



Dear *Houghton Mifflin Reading* Teacher,

Welcome to the third issue of the *Houghton Mifflin Reading California* Newsletter.

In this issue, we will spotlight assessment that drives instruction and offer tips on using resources in *Houghton Mifflin Reading* to effectively deliver instruction.

Visit the Houghton Mifflin California Website!

Visit www.eduplace.com, click on state resources, then click on California.



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AUTHOR'S CORNER

Assessment That Drives Instruction



Sheila Valencia

Dear California Teacher:

I am one of the authors of *Houghton Mifflin Reading California*. It was our goal to create a program that would provide you and your students with the support you need to succeed.

I'd like to share a few tips that will help you move through the program. These tips relate to assessment and how you can use assessment to monitor student progress and adjust instruction.

TIP #1: There are two types of assessment in *Houghton Mifflin Reading*: (1) those that are more formal such as Integrated Theme Tests, Theme Skills Tests, The Emerging Literacy Survey, and Leveled Reading Passages, and (2) those that are more informal such as the comprehension checks in the Practice Book, diagnostic checks and fluency assessments in the Teacher's Edition lesson plans. Writing rubrics, observation checklists, and selection tests are in the Blackline Masters. The formal assessments are typically given at the end of a theme or at specific times during the school year. Informal assessments are

used as needed during instruction. You can't do all of these. Determine one or two of the formal measures that best meet your needs and then use the informal assessments flexibly as you work through each theme with your students.

TIP #2: Good assessment relies on more than a single piece of information. Students' performance may vary depending on what they are reading, how much support they have had, their background knowledge, and the mode of response (oral or written). Be sure to use information from several sources to get the best assessment of student performance. By analyzing the situations in which students do well and those in which they struggle, you will be better able to adjust instruction to meet their needs.

TIP #3: Students should be involved in their own assessment. It is how they learn the qualities of good work and how they become engaged in setting appropriate goals. Student self-assessment prompts are placed strategically in the Teacher's Edition in the End-of Selection

Assessment box and in the Reading-Writing Workshop. Use these questions to help students think about their reading and writing. In addition, make students part of the assessment process by involving them in evaluating other work products (e.g. Practice Book pages, pieces of writing, tests) and guiding them to think aloud about their strengths and challenges.

I hope you and your students are having a very successful school year!

Sincerely,

Sheila Valencia
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Author, *Houghton Mifflin Reading California*

TEACHER'S TIPS

Extend the writing and grammar in *Houghton Mifflin Reading*!

TEACHER TIP #1

Visit the *Houghton Mifflin* website and access resources from our language arts program: *Houghton Mifflin English*.

Begin by visiting the Houghton Mifflin website www.eduplace.com. From the homepage, click on the *Houghton Mifflin English* icon. Here you will find a myriad of resources that complement the grammar instructional sequence and the Reading-Writing Workshops found in *Houghton Mifflin Reading*. The topics support your core instruction in many ways!

- Choose the **Benchmark Paper Oval** and select your grade level to view a choice of writing domains to choose from. You will find a wide choice of rubric score(s) that you can print and use with your students as well as benchmark papers to illustrate specific aspects of quality writing.
- Select the **Grammar Icon** to find Grammar Enrichment, Grammar Quizzes, Prewriting Ideas, and Writing Prompts to extend the grammar in *Houghton Mifflin Reading*.

- Select the **Writing Traits Icon** to access definitions of "6-Traits Plus 1" in writing instruction. In addition, you will find a visual placing the traits where they occur in the writing process.

- For further "6-Traits Plus 1" support, the **Teacher's Assessment Handbook** includes a General Analytic Scoring Sheet and an Analytic Scoring Overview Grid on pages 112–113 to help create student profiles.

TEACHER TIP #2

Power Proofreading

The Power Proofreading CD that comes with the Writing Resource Center provides an engaging and motivating way to practice proofreading. Students are given the opportunity to edit various documents. When students have finished their "have-to's" they can go individually or in a small group to work with Power Proofreading at the computer. Power Proofreading can also be found at our website www.eduplace.com.

Remember "Mad Libs?" *Houghton Mifflin Reading* has them! You and your students will want to check out *Wacky Web Tales*, our version of "Mad Libs" on www.eduplace.com/kids/games/.

TEACHER TIP #3

Visit the other reading/language arts icons on the *Houghton Mifflin* website, www.eduplace.com.

