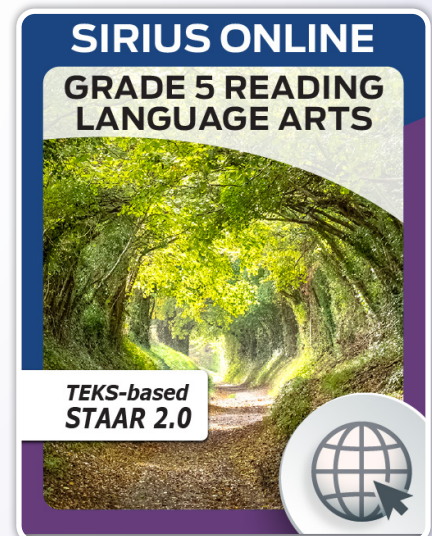
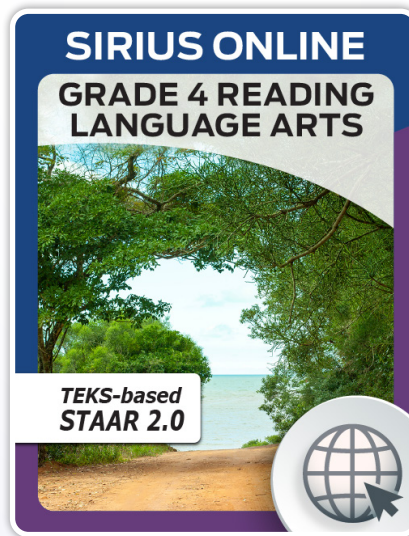
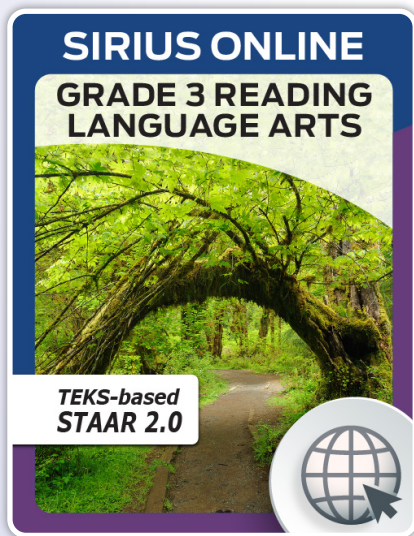


Sirius Online

TEACHER'S GUIDE

How to Implement *Sirius Online* in Your Classroom

Grades 3–5 RLA



Welcome Educators

Welcome to the *Sirius Online* **Grades 3–5 RLA Teacher’s Guide**—a reference that helps you understand what resources you get and how you can best use them. We crafted it to save you time and help you avoid difficulties.

- *Sirius Online* is a supplement that **fills gaps** in adopted instructional materials by providing essential TEKS instruction and authentic STAAR 2.0 practice.
- Use *Sirius Online* **alongside your core curriculum** to ensure that your students learn exactly what they need to know and do on STAAR 2.0—its content (reading and writing selections), context (online and new question types), and complexity (rigor).
- With *Sirius Online*, your students will focus on the essential TEKS, including how they are tested in STAAR. By helping students apply important skills and concepts to reading multi-genre selections and answering STAAR questions, Sirius **adds depth and rigor** to your curriculum.

We are honored to support you in helping your students succeed. Please contact us for assistance. **And thanks for all you do!**



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INTRODUCING SIRIUS ONLINE

Why Sirius Online?

TEKS-Focused Instruction

Sirius Online supplements enhance existing instructional materials by providing essential TEKS instruction and authentic STAAR 2.0 practice. *Sirius Online* is used along with a core curriculum, not as a replacement. However, *Sirius Online* is needed because it fills instructional gaps in older adopted materials by closely matching STAAR 2.0 in all its details: content, format, and rigor.

Problem-Solving Focus

Because the RLA STAAR test is challenging and requires covering several skills across multiple genres, both for reading and writing, Sirius adds depth and rigor by helping students apply these skills and concepts with a problem-solving focus.

Learning to be a better reader, writer, and problem solver is hard work. But teachers can create the conditions that encourage and support thinking and problem-solving more deeply.

High-Quality Feedback

Effective feedback enables learning and relies upon a culture that is open to using feedback to impact future choices—to feedforward. Sirius' comprehensive feedback options are designed to empower students through choice and to be supported by teachers.

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

Sirius Online empowers students to become better STAAR readers by giving students scaffolded support in how they navigate each selection and item set. Choices empower students to **become more active thinkers** and *own* their learning. *Sirius Online* choices with **actionable feedback** include:

Show Hint

Gives a helpful tip before answering a question.

Sample Answer

Gives a solution or complete response to an SCR/ECR.

Submit Answer

Gives immediate feedback on the answer selected.

Try Again

Gives another try after students receive actionable feedback.

Show Correct Answer

Gives the correct answer and its feedback.

English-Spanish Courses

Classrooms with students benefiting from Spanish language content should select the English-Spanish RLA courses. This course provides all assignments in both languages with the same RLA TEKS in both Spanish and English. Spanish translations closely match one-to-one with the English content with only minor adaptations when needed.

Getting Started

Sirius Online System Tutorials

Tutorials provide information about the *Sirius Online* interface for students and for teachers. Add the **tutorials course** to each of your classes and begin with these introductions to become familiar with the platform.

FOR TEACHERS



Introduction to *Sirius Online*

To become familiar with *Sirius Online*, work through this teacher eLearning Module. It only takes about 20 minutes, and you can print a certificate to show completion.



Introduction to Reporting for Education Leaders

This eLearning Module is directed primarily at administrators and focuses on Reports. Review this at your leisure to understand what Admins see in their dashboards.

FOR STUDENTS



Sirius Tools Tutorial

This is an introductory tutorial about the Sirius Online tools. Sirius has the same tools found in the online STAAR tests. However, Sirius tools are slightly different in that they are easier to find and use with just one click—students don't have to use submenus. Use this tutorial with your students to familiarize them with the tools.

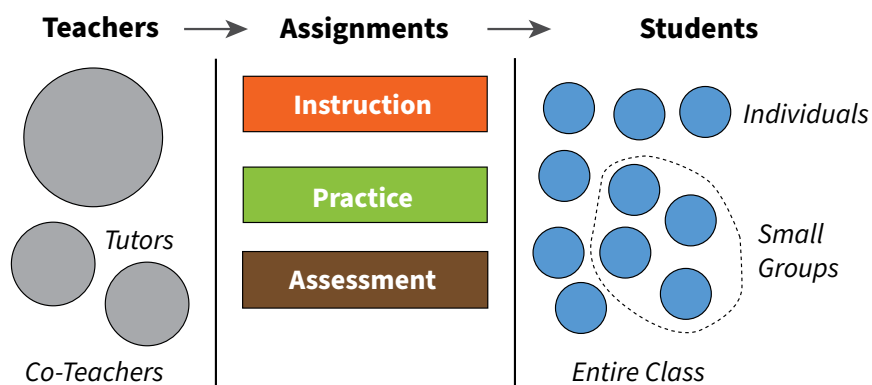
A Comprehensive Supplement

Sirius Online serves as a supplement to existing instructional materials by providing essential TEKS instruction and authentic STAAR 2.0 practice. Using Sirius adds **depth and rigor** to your curriculum.

Sirius Online is a comprehensive supplement with three distinct assignments:

- **Instruction** Explicit TEKS instruction uses the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) framework.
- **Practice** Authentic STAAR 2.0 practice empowers students with scaffolds and feedback.
- **Assessment** Authentic STAAