

Really Great Reading Company

English Phonics, K
 Countdown Texas Edition, Grade Kindergarten

MATERIAL TYPE	ISBN	FORMAT	ADAPTIVE/STATIC
Partial-Subject, Tier-1	9781964745237	Print	Static

Rating Overview

TEKS SCORE	PHONICS RULE COMPLIANCE	THREE-CUEING	ERROR CORRECTIONS (IMRA Reviewers)	SUITABILITY NONCOMPLIANCE	SUITABILITY EXCELLENCE	PUBLIC FEEDBACK (COUNT)
100%	Compliant	Flags Not in Report	25	Flags Not in Report	Flags in Report	0

Quality Rubric Section

RUBRIC SECTION	RAW SCORE	PERCENTAGE
1. Intentional Instructional Design	28 out of 28	100%
2. Progress Monitoring	25 out of 26	96%
3. Supports for All Learners	27 out of 27	100%
4. Phonics Rule Compliance	31 out of 31	100%
5. Foundational Skills	94 out of 95	99%

Breakdown by Suitability Noncompliance and Excellence Categories

SUITABILITY NONCOMPLIANCE FLAGS BY CATEGORY	IMRA REVIEWERS	PUBLIC	Flags NOT Addressed by November Vote
1. Prohibition on Common Core	0	0	0
2. Alignment with Public Education's Constitutional Goal	0	0	0
3. Parental Rights and Responsibilities	0	0	0
4. Prohibition on Forced Political Activity	0	0	0
5. Protecting Children's Innocence	0	0	0
6. Promoting Sexual Risk Avoidance	0	0	0
7. Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)	0	0	0

SUITABILITY EXCELLENCE FLAGS BY CATEGORY	IMRA REVIEWERS
Category 2: Alignment with Public Education's Constitutional Goal	2
Category 6: Promoting Sexual Risk Avoidance	0

IMRA Quality Report

1. Intentional Instructional Design

Materials support educators in effective implementation through intentional course, unit, and lesson-level design.

1.1 Course-Level Design

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
1.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
1.1b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
1.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
1.1d	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
1.1e	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
—	TOTAL	12/12

1.1a – Materials include a scope and sequence outlining the TEKS, ELPS, and concepts taught in the course.

In the kindergarten *Countdown Teacher Guide*, "Appendix," a scope and sequence is included that outlines the specific order of English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR), the TEKS, ELPS, and concepts taught throughout the year. For example, Unit 1 has five lessons that will cover concepts including "Functional Vocabulary and Rhyming," "TEKS K.3.C and K.2.Ai," and a variety of ELPS from subsection C.

The *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1*, also includes a scope and sequence outlining the TEKS, ELPS, concepts, and activities taught in each lesson. The different types of activities are color-coded based on skill type. For example, functional vocabulary is purple, rhyming is coral, sound stories are light blue, sight word automaticity is yellow, phonemic awareness is varying shades of green based on skill type, and alphabetic principle is varying shades of teal based on skill type.

1.1b – Materials include suggested pacing (pacing guide/calendar) to support effective implementation for various instructional calendars (e.g., varying numbers of instructional days–165, 180, 210).

For kindergarten, the materials provide a clear pacing guide, which includes the book number, unit number, lesson, activities, skill, the TEKS, and ELPS that are being taught. The pacing guides are built to reflect a five-day week.

The kindergarten materials provide a flexible scheduling chart showing how lessons may be taught in different time increments. The chart shows how long it would take to complete all units. The materials provide multiple calendars to support varying numbers of instructional days.

1.1c – Materials include an explanation for the rationale of unit order as well as how concepts to be learned connect throughout the course.

In the kindergarten *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1*, includes a description of the intentional purpose of each unit. For example, in the section titled "Specific Curricular Goals" in the introduction, the following rationale is provided, "The goals are broken down into two major sections: Units 1–16, which focus on pre-decoding skills and scaffolded decoding and encoding, and Units 17–28, which focus on increasingly independent encoding and decoding of words in isolation and in connected text." The material further explains, "The first half of the year (Units 1–16) teaches pre-decoding skills (understanding the alphabetic principle, building basic phonemic awareness skills, understanding letter-sound relationships, practicing letter formation, and watching and participating in models of proficient decoding and encoding). By Unit 16, students should be able to read and understand the structure of consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words like *hug*, *sat*, *rip*, and *wet*, independently or with the teacher's support."

In kindergarten, the Introduction in *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 3*, includes a rationale for unit order in the sections titled "What is Countdown," "Overarching Goals," and "Specific Curricular Goals." "What is Countdown" explains that Countdown provides a firm foundation in the subskills that lead to strong decoding and fluent reading. "Overarching Goals" includes the primary and secondary goals of the curriculum. "Specific Curricular Goals" are broken down into two major sections, and each section is explained. The "Specific Curricular Goals" section also includes an explanation of how concepts to be learned connect throughout the course. In addition to the connection being explained in the "Specific Curricular Goals" section, the connection is further explained in the "Shift in Focus from Units 6–16 to Units 17–28" and includes a diagram that shows the "Progression of Phonics Concepts Instruction" in *Countdown, Book 3*. The section "Countdown's Unit and Lesson Structure: How Book 3 Differs" explains how *Book 3* adds to the instruction from *Books 1 and 2* and the instructional strands that are the focus in *Book 3*.

1.1d – Materials include protocols with corresponding guidance for unit and lesson internalization.

In the kindergarten *Countdown Teacher Guides*, the materials include internalization guidance for each unit. For example, the "Unit Planner" chart provides information on "the essential whole-group, small group, and independent practice and assessment required in each unit, along with resources for Spanish-speaking students and the wider English Language (EL) population." Notes throughout the units direct the teacher to the corresponding resources as they teach each lesson.

For kindergarten, the *Countdown Teacher Guide Books* include processes for teachers to understand and prepare to teach each unit. The introduction gives teachers information about the strand concentration by unit, lesson structure, and the breakdown of the lesson design. The "Countdown Strands" section gives a brief synopsis of each strand taught.

For kindergarten, the materials include an "Implementation Guide" that provides lesson internalization protocols with teacher guidance on how to use them. In the "Unit Planners Overview and Design Section," a breakdown of each unit lesson is provided with a diagram. It includes direct instruction, handwriting, resources for ELs, practice to mastery, small group, independent practice, and Spanish resources.

1.1e – Materials include resources and guidance for instructional leaders to support teachers with implementing the materials as designed.

The kindergarten materials provide a list of materials needed to successfully implement the unit lessons; for example, the "Supply Room" contains an "Instructional Resources" tab. That tab includes "Instructional Videos," "Articulation Videos," "Vowel Sound Animations," "Posters," and "Charts." The materials include guidance for instructional leaders to support teachers with planning or instruction.

The kindergarten resources do not provide guidance for instructional leaders to support teachers in implementing the materials as designed. The "Unit Planners Overview" and "Design Section" gives the teacher a complete breakdown of each section of the lesson design, with a short description of the teaching expectation for each section.

The *Guide Books* provide lesson information in the side margins to help teachers provide the lessons and differentiation support. Guidance is also provided for instructional leaders to support teachers.

1.2 Unit-Level Design

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
1.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
1.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
—	TOTAL	4/4

1.2a – Materials include comprehensive unit overviews that provide the background content knowledge and academic vocabulary necessary to effectively teach the concepts in the unit.

In the kindergarten *Countdown Teacher Guide Book 1*, the materials provide the background knowledge necessary to effectively teach the concepts in the unit in a section titled "Countdown's Strands: What You Need to Know." The introduction contains key ideas behind each strand of the resource. For example, the section titled "WYNTK: Functional Vocabulary and Key Concepts" states, "Students must understand specific vocabulary and key concepts that underlie the phonemic awareness and phonics concepts they will learn." It also states, "Unit 1 is the introductory Countdown unit that focuses on building this background knowledge in functional vocabulary and other key concepts." Additionally, the materials provide a list and breakdown of the unit's concepts and terms. The materials provide the academic vocabulary necessary to effectively teach the concepts within the unit in "Countdown's Broad Structure: Strands & Sub-strands," found in the introduction. For example, the strand Phonemic Awareness is defined, followed by its sub-strands Beginning Sound Isolation, Blending, Segmenting, and Phoneme Manipulation: Addition, Deletion, and Substitution. All of these sub-strands are defined with examples.

In kindergarten, the "Introduction" in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*, and *Guide, Book 3*, under the section "Specific Curricular Goals" states that the first half of the year is focused on pre-decoding skills, and the second half of the year uses those skills to encode and decode. This section also includes a bulleted list of skills students should have mastered by the first and second half of the year. "Appendix B" contains a "Glossary" that provides the instructor with the academic vocabulary that is necessary to effectively teach the concepts in the unit.

1.2b – Materials contain supports for families in both Spanish and English for each unit with suggestions on supporting the progress of their student.

In the kindergarten *Countdown Supply Room*, the materials include supports for families in both English and Spanish for each unit. For example, under the "Home Connections" tab in "Teacher Resources," there are "Countdown Parent Letters" and "Home Activities" provided for each unit in both English and Spanish. The letter includes guiding information such as "Instructional Vocabulary," "Sounds in Words," "Print Concepts," "Letters and Their Sounds," followed by a glossary for the academic terms mentioned,

and suggested "Early Literacy Home Activities." "The Supply Room" in *Countdown Online* also contains parent letters in English and Spanish for Tier 1 instruction and explains Tier 2–3 intervention.

In kindergarten, there is a QR code that takes families to a "Family Website" that provides videos that are divided into different skills that students will be learning in the classroom to teach foundational and critical concepts. It also provides home resources to help support students at home, as well as practice ideas to use at home. This website is provided in both English and Spanish.

1.3 Lesson-Level Design

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
1.3a	All criteria for guidance met.	8/8
1.3b	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
1.3c	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
—	TOTAL	12/12

1.3a – Materials include comprehensive, structured, detailed lesson plans that include daily objectives, questions, tasks, materials, and instructional assessments required to meet the content and language standards of the lesson (aligned with the TEKS and the ELPS).

The kindergarten *Countdown Teacher Guide Books* include questions that are aligned to lesson objectives to check for understanding within each lesson. For example, in the *Countdown Teacher Book 2*, in Unit 10, Lesson 5, Part 1, the lesson guides the teacher to ask, "How many sounds did you hear in /a/, /d/, and add?"

