



Kentucky Department of  
**E D U C A T I O N**

Equity Lenses

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# Introduction

Every student in the Commonwealth deserves equitable access to effective educators who have unique experiences and perspectives, quality preparation and are committed to the success of all learners.

*Kentucky Board of Education Commitment to Racial Equity in Kentucky Public Schools*

Students deserve access to high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) that are engaging, accessible and inclusive of the cultural diversity and perspectives of their communities. The Kentucky Department of Education is committed to providing guidance that supports the selection of resources that are culturally relevant, free from bias, and accessible for all students to further the KDE's [diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts](#).

Below are 5 equity lenses schools and districts may use to help promote equitable learning environments for all students:

- Resources meet the **high-quality instructional markers** laid out in the KDE definition of High-Quality Instructional Resources.
- Resources **recognize, celebrate and leverage students' cultures and identities** and provide opportunities to **broaden perspectives by learning about other cultures**.
- Resources provide opportunities for **students to lead learning that is meaningful and relevant** to them, both in connection to their local context and communities and the broader global context of the world.
- Resources provide **engagement with grade-level content and the KAS for all students**.
- Resources allow students to **engage and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways**.

**To support schools and districts in understanding the lenses, a detailed table of the equity lenses provides guidance on what each is.** The lenses are woven into the Consumer Guide for each content area, may be carried forward to Phase 4 of the Curriculum Development Process, and are a useful companion to the Model Curriculum Framework as a whole.

# Equity Lenses for High-Quality Instructional Resources

Students deserve access to HQIRs that are engaging, accessible and inclusive of the cultural diversity and perspectives of their communities. The KDE is committed to providing guidance that supports the selection of resources that are culturally relevant, free from bias, and accessible for all students to further the KDE’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Below are 5 equity lenses schools and districts may consider to help promote equitable learning environments for all students.

Equity Lens	Description
Resources meet the <b>high-quality instructional markers</b> laid out in the KDE definition of High-Quality Instructional Resources.	<p>The high-quality instructional markers for resources in the state of Kentucky are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS);</li> <li>● Research-based and/or externally validated;</li> <li>● Comprehensive to include engaging texts (books, multimedia, etc.), problems and assessments;</li> <li>● Culturally relevant, free from bias; and</li> <li>● Accessible for all students.</li> </ul>
Resources <b>recognize, celebrate and leverage students’ cultures and identities</b> and provide opportunities to <b>broaden perspectives by learning about other cultures</b> .	Students’ cultures are affirmed and included as scaffolds for learning; students’ unique strengths (language, culture, neurodiversity, passions) are recognized and celebrated and leveraged. Resources nurture, reinforce, and celebrate students’ identities as competent learners with interesting and worthy ideas to share. Students broaden their perspectives by learning about other cultures. They have opportunities to explore multiple perspectives on topics, which avoids single stories and offers opportunities to disrupt negative narratives.
Resources provide opportunities for <b>students to lead learning that is meaningful and relevant</b> to them, both in connection to their local context and communities and the broader global context of the world.	Students are drivers of their learning--the classroom is student-centered, and resources offer students opportunities to exercise choice and voice in their learning. The resources students engage with connect to students’ local communities and global context as well to make them meaningful and relevant. Students are asked, “What challenges exist in your community?” and able to design their learning around those challenges.
Resources provide <b>engagement with grade-level content and the KAS for all students</b> .	Scaffolds and supplementary materials are designed to provide access to grade-level content for all students and do not solely provide previous grade-level content and/or content that has been reduced in rigor. Scaffolding should lead students to engage in content at the same level of rigor, though differentiation may be needed to make the content accessible for all students.
Resources allow students to <b>engage and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways</b> .	Assessments exist in a variety of formats to measure students’ experiences and learning of KAS (e.g., exit tickets, feedback, reflection, curricular tasks, unit assessments). Students are able to express their learning authentically, with their experiences and perspectives valued.