Click on the Reading/Language Arts link to view all of Houghton Mifflin's reading/language arts resources. Click on the "banner" logo for Houghton Mifflin Reading (as opposed to the "chevron" logo) to access additional ideas to extend and support your instruction.

To find additional support for the **Focus On Genre** sections in *Houghton Mifflin Reading*, go to your grade, select a theme, then select Extension Activities.

At "**Kids' Place**" you and your students will find e-postcards, online quizzes, book reviews, and online polls. Students can vote on their favorite selections/genres and write their own reviews for on-line posting. You will also find several games such as Brain Tease, Tackle Reading, Spelling Match, and Fake Out that support writing and grammar practice.

COMPONENT SPOTLIGHT

Sound/Spelling Cards

Sound/Spelling Cards are a core component of the *Houghton Mifflin Reading* program, grades 1–6. The Sound/Spelling Cards are a tool for both the teacher and the student to use in their teaching and learning.

Don't be fooled by the word "Spelling" in the title of the cards. They are not just to be used for *encoding* (spelling and writing instruction)! The Sound/Spelling Cards are an effective tool in teaching the reading process or *decoding* skills to all students, but especially struggling readers. For example, Jolyn, a reading coach from San Francisco Unified SD, uses the Sound/Spelling Cards frequently with her struggling readers in 5th grade. While reading with her students, she uses a scaffolded approach to teach the letter/sound associations. As she reads to the students, she frequently stops and models how she breaks apart a multi-syllabic word. As she models her thinking and decoding skills, she holds up the appropriate Sound/Spelling Card. At another time, when students are reading silently, she will ask a pre-selected student to find a word that gave him/her trouble. Then together they practice how to decode the word with the help of a Sound/Spelling Card. When ready, students will then select a word on their own. For their classmates, they will model their word using the Sound/Spelling Cards. Joyln teaches her students that the Sound/Spelling Cards are an important tool they can use while reading.

Additional Ways to Use the Sound/Spelling Cards:

- During Back to School for grades 2–6, turn over a consistent amount of cards each day. Review the sound and spelling for each card. Have students write their names, the Title, and 2 words that fit the spelling pattern.
- Use the appropriate card(s) each week with student's spelling lessons. Place the card on a bulletin board. Place index cards in a box under or next to the board. Invite students to find words from their reading and rewrite the word on the index card. Then have the students pin/tape the word under the appropriate card.
- Use in interactive writing.



UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Strategies for Advanced Learners

Houghton Mifflin Reading offers many activities and strategies to meet the needs of our advanced learners.

Identify your advanced learners by observing students who exhibit the following:

- Evidence of creativity
- High level of motivation
- Critical thinking ability
- Communication Skills
- Leadership
- Task Persistence
- Logical reasoning skills
- Ability to improvise with commonplace materials
- Use of expressive speech and humor

Houghton Mifflin Reading includes many resources to meet the needs of advanced learners:

Challenge Handbook

The Challenge Handbook offers daily challenge activities and long-term projects that provide enrichment opportunities that will extend students' learning in a meaningful and engaging way. All of the activities are critical thinking activities that encourage problem solving and higher-level thinking.

Classroom Management Handbook

The Classroom Management Handbook provides:

- Daily ready-to-use literacy centered activities

- Differentiating curriculum and instruction suggestions
- Grouping strategies
- Pacing guidelines
- Meaningful activities related to literature selections and core skills

Teacher's Edition

- Universal Access boxes provide strategies to modify the core lessons for advanced learners.
- Classroom Management boxes provide strategies for advanced learners to use as they read the anthology selections
- The Teacher Resources Section provides Challenge Activities for phonics, high frequency words, and comprehension in the primary grades. In the upper grades, there are challenge activities for comprehension and vocabulary.
- The "Purple Pages" provide lesson plans for the Challenge Theme Paperbacks.

Other Houghton Mifflin Reading Resources

The Teacher's Resource Blackline Masters provide reading cards that will encourage higher-level thinking and synthesis for California students. Our award-winning website www.eduplace.com offers extension activities for every story selection in *Houghton Mifflin Reading California*.

The *Houghton Mifflin Leveled Readers* developed with Dr. Irene Fountas and the *Houghton Mifflin Social Studies Leveled Readers* also developed with Dr. Irene Fountas, provide above level books and lesson plans.

TEACHERS ASK...

What are the different ways to use the Content Links?

Every Content Link follows an anthology story, and each “Link” focuses on learning a particular skill. There are several ways to use the Content Links depending on your grade level.

