

Arkansas

High Quality Instructional Materials



As educators, we have the task of helping our students learn the standards. This is essential because the standards have been formulated to help students achieve academic excellence and navigate the world after graduation. But this is a difficult task because different students have different needs. Teachers must find ways to teach the standards to a variety of students.

Some teachers have approached this difficulty by either searching for education materials online or creating their own materials from scratch. Both approaches show the dedication of our teachers. They are willing to put extra time into meeting the needs of their students. The problem is, online and self-made materials do not always match the standards, and online materials are often not vetted for accuracy.

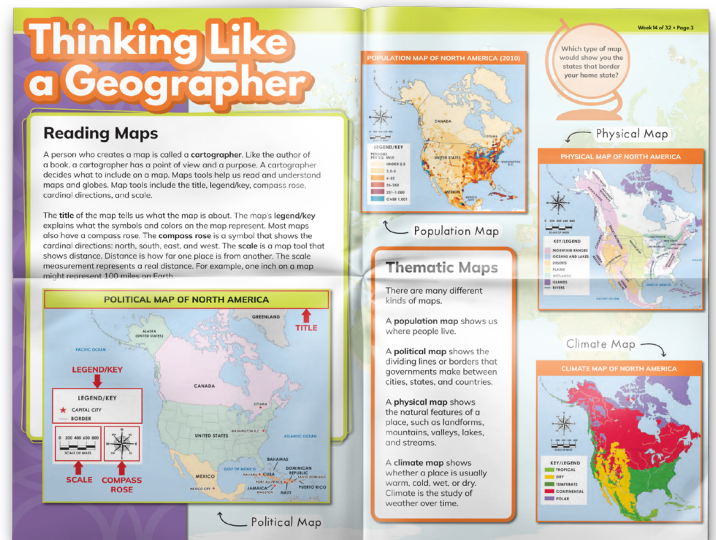
A 2020 national survey published by the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education showed that 64 percent of teachers wished that they could have what is called High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), instead of trying to find or make materials of their own.¹

In Arkansas, HQIM is defined as curriculum materials “aligned to state academic standards that include evidence-based strategies, inclusive practices, and embedded teacher supports.”² In other words, HQIMs go far beyond most material that one can find online. HQIMs not only include the student lesson, but also all supporting materials.

Finding all-inclusive HQIMs can be difficult, firstly because they must meet Arkansas state standards. Then they must provide the

supporting materials: background knowledge on the subject; vocabulary words; lesson plans and activities that account for the needs of students with many different learning styles, cultures, and languages; and assessments.

One popular HQIM nationally is the social studies, science, and health & wellness curricula offered by Studies Weekly. Studies Weekly maintains documents that show how its material is aligned to Arkansas state standards. For example, G.1.3.3 for third grade mandates that students must “Create

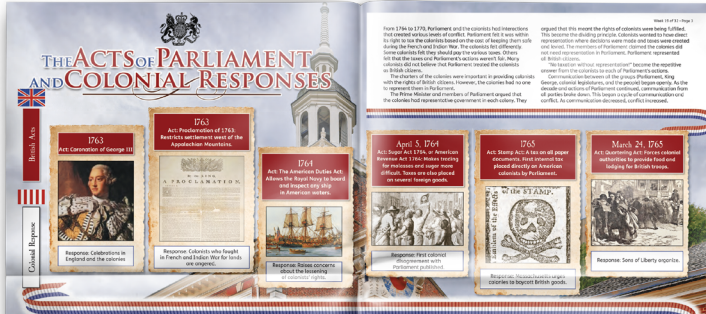


Studies Weekly: Our Community, Week 14

maps to illustrate the physical and human characteristics of a place or region, including titles, symbols, legends, a compass rose, and scale.” This is covered over the course of three lessons: “Thinking Like a Geographer;” “Natural Features and Landforms;” and “Oceans and Deserts.” Standard correlation documents are available within Studies Weekly Online in the Teacher Resources section.

The Studies Weekly student edition is a year-

long colorful, newspaper-style consumable that can be sent home each week or can be highlighted, and cut and glued into interactive notebooks. Each week contains articles and other content, including rich images and graphics to support student understanding of the content.



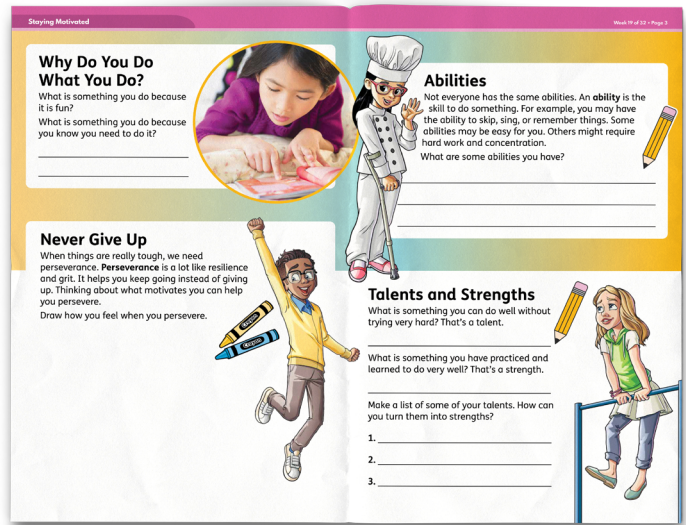
Detail from *Studies Weekly: Our Nation, Week 19*

While the student editions provide engaging and explicit standards coverage, even more value can be found in the Teacher's Edition. This guide provides teaching material and strategies for each article or activity from the student edition, including background knowledge, vocabulary words, lesson plans, classroom activities, reteaching strategies, ELA connections, assessments, literature connections and even videos.

