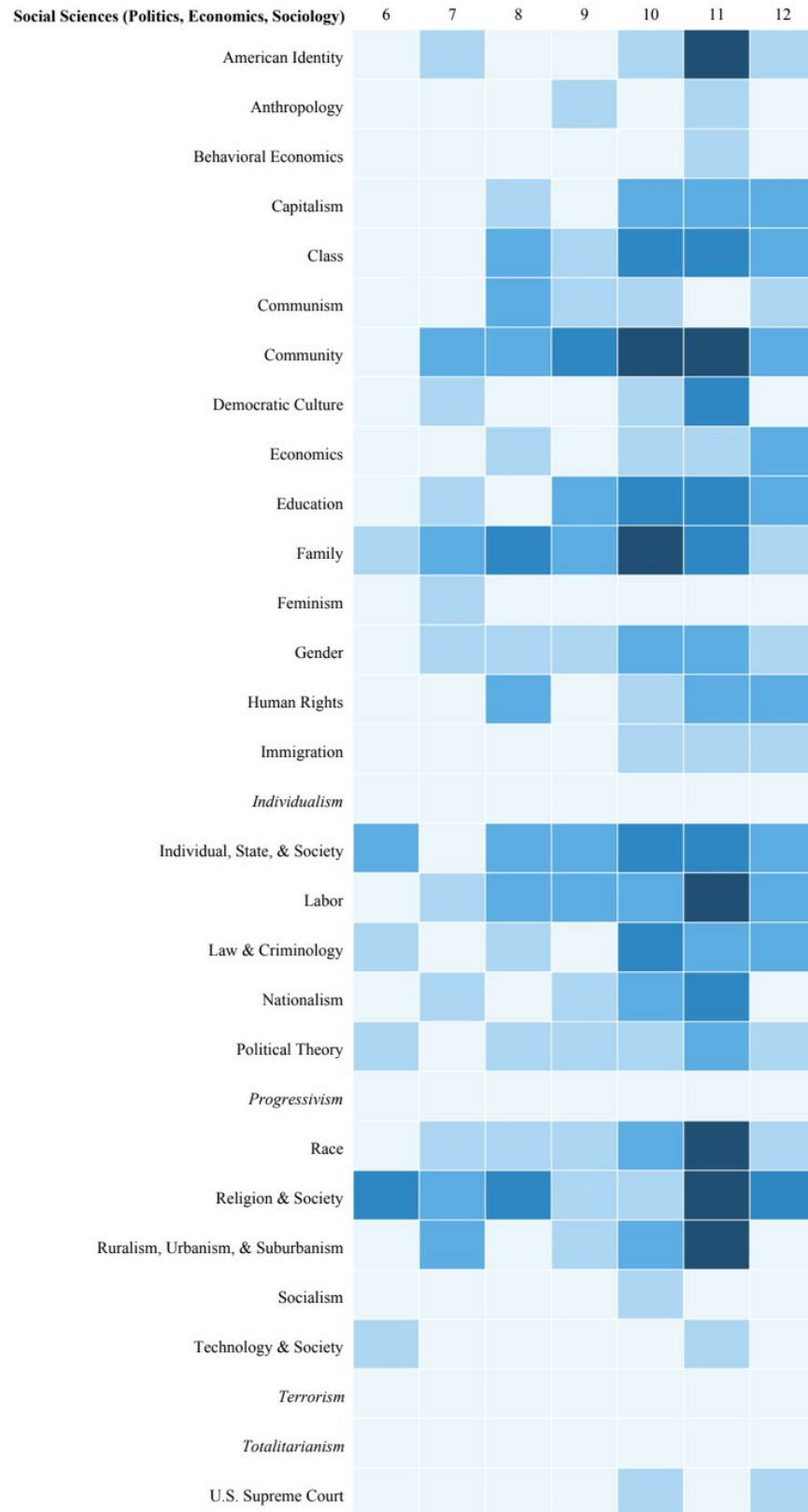


Figure 16. Heat map analysis of the Social Sciences (Politics, Economics, Sociology) knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

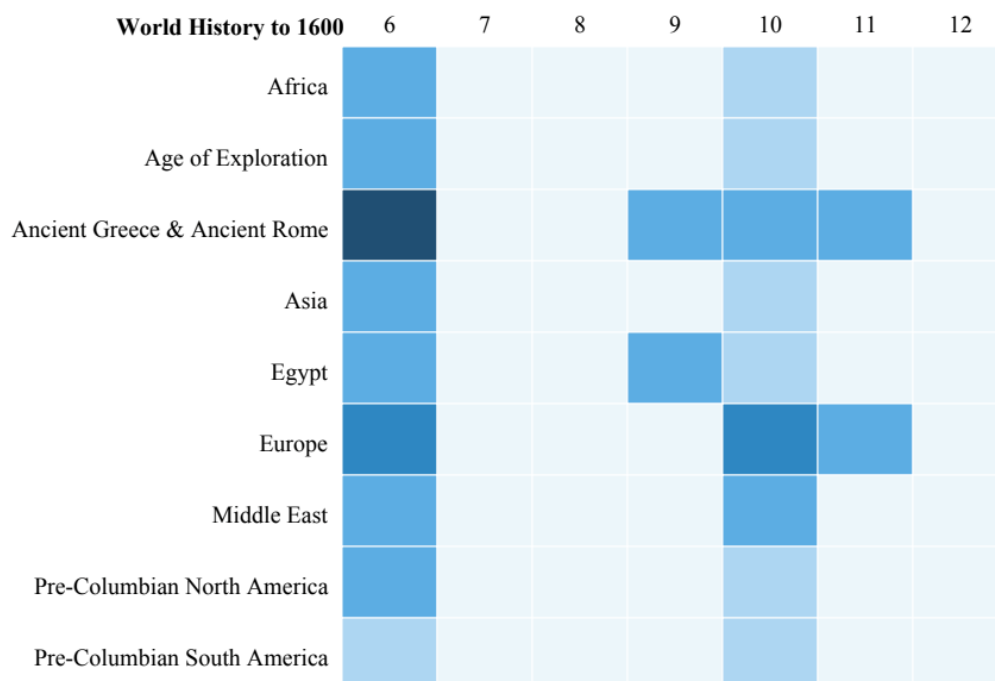


Figure 10. Heat map analysis of the World History to 1600 knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

Weak Knowledge-Building Domains

The curriculum presents insufficient or weak knowledge-building in multiple knowledge domains and topics. Weak knowledge-building domains appear in the heat maps as light blue, indicating few or no texts address the topic. We do not perform prevalence analysis on weak domains because there is not enough data to be meaningful.

Nearly all of the twenty-one evaluated knowledge domains were evaluated as weak overall. Namely, these include the following: American Literature (Figure 18), British Literature (Figure 19); Earth, Life, and Medical Sciences (Figure 20); Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness (Figure 21); Global Literature (Figure 22); Literary Genres (Figure 23); Mathematics (Figure 24); Media (Figure 25); Music, Art, Architecture (Figure 26); Philosophy Proper (Figure 27); Physical Sciences (Figure 28); Technology (Figure 29); U.S. Geography (Figure 30); U.S. History Since 1865 (Figure 31); U.S. History to 1865 (Figure 32); World Geography (Figure 33); and World History Since 1600 (Figure 34).

Moreover, prevalence analysis indicates that many knowledge domains are minimally covered – or not covered at all – at every grade level. The weakest domains at this level are Mathematics (Figure 24); Media (Figure 25); Music, Art, Architecture (Figure 26); Philosophy Proper (Figure 27); Physical Sciences (Figure 28); Technology (Figure 29); U.S. Geography (Figure 30); U.S. History Since 1865 (Figure 31); and U.S. History to 1865 (Figure 32). Furthermore, two knowledge domains have six or fewer total texts Mathematics (Figure 24); and Media (Figure 25).

Apart from these overall weak domains, all remaining knowledge domains present specific weaknesses. One pattern of specific weakness appears as an absence of texts across grade levels. Examples are

numerous within the curriculum. For instance, within the knowledge domain of Earth, Life, and Medical Sciences (Figure 20), no texts cover the topics of Geology, or Molecular Biology & Biochemistry.