# Using the Equity Lenses for HQIR Selection

In each Consumer Guide, there are content-specific equity lenses. The below table shows the guidance given for how to use the lenses in each step of instructional resource selection.

Step	How to Use the Lenses
<b>Step 1: Determine Selection Criteria</b>	<p>The equity lenses are an important check for school and/or district instructional priorities and instructional philosophies. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are the equity lenses woven into the school/district priorities?</li> <li>• Which equity lenses have been used consistently in the past? Which are opportunities for further attention?</li> <li>• Which equity lenses may be challenging for the team to examine in resources and/or may need support in examining? This will help identify specific learning the committee may need to be able to engage in future steps fully.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2: Identify Potential High-Quality Instructional Resources</b>	<p>Note where there is evidence (or a lack of evidence) of the equity lenses for each resource in the initial list. Organizing initial impressions and questions will provide support when the committee does a deeper analysis of the resources in Step 3. For example, if a set of resources has been used previously with strong alignment to the KAS but little is known about the quality of assessments, the committee will likely need to spend more time on the fifth lens in their evaluation process.</p>
<b>Step 3: Evaluate Potential High-Quality Instructional Resources</b>	<p>The equity lenses and the supporting note-catcher are an essential tool in Step 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lenses offer a starting point to identify what materials/resources reviewers will examine and can guide conversations and questions for publishers.</li> <li>• The note-catcher will support the committee’s review of the resources and can be adapted to create a snapshot analysis of each set of resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4: Select Instructional Resources</b>	<p>As the committee selects its instructional resources, use the equity lenses to ensure the final set of resources contains strengths for each lens and that any gaps or supplementary needs are clearly noted. Once resources are selected, consider two final questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the committee share with the school and/or district instructional teams the strengths and gaps of the resources tied to the equity lenses?</li> <li>• Where there are continued needs/gaps tied to the equity lenses, what supports will teachers need to ensure students experience learning in a way that fulfills the instructional vision? The equity lenses and analyses may be carried forward to support Phase 4 of the Curriculum Development Process and be a useful companion to the Model Curriculum Framework as a whole.</li> </ul>

## Appendix: Content-Specific Equity Lenses and Note-Catchers

Equity Lenses	Note-Catcher
<a href="#">Reading and Writing Equity Lenses</a>	<a href="#">Reading and Writing Note-Catcher</a>
Math	
Science	
And so on...	

## Equity Lenses for High-Quality Reading and Writing Instructional Resources

<i>Lens</i>	<b>What does this mean?</b> What does this look like? What is the classroom experience students have when resources fulfill this lens?	<b>What do we look for in reading and writing resources?</b> <i>Note: texts, writing prompts, assessments, and supplemental resources are key points of examination in resource selection</i>
<i>Resources meet the <b>high-quality instructional markers</b> laid out in the KDE definition of High-Quality Instructional Resources.</i>	The KDE has developed a set of criteria for what is considered high-quality as districts examine resources. These provide a strong foundation for resources used in schools and districts throughout the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned with the <i>Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)</i>;</li> <li>● Research-based and/or externally validated;</li> <li>● Comprehensive to include engaging texts (books, multimedia, etc.), problems and assessments;</li> <li>● Culturally relevant, free from bias; and</li> <li>● Accessible for all students.</li> </ul>
<i>Resources <b>recognize, celebrate and leverage students' cultures and identities and provide opportunities to broaden perspectives by learning about other cultures.</b></i>	<p>Students' cultures are affirmed and included as scaffolds for learning; students' unique strengths (language, culture, neurodiversity, passions) are recognized and celebrated and leveraged. Resources nurture, reinforce, and celebrate students' identities as competent readers and writers with interesting and worthy ideas to share.</p> <p>Students broaden their perspectives by learning about other cultures; they have opportunities to explore multiple perspectives on topics, which avoids</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feature stories of resistance and healing</li> <li>● Tasks and questions provide opportunities to build from students' funds of knowledge</li> <li>● Authentic representations that affirm students' identities (mirrors)</li> <li>● Learning about and from diverse cultures or perspectives (windows)</li> <li>● Bridging new learning to familiar experiences</li> <li>● Opportunities to connect vocabulary to students' home languages</li> <li>● Include a diverse set of authors, both based on their identities and thought</li> <li>● Opportunities to explore multiple perspectives on a specific topic to avoid the danger of a single story</li> </ul>