The kindergarten lessons include references to assessments to determine content objective mastery. For example, in the "What is Assessed" section in the introduction, it explains how students will be assessed throughout the lesson cycles. The "Countdown Quick Checks" are a set of reproducible, quick-to-administer, informative, daily mini-assessments to ensure that students have grasped and internalized the concepts taught in each lesson. Teachers administer a pencil-and-paper "Quick Check" at the end of each day's lesson that targets the specific concepts taught.

For kindergarten, the lesson plans include daily learning objectives for each lesson that are aligned to the TEKS. For example, each lesson has the TEKS written across the top of the page, and lesson objectives match the TEKS listed. The ELPS are notated in the Scope and Sequence and are specifically tied to lessons. The ELPS are listed specifically with the lesson plans in the teacher guidebooks.

The materials consistently include the ELPS addressed in each lesson and how mastery of content will be addressed.

1.3b – Materials include a lesson overview listing the teacher and student materials necessary to effectively deliver the lesson, and the suggested timing for each lesson component.

In the kindergarten *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1*, each lesson begins with a "3, 2, 1 . . ." countdown and guides students on what material they need to access. For example, in Unit 1, Lesson 1, Part 1, it states, "3, 2, 1 . . . Open Countdown Online to Unit 1, Lesson 1, Part 1 (1.1.1)."

In kindergarten, located in the *Teacher Supply Room* under "Teacher Resources," teachers are provided instructional resources per unit. The resource lists both student and teacher materials needed for each component of the lesson. For example, the document for Unit 1, page 1, states that during "Handwriting," teachers will need pages 1–18 in the *RGH Teacher Guide*, and students will need pages 2–5 in the *RGH Student Workbook*.

For kindergarten, the lessons include a section that includes a list of teacher and student materials, as well as a description and sidebars throughout the lesson with information about materials, concepts being taught, and an explanation of how it is important to the lesson. While the teacher and student list of materials is included in the curriculum, it is not explicitly listed in the lessons in the teacher guidebooks in later units.

For kindergarten, in the lesson components, guidance is provided for the suggested timing of the lesson components. For example, in the *Unit 1 Planner*, it is suggested that direct instruction last 20–30 minutes daily, Practice to Mastery 5–10 minutes daily, Small Group Instruction 20–30 minutes daily, and Independent Practice 30–40 minutes weekly.

1.3c – Materials include guidance on the effective use of lesson materials for extended practice (e.g., homework, extension, enrichment).

In kindergarten, the materials provide a variety of extension activities for students. For example, in the "Activities and Extension Units" section in the supply room, extension lessons are provided for spelling two-syllable words, open and closed syllables, and vowel-consonant-e words. These are optional units, and each unit has a lesson plan identifying the objective, a description, a "What You Need to Know" section, along with the materials needed and a script for the teacher to use. The materials also provide opportunities for students to extend their learning at home. For example, students can click on "Letter Tile Freeplay," "Using Letter Tiles for Spelling," or "Heart Word Magic."

Kindergarten materials provide differentiation activities to support the needs of each student. Differentiation options are provided to allow you to simplify the activities or make them more challenging to meet the needs of your students. For example, in the supply room, there are differentiation activities to use in small groups with the Special Education (SPED) population, Emergent Bilingual (EB) population, and students with dyslexia.

In kindergarten, the lessons in *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 3* have symbols in a text box at the end of some lessons that suggest activities to use for enrichment. In the "Supply Room," *Countdown Online* offers teacher resources to differentiate instruction for students who need additional help or more of a challenge. For example, in the "Teacher Resources" section, there are "Differentiation Resources," and in the "Instructional Resource" there are "Additional Activities & Extension Units" to use for extended student practice.

2. Progress Monitoring

Materials support educators in effective implementation through frequent, strategic opportunities to monitor and respond to student progress.

2.1 Instructional Assessments

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
2.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	9/9
2.1b	The materials do not provide the definition of assessment types.	1/2
2.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
2.1d	All criteria for guidance met.	6/6
2.1e	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
—	TOTAL	20/21

2.1a – Materials include a variety of instructional assessments at the unit and lesson level (including diagnostic, formative, and summative) that vary in types of tasks and questions.

In kindergarten, materials include a variety of instructional assessments. At the unit level, the diagnostic and summative assessments vary in types of questions and tasks. In the *Countdown Supply Room* under "Reading Playground," "Diagnostics," and in the "Countdown Oral Decoding Diagnostic Surveys," the variation is stated between the beginning, middle, and end-of-year surveys. The survey begins by students reading "5 real words + 5 high-frequency words," then in the middle of the year they read "5 real words + 3 sentences + 5 high-frequency words," and finally at the end of the year they read "14 real words + 3 sentences + 5 high-frequency words."

The kindergarten materials provide "Diagnostic Decoding Surveys." Teachers use the "Diagnostic Decoding Surveys" to help determine which students are struggling with decoding, and more specifically, what types of words students are struggling to read. The words in the kindergarten "Diagnostic" are identical to those found in *RGR's Kindergarten Foundational Skills Survey (FSSK)*. The words in the diagnostics are representative of kindergarten foundational literacy skills (those found in the "Countdown" curriculum) that focus on: functional vocabulary, phonological/phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, decoding, and high-frequency word reading.

In kindergarten, the materials provide formative assessments or checks for understanding that assess a combination of skills from a group of lessons. For example, in the formative assessment section in the reading playground, a scope and sequence is provided for formative assessments based on the unit number and the lesson. The materials also include a variety of assessment tools for measuring skills and student understanding of phonics skills. For example, assessments include diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments that are embedded at the lesson level in the form of quick checks.

"Three Reading Playground" games from each unit can be utilized as formative assessments. Each game assesses a unique skill taught within

the current unit. The concepts targeted in the assessment games are phonemic awareness, phonics, letter identification, Sound-Letter correspondence, decoding, and encoding. A video is included to guide the teacher on how to assign the assessments.

At the lesson level in kindergarten, the formative and summative assessments vary in types of questions and tasks. In Lesson 1, Unit 19, students learn the procedure for an activity called "Read a Row." The lesson states that the activity "acts as practice for students and also as an informal assessment." In Lesson 4, Unit 18, the materials guide teachers to provide students with two practice activities, "Detective Work" and "Word Sort." The lesson states, "These cumulative and controlled practice activities can serve as a type of formative assessment."

Summative assessments are also embedded within the lesson as a monitoring tool for the teacher. The assessments are intended to be used at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The assessments can be administered in the form of games by creating an assignment, and can be completed whole class or in reading rotations. The teacher can also choose to use oral decoding in two ways: 1:1 with each student, or 2: Using a voice recording tied to an assignment.

2.1b – Materials include the definition and intended purpose for the types of instructional assessments included.

The materials do not provide the definition of assessment types.

In kindergarten, the purpose of each type of instructional assessment is included in the guidance within the materials. In the "Reading Playground Supply Room" under "Formative Assessment," the *Countdown Formative Assessment Guide* states that "three Reading Playground games from each unit can be utilized as formative assessments." The guide explains that these particular assessments are "meant to inform the teacher of the most appropriate next steps for each student. Teachers can use the benchmark scores given in the table to determine which students are on their way to proficiency and which students would benefit from additional instruction and practice."

The kindergarten materials provide information for the intended purpose of each kind of assessment available in the program. For example, the materials explain why the assessment should be used, explaining that "poor decoding is one of the primary reasons students struggle to comprehend what they're reading. When students cannot read text accurately and efficiently, it often impacts their academic work. The assessments in the Reading Playground are a simple, efficient way to determine students' knowledge of the phonological and phonemic awareness and phonics concepts taught in the program." An overview of the assessment is also provided.

The kindergarten materials provide guidance on how to administer the assessments and how to use the data to support learners. The materials provide guidance on the program assessments located in the *Countdown Reading Playground* for students to take at different times of the year. In the "Program Assessments in the Countdown Reading Playground" document found by clicking on "Beginning, Middle, & End of Year Program Assessments" in the "Reading Playground" tab, the resource includes the definition of the program's summative assessments and their purpose for evaluating student learning. For example, in regard to the Beginning of Program (BOP) baseline, the materials state this is given to "determine students' background knowledge in the phonological and phonemic awareness and phonics concepts taught in the *Countdown* lessons, "as well as to "anticipate the amount of additional support, if any, students may need to be successful in *Countdown* lessons."

2.1c – Materials include teacher guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of instructional assessments.

In kindergarten, the materials provide guidance on the program assessments located in the *Countdown Reading Playground* for students to take at different times of the year. In the "Program Assessments in the Countdown Reading Playground" document found by clicking on "Beginning, Middle, & End of Year Program Assessments" in the "Reading Playground" tab, the resource includes guidance to ensure accurate administration of the assessments. The document uses a timeline to visually represent when summative assessments should be administered throughout the school year. The document also contains information about how long the summative assessment will take to complete, how to administer the assessment, and a table that breaks down the assessment content and the TEKS alignment. For example, Section 3, "General Assessment Information & FAQs," answers questions such as, "How long will it take my students to complete the assessment?" The summative assessment could take 15 to 40 minutes to complete, and a student's progress can be saved, allowing the assessment to be completed over multiple sessions. It explicitly states, "Student progress will be saved between each game, so they can return to the assessment to complete the remaining games at any time."

The materials provide teacher guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of the assessments. For example, in the *Countdown Reading Playground Formative Assessment* guide, information is provided for several aspects of the assessment, such as: "Game Choice Rationale, Formative Assessment Goal, Benchmark Scores, and Instructional Recommendations." The materials also provide "Accessing the Formative Assessment Game Data" to be used with a provided benchmark chart to determine next steps for each student or group of students.

The kindergarten materials provide an overview of the *Countdown Program Assessments*, provide information on how the assessments are administered, what the format is, and why they should be given. For example, the *Countdown Formative Assessment Guide* states, "Three Reading Playground games from each unit can be utilized as formative assessments. The games were chosen for their ability to showcase your students' abilities as accurately as possible without face-to-face interaction. For example,

Unit 8, Game 1, assesses a student's ability to blend sounds. A page with "General Assessment Information & FAQs" explaining how the data can be used and how long it will take students to complete the assessment, and how the assessment should be administered.

2.1d – Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are aligned to the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lesson.

In kindergarten, the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are aligned to the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lesson. In the "Program Assessments" in the *Countdown Reading Playground* document, there is content and TEKS-alignment for the "Baseline," "Mid-Interval," and "Summative" assessments. For example, in Game 1 of the "Baseline Assessment," the skill instructional vocabulary is assessed, and K.3.C is listed for the TEKS alignment.