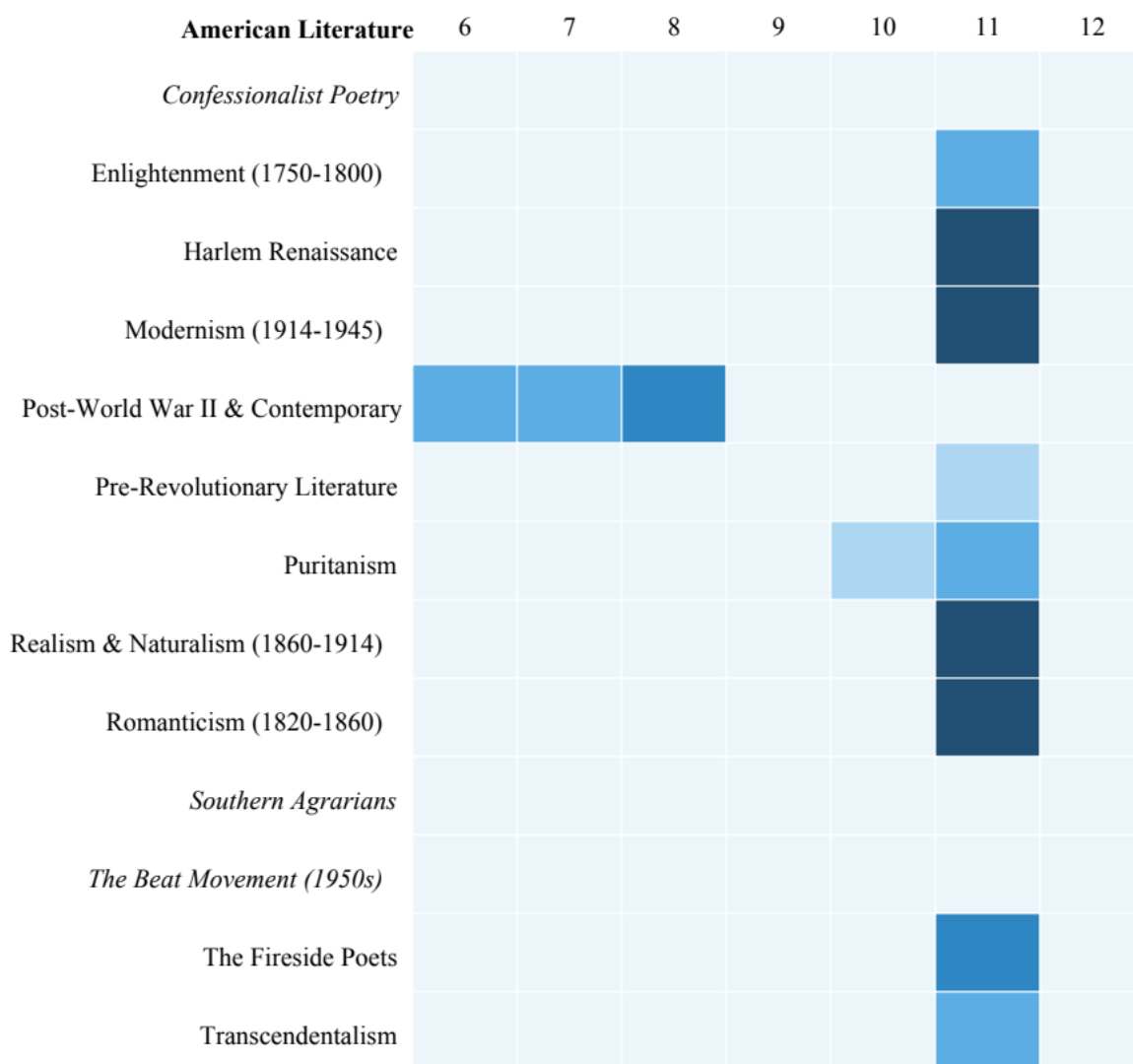


Figure 18. Heat map analysis of the American Literature knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

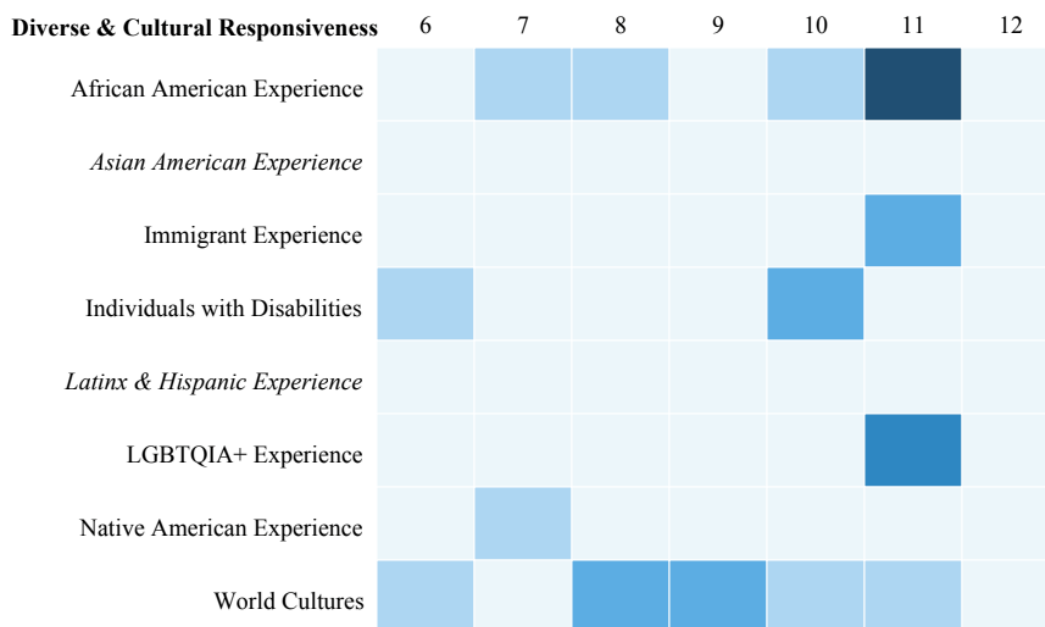
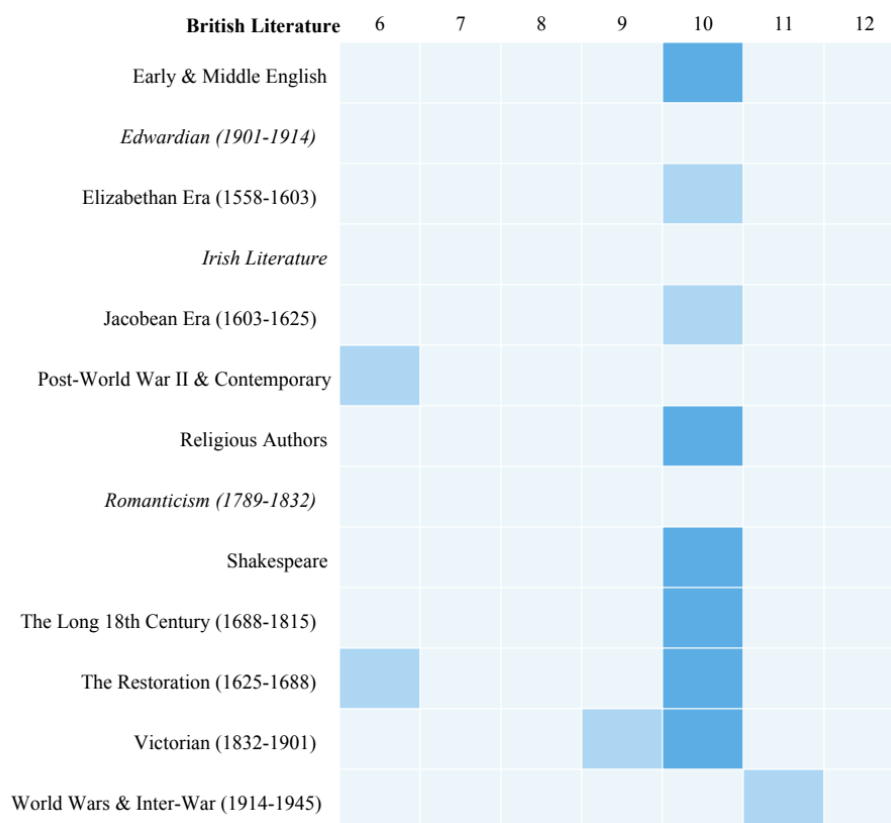


Figure 20. Heat map analysis of the Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