<b>Lens</b>	<b>What does this mean?</b> What does this look like? What is the classroom experience students have when resources fulfill this lens?	<b>What do we look for in reading and writing resources?</b> <i>Note: texts, writing prompts, assessments, and supplemental resources are key points of examination in resource selection</i>
	single stories and offers opportunities to disrupt negative narratives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Diversity of characters in texts, both fiction and non-fiction: Visually diverse, different family structures, different ethnicities and nationalities, neurodiversity, gender, religion</li> <li>● Guidance to support teachers to learn about and be aware of their assumptions and/or beliefs about students' cultures identities and how to leverage students' cultures and identities in lessons</li> </ul> <p><i>The concept of windows and mirrors comes from Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop. (Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors)</i>  <i>The concept of the danger of a single story comes from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. (Adichie, C. (2009) The danger of a single story [Video]. TEDGlobal Conferences. <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?utm_campaign=tedsread&amp;utm_medium=referral&amp;utm_source=tedcomshare">https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?utm_campaign=tedsread&amp;utm_medium=referral&amp;utm_source=tedcomshare</a></i></p>
<i>Resources provide opportunities for <b>students to lead learning that is meaningful and relevant</b> to them, both in connection to their local context and communities and the</i>	Students are drivers of their learning--the classroom is student-centered, and resources offer students opportunities to exercise choice and voice in their learning. The resources students engage with (assessments, texts, writing prompts) connect to students' local communities and global context as well to make them meaningful and relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Authentic tasks: Students identify challenges they see in their context and communities (local and global) as part of the lessons, tasks, assessments</li> <li>● Opportunities for reading and writing to serve students' social-emotional growth and development: Teach and provide opportunities for students to use writing as a way of processing strong emotions</li> <li>● Guidance to support teachers and students to make connections from the curriculum to their prior knowledge and experience as well as their local community</li> </ul>



<b><i>Lens</i></b>	<b>What does this mean?</b> What does this look like? What is the classroom experience students have when resources fulfill this lens?	<b>What do we look for in reading and writing resources?</b> <i>Note: texts, writing prompts, assessments, and supplemental resources are key points of examination in resource selection</i>
<i>broader global context of the world.</i>	Students are asked, “What challenges exist in your community?” and able to design their learning around those challenges.	
<b><i>Resources provide engagement with grade-level content and the KAS for all students.</i></b>	Scaffolds and supplementary materials are designed to provide access to grade-level content for all students and do not solely provide previous grade-level content and/or content that has been reduced in rigor. Scaffolding should lead students to engage in content at the same level of rigor, though differentiation may be needed to make the content accessible for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alignment to grade-level standards and complex texts in supplementary resources and listed scaffolds</li> <li>● Prompts and resources with scaffolds and supplementary materials that support students to lead their learning (shifts are not made to be more heavily teacher-directed or teacher-delivery of content)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Resources allow students to engage and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.</i></b>	Assessments exist in a variety of formats to measure students’ experiences and learning of KAS (e.g., exit tickets, feedback, reflection, curricular tasks, unit assessments). Students are able to express their learning authentically, with their experiences and perspectives valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Authentic culminating tasks for literacy units (e.g., research and report/presentation/etc. connected to a local or community issue)</li> <li>● Opportunities for public discussion and debates of ideas and texts (whole-class, small-group, pair-share)</li> <li>● Opportunities for linguistic diversity to show up in the way students express their learning</li> <li>● Multiple right answers: Guidance or examples of multiple answers and responses students can provide to demonstrate learning</li> </ul>