In kindergarten, the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are aligned to the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lesson. Found in the *Countdown Teacher Guide Books*, each daily lesson begins with an objective that is aligned with the assessments being suggested. For example, in Unit 1, Lesson 2, Part 3, the objective is stated as, "Students will hear the teacher model rhyming pairs, and then students will say the rhyming word for each pair." Rhyming is also assessed in the first suggested progress monitoring check-in found in the "Supply Room."

In kindergarten, *Countdown Online* provides beginning, middle, and end-of-program summative assessments in the "Reading Playground." Sections 4, 5, and 6 of a document titled "Program Assessments in the Countdown Reading Playground" contain the "Assessment Content & TEKS Alignment," which includes the skill, content assessed, and the TEKS alignment for each game listed. For example, "Game 10" assesses letter knowledge by letter identification, which aligns with TEKS K.2.B.i.

In kindergarten, *Countdown Online* provides a "Countdown Formative Assessment Guide" that includes a table titled "Countdown Benchmark Scores" that contains game numbers, skills assessed, lesson review, and additional practice. For example, Unit 8, Game 9, provides students with an opportunity to match letters to sounds, which aligns with the "Countdown Curriculum." Also, in *Countdown Online* is a "Diagnostics" tab, which provides information about the "Kindergarten Diagnostic Decoding Surveys." The paragraph to the right of the title of the document states, "The words in the diagnostics are representative of kindergarten foundational literacy skills (those found in the "Countdown" curriculum)." The formative assessments and diagnostic surveys are aligned to the Countdown curriculum, and the curriculum is aligned to the TEKS; therefore, the formative assessments and diagnostic surveys are aligned to the TEKS.

2.1e – Instructional assessments include TEKS-aligned items at varying levels of complexity.

In kindergarten, the instructional assessments include TEKS-aligned items that vary at levels of complexity as students progress through the game assessments within the *Reading Playground*. In the "Program Assessments in the Countdown Reading Playground" document found by clicking on "Beginning, Middle, & End of Year Program Assessments" in the "Reading Playground" tab, the "Baseline Assessment Content & TEKS Alignment," for example, states that in Game 1, students are assessed on counting phonemes. The summary of directions states, "Students hear a word and choose the number of phonemes in the word." Later in Game 5, students are assessed on blending syllables. The summary of directions states, "Students hear a series of isolated syllables. They blend the syllables and touch the words they hear."

In kindergarten, the instructional assessments include TEKS-aligned items that vary at levels of complexity as students progress through the games as assessments within the *Reading Playground*. In the "Program Assessments in the Countdown Reading Playground" document found by clicking on "Beginning, Middle, & End of Year Program Assessments" in the "Reading Playground" tab, the "Mid-Interval Assessment Content & TEKS Alignment," for example, states that in Game 8, students are assessed on digraphs and blends. The summary of directions states, "Students choose the word they hear out of three choices." Later in the "Summative Assessment Content & TEKS Alignment" in Game 16, students are assessed on three-syllable words with Latin endings. The summary of directions states, "Students choose the correct Latin ending to spell the final syllable of the word they hear."

In kindergarten, *Countdown Online* provides beginning, middle, and end-of-program summative assessments in the *Reading Playground*. Sections 4, 5, and 6 of a document titled "Program Assessments in the *Countdown Reading Playground*" contain the "Assessment Content & TEKS Alignment," which includes the skill, content assessed, and direction summary. The majority of the skills are assessed by selecting a response from a set of choices. Skills are also assessed by students decoding 1:1 and reading heart words.

In kindergarten, *Countdown Online* provides a "Countdown Formative Assessment Guide" that includes a table titled "Countdown Benchmark Scores" that contains game numbers, skills assessed, lesson review, and additional practice. The games allow for multiple-choice selections and open responses. For example, Unit 8, Game 9, "Sound-Letter Match" gives a sound and students select the correct letter from options given. Students practice open responses in Unit 19, Game 7, by listening and building a word that is spoken.

2.2 Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
2.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
2.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
2.2c	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
—	TOTAL	5/5

2.2a – Instructional assessments and scoring information provide guidance for interpreting student performance.

The kindergarten materials include diagnostic tools with guidance for interpreting student performance. For example, the "Countdown Oral Decoding Diagnostic Surveys" provide scoring interpretation guidance to identify mastered and developing skills. Students scoring below 75% trigger follow-up diagnostics.

The Teacher Dashboard includes reports that show game accuracy percentages aligned with benchmark charts. A score of $\geq 80\%$ in Unit 1 games indicates "nearing proficiency" and links to review recommendations.

The "Program Assessments" in the Reading Countdown Playground document includes a color-coded scoring key: red (0–59%) for "needs attention," yellow (60–79%) for "approaches," green (80–95%) for "on track," and blue (96–100%) for "exceeds."

2.2b – Materials provide guidance for the use of included tasks and activities to respond to student trends in performance on assessments.

The kindergarten "Intervention Flow Chart" outlines steps for responding to assessment data. The process includes diagnosing, grouping, teaching, progress monitoring, and adjusting instruction. Also, the tool outlines steps for using assessment data to diagnose performance and group students. The "Blast Student Workbook" and "Countdown Additional Activities" are progress monitoring tools for instruction adjustment.

In kindergarten, Countdown Online includes "Kindergarten Foundational Skills Surveys" and a "Countdown Guide" to drive targeted instruction based on assessment data. The document provides guidance for students who score low, emerging, and on track in the areas of functional vocabulary, phonological/phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, decoding closed syllable words, and high-frequency word reading.

The kindergarten materials provide usage guidance for included tasks and activities in response to student performance trends. For example, the Countdown Formative Assessment Guide breaks down each game's benchmark scores in a table and designates specific lesson reviews or practical

recommendations based on mastery. For example, in the first three games of Unit 2, if a student scored $\geq 80\%$, the table states the following activities for additional practice: "SRA 1.1, 1.2, 1.3: Rhyme Time Game 2."

2.2c – Materials include tools for teachers to track student progress and growth, and tools for students to track their own progress and growth.

The "Grouping Matrix" in the kindergarten materials organizes assessment data and generates reports and graphs for monitoring student and group progress. Video tutorials support effective use.

The student-facing data tracker includes a unit-by-unit progress chart. For example, after completing Unit 6, which includes letters "m," "t," "p," and "a," students color in Box 6 to track progress toward the program goal.

3. Supports for All Learners

Materials support educators in reaching all learners through design focused on engagement, representation, and action/expression for learner variability.

3.1 Differentiation and Scaffolds

Guidance marked with a (T) refers to teacher-facing components. Guidance with an (S) refers to student-facing components.

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
3.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
3.1b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
3.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
—	TOTAL	7/7

3.1a – Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, activities, and paired (scaffolded) lessons for students who have not yet reached proficiency on grade-level content and skills.

The kindergarten materials include guidance for differentiated instruction, scaffolded activities, and lessons designed for students who have not yet reached proficiency on grade-level skills.

The *Really Great Reading Phonics Suite* in kindergarten uses assessment data to group students by specific skill gaps. The small-group lessons focus on targeted skills such as phoneme blending, sound-symbol correspondence, and decoding. The lesson materials include a section labeled "Differentiation Options" that explains how to adjust instruction and activities based on student needs. For example, in Unit 2, Lesson 2, the kindergarten materials provide a scaffolded prompt to reinforce beginning sounds: "Add more information to the question: '/h/, house. Does /h/ house begin with the same sound as /m/, monkey, or /h/, hammer?'"

The kindergarten materials also offer an "Alternative Scope and Sequence" for students who are not yet ready to begin the standard *Countdown* program. This alternative path includes three weeks of instruction with simplified activities, repeated exposure, and explicit vocabulary instruction to support mastery of foundational concepts such as oral language, directionality, and common object identification.

3.1b – Materials include pre-teaching or embedded supports for unfamiliar vocabulary and references in text (e.g., figurative language, idioms, academic language). (T/S)

The kindergarten materials provide pre-teaching and embedded support for unfamiliar vocabulary. The *Vocabulary Playground Deep Teach* introduces target words before the main lesson. The materials repeat vocabulary across multiple lessons to reinforce understanding.

The materials include structured routines for practicing vocabulary. The *Vocabulary Playground* prompts vocabulary discussions using images, captions, and oral explanations. The routines include partner tasks where students define words, explain meanings in their own words, and listen to recorded definitions.

The materials include a "Vocabulary Playground Scope and Sequence" that outlines vocabulary instruction across units. The scope and sequence organizes vocabulary into four categories: "Deep Teach," "Multiple Meaning," "Light Touch," and "Related Words." Each category includes interactive games that support vocabulary practice.

The materials embed academic vocabulary in daily routines. The lessons guide vocabulary use through structured conversation and repetition.

3.1c – Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, enrichment, and extension activities for students who have demonstrated proficiency in grade-level content and skills.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance for enrichment and extension through the "Additional Activities & Extension Units" section in the "Supply Room." These materials provide optional activities that focus on advanced phonics patterns, such as two-syllable words, open syllables, and vowel-consonant-e syllables.

The kindergarten materials include differentiated versions of each "Countdown Passage" in the "Differentiated Passages" section. The guidance directs the use of the simplified version first. After successful reading, the standard version follows to extend fluency and comprehension practice.

The kindergarten materials provide online extension supports through the *Making Countdown Active* document. This resource includes strategies to increase engagement and extend instruction for students who demonstrate proficiency. For example, an extended Sound Swap activity prompts students to generate new rhyming words and explain which sound was changed.

The kindergarten materials offer multiple options for differentiation, enrichment, and extension. The activities are clearly identified and support students ready for additional challenges.

3.2 Instructional Methods

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
3.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
3.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
3.2c	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
—	TOTAL	9/9

3.2a – Materials include explicit (direct) prompts and guidance to support the teacher in modeling and explaining the concept(s) to be learned.

The kindergarten materials include direct prompts that guide modeling and explanation of concepts. In Unit 3, Lesson 1, Part 1, the script includes specific teacher language, such as "Say: Today, we are going to peel off the first sound of some words." The script then provides step-by-step directions and examples for the teacher to follow, such as pointing to an image and saying the word with the beginning sound segmented.