The curriculum is vetted by outside sensitivity readers from various races, cultures, and groups.

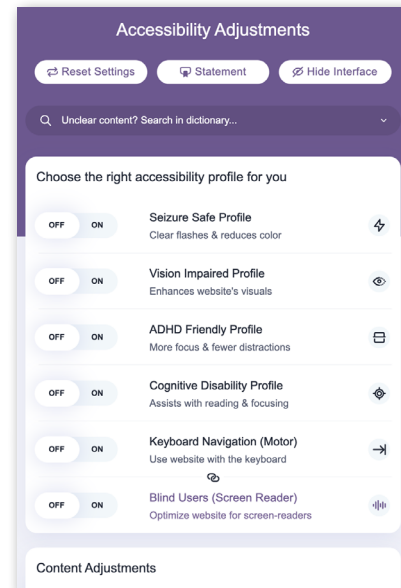
Inclusive practices are an important element of student success. With all publications, Studies Weekly strives to prevent bias and make both the content and access to the content equitably accessible for all students.

In Health and Wellness, students are explicitly encouraged to see all backgrounds, interests, abilities, etc. as something to respect and value.



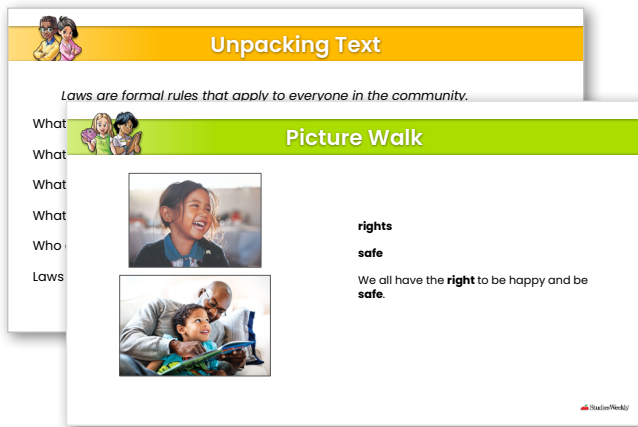
Health and Wellness: Grade 2, Week 19

While having equal access to content and language is important, it does not go far enough to accommodate the needs of all learners. For that reason, Studies Weekly has included a customizable-by-student suite of tools so that the online platform can provide additional supports such as human-recorded audio at variable speeds or ADHD-focused reading panels.



Embedded accessibility tools, teacher can enable for student use.

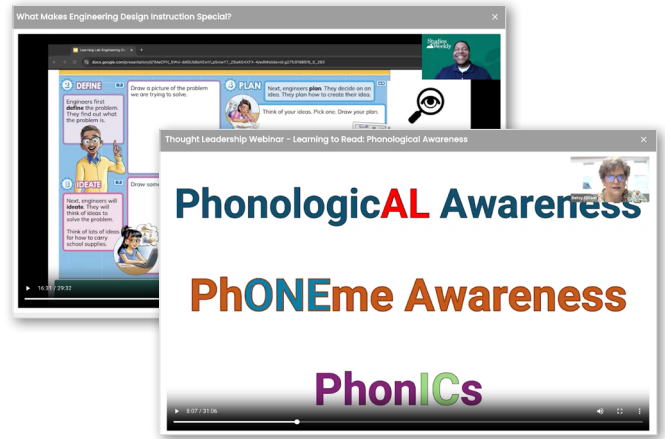
Supporting multilingual learners is an important part of inclusive practices. It supports content and develops academic language for English learners. Native English speakers also benefit from targeted language instruction. That's why Studies Weekly publications include a set of online English Language Development slides in the Teacher Resources area that include seven different instructional strategies (in grades 2-5) to accommodate all entry points into each week. Grades K and 1 include grade-level appropriate language activities.



Studies Weekly: My World Grade K, Week 8

Studies Weekly: Our Community Grade 3, Week 1

Embedded teacher support is key to the success of any program, and any teacher for that matter. While Studies Weekly provides a wide array of paid professional development opportunities, the Training and Resources area of the online platform includes an incredible library of videos and resources to help teachers onboard, grow, evolve, and thrive in using evidence-based strategies. Whether learning about NGSS and 3-dimensional learning, ideas to support students in developing grit and a growth mindset, or how to incorporate English language arts



Training and Resources in Studies Weekly's online platform.

strategies into any content area, the training and resources materials included in the subscription help teachers thrive every step of the way.

Whether supporting students or teachers, Studies Weekly gives the teacher an abundance of high quality materials to work with as teachers increase their own education and strive to use inclusive practices to reach all their students.

¹"Building Pathways to HQIM," Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, <https://indd.adobe.com/view/980bc6c3-80b4-4ecf-9220-4b13146b476a>.

²"Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials," Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-initiative-for-instructional-materials-aiim>.