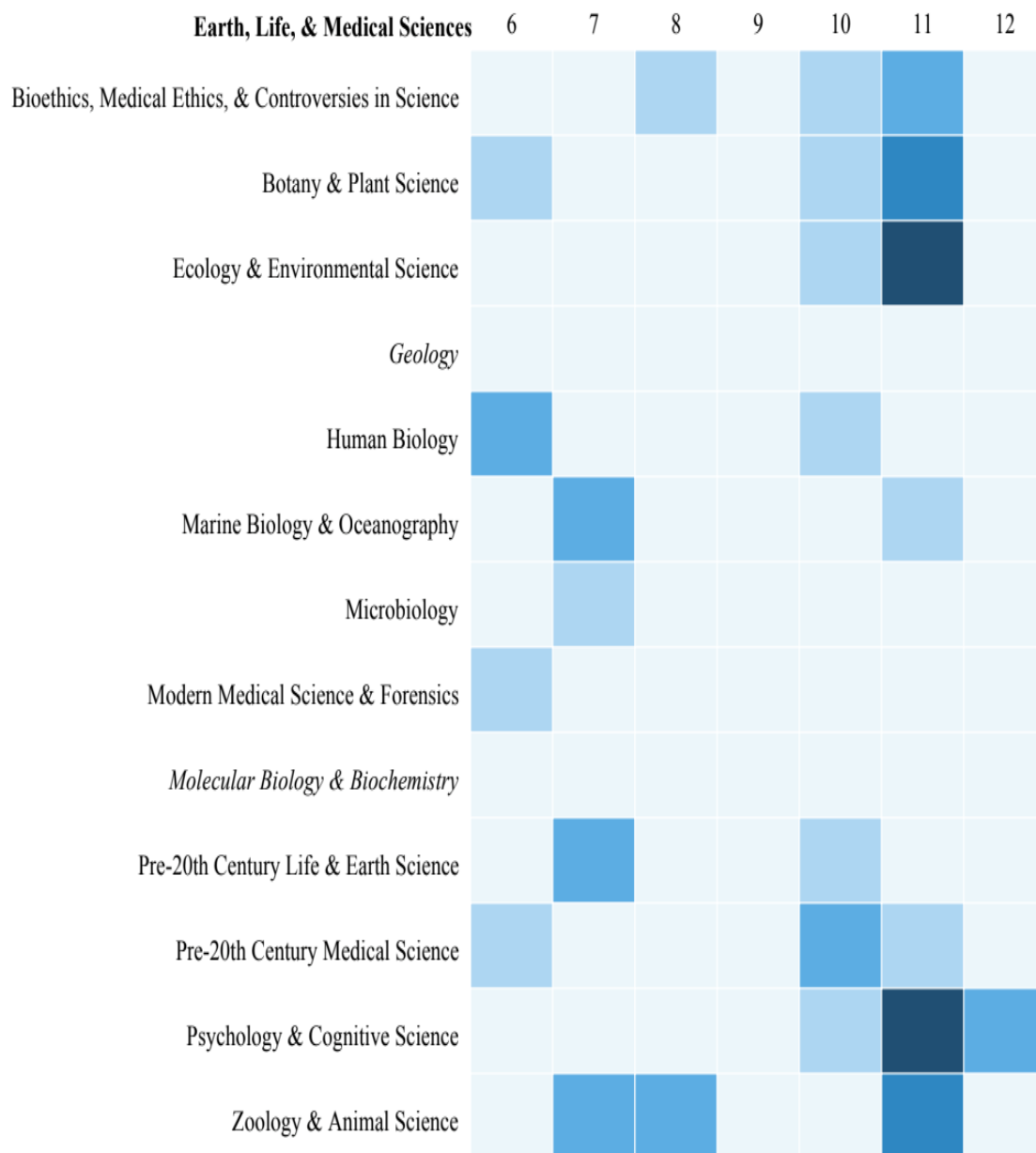


Figure 11. Heat map analysis of the Earth, Life, and Medical Sciences knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.



Figure 12. Heat map analysis of the Global Literature knowledge domain in Grades 6 -12.

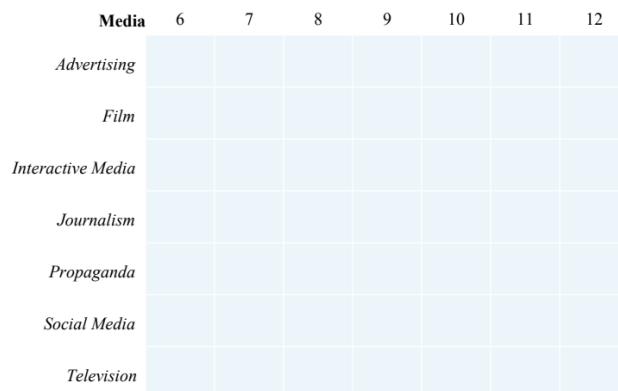
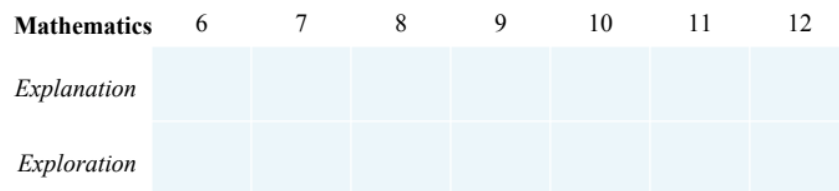
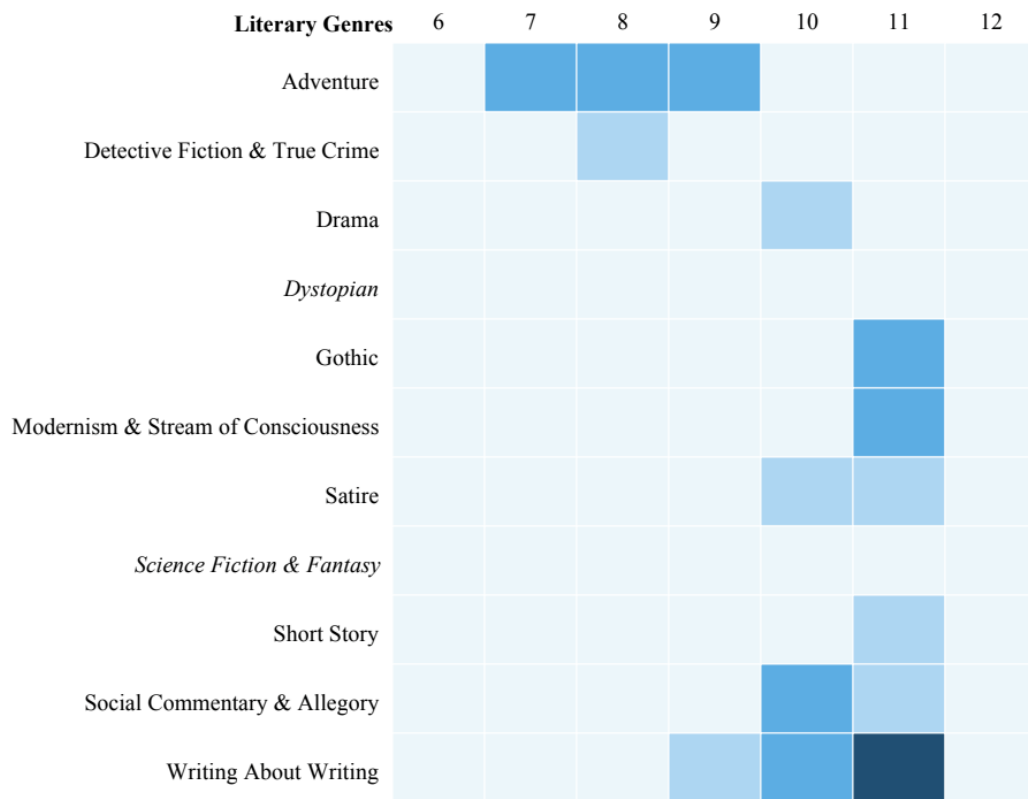


Figure 25. Heat map analysis of the Media knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.



Figure 26. Heat map analysis of the Music, Art, Architecture knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

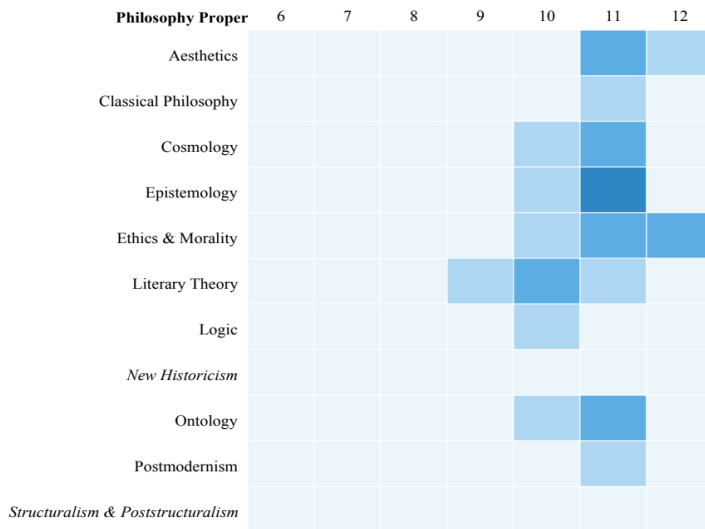


Figure 14. Heat map analysis of the Philosophy Proper knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

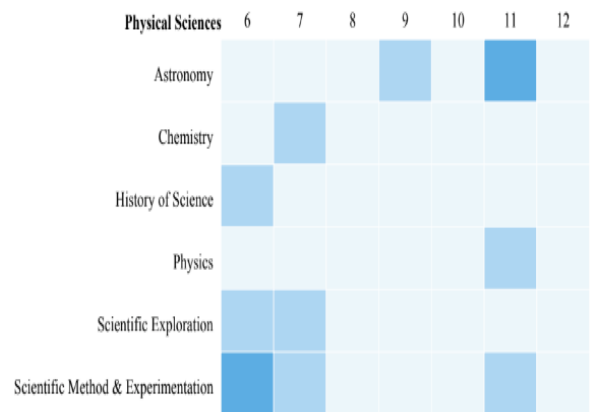


Figure 15. Heat map analysis of the Physical Sciences knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

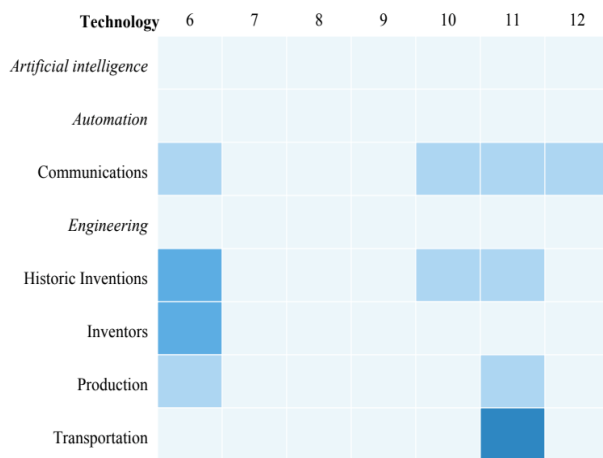


Figure 16. Heat map analysis of the Technology knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

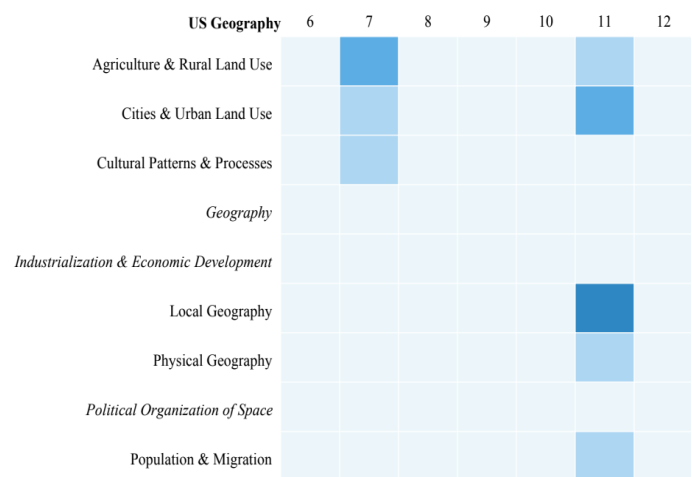


Figure 17. Heat map analysis of the US Geography knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

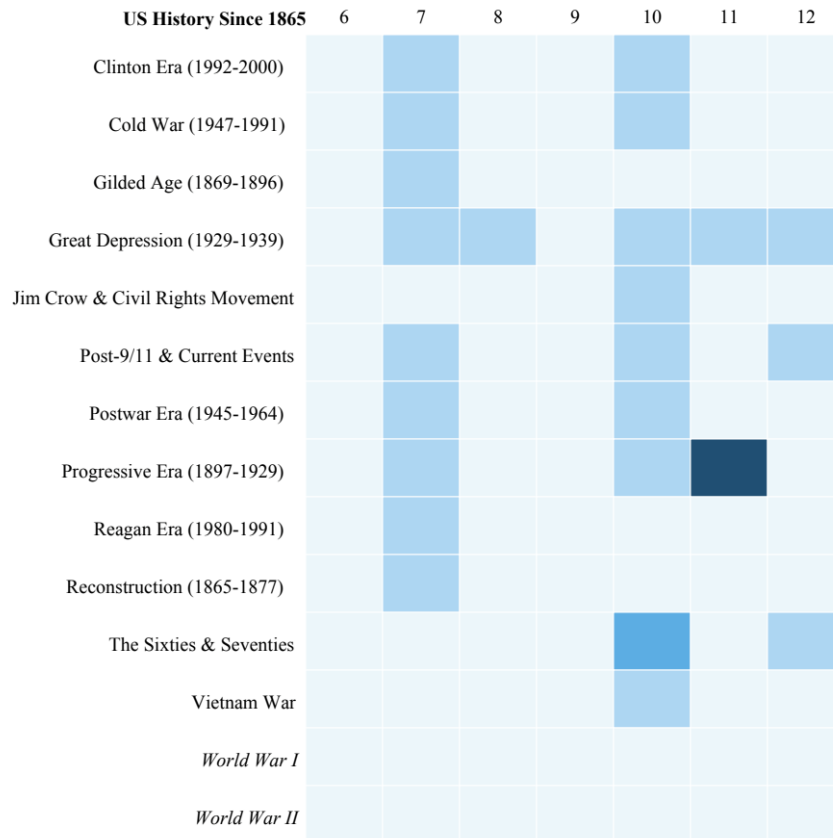


Figure 31. Heat map analysis of the US History Since 1865 knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

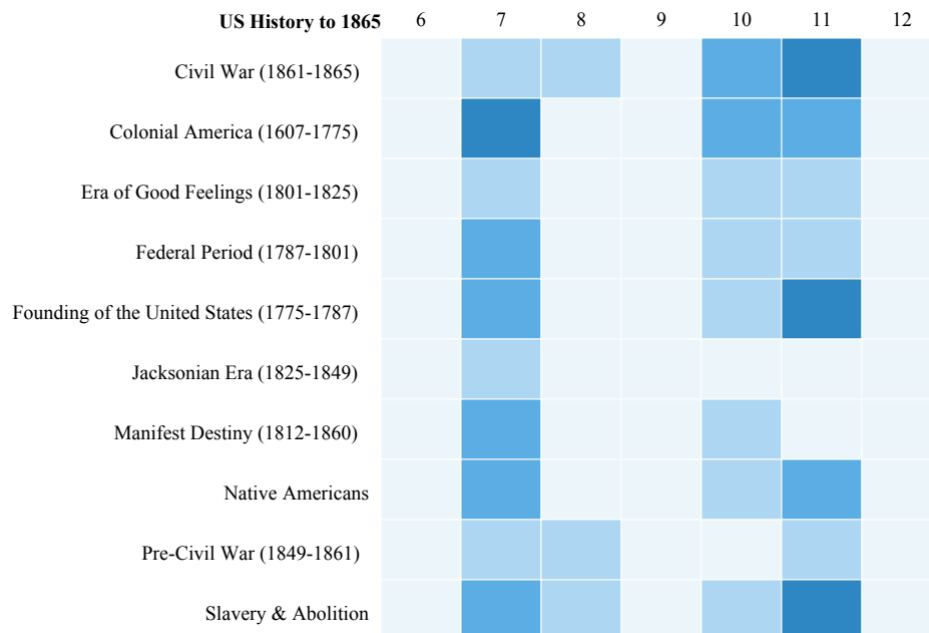


Figure 18. Heat map analysis of the US History to 1865 knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

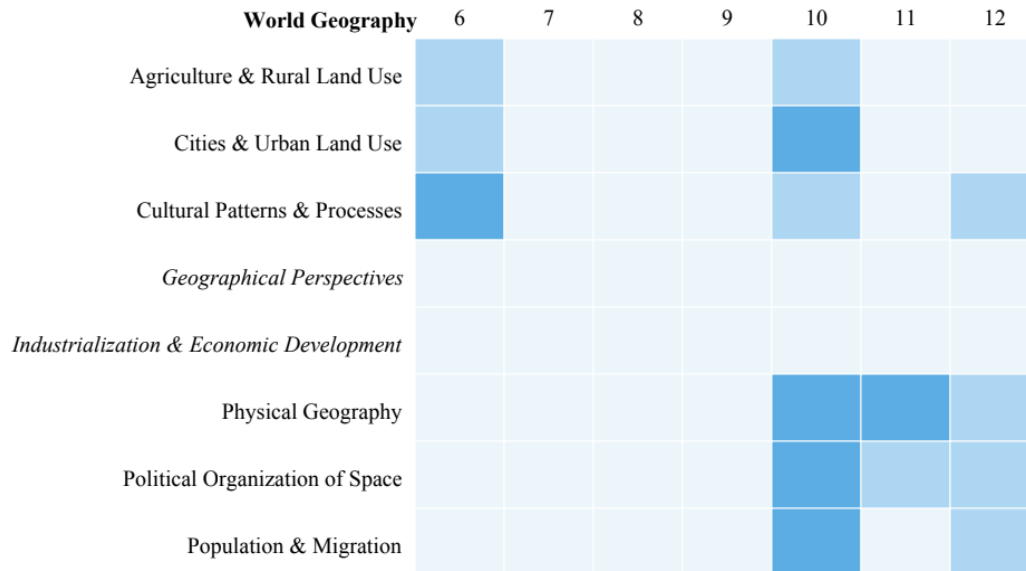


Figure 19. Heat map analysis of the World Geography knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

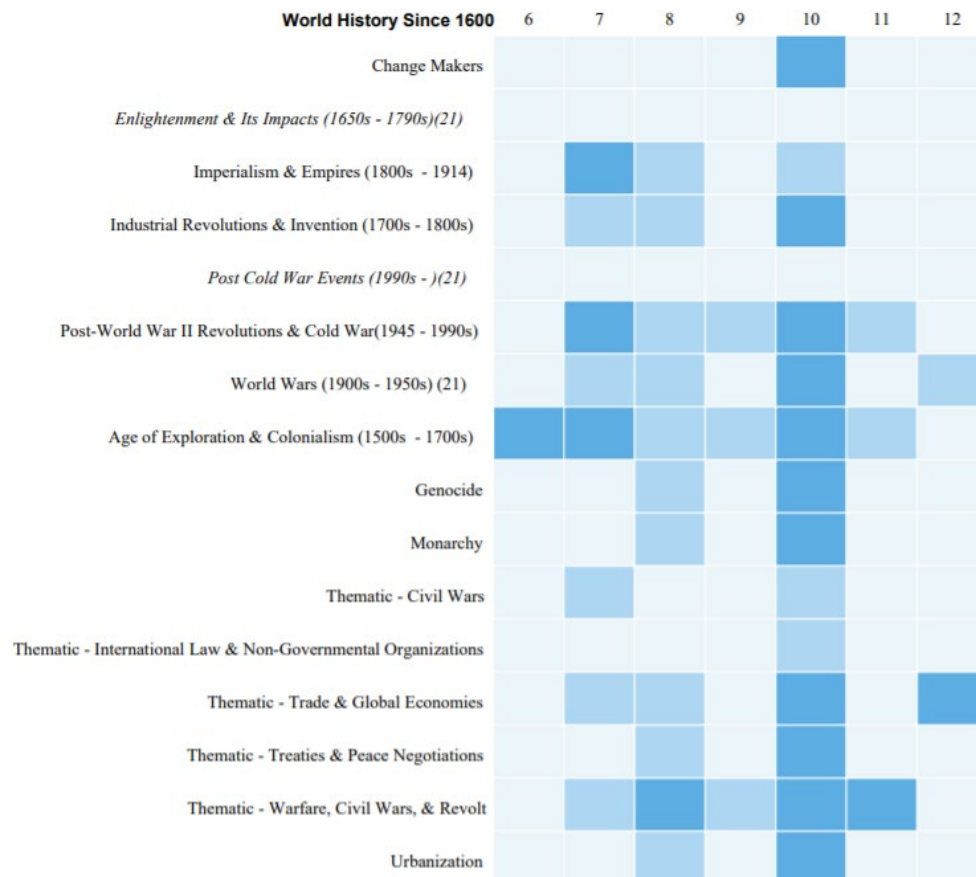


Figure 20. Heat map analysis of the World History Since 1600 knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

DIVERSITY AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DOMAIN: GRADES 6-12

Culturally Responsive texts represent a spectrum of positive, neutral, and negative aspects of a cultural group's experience in the United States. Quality texts rated for the Diversity & Culturally Responsive knowledge domain illustrate both strengths and challenges relevant to each group. Materials evaluated for Cultural Responsiveness range from picture books to documentary films. The Institute reviewed 192 texts for cultural relevance across grades 6-12 and found 47 that address the topics within this domain.

The knowledge domain of Diversity & Cultural Responsiveness parses into specific topics of cultural experience - African American Experience, World Cultures (n=26 or 13.5%), LGBTQIA+ Experience (n=5 or 2.6%), Immigrant Experience (n=3 or 1.6%), Individuals with Disabilities (n=3 or 1.6%), and Native American Experience (n=1 or 0.5%). No texts addressed the topics of the Asian American or Latinx & Hispanic experiences. Overall, this is a weak-to-moderate knowledge-building domain.

The prevalence and distribution of Diversity & Culturally Responsive materials vary across the secondary curriculum. Most grades include culturally relevant materials, as shown below. Grades 10 and 11 contain the most culturally relevant texts. By comparison, Grades 6 and 7 possess the fewest number of Culturally Relevant materials, while Grade 12 possesses none at all.



Figure 20 (repeated). Heat map analysis of the Diversity and Culturally Responsive knowledge domain in Grades 6-12.

MY FATHER'S WORLD QUALITY AND COHERENCE

As mentioned previously, the Institute's analysis includes tagging each text for the knowledge domains, topic, and subtopics that it reinforces. The Institute expanded upon the Heat Map analysis and evaluated each text for quality, according to the rubrics below. In addition, the Institute also applies a coherency score that rates how well the materials within a unit reinforce the overall knowledge build, as described in more detail below.

The findings of quality and coherence vary and are not linked. For instance, a unit may score high in overall quality, shown as a percentage, but may still have a low coherence score in terms of how well the texts reinforce the knowledge introduced in the unit. In other words, units with high overall quality scores may only weakly reinforce central themes through additional materials. The converse is also possible, where a unit scores low for overall quality but presents moderate or strong reinforcement of the unit's topics.

Rubrics for Quality

The Institute applied three rubrics for analysis of text quality: a fiction rubric, a nonfiction rubric, and a literary nonfiction rubric. All three rubrics consider content knowledge and language. Fiction and literary nonfiction (nonfiction material presented in a book-length format) include additional factors relevant to the genres, such as emotion, prominence of the work, and eternal questions. Nonfiction does not consider these factors, instead focusing on the accuracy and quality of the source. Within the literary nonfiction rubric, these factors reside within the 'prominence' category.

Fiction and Literary Nonfiction (Total of 15 possible Points)

Emotion: Emotion is the degree to which the text is memorable due to its impact upon the reader's affect (e.g., Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*).

Language: The degree to which the text contains outstanding language and derives from several factors, including:

- Clarity (Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, and Austen's *Emma*)
- Appeal to the imagination (Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*)
- Sophisticated capacity at multiple levels, including: cultural, social, metaphorical, and/or theological (Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*).

Eternal Questions: Eternal questions form a category about which the text addresses perpetual issues of the human condition, such as: private and public ethics, obedience to the State, family allegiance, meaning and purpose (e.g., Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Camus's *The Stranger*).

Content Knowledge: Content knowledge is the degree to which text builds students' background knowledge about the world (e.g., Erdrich's *Birchbark House* in elementary school, and Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in secondary school).

Prominence: Prominence represents the degree to which a text is widely known. Several factors determine a text's prominence, including:

- Longevity: Degree to which the text has entered the American literary canon, meaning that the text remains widely read after at least 50 years since first publication (e.g., Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* or Thoreau's *Walden*)
- Current prominence: Degree to which the text is a contemporary classic, meaning that American schools widely read the text (e.g., Cisneros's *Last House on Mango Street* or Satrapi's *Persepolis*)
- Awards: Degree to which critics recognize the text as outstanding, such as the Nobel Prize in Literature, Booker Prize, John Newberry, Man Booker Award, [PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction](#), Pulitzer Prize, the [Coretta Scott King](#) awards, or [Pura Belpre Awards](#). More examples of critical literary acclaim linked [here](#).
- Accuracy & Source: For literary nonfiction, accuracy and source quality concern the verifiable factual basis for the information and the bias profile of the source.

Nonfiction (Total of 12 Possible Points)

Accuracy: Accuracy is the degree to which the text is empirically accurate.

Source Quality: Source quality is the degree to which text comes from a high-caliber source. The Institute assigned an initial numerical value to news sources and added quality scores upon encountering new sources. (For relevant links, click [here](#).)

Language: Language as a category represents the degree to which the text is well written and presents its subject matter.

Content Knowledge: Content knowledge as a category is the degree to which the text effectively builds background knowledge of the topic or subtopic at hand.

Coherence Analysis

Finally, the Institute generates *Unit Coherence Maps* that illustrate the extent to which the materials reinforce the knowledge built within that unit, measured through shared topical tags.

The Unit Coherence map utilizes a hub and spoke visual, where the unit name appears in the central square and the surrounding squares represent the unit's additional materials. The percentage shown on each outer square represents the percentage of shared topics weighted against the total number of shared topics within a unit. The more often a topic is shared within a unit, the higher the percentage for each text including that topic; similarly, less frequent topics will result in a lower percentage for each text. The proximity of each spoke to the central unit square visually represents this relationship. Additionally, the upper right corner of the graphic presents the overall unit coherence score. This score

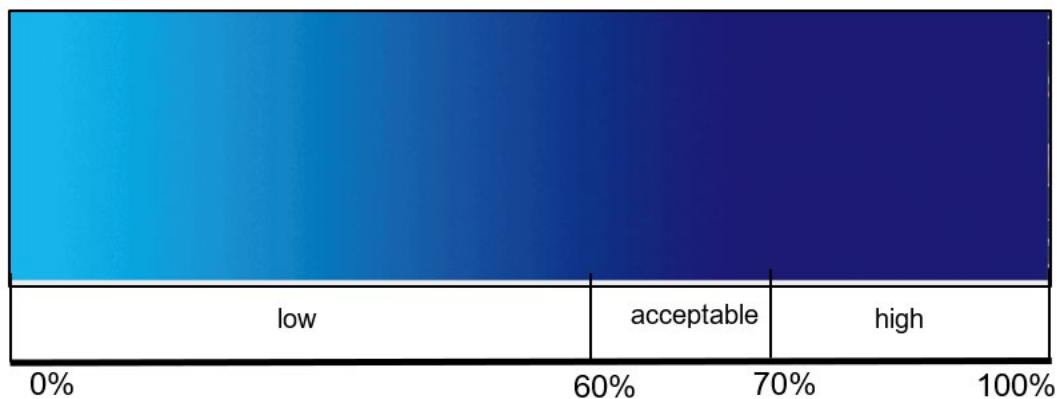


Figure 21. Interpretation of unit quality scores

MY FATHER'S WORLD UNIT COHERENCE FINDINGS: GRADES K-12

The quality and coherence findings for each grade level follow in the sections below. This report highlights the highest- and lowest-quality units for each grade and provides a discussion of knowledge reinforcement within those units. The caption below each graphic provides an average quality score for all texts contained in the unit. The Institute considers a unit or text high quality if it achieves a score of 70% or above. A unit or text rated below 60% is poor quality, and one between 60% and 69% is acceptable. The caption also includes a unit's Coherency Score. Because the score depends on the number of shared topics within a unit, what constitutes a strong Coherency Score will vary from unit to unit.

Kindergarten

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 71.99%, placing it in the high-quality band. Coherence analysis suggests moderate knowledge reinforcement, as seen below. Texts vary in their ability to connect topically to each other, with individual coherence scores falling across a wide spectrum. This suggests that while the texts within this grade build off of each other to an extent, additional care should be taken to ensure well-rounded reinforcement of all of the main themes.

- [Shape Key](#)

○ At least one domain aligns with anchor.

1 Qualitative Score: 71.99 %

1 Coherence Score: 58.3 %

Potential Total Score: 58.8% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -0.5% / 58.3% Final Coherence Score

- [Color Key \(quality score\)](#)

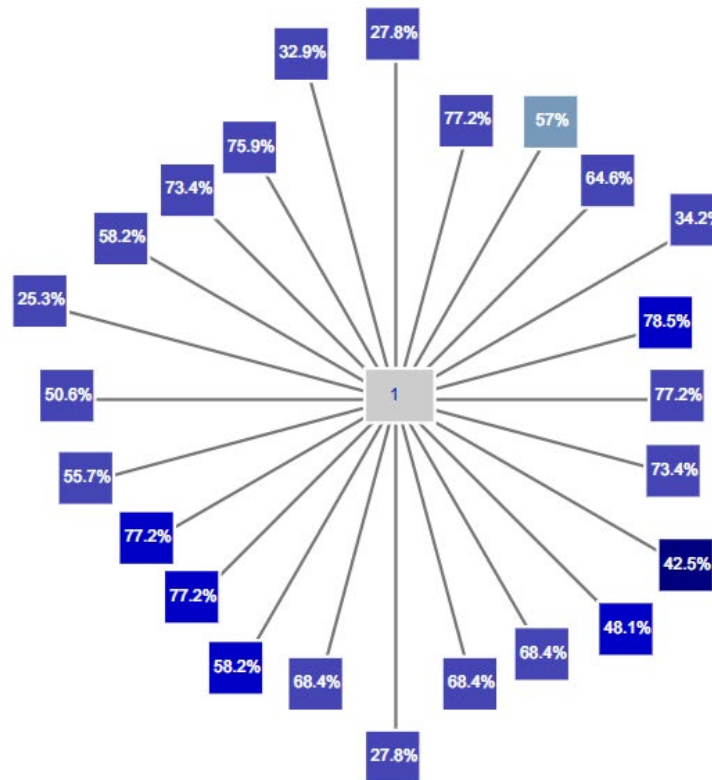
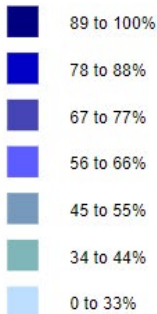


Figure 22. Proximity map of Grade K, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 71.99%. The final coherence score is 58.3%.

Grade 1

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 91.67%. The results of coherence analysis indicate weak knowledge reinforcement throughout the unit, as demonstrated in Figure 37. While most of the text reinforce the topics Life & Living Things, Geology & Earth Science, and Discovery & Exploration from the Science domain, two of the texts, *Bible Reader* and *Tales from Cherry Lane*, do not support these at all. These texts focus on the Social-Emotional domain. Ensuring further overlap of the ideas addressed by all materials in the unit would contribute to further knowledge reinforcement at this level.

1 Qualitative Score: 91.67 %
 1 Coherence Score: 38.8 %
 Potential Total Score: 39.3% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -0.5% / 38.8% Final Coherence Score

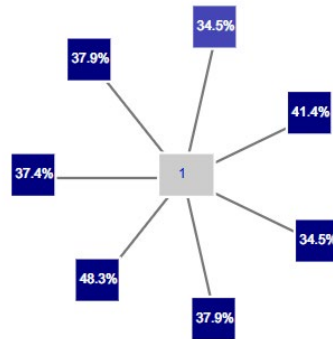


Figure 37. Proximity map of Grade 1, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 91.67%. The final coherence score is 38.8%

Grade 2

1 Qualitative Score: 70.29 %
 1 Coherence Score: 26.6 %
 Potential Total Score: 27.1% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -0.5% / 26.6% Final Coherence Score

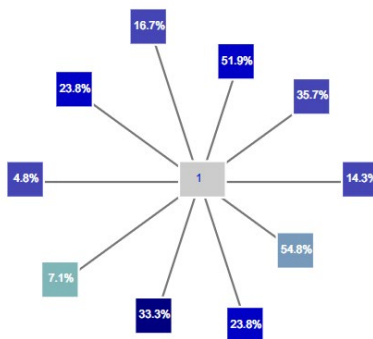


Figure 23. Proximity map of Grade 2, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 70.29%. The final coherence score is 26.6%.

Grade 3

1 Qualitative Score: 75.00 %
1 Coherence Score: 31 %
Potential Total Score: 33.5% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -2.5% / 31% Final Coherence Score

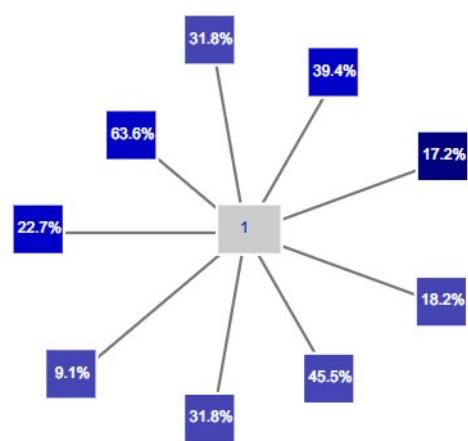


Figure 24. Proximity map of Grade 3, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 75.00%. The final coherence score is 31.00%.

Grade 4

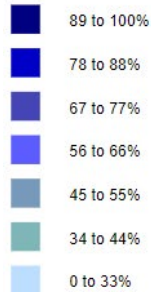
The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 72.28%.

Individual text quality varies, as demonstrated by the blue shading in the figure below. Coherence analysis suggests weak knowledge reinforcement at this level. Individual coherence scores skew low across the entire unit, indicating few similarities in topical coverage from text to text. This unit’s overall efficacy could be improved with a greater focus on top-quality materials that truly connect to its main ideas.

- [Shape Key](#)

○ At least one domain aligns with anchor.

- [Color Key \(quality score\)](#)



1 Qualitative Score: 72.28 %

1 Coherence Score: 31.2 %

Potential Total Score: 32.7% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -1.5% / 31.2% Final Coherence Score

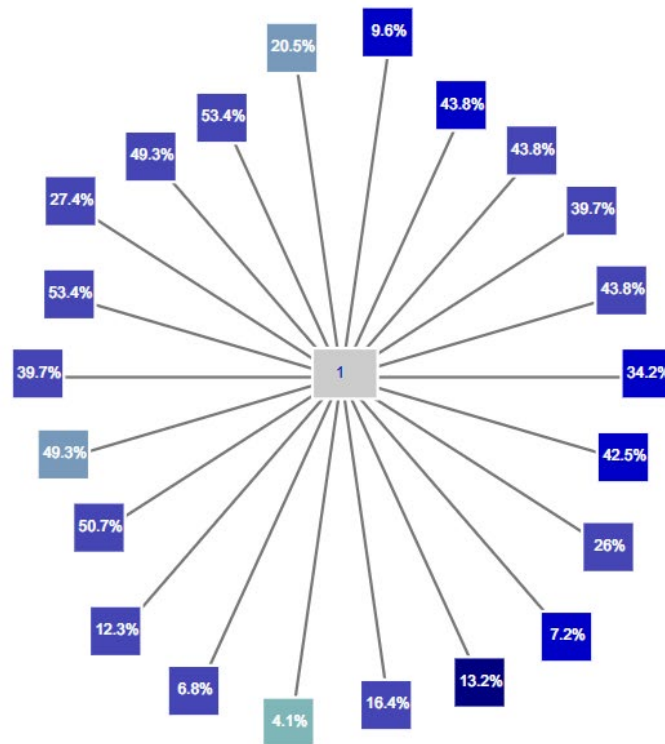


Figure 250. Proximity map of Grade 4, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 72.28%. The final coherence score is 31.2%.

Grade 5

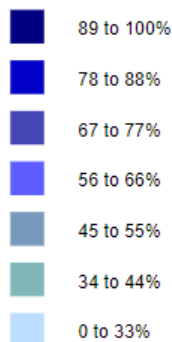
The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 88.70%. Coherence analysis indicates weak levels of knowledge reinforcement at this level, as indicated by the unit's low final coherence score. Both the generally low individual scores and the isolated domain penalty levied on the unit suggest that instruction here could benefit from more concrete connections between texts.

- [Shape Key](#)



At least one domain aligns with anchor.

- [Color Key \(quality score\)](#)



Potential Total Score: 31.4% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -1.5% / 29.9% Final Coherence Score

1 Qualitative Score: 88.70 %

1 Coherence Score: 29.9 %

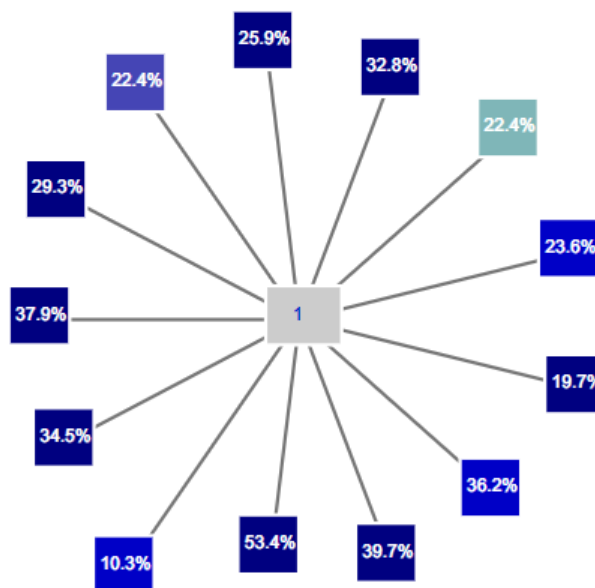


Figure 261. Proximity map of Grade 5, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 88.70%. The final coherence score is 29.9%.

Grade 6

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 72.58%. Individual text quality varies, as demonstrated by the figure below; though several materials achieve strong quality ratings, other texts demonstrate a weaker grasp of the subject matter. Coherence analysis demonstrates weak reinforcement of knowledge built by the texts. Notably, the unit receives a staggering isolated domain penalty of 14%, revealing that many texts exist in a topical vacuum rather than building off of each other. Ensuring meaningful connections from text to text to create a more significant knowledge build would improve the efficacy of the unit as a whole.

1 Qualitative Score: 72.58 %

1 Coherence Score: 32.2 %

Potential Total Score: 46.2% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -14% / 32.2% Final Coherence Score

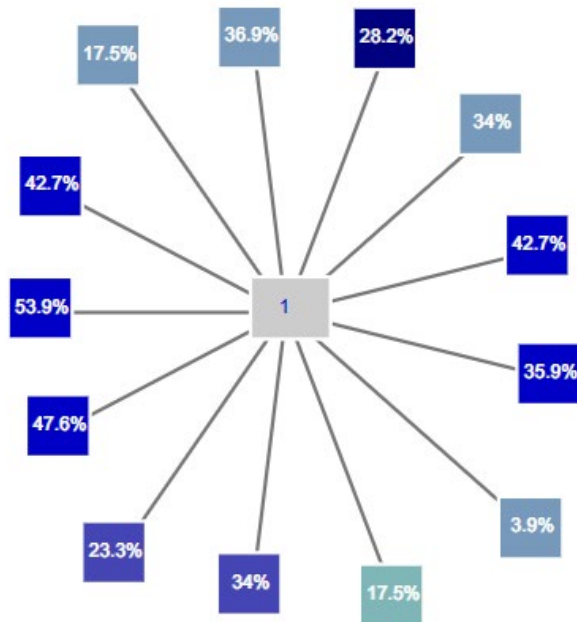


Figure 27. Proximity map of Grade 6, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 75.58%. The final coherence score is 32.2%.

Grade 7

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 68.78%. Coherence analysis indicates that the unit achieves weak reinforcement of knowledge built by the texts, as shown in the figure below. The final coherence score of 25% stems from both the low individual coherence scores and the significant penalty levied for isolated knowledge domains. This lack of reinforcement indicates that students do not always receive further development of the unit's main ideas. Prioritizing the introduction of further quality materials that connect more strongly to the unit's core lessons would improve the unit as a whole.

1 Qualitative Score: 68.78 %

1 Coherence Score: 25 %

Potential Total Score: 31.5% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -6.5% / 25% Final Coherence Score

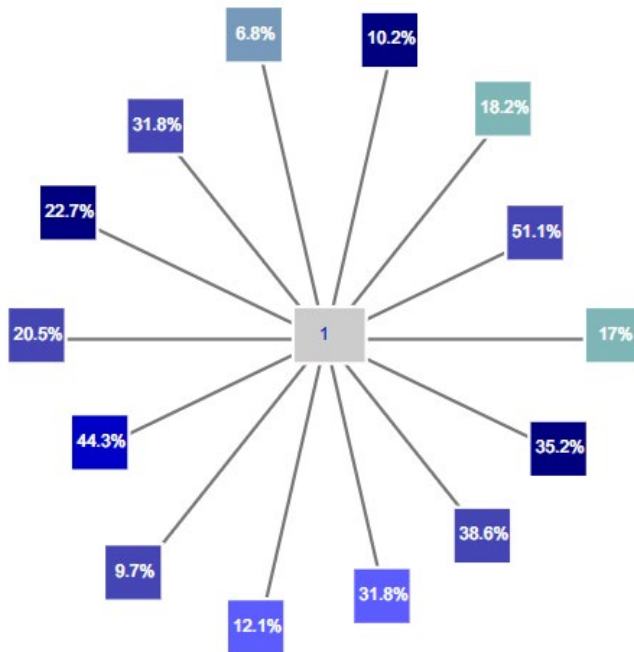


Figure 28. Proximity map of Grade 7, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 68.78%. The final coherence score is 25%.

Grade 8

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 79.91%. Most materials available at this level achieve high quality ratings when evaluated by the aforementioned rubrics. The coherence analysis suggests moderate reinforcement of the knowledge established within the unit. The selected texts within this unit each have a wide array of topics, helping reinforce concepts throughout the unit.