The kindergarten materials include detailed descriptions of activities in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*. The section titled "Detailed Activity Descriptions, Units 1–16" explains how to model and guide each activity. For example, in the "Mystery Bag Blending Sounds" activity, the materials instruct the teacher to say each phoneme and ask students to blend the sounds before showing a related image.

The kindergarten materials in *Countdown Teacher Guide Book 3* include scripted prompts and visual supports to guide lesson delivery. In Unit 27, Lesson 5, Step 2, the "Two-Syllable Word Reading" activity provides examples for correctly using the "SyllaBoards." The first page of each lesson includes a "What You Need to Know" section and a "Before Teaching" box to support teacher preparation.

The kindergarten materials consistently provide explicit prompts, modeling examples, and visual cues to support accurate and effective instruction across all units.

3.2b – Materials include teacher guidance and recommendations for effective lesson delivery and facilitation using a variety of instructional approaches.

The kindergarten materials include clear guidance for effective lesson delivery using multiple instructional approaches. Lessons incorporate direct instruction, guided practice, independent work, and collaborative tasks, such as pair-share. The *Reading Playground* adds a digital learning component that supports active engagement.

The materials provide scripting suggestions and structured routines that guide teacher modeling and explanation. For example, the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2* includes think-alouds, step-by-step directions, and scaffolding strategies embedded throughout each lesson.

The kindergarten materials also support multi-sensory instruction. In Unit 10, Lesson 4, the lesson includes a hands-on component, decodable text reading with scaffolded support, a quick check for understanding, and digital games for extended independent practice. These varied strategies help maintain student engagement and support effective delivery of content.

3.2c – Materials support multiple types of practice (e.g., guided, independent, collaborative) and include guidance for teachers and recommended structures (e.g., whole group, small group, individual) to support effective implementation.

The kindergarten materials include whole-group, small-group, and independent practice structures in each lesson. The *Unit 25 Planner* divides instruction into four sections: "Direct Instruction," "Practice to Mastery," "Small Group Instruction," and "Independent Practice." Each section includes suggested time spans, guidance on using student data to form groups, and reteaching options.

The kindergarten materials include multiple types of practice across the program. Lessons provide guided and independent practice tasks throughout instructional units. For example, the "WYNTK: Phoneme Manipulation: Addition, Deletion, and Substitution" section in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1* explains that the second half of the program builds on foundational phonemic awareness using guided and independent routines.

The kindergarten materials include clear teacher guidance for implementing each practice type. Instructional notes, lesson planners, and activity descriptions help organize practice across whole group, small group, and individual settings to support effective and consistent implementation.

3.3 Support for Emergent Bilingual Students

An emergent bilingual student is a student who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the primary language. The term emergent bilingual student replaced the term English learner in the Texas Education Code 29, Subchapter B after the September 1, 2021 update. Some instructional materials still use English language learner or English learner and these terms have been retained in direct quotations and titles.

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
3.3a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
3.3b	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
3.3c	All criteria for guidance met.	8/8
3.3d	This guidance is not applicable to the program.	N/A
—	TOTAL	11/11

3.3a – Materials include teacher guidance on providing linguistic accommodations for various levels of language proficiency [as defined by the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)], which are designed to engage students in using increasingly more academic language.

The kindergarten materials include ELPS-aligned recommendations based on English proficiency levels. The *ELPS Aligned Recommendations Based on Proficiency Levels* provides guidance for differentiating instruction for emergent bilingual students.

The materials include the document "Leveraging the Reading Playground for English Language Learners," which outlines strategies, such as modeling games in a group setting and allowing partner work for vocabulary reinforcement.

The materials include recommendations for using or omitting nonsense words based on proficiency level. The *Countdown "Supply Room"* document "Recommendations for Supporting Spanish-Speaking Students for Teachers" directs teachers to skip nonsense word activities for newcomers and early intermediate learners while strategically using them for advanced learners.

The materials provide ELPS-aligned literacy skill support in the "ELPS Alignment for Kindergarten Literacy Skills" section of the Appendix in *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*. This section connects skills to TEKS and ELPS while providing recommendations by proficiency level.

3.3b – Materials include implementation guidance to support teachers in effectively using the materials in state-approved bilingual/ESL programs.

The kindergarten materials include the *English Learner Support Guide for Teachers'* guide, providing users the location of embedded EL supports within the instructional materials.

The kindergarten materials include the document "Recommendations for Supporting Native Spanish Speakers." The document offers supports such as "Spanish Animations," "Sound Stories," "Nonsense Words," "Sentences for Dictation," and "Heart Word Generator." Each section includes a description and a usage recommendation.

The materials include virtual video training that provide overviews of effective EL practices and the essentials of language acquisition programs. These resources support implementation in bilingual and ESL settings.

3.3c – Materials include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in developing academic vocabulary, increasing comprehension, building background knowledge, and making cross-linguistic connections through oral and written discourse.

The kindergarten materials support academic vocabulary development through the *Vocabulary Playground Deep Teach Lesson Plan*. This document includes oral repetition, phoneme awareness, sentence stems, and guided vocabulary writing tasks.

The kindergarten materials support oral comprehension using embedded questions in the "Countdown Decodable Passages." Each passage includes literal, inferential, and connection questions to guide oral discussion.

The kindergarten materials build background knowledge through oral discourse. Vocabulary routines prompt students to use prior knowledge and define words using personal schema.

The kindergarten materials support cross-linguistic connections using resources, such as crosslinguistic alphabet cards. These cards highlight shared letters and sounds in English and Spanish and include cognate-based activities.

The kindergarten materials include Spanish-language video animations and multisensory sentence completion supports that reinforce language transfer for native Spanish speakers.

The kindergarten materials include structured opportunities for written discourse to build background knowledge or deepen comprehension.

3.3d – If designed for dual language immersion (DLI) programs, materials include resources that outline opportunities to address metalinguistic transfer from English to the partner language.

This guidance is not applicable because the program is not designed for dual language immersion (DLI) programs.

4. Phonics Rule Compliance

Materials comply with state requirements for explicit (direct) and systematic phonics instruction.

4.1 Explicit (Direct) and Systematic Phonics Instruction

19 TAC §74.2001(b)(1)(C) / Texas Reading Academies: Module 2E – The Science of Reading

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
4.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
4.1b	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
—	TOTAL	6/6

4.1a – Materials include systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) skills.

The kindergarten materials include *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1* that includes a systematic phonics progression. For example, the units start with phonemic awareness, then progress to identifying and generating beginning sounds. The lessons further progress to more difficult skills, such as blending multiple phonemes. For example, generating rhyming words is in Unit 1; identifying the beginning sounds of words is in Unit 3; and blending three phonemes to say a word is in Unit 5.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics skills. For example, in Unit 2, the materials introduce letters m, s, l, n, and f. Unit 3 materials introduce letters r, v, z, p, q, and Unit 4 materials introduce letters d, t, k, b.

The kindergarten materials include explicit and intentional ongoing practice opportunities for phonics skills, both in isolation and through decodable texts. For example, the materials include teacher guidance to introduce each new phonics skill using a predictable routine. Each unit cycle is broken down into letter-sound fluency, heart word fluency, phonemic awareness and phonics concept, and reading and spelling.

The kindergarten materials include *Countdown Online*, a document that outlines the structured phonics progression from basic foundational skills to more complex. For example, identifying the location (beginning, middle, or end) of each picture, then moving onto rhyming, and blending words is included in the first game of the "Countdown Practices."

4.1b – Materials include explicit (direct) and intentional ongoing practice opportunities for phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) skills, both in isolation and through decodable texts.

The kindergarten materials include systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) skills. Lesson objectives in *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1* follow a clear progression, beginning with phonemic awareness and advancing to more complex phonics skills. For example, Unit 1

focuses on generating rhyming words, Unit 3 introduces beginning sounds, and Unit 5 includes blending three phonemes.

In the kindergarten lessons, letter-sound correspondences are introduced in a sequenced manner across units. Unit 2 introduces m, s, l, n, and f; Unit 3 includes r, v, z, p, and q; and Unit 4 presents d, t, k, and b.

The kindergarten *Countdown Online* materials include a structured phonics sequence that begins with identifying sound positions, followed by rhyming, segmenting, and blending words.

In the kindergarten materials, each unit cycle is organized to reflect systematic and sequenced instruction through consistent routines in letter-sound fluency, heart word fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics concepts, and reading and spelling.

4.2 Daily Instructional Sequence and Routines

19 TAC §74.2001(b)(1)(D) / Texas Reading Academies: Module 2E – The Science of Reading

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
4.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
4.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
4.2c	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
—	TOTAL	8/8

4.2a – Daily lessons include explicit (direct) phonics instruction with teacher modeling.

The kindergarten materials include daily lessons that introduce beginning sounds through scripted modeling routines and image prompts. For example, Unit 4, Lesson 2, displays pictures of fire, flower, and finger, then prompts identification of the shared initial sound /f/. A similar activity uses leg, lightbulb, and lemon to reinforce the /l/ sound. The kindergarten materials link images to letter-sound instruction using predictable routines. In Unit 6, Lesson 1, materials display a toothbrush image, introduce the /t/ sound, and pair it with uppercase and lowercase T letter tiles. The lesson uses a character narrative to reinforce the letter name and sound relationship. The kindergarten materials guide phonics instruction through structured routines that isolate, blend, and segment phonemes. In Book 3, Unit 6, Lesson 1, materials present the word sap and break it into individual sounds using gestures. The scripted routine emphasizes the short vowel /ă/ and links it to a visual keyword, like apple.

4.2b – Daily lessons include opportunities for explicit (direct) guided instruction with guidance for immediate and corrective feedback.

The kindergarten materials include daily opportunities for explicit (direct) guided instruction with guidance for immediate and corrective feedback. In Unit 17, Lesson 4, the materials include a box titled Positive Error Correction for Finger-Stretching that outlines steps to address decoding errors. The materials direct the teacher to name the correct sounds, repeat the word, prompt another attempt, model if needed, and ensure the student stretches the word correctly. The kindergarten materials provide sidebars with guidance for immediate and corrective feedback during guided instruction. In Unit 3, Lesson 3, Part 2, a sidebar directs the teacher to address errors in identifying the initial sound /z/. If the student guesses incorrectly, the materials prompt the teacher to model the correct sound and redirect the student to think of a word that begins with /z/. The kindergarten materials embed routines that provide guidance for immediate and corrective feedback following explicit (direct) guided instruction. For example, in Unit 17, Lesson 4, the "You Do" section is followed by a scripted correction routine that supports accurate production of segmented sounds.