Early Finishers in the Intermediate Grades:

During an introduction, state the explicit goal of the Content Link (the skill is located in the read bar on the first page of the link). Next, remind students to keep the skill in mind while they read the Content Link. An effective activity for early finishers is a presentation of the content link to the class.

After a required assignment is finished, in pairs or small groups, have these early finishers read the content link. Using the Group form in back of the Classroom Management Handbook, tell students that they will be responsible for presenting the Content Link to the rest of the class. It is assumed that you will have led the class in a few Content Link explorations before making this project available to students. Remember, the more explicitly you have modeled the process, the better your students are likely to take your lead. As a guide, provide a copy of an relevant graphic organizer that can be found either in the Teacher’s Edition on the second page of the Link, in the back of the Challenge Handbook, or in the Transparency Box. The students can use this guide while presenting to the class.

Once the early finishers have completed this project, but before they present, schedule a time to meet with them to review their understandings and guide them in an outline of their presentation. Depending on their abilities, you will know how much structure you have to provide to their presentation so that it is truly beneficial to the rest of the class.

Primary Grades:

Many teachers in the primary grades read the Content Links to the entire class on Thursday. Then on Friday, they have students participate in extension activities based on the main anthology story and content link. In these small groups or centers, student engage in fun exciting activities that increase their content area knowledge, as well as, apply several comprehension and content link skills. For example, in second grade the Content Link following *Moses Goes to a Concert* (Theme 6) is on symphonies. As a center activity, students can compare and contrast different types of symphony music using a Venn diagram (provide several types of symphony music on tape/CD for the students to listen to). While, the skill compare and contrast is not the highlighted skill for the week, it is an excellent opportunity to create a spiral review of the skill in a fun and motivating environment.

All Grades

Many teachers find the Content Links as great opportunities to reinforce the science and social studies standards for their grade level. The Links provide them time to teach content area subject matter in Reading/Language Arts.

They are also excellent opportunities to teach expository text. You can provide several mini lessons on text features, text structures, vocabulary, comprehension, skills and strategies, and the use of graphic organizers. All these “best practices” strategies will allow students to access expository text and ultimately lead to an increase in test scores.

Why are the Theme Skills Tests so long? How can I give them to my students without overwhelming them or taking up too much time?

In order to conform to the California state requirements for an adopted Language Arts Program, the Theme Skills Tests assess the long list of standards set for each grade level by the state. The Theme Skills Test for each theme is broken down into subtests by specific skill.

In intermediate grades, you may occasionally want to give the entire test in one or two segments in preparation for the conditions students will encounter during standardized testing.

In most other instances, you can break the entire theme test into smaller chunks. Open your Theme Skills Test to the Student Record Form for the upcoming theme. Compare each subtest (part A, part B, etc.) to the Theme at a Glance page in the corresponding Teacher’s Edition. Note which subtest skills are taught in the course of one selection and which are taught over the course of the entire theme. On the Theme at a Glance page, put a sticky-note at the end of each row on which subtests you will give after you have completed that selection. As an example, you might schedule Theme Skills subtests A, D, and J after selection I; subtests B, E, and K after selection II; and subtests C, F, and L after selection III, because each of those subtests deal with skills covered in each of those selections only. The remaining subtests (G, H, I, and M) cover skills encountered throughout the theme, so they would be given at the end of the theme.

It is important to decide on the purpose for giving these tests: assessment OF instruction or assessment FOR instruction. If you are required to do assessment OF instruction for a particular theme, follow the subtest breakdown as outlined above for all students. If, however, you are using the Theme Skills Test as assessment FOR instruction (in order to guide instruction), consider that not every student needs to take every subtest. You may already have “proof” of a student’s understanding of a particular skill through his writing, a practice book page, the results of an activity or project, or your observation of him during small group instruction. Remember the sticky-notes on the Theme at a Glance page in your TE? After each subtest and as you progress through the selection, list the students that need to take that test because you do not already have sufficient knowledge of their understanding.

NEW FROM HOUGHTON MIFFLIN Houghton Mifflin PRE–K



Help your young students shine with our new comprehensive PRE–K program!

- Features engaging themes rich in content and oral language development as well as award-winning literature with cross-curricular connections.
- Includes strong academic instruction in 4 essential strands: oral language, phonemic awareness, print awareness, letter knowledge, and provides literacy activities developed from scientifically based reading research to improve fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.
- Integrates literacy, math, and other content areas such as art, social/emotional development, and physical development to increase learning opportunities for Pre-K students.
- Fits with the design and organization of your Pre-K schedule to decrease planning time and increase student learning.