1 Qualitative Score: 79.91 %

1 Coherence Score: 45.8 %

Potential Total Score: 46.8% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -1% / 45.8% Final Coherence Score

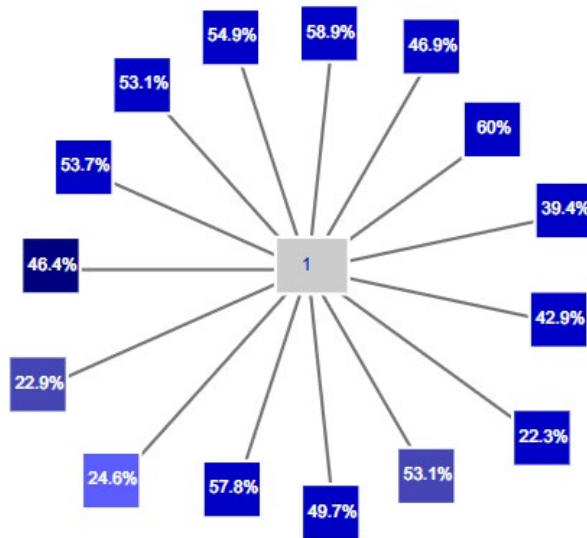


Figure 29. Proximity map of Grade 8, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 79.91%. The final coherence score is 45.8%.

Grade 9

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 72.96%. Though some texts achieve a high-quality rating by the standards of the rubrics, the quality of others varies drastically, as seen below. Additionally, coherence analysis reveals weak reinforcement of knowledge throughout this unit. Low individual scores and a notable penalty for isolated knowledge domains indicate that the ideas presented in one text are infrequently expanded upon in other texts. A focus on consistency both in terms of text quality and general proximity of ideas would bolster this unit significantly.

1 Qualitative Score: 72.96 %
 1 Coherence Score: 39.3 %
 Potential Total Score: 42.3% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -3% / 39.3% Final Coherence Score

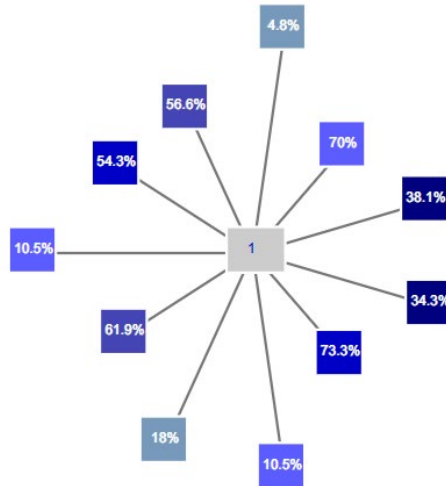


Figure 30. Proximity map of Grade 9, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 72.96%. The final coherence score is 39.3%.

Grade 10

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 77.37%. Individual text quality is solid overall, although several supplementary materials achieve weaker ratings when judged by the rubrics. Coherence analysis suggests a moderate knowledge reinforcement, as seen in the figure below. Texts vary considerably in their individual coherence scores. As the graphic below reveals, however, certain texts perform better on this metric, and could be used as a basis for future development. Reevaluating certain low-quality materials with lower coherency scores would contribute to further effectiveness.

1 Qualitative Score: 77.37 %
 1 Coherence Score: 40.8 %
 Potential Total Score: 41.8% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -1% / 40.8% Final Coherence Score

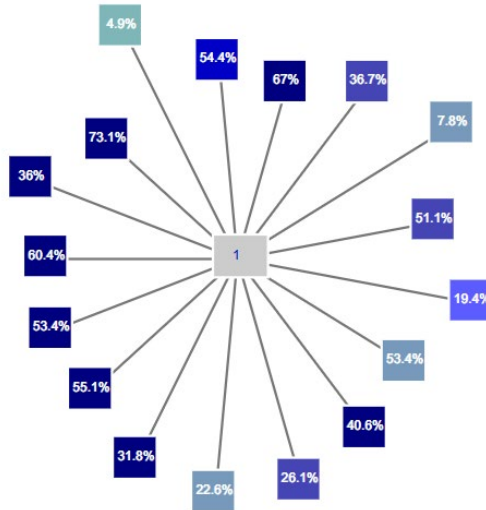


Figure 31. Proximity map of Grade 10, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 77.37%. The final coherence score is 40.8%.

Grade 11

Grade 11 receives an overall quality score of 77.84%, placing it in the high-quality band. The Institute conducted an analysis of the units for coherence; though the visual graph is too large to include in this report, it can be viewed in full through the Institute's online database.

The majority of this unit's many texts achieve high or acceptable quality ratings when compared against the rubrics used, though weaker materials are scattered throughout the unit. Coherence analysis of the unit indicates weak coherence across the entire unit, with considerable variance throughout. Though the unit contains a wide variety of materials, they vary considerably in their ability to topically connect to the unit as a whole. This suggests that a portion of the sources students access during this unit do not meaningfully build upon the knowledge established in the unit. In a unit this size, it may be best to reevaluate the presence of lower quality or less relevant materials in order to create a more consistent and focused unit overall.

Grade 12

The only unit available at this grade level, Unit 1, achieves an average text quality score of 60.78%. Overall text quality falls off significantly here, as suggested by the chart below; many texts do not meet the standards put forth in the rubric. Additionally, coherence analysis indicates weak reinforcement of ideas across the entire unit. Texts vary in their ability to build coherence, and the unit as a whole receives a significant penalty for the presence of isolated knowledge domains. In order for the overall quality of this unit to improve, both general text quality and overall relevance should be evaluated.

1 Qualitative Score: 60.78 %
 1 Coherence Score: 43.6 %
 Potential Total Score: 47.1% / Isolated Domain Penalty: -3.5% / 43.6% Final Coherence Score

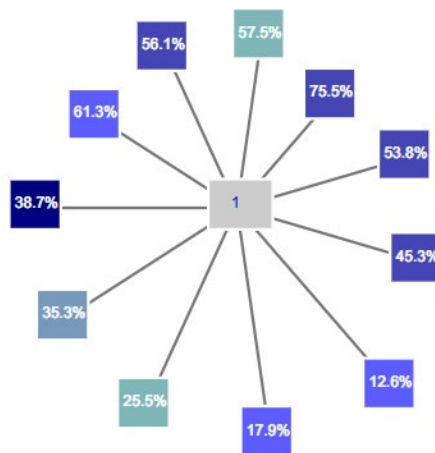


Figure 32. Proximity map of Grade 12, Unit 1. The average unit score for text quality is 60.78%. The final coherence score is 43.6%.

MY FATHER’S WORLD QUALITY ASSESSMENT

In summary, the quality of the My Father’s World curriculum varies. The chart below shows each overall quality score by grade level. With the exception of Grade 12, all units score acceptable or high-quality ratings, presenting an area of strength for the curriculum. In particular, grades 1 and 5 demonstrate strong quality overall, and both could be used as a basis for future curriculum-wide improvement. Most other units score between 70 and 79 percent for quality, indicating a level of consistency and quality across the curriculum. Though the My Father’s World curriculum presents an overall solid and consistent knowledge base, unit-specific text evaluations could contribute to specialized improvement in both text quality and knowledge reinforcement.

Grade	Overall Unit Quality Score
K	71.99%
1	91.67%
2	70.29%
3	75.00%
4	72.28%
5	88.70%
6	72.58%
7	68.78%
8	79.91%
9	72.96%
10	77.37%
11	77.84%
12	60.78%

Figure 33. Summary of unit quality scores in Grades K-12.

LEARN MORE

This report is one of twelve ELA Knowledge Map™ reports released in Winter 2022 by the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy. The release of these reports was accompanied by a Findings Summary, outlining the overarching themes across all ELA curricula analyzed. View the other ELA Knowledge Map™ reports and learn more about the importance of high-quality curriculum at edpolicy.education.jhu.edu.

About the Institute

The [Johns Hopkins University Institute for Education Policy](https://edpolicy.education.jhu.edu) is dedicated to integrating research, policy, and practice to achieve educational excellence for all of America's students. Specifically, we connect research to the policies and practices that will ensure all children have access to intellectually challenging curricula, highly-effective educators, and school models that meet students' diverse needs. By delivering the strongest evidence to the policymakers who set the course and the practitioners who teach and lead, we hope to serve the American children who enter our classrooms every day.

About My Father's World Curriculum

[My Father's World](https://www.myfather'sworld.com) is dedicated to inspiring academic excellence in an easy and life transforming way. My Father's World Christian homeschool curriculum combines the best of Charlotte Mason's ideas, classical education, and unit studies with a biblical worldview and global focus. Our goal is to raise up generations of families who see the world through God's eyes and live according to that knowledge.

ⁱ Reid Smith et al., "[The Role of Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension: A Critical Review](#)," *Reading Psychology* 42, no. 3 (April 3, 2021): 214–40). Sonia Q. Cabell and Hyejin Hwang, "Building Content Knowledge to Boost Comprehension in the Primary Grades," *Reading Research Quarterly* 55, no. S1 (2020): S99–107, <https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/rrq.338> and also Kathryn S. McCarthy and Danielle S. McNamara, "The Multidimensional Knowledge in Text Comprehension Framework," *Educational Psychologist* 56, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 196–214, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2021.1872379>.

ⁱⁱ "Standards aligned" generally refers to the Common Core State Standards.



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