4.2c – Daily lessons include a variety of opportunities for students to practice phonics skills through collaborative learning and independent practice.

The kindergarten materials include daily opportunities for phonics practice through collaborative and independent activities. The "Unit Planners" in the *Countdown Supply Room* outline each lesson sequence, beginning with direct teaching, followed by "Practice to Mastery," "Small Group Instruction," and "Independent Practice."

The kindergarten materials provide end-of-lesson guidance for additional collaborative and independent phonics practice. For example, Unit 16, Lesson 5, Part 3, includes a whole-group letter-sound review and suggests using Unit 16 games, spelling word practice, small-group multisensory tasks, and dictation phrases for progress monitoring.

The kindergarten materials include daily independent phonics practice through the *Countdown Reading Playground*. The *Game Mapping Guide* explains that the platform merges learning, assessment, and practice. For example, Unit 2, Game 4, focuses on blending onset and rime through interactive word selection.

The kindergarten materials support collaborative learning through structured routines. "Appendix A" of *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 3*, outlines "Collaborative Kit Use." The kit directs alternating use of boards and roles such as "Builder" and "Checker." The routines facilitate encoding accuracy through a system of turn-taking, shared materials, and structured peer interaction.

4.3 Ongoing Practice Opportunities

19 TAC §74.2001(b)(1)(E) / Texas Reading Academies: Module 2E – The Science of Reading

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
4.3a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
4.3b	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
4.3c	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
4.3d	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
—	TOTAL	6/6

4.3a – Materials include intentional cumulative phonics review and practice activities throughout the curriculum.

The kindergarten materials include a dedicated review in Lesson 5 of each unit. These lessons systematically practice phonics concepts taught earlier in the unit. For example, Unit 18, Lesson 5 is a wrap-up that reviews and cumulatively practices the concepts from that unit and previous units. The kindergarten materials include digital review games in the *Reading Playground*. These games align with previously taught skills and allow for cumulative practice of phonics concepts. The *Countdown Teacher Guide Book 3* includes a section titled "Cumulative and Controlled Practice as Formative Assessment." This section explains that each unit ends with review lessons designed to help students apply newly taught skills along with previously learned concepts. The lessons provide structured, cumulative practice to reinforce phonics skill development.

4.3b – Practice opportunities include only phonics skills that have been explicitly taught.

The kindergarten materials provide practice opportunities aligned to phonics skills that are explicitly taught in each lesson. In Unit 17, Lesson 1, the materials introduce the concept of vowels and consonants using letter cards. In Lesson 2, the student workbook includes tasks that reinforce identifying vowels and consonants. Additional tasks prompt analysis of letter groupings to determine if they contain at least one vowel and one consonant, aligning with the lesson's instructional focus. The kindergarten materials sequence practice tasks to reflect previously taught phonics content. In Unit 12, the materials begin with picture cards used to sort by beginning sounds. Instructional routines guide segmentation of three-phoneme words and provide encoding models. By the end of the unit, the materials include practice activities that revisit and extend sorting by beginning sounds using the same phonics skills introduced earlier.

4.3c – Decodable texts incorporate cumulative practice of taught phonics skills.

The kindergarten materials include decodable reading passages in *Countdown Online* that provide cumulative practice of previously taught phonics skills. For example, the decodable text in Unit 8, includes

consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as "Tom," "hat," and "is." By Unit 28, the decodable texts include two-syllable closed syllable words such as "Calvin," "plastic," and "bathtub," reflecting a progression of phonics complexity across the program.

The *Countdown Student Workbook* includes "Phrases & Sentences to Read" pages that support cumulative application of phonics skills. In Unit 19, practice focuses on CVC words such as "hug," "pay," and "Ken." By Unit 28, the practice includes more complex words such as "milkman," "cabin," and "wombats," integrating two-syllable closed syllables to support skill retention and fluency development.

4.3d – Lessons include an instructional focus with opportunities for practice in isolation and decodable, connected text.

The kindergarten materials include decodable reading passages in *Countdown Online* that provide cumulative practice of previously taught phonics skills. For example, the decodable text in Unit 8, includes consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as "Tom," "hat," and "is." By Unit 28, the decodable texts include two-syllable closed syllable words such as "Calvin," "plastic," and "bathtub," reflecting a progression of phonics complexity across the program.

The *Countdown Student Workbook* includes "Phrases & Sentences to Read" pages that support cumulative application of phonics skills. In Unit 19, practice focuses on CVC words such as "hug," "pay," and "Ken." By Unit 28, the practice includes more complex words such as "milkman," "cabin," and "wombats," integrating two-syllable closed syllables to support skill retention and fluency development.

4.4 Assessments

19 TAC §74.2001(b)(1)(F) / Texas Reading Academies: Module 2E – The Science of Reading

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
4.4a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
4.4b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
4.4c	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
—	TOTAL	5/5

4.4a – Materials include a variety of assessment tools that are developmentally appropriate.

The kindergarten materials include a "Foundational Skills Survey" described in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1*. The survey assesses "Functional Vocabulary," "Phonological/Phonemic Awareness," "Letter Knowledge," "Decoding," and "High-Frequency Word Reading," with tasks that increase in complexity. The kindergarten materials provide "Countdown 1:1 Decoding Progress Monitoring Check-ins" in the *Reading Playground* to measure progress across aligned units. The tools begin with rhyming and blending tasks and move to more complex decoding skills. For example, "Assessment #6" focuses on CVC words with short "a" and "i" vowel sounds, while "Assessment #7" includes CVC words with short "u" and "o" vowel sounds and digraphs "sh" and "th." The kindergarten materials include Beginning, Middle, and End of Program Summative Assessments." These assessments follow a developmentally appropriate sequence. The "Beginning of Program" assessment evaluates rhyming and letter identification. The "Middle of Program" assessments add phoneme-level tasks, and the "End of Program" assessments evaluate syllable blending, short vowels, and digraphs. The kindergarten materials offer "Student Decoding Pages" through the *Reading Playground*. These pages build decoding fluency by moving from simple CVC words and short heart words (e.g., I, me) to more complex consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant (CCVC)/consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant (CCVCC) words and longer heart words (e.g., want, they).

The kindergarten materials include a *Formative Assessment Guide* with a benchmark table that reflects increasing skill difficulty. For example, Unit 1, benchmarks involve identifying the position of sounds in words, while Unit 28, benchmarks require identifying the number of syllables in a word.

4.4b – Materials include progress monitoring tools that systematically and accurately measure students' acquisition of grade-level phonics skills.

The kindergarten materials include "Countdown 1:1 Decoding Progress Monitoring Check-ins" in the *Reading Playground*. These tools systematically follow the program's instructional sequence to track skill acquisition across aligned units. The kindergarten materials accurately measure phonics skills using word

lists aligned to the specific content taught in prior units. The "Check-Ins" require decoding targeted words from previous lessons. The "Check-Ins" allow the system to pinpoint areas of mastery and need.

The kindergarten materials include *The Reading Playground*, an interactive tool that assigns skill-aligned phonics games and collects real-time data. The dashboard monitors student performance and supports instructional decisions through ongoing progress tracking.

The kindergarten materials provide "Beginning, Middle, and End of Program Summative Assessment" in the Reading Playground. These assessments measure phonics skills systematically and increase in complexity over time. For example, beginning assessments focus on rhyming and letter recognition, while end assessments include syllable blending and decoding two-syllable words. Each item includes alignment to specific phonics skills and corresponding TEKS.

The kindergarten materials include ten "Progress Monitoring Check-Ins" that follow the instructional sequence and build in complexity. For example, "Progress Monitoring 1" assesses directionality, rhyming, and blending, while "Progress Monitoring 10" measures decoding of two-syllable closed-syllable words.

4.4c – Materials include assessment opportunities across the span of the school year aligned to progress monitoring tools.

The kindergarten materials provide assessment opportunities throughout the year aligned with progress monitoring tools and the grade-level TEKS. The "Program Assessments" in the *Countdown Reading Playground* document outlines guidance for administering assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the program. The document explains that overall scores on the "Beginning, Middle, and End of Program (BOP, MOP, EOP) Assessments" provide guidance on decisions regarding appropriate next steps. The assessments show knowledge of specific skills taught in *Countdown*. The kindergarten materials include a timeline in the "Countdown Reading Playground's Recommended Timeline" section of the "Program Assessments in the Countdown Reading Playground" document. The timeline shows when to administer each assessment to track student growth over the year.

The kindergarten materials include ten "Progress Monitoring Check-Ins" aligned to the instructional sequence and spread across the school year. For example, "Progress Monitoring 2" aligns with skills from Lessons 1–9, "Progress Monitoring 4" aligns with Lessons 13–14, and "Progress Monitoring 8" aligns with Lessons 22–25.

4.5 Progress Monitoring and Student Support

19 TAC §74.2001(b)(1)(G) / Texas Reading Academies: Module 2E – The Science of Reading

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
4.5a	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
4.5b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
4.5c	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
4.5d	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
—	TOTAL	6/6

4.5a – Materials include data-management tools for tracking individual student progress to make appropriate instructional decisions to accelerate instruction.

The kindergarten materials include "1:1 Decoding Progress Monitoring Check-Ins" in the *Reading Playground*. These check-ins track individual progress through the "Countdown" units. Each check-in uses word lists aligned with skills taught in grouped units. The "Teacher Dashboard" displays skill analysis reports and allows assignment of follow-up tasks based on student performance. The kindergarten materials include a "Grouping Matrix" that organizes data for instruction and intervention. The matrix tracks individual and group progress using reports and graphs. Video tutorials support teachers in using this tool effectively. The kindergarten materials include a "Foundational Skills Survey" and *Countdown Guide*. This guide uses assessment data to support instructional decisions. It categorizes student performance as low, emerging, or on track in key literacy skill areas. The guide offers options for diagnostic follow-up, extra support, or instructional adjustment based on student needs.

4.5b – Materials include data-management tools for tracking whole-class student progress to analyze patterns and needs of students.

The kindergarten materials include data-management tools to track whole-class progress and analyze student needs. In the "Supply Room" under "Teacher Resources," the document "Grouping Matrix Decoding Levels" (found in "Assessment & Grouping") provides instructions for sorting student data by specific phonics skills. The "Grouping Matrix" organizes decoding data, allows for grouping based on skill proficiency, and generates immediate reports to inform instruction. The tool also enables grouping students by the depth of their decoding strengths and weaknesses. Video tutorials are available to support effective use of the tool.

The kindergarten materials include the *Kindergarten Foundational Skills Surveys* and *Countdown Guide*. These tools outline assessed content, specify instructional entry points, and identify areas requiring additional support based on foundational literacy skills. The kindergarten materials use the "Foundational Skills Survey" to assign performance levels—Low, Emerging, or On Track—in key areas such as functional vocabulary, phonological and phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, decoding

closed-syllable words, and high-frequency word reading. *The Countdown Guide* provides guidance for using survey results to determine the need for additional diagnostic assessments, targeted content support, or an adjusted instructional path through *Countdown*.

4.5c – Materials include specific guidance on determining frequency of progress monitoring based on students’ strengths and needs.

The kindergarten materials include progress monitoring tools in the *Teacher Dashboard*. "Progress Monitoring Check-Ins" are scheduled after every two to three lessons. For example, "Progress Monitoring #2" aligns with Units 6–9. "Progress Monitoring #4" aligns with Units 13–14. The materials do include specific guidance for changing the frequency of progress monitoring based on student strengths and needs.

The kindergarten materials include the *Kindergarten Foundational Skills Surveys* and *Countdown Guide*. The guide provides suggestions for adjusting instruction based on performance levels. For example, the "Functional Vocabulary" section states that students who score "On Track" in Decoding may be ready to accelerate. The guide recommends giving the "End-of-Year Kindergarten" form to students who show strong performance. These students may benefit from moving quickly into *Countdown, Book 3*. The materials also provide direction on how often to monitor progress based on different levels of student need.

4.5d – Materials include guidance on how to accelerate learning based on the progress monitoring data to reach mastery of specific concepts.

The kindergarten materials state that the "Beginning of Program Assessment" determines background knowledge in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics. The assessment is used to anticipate the level of support students may need to succeed in *Countdown* lessons. The materials explain that the data can help identify appropriate next steps for instruction. The materials do include guidance on how to accelerate instruction based on this data.

The kindergarten materials include the *Kindergarten Foundational Skills Surveys* and *Countdown Guide*. The guide identifies student performance levels and provides options for adapting instruction. It states that most students should begin with Unit 1 but may need different levels of support. The guide suggests using survey results to select alternate paths through *Countdown*. It also notes that students who perform well may be ready to accelerate to more advanced content. However, the materials "do" include guidance on how to accelerate instruction for those students.

The kindergarten materials include extension units on advanced phonics concepts, such as two-syllable spelling, open syllables, vowel-consonant-e, and introductory morphology. These lessons are included in the *Countdown Online* platform.

The *Countdown Guide* states that students who perform well on the *Kindergarten Foundational Skills Survey* may benefit from an accelerated scope and sequence. The guide suggests moving these students quickly to Book 3, Units 17–28. The materials do not offer guidance on how to plan or deliver accelerated instruction based on this recommendation.

5. Foundational Skills

Materials include guidance for explicit (direct) and systematic instruction in foundational skills, instructional routines, student practice, and cumulative review.

5.B Oral Language

5.B.1 Oral Language Development

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 5E – Oral Language

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.B.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	8/8
5.B.1b	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
5.B.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
—	TOTAL	16/16

5.B.1a – Materials include explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language and oracy through a variety of methods (e.g., modeling, guided practice, coaching, feedback, and independent practice). (T)

The kindergarten materials include explicit (direct) instructional guidance on developing oral language and oracy through a variety of methods. For example, the *Countdown Teacher Book 2*, Unit 8, Lesson 3, Part 1" states, "Say 'Let's read our Heart Words, starting here.' (Point to the words "the," "in," and "my," while reading them in left to right order.) Ask: 'Which word is last?' A: my."

The materials provide explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language through a variety of methods. "Learn Vocabulary with Vocabulary Playground Deep Teach Lesson Plan" provides teacher-led, whole-class discussion about and inference of new vocabulary introduced in the unit. The "Deep Teach Lesson Plan" provides teacher guidance, questions, and sentence stems to lead discussions about unit-specific vocabulary words.

The kindergarten materials provide explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language through a variety of methods. The "Unit Planners Overview and Design" section states that "oral language skills are intertwined with Countdown's phonemic awareness, phonics, handwriting, and vocabulary instruction." A specific icon is used to signify that an activity strengthens oral language skills. Throughout the materials, oral language opportunities are marked with a square text bubble. Oral language opportunities are included in Countdown's phonemic awareness, phonics, handwriting, and vocabulary instruction.

The materials provide explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language through a variety of methods. Explicit and systematic instructional guidance on developing oracy are also included.

5.B.1b – Materials include opportunities for students to engage in social and academic communication for different purposes and audiences. (S)

The kindergarten materials provide opportunities for students to participate in academic conversations. Most speaking opportunities are formatted as question and answer. For example, in Unit 10, Lesson 3, Part 3, students are practicing "Heart Words." The teacher asks a series of questions such as, "Which word is last? Which word is before the I?" Students answer by giving the word.

The kindergarten materials provide opportunities for academic and social communication for different audiences and purposes. "Learn Vocabulary with Vocabulary Playground's Deep Teach Lesson Plan" offers a teacher-led, whole-class discussion and inference of new vocabulary introduced in the unit. The "Deep Teach Lesson Plan" provides teacher guidance questions and sentence stems to lead discussions about unit-specific vocabulary words.

The materials provide opportunities for academic communication with different purposes and audiences. The materials do provide opportunities for students to engage in social communication.

5.B.1c – Materials include authentic opportunities for students to listen actively, ask questions, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas. (S)

The kindergarten materials include authentic opportunities for students to listen actively, ask questions, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas. For example, in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1* appendix under "Whole Body Listening," the materials present a listening activity where a character is described with features such as soft fur, whiskers, and a puffy tail. Students are prompted to compare the details and infer the identity of the animal, encouraging active listening and verbal response.

The materials provide authentic opportunities to listen actively, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas. "Learn Vocabulary with Vocabulary Playground Deep Teach Lesson Plan" provides teacher-led, whole-class discussion about and inference of new vocabulary introduced in the unit. The "Deep Teach Lesson Plan" provides teacher guidance, questions, and sentence stems to lead discussions about unit-specific vocabulary words.

The kindergarten materials provide authentic opportunities to listen actively, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas. *Whole Brain Learning, Part 2* provides opportunities to actively listen, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas to describe an item in a bag using all senses except sight, emphasizing that using multiple senses helps the brain learn.

5.C Alphabet

5.C.1 Alphabet Knowledge (K only)

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 7E – Pre-Reading Skills

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.C.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
5.C.1b	All criteria for guidance met.	6/6
5.C.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
5.C.1d	All criteria for guidance met.	6/6
—	TOTAL	18/18

5.C.1a – Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds. (PR 2.A.1)

The kindergarten materials provide a systematic sequence for introducing letter sounds and corresponding letter names. The "Countdown Scope and Sequence" includes an outline for introducing letter sounds in Units 2–5 and beginning letter names in Unit 6. Opportunities to review letter-sound relationships begin in Unit 18.

The kindergarten materials provide a systematic sequence for introducing letter sounds and corresponding letter names. Countdown introduces letters in clusters, typically three consonants and one vowel. Countdown activities related sounds and letters for isolated and distinguished individual phonemes.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds. In the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1* "Introduction," the section titled "Overview of Countdown's Scope and Sequence" explains this progression. By the middle of the year (Unit 16), students have learned all 26 letters. This includes letter names, formations, and most common sounds. At this stage, students begin reading and spelling words like "hug," "map," and "jog" with support or on their own.

5.C.1b – Materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction for teaching and developing student automaticity in the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase) and their corresponding sounds. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

The kindergarten materials provide explicit, direct instruction to support automaticity with the 26 alphabet letters. In Unit 6, Lesson 1, Part 1, the materials introduce the concept that letters represent spoken sounds and include an animation to illustrate this idea. The materials organize letter instruction in clusters of three to four per unit. In Part 2, the materials present activities for identifying uppercase

and lowercase letters associated with the sounds /m/, /t/, /p/, and long /a/. A detailed script guides the delivery of each lesson component.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction for teaching and developing student automaticity in the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase) and their corresponding sounds. For example, in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*, "Introduction," "Standard Alphabetic Principle Activities," it states, "Letter-Sound Review: Four rows of letter tiles appear. You will point to a tile, saying the name of the letter. The students, with your help if needed, say the sound spelled by that letter. Upon a click, you will reveal the guideword image associated with that letter and say its beginning sound and its name. Students repeat the sound and the guideword. You will repeat this pattern until all 26 guideword images are revealed."

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit instruction for teaching and developing student automaticity in the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds. For example, the materials include explicit instruction for teaching the letter "m." Unit 2, Lesson 1, Part 2, includes a systematic approach with teacher guidance on how to introduce and teach the letter m. Instructions and materials are also provided for a sound wall to utilize in the classroom. This speech-to-print resource provides opportunities for direct, explicit teaching and modeling of foundational phonological skills so that students can gradually become more independent learners.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction for teaching identification of uppercase, lowercase, and corresponding sounds for the 26 letters of the alphabet. The "Read a Row Teacher Recording Form" provides a tool for tracking accuracy and reading rate. The materials use this information to support the development of automaticity with key reading sub-skills.

5.C.1c – Materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) and systematic instruction for letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (T)

The kindergarten materials provide guidance for explicit and systematic formation of upper- and lowercase letters. For example, in the "Supply Room Handwriting," a teacher guide is included for each handwriting lesson. The "Scope and Sequence" shows that uppercase A is the first letter taught in Unit 1, Lesson 5, followed by uppercase M, S, L, N, F, and E in Unit 2, Lessons 1–5. Instruction on writing uppercase letters continues through Unit 5, Lesson 5.

The kindergarten materials provide a rationale for introducing uppercase letters before lowercase letters. The materials state that uppercase letters are typically easier to write because they involve fewer strokes. Uppercase letters are also easier to recognize and differentiate due to their distinct shapes. The materials explain that students often recognize capital letters more quickly because they appear in their names and print materials.

The default scope and sequence of *Countdown's Really Great Handwriting* is aligned with *Countdown's Scope and Sequence*. Embedding handwriting into phonics instruction provides a multisensory learning opportunity. Instruction is provided on forming uppercase letters in Units 2 through 5 and lowercase letters in Units 6–8 and Units 10–14.

The *Countdown to Handwriting, Texas Edition, Teacher Guide*, Unit 3, Lesson 4, provides a scripted routine for teaching letter formation using engaging, student-friendly language. The materials prompt students to place their pencils on the starting point, referred to as the "launch point" on the Star line, and follow a guided sequence using imaginative cues. Students are instructed to draw a straight line down to the Earth line, then create a curved line from the Star line to the Moon line, using terms that mimic a rocket's movement. The routine ends with putting the strokes together to complete the letter P, supporting letter formation through a multisensory and structured approach.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) and systematic instruction for letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase). The default scope and sequence of *Countdown's Really Great Handwriting* are aligned with *Countdown's Scope and Sequence*. Embedding handwriting into phonics instruction provides a multisensory learning opportunity. Instruction is provided on forming uppercase letters in Units 2–5, and lowercase letters in Units 6–8, and Units 10–4.

5.C.1d – Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) alphabet knowledge both in isolation and in the context of meaningful print. (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S).

The *Countdown* materials include a variety of activities, allowing students to develop, practice, and reinforce alphabet knowledge. The materials provide the tool "Next Steps for Practice & Mastery." This tool includes visuals and notes to guide teachers on next steps for the practice to mastery, small group, independent practice, and assessment portions of the instructional block.

The "Reading Playground" tool provides opportunities for students to practice and solidify learning during the lessons. The "Reading Playground" provides students with an independent practice portal and allows teachers to monitor and pull reports on individual student performance. Students play games related to the current unit to practice the skills they are learning. The "Reading Playground" merges learning, assessment, and practice, and games may be used as formative assessments.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and resources, including memory-building strategies, to support the development of alphabet knowledge both in isolation and within meaningful print. In *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*, Unit 10, Lesson 1, Part 2, the materials present an interactive routine where students identify a picture of a goat and discuss the initial /g/ sound. The lesson connects the sound to the letter G using a memory aid—Gary the Gorilla—who attends grammar school with goats

and guinea pigs and loves the /g/ sound. The materials introduce both uppercase and lowercase G, while emphasizing recognition of lowercase g in print. This routine supports sound-symbol correspondence using visual cues, character-based associations, and explicit letter naming.

The materials provide digital opportunities to develop, practice, and reinforce alphabet knowledge through interactive games. Games in *Countdown Reading Playground*, such as Unit 19, Game 5, Sound-Letter, provide opportunities for the development of alphabet knowledge and require recall of previously learned letters, building memory over time. Decodable passages, such as "Tom and Cat," integrate alphabet knowledge into print, providing opportunities to understand the relevance and application of letters in context.

5.C.2 Letter-Sound Correspondence

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 8E- Decoding, Encoding, and Word Study

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.C.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
5.C.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
5.C.2c	All criteria for guidance met.	6/6
—	TOTAL	12/12

5.C.2a – Materials explicitly (directly), and systematically introduce letter-sound relationships in an order that allows for application to basic decoding and encoding. (PR 2.A.1)

The kindergarten materials include systematically introducing letter-sound relationships in an order that allows for application to basic decoding and encoding. For example, in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 3* "Introduction," "Shift in Focus from Units 6–16 to Units 17–28," there is a "Progression of Phonics Concept Instruction" in *Countdown, Book 3* (Units 17–28)" which shows how the units progress from single syllable to multisyllabic words. In "Concepts of Print," teachers are guided to instruct students on why we read, what we read, and how text conveys meaning.

Unit 25 provides opportunities to practice automatic recognition of specific letters prior to building words, blending graphemes, and encoding with a controlled set of concepts and phonemes such as short vowels and digraphs. Instruction is intentionally sequenced to progress from less complex skills to more complex skills, allowing successful application when decoding and encoding.

The kindergarten materials explicitly (directly) and systematically introduce letter-sound relationships in an order that allows for application to basic decoding and encoding as explained in the section "Specific Curricular Goals" in the "Introduction" that the goal of *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 3* focuses on increasingly independent encoding and decoding of words in isolation and in connected text.

5.C.2b – Materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2) (T)

The kindergarten materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors. For example, in the *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 1*, "Introduction," "Positive Error Correction," it states, "Using Positive Error Correction, you might respond, 'That is the name of the letter; can you tell me its sound?'"

The materials include guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback based on common errors, such as the instruction in section two, "Examine the Text," in "Countdown Passages," which finds any words with the phonics concept focus, examining the words, and discussing the word before reading to prevent errors when reading.

The kindergarten materials include guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words, with recommended explanatory feedback based on common errors, such as the information in the "What You Need to Know" section of Unit 17, Lesson 1. The material states that direct, explicit instruction in phonics "prepares students to connect phonemes to letters within words, resulting in the development of fewer misconceptions." The material provides a section dedicated to common misconceptions and lessons to address.

5.C.2c – Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one syllable and multisyllable words in isolation and decodable connected text. (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one-syllable and multisyllable words in isolation and decodable connected text. In *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*, Unit 10, Lesson 2, Part 1, the materials present an interactive routine where students sound out the individual sounds in a word with teacher modeling. The teacher clicks on individual sound tiles, modeling the sound with each, then slides an arrow to connect the sounds into one word. The activity continues with the students saying individual sounds and blending the word.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to practice their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one-syllable and multisyllable words in isolation and decodable connected text. In *Countdown Teacher Guide, Book 2*, Unit 16, Lesson 3, Part 1, the materials provide an interactive lesson in which students determine the first sound in a given word, "pig," then change the first sound /p/ to /w/ to form the word "wig." Illustrations are provided to assist students with identifying the new word's meaning.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to reinforce (through cumulative review) their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one-syllable and multisyllable words in isolation and decodable connected text. For example, in the "Countdown Supply Room," "Instructional Resources," "Alternative Start, Passages & Book Reading," "Countdown Decodable Passages (with Fluency Instruction)" states that the decodable passages consist of words and phonics skills students have explicitly learned.

In Unit 14, Lesson 1, Part 2, students are identifying the first sound in a word and sorting words into two lists based on the beginning sound. After the lessons, the *Countdown Reading Playground* includes access to games for practice of current and previously introduced skills. The materials also provide decodable texts for students to reinforce the skills previously learned.

5.D Phonological Awareness

5.D.1 Phonological Awareness (K–2)

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 6E – Phonological Awareness

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.D.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
5.D.1b	The materials provide feedback for common errors; the materials do not provide guidance for addressing misconceptions.	1/2
5.D.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
—	TOTAL	7/8

5.D.1a – Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness activities in accordance with grade-level TEKS that begins with simple skills and larger units of sound (e.g., identifying and producing rhyming words, recognizing spoken alliteration, identifying the individual words in spoken sentences) and gradually transitions to more complex skills and smaller units of sound (e.g., adding, deleting, and substituting syllables). (PR 2.A.1)

The "Countdown Scope and Sequence" provides the systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness activities as well as lists the TEKS that correlate to each of the activities. The materials begin with simple, larger unit phonological awareness activities such as identifying rhyming words. As the year progresses, students move to smaller sound units by blending syllables into words.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness activities following grade-level TEKS that begins with simple skills and larger units of sound and gradually transitions to more complex skills and smaller units of sound, such as recognizing rhymes, isolating sounds, blending and segmenting, and manipulating sounds as listed in "Specific Curricular Goals."

The materials include phonological awareness opportunities that begin with simple skills and gradually transition to more complex skills and smaller units of sound. For example, in Unit 20, Lesson 2, students un-blend words using the finger-stretch activity before moving on to the more complex skill of blending sounds in words. Scaffolding instruction is used to build skills and boost learner confidence.

5.D.1b – Materials include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonological awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2) (T)

The kindergarten materials include explicit instruction for teaching phonological awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors. The "Build A Word" activities include a "Positive Error Correction" section, which provides a procedure for addressing possible errors.

The kindergarten materials include explicit instruction for teaching phonological awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors, but they do not include explicit instruction with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on misconceptions.

5.D.1c – Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonological skills connected to grade-level TEKS. For example, decodable passages are available for each unit. Students apply what they have learned in current and previous phonological awareness lessons to read a decodable text.

The materials provide a variety of digital opportunities to develop, practice, and reinforce phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS through interactive games. "Sort the Rhyme" in *Countdown Reading Playground*, Unit 2, Game 8, provides opportunities for the development of phonological awareness and cumulative review by requiring recall of previously learned skills, building memory over time.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities to develop, practice, and reinforce phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS through teacher-guided practice. For example, Unit 25, Lesson 2 provides opportunities to segment, identify blends, and delete phonemes in spoken words.

5.D.2 Phonemic Awareness (K–2)

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 6E – Phonological Awareness

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.D.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
5.D.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
5.D.2c	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
5.D.2d	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
—	TOTAL	10/10

5.D.2a – Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begins with identifying, blending, and segmenting phonemes, and gradually transitions to more complex manipulation practices such as adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes. (PR 2.A.1)

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begins with identifying, blending, and segmenting phonemes, and gradually transitions to more complex manipulation practices such as adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes. For example, the "Countdown Scope and Sequence" details the systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begin with simple skills and transition to more complex skills.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness, beginning with easier concepts and moving toward more complex skills. For example, in Unit 2, Lesson 3, students are working with beginning sound isolation

and blending. In Unit 6, Lesson 2, students are segmenting phonemes. In Unit 16, Lesson 3, students are manipulating phonemes.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begins with identifying, blending, and segmenting phonemes, and gradually transitions to more complex manipulation practices such as adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes. For example, in the *Countdown Teacher Guide Book 2*, "Appendix," "Additional Activities for Practice," it states that the activities "This or That" and "Peel and Say" are based on beginning sound isolation, and "Stretch Those Sounds" is based on segmenting.

5.D.2b – Materials include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2) (T)

The kindergarten materials include explicit instruction for teaching phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors. For example, the materials provide a positive error correction routine for teachers. Positive Error Correction is when you tell students who have provided an incorrect response what they did correctly before focusing on their errors. For instance, when asked to say the sound associated with the symbol m, some students might say the name of the letter m ("em"), rather than the sound /m/. While these students have not answered the question correctly, they did demonstrate some knowledge. The recommended response is, "That is the name of the letter; can you tell me its sound?"

The materials include explicit instruction for teaching phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors, and the materials give recommended explanatory feedback to address misconceptions.

The kindergarten materials include guidance on explicit instruction for teaching phonemic awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors, such as the instruction in section two, "Examine the Text," in Countdown Passages, which finds any words with the phonics concept focus, examining the words, and discussing the word before reading to prevent errors when reading.

5.D.2c – Materials include explicit (direct) guidance for connecting phonemic awareness skills to the alphabetic principle, to support students in the transition from oral language activities to basic decoding and encoding. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

The kindergarten materials provide explicit instruction for connecting phonemic awareness to the alphabetic principle. For example, in Unit 12, Lesson 4, Part 3, students are encoding words by first segmenting sounds and then matching sounds to letters. Students are building words with letter tiles by listening to the sounds in each word and placing letter tiles to spell the word.

The materials include explicit (direct) guidance for connecting phonemic awareness skills to the alphabetic principle to support students in the transition from oral language activities to basic decoding, providing a smooth progression in developing essential reading and writing skills. For example, Unit 18, Lesson 1, includes activities that begin automatic recognition of some grapheme-phoneme (letter-sound) combinations.

The kindergarten materials include explicit (direct) guidance for connecting phonemic awareness skills to the alphabetic principle to support students in the transition from oral language activities to basic encoding, providing a smooth progression in developing essential reading and writing skills. For example,

Unit 16, Lesson 4, Part 3, provides opportunities to encode words by first segmenting sounds and then matching sounds to letters.

5.D.2d– Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills. The practice activities in *Countdown* are cumulative and controlled. Students only practice with words, phrases, and sentences that contain concepts based on what they have been taught up to that point in the lessons. Each activity allows students to practice the skills and concepts taught in the current and previous units, and the activities build upon one another in complexity. The materials also include "Environmental Activities" to reinforce phonological awareness skills addressed during *Countdown's* structured lessons.

The materials provide a variety of digital opportunities to develop, practice, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS through interactive games. Games are connected by skill and TEKS for students to practice, develop, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills taught in current and previous lessons. Unit 8, Game 7, "Letter-Sound Sort: /d/ vs /f/" in Countdown Reading Playground provides opportunities for the development of phonemic awareness and cumulative review by applying knowledge of previously learned skills, building memory over time.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities to develop, practice, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS through teacher-guided practice. For example, Unit 17, Lesson 4 provides opportunities to practice finger-stretching and counting the sounds (phonemes) in words.

5.E Phonics (Encoding/Decoding)

5.E.1 Sound-Spelling Patterns

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 8E – Decoding, Encoding, and Word Study

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.E.1a	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
5.E.1b	All criteria for guidance met.	1/1
5.E.1c	All criteria for guidance met.	3/3
5.E.1d	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
—	TOTAL	9/9

5.E.1a – Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns, as outlined in the TEKS. (PR 2.A.1)

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns, as outlined in the TEKS with the "Countdown Scope and Sequence." For example, the materials introduce CVC words before learning CCVC words.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns, as outlined in the TEKS. The section "Specific Curricular Goals" states there are opportunities to practice both with support and independently, and the focus is on building automaticity with letter-sound relationships, increasing scaffolded and independent phonics decoding and spelling practice.

5.E.1b – Materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. For example, the "Countdown Scope and Sequence" outlines the sound-spelling patterns that will be taught, as well as the unit and lesson numbers to find the teacher guidance for the lessons.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. For example, Unit 18, Lesson 3, provides direct instruction for building words with short vowel phonemes with the activity "Build a Word." Unit 20, Lesson 3, provides direct instruction for spelling words with the digraph "sh."

5.E.1c – Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound-spelling patterns (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1) (T)

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound spelling patterns. The "Reading Playground" provides student games that correlate to the sound-spelling patterns taught in the lesson to reinforce taught skills. In Unit 22, students are building automatic recognition of some letter-sound combinations. In the unit, students participate in games such as "Look, Think, Say!," "Letter-Sound Pop-Up," and "Letter-Sound Read A Row."

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound spelling patterns. For example, the "Countdown Scope and Sequence" outlines the different games and activities that are provided for each unit to help develop, practice, and reinforce sound-spelling patterns.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound-spelling patterns (through cumulative review). For example, Unit 18, Lesson 3 provides direct instruction for building words with short vowel phonemes with the activity "Build a Word." Unit 20, Lesson 3, provides direct instruction for spelling words with the digraph "sh."

5.E.1d – Materials provide a variety of activities and/or resources to support students in decoding and encoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns, both in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in decodable connected text that builds on previous instruction (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3) (S)

The kindergarten materials provide a variety of activities and resources to support students in decoding and encoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns in isolation. For example, in Unit 26, Lesson 3, students are spelling and reading words with two-sound consonant blends. The teacher and students build words with two-sound consonant blends, identifying the blend in each word. The *Countdown*, Unit 26, planner includes a decodable text, spelling list, and dictation sentences that include the sound-spelling patterns included in the unit.

Materials provide a variety of activities and resources to support students in decoding and encoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns in decodable connected text that build on previous instruction. For example, after a lesson on two sound blends, students read the decodable passage, "Our Land," which builds on that lesson.

After a review lesson on digraphs, students will read the decodable passage, "The Fall," that builds on previous lessons over those digraphs.

The kindergarten materials provide a variety of activities and/or resources to support students in decoding and encoding words in isolation and connected text. Unit 18, Lesson 5, provides decoding opportunities in words, phrases, and sentences. Unit 18, Lesson 3, provides encoding opportunities through the "Build a Word!" activity.

5.E.2 Regular and Irregular High Frequency Words

TEKS Correlation: Strand 1 / Texas Reading Academies: Module 8E – Decoding, Encoding, and Word Study

GUIDANCE	SCORE SUMMARY	RAW SCORE
5.E.2a	All criteria for guidance met.	2/2
5.E.2b	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
5.E.2c	All criteria for guidance met.	12/12
5.E.2d	All criteria for guidance met.	4/4
—	TOTAL	22/22

5.E.2a – Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. (PR 2.A.1)

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. The *Countdown* "Scope and Sequence" includes the high-frequency words taught for each unit and lesson, including regular and irregular words. The section "Sight Words/High-Frequency Words" contains a list of high-frequency words that are taught by unit. For example, in Unit 9, the heart words taught include "a," "is," and "for."

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. The "Supply Room" has a section specifically about heart words (high-frequency) that provides a video, "What is Heart Word Magic," explaining the reasoning behind the scope and sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words.

The kindergarten materials include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. Unit 18, Lesson 1, provides multiple opportunities to practice high-frequency words, including the interactive games "Look, Think, Say!," "Pop-Up," and "3-Up" to learn six new Heart Words.

5.E.2b – Materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction for decoding and encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

The kindergarten materials include guidance to provide explicit instruction for decoding and encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. For example, in Unit 19, Lesson 5, students are accurately reading and spelling phrases and sentences that contain the concepts, words, and phonemes taught in this and previous units.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit (direct) instruction for encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. For example, in the *Countdown to Really Great Handwriting*, Unit 10, Lesson 4, it states, "Let us name the letters and then say the word together as we write them, h, e, r, e. Let us write it together while we name the letters and say the word one more time."

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit instruction for encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. "Heart Word Magic Spelling" allows practice spelling Heart Words (high-frequency) words with irregular letter-sound relationships by filling in a heart above the irregular part of the word that must be learned "by heart." The "Heart Word Magic Spelling" document has a script provided for teacher guidance.

The kindergarten materials include teacher guidance to provide explicit instruction for decoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. The "Heart Word Generator" allows practice decoding high-frequency words to improve sight word vocabulary and reading fluency.

5.E.2c – Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode and encode regular and irregular high-frequency words (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3) (S)

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode regular high-frequency words. For example, in Unit 20, Lesson 2, the teacher introduces the lesson with articulation videos and reviews the short vowels poster. The lesson progresses to the use of the Finger-Stretching Strategy and the Mystery Bag Activity.

Materials include a variety of activities for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode regular high-frequency words. In Unit 21, Countdown Game 9, students listen to a sentence, then they drag the words into the correct order to create the sentence they hear. Students also have access to "Heart Word" cards, allowing them to practice words introduced in the current and past units.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to encode regular high-frequency words (through cumulative review). In the Countdown to Really Great Handwriting Unit 10, Lesson 4, it states, "Let us name the letters and then say the word together as we write them, h, e, r, e. Let us write it together while we name the letters and say the word one more time."

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop skills to decode irregular high-frequency words. For example, in the document, "Heart Word Magic Spelling," students are decoding, with teacher support, irregular high-frequency words using a scripted lesson and graphic organizer.

Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop skills to decode irregular high-frequency words. The "Reading Playground" provides students with the opportunity to develop skills to decode irregular high-frequency words through the use of digital games. The games have students decoding, building, and spelling high-frequency words.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to encode irregular high-frequency words. Heart Word Magic Spelling allows practice spelling Heart Words (high-frequency words) with irregular letter-sound relationships by filling in a heart above the irregular part of the word that must be learned "by heart."

"Heart Word Magic: Dissect a Word" provides opportunities to dissect high-frequency words with irregular letter-sound relationships by listening to the individual phonemes in a word and then filling in the corresponding spellings.

5.E.2d – Materials include a variety of activities and/or resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to read, and write high-frequency words in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in connected text (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A.1) (S)

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities for students to read and write high-frequency words in isolation and in connected text. The *Countdown Teacher, Guidebook 3* states that students are explicitly taught to read three Heart Words in Lesson 1, of every unit (in Units 18–28). They continue to practice those Heart Words throughout the unit. Students work with the Heart Words they have been taught in the "Phrases and Sentences to Read" activity in each unit's Lesson 5. Students also encode the Heart Words they have learned in the Dictation activities, as well as write them with proper letter formation in the handwriting workbook.

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to read high-frequency words in isolation and connected text. The "Heart Word Generator" allows practice decoding high-frequency words in isolation with activities such as "Look, Think, Say!" and "Pop Up," and practice decoding multiple words in activities such as "3-Up" and "Read a Row."

The kindergarten materials include a variety of activities and/or resources for students to write high-frequency words in isolation and connected text. For example, Unit 9 of *Countdown to Handwriting, Texas Edition, Teacher Guide* allows practice writing high-frequency words in isolation with Lesson 3 and practice writing high-frequency words in dictation sentences in Lesson 5.