## Equity Lenses Note-Catcher for Reading and Writing Instructional Resources

The table below offers a note-catcher featured in the Reading & Writing Consumer Guide for the committee to use while examining instructional resources using the equity lenses. Noting strengths and gaps will support the committee in resource selection and in supplementing or adjusting the resources selected. For each lens, the committee should use the Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices in the KAS to guide their analysis as well. *Tip: Add rows to the note-catcher to include any additional priorities and look fors in the resources to organize analysis in one place.*

<i>Lens</i>	<i>Questions to Ask</i>	<i>Analysis Notes</i> <i>What strengths do these resources have? What are the gaps? What additional resources, supplements, or supports for teachers are needed to use these resources?</i>
<i>Resources meet the <b>high-quality instructional markers</b> laid out in the KDE definition of High-Quality Instructional Resources.</i>	Are the resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned with the <i>Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)</i>;</li> <li>● Research-based and/or externally validated;</li> <li>● Comprehensive to include engaging texts (books, multimedia, etc.), problems and assessments;</li> <li>● Culturally relevant, free from bias; and</li> <li>● Accessible for all students?</li> </ul>	

<b>Lens</b>	<b>Questions to Ask</b>	<b>Analysis Notes</b> <i>What strengths do these resources have? What are the gaps? What additional resources, supplements, or supports for teachers are needed to use these resources?</i>
<p><i>Resources recognize, celebrate and leverage students' cultures and identities and provide opportunities to broaden perspectives by learning about other cultures.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do the resources nurture, reinforce, and celebrate students' identities as competent readers and writers with interesting and worthy ideas to share?</li> <li>● How do resources support students to broaden their perspectives and to learn about other cultures through a diverse set of texts, prompts, and authors?</li> <li>● What guidance and support do the resources offer teachers to learn about and be aware of their assumptions and/or beliefs about students' cultures identities and how to leverage students' cultures and identities in lessons?</li> </ul>	

<b>Lens</b>	<b>Questions to Ask</b>	<b>Analysis Notes</b> <i>What strengths do these resources have? What are the gaps? What additional resources, supplements, or supports for teachers are needed to use these resources?</i>
<i>Resources provide opportunities for <b>students to lead learning that is meaningful and relevant</b> to them, both in connection to their local context and communities and the broader global context of the world.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do the resources provide opportunities for students to lead and design their own learning?</li> <li>● How do students have choice in what they are reading and the types of tasks they engage in?</li> <li>● What guidance and support do the resources offer teachers to supplement, enhance, and customize learning for their students to make it more relevant?</li> </ul>	
<i>Resources provide <b>engagement with grade-level content and the KAS for all students.</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How are resources aligned to the KAS and Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices?</li> <li>● How do scaffolds provide support and engagement with grade-level content for all students?</li> </ul>	

<i>Lens</i>	Questions to Ask	Analysis Notes <i>What strengths do these resources have? What are the gaps? What additional resources, supplements, or supports for teachers are needed to use these resources?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What guidance and support do the resources offer teachers to differentiate instruction without reducing rigor and to make content accessible to all students?</li> </ul>	
<i>Resources allow students to <b>engage and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of assessments are included to measure student learning (e.g. exit tickets, feedback, reflection, curricular tasks, unit assessments)?</li> <li>• In the assessments, what type of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking are students being asked to do? For further guidance, use the first three sections (standards, literacy practices, and relevance) of the <a href="#">Reading and Writing Assignment</a></li> </ul>	

<i>Lens</i>	Questions to Ask	<b>Analysis Notes</b> <i>What strengths do these resources have? What are the gaps? What additional resources, supplements, or supports for teachers are needed to use these resources?</i>
	<p><a href="#">Review protocol</a> for support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What guidance and support do the resources offer teachers to measure learning in a way that values student experience and perspective?</li> </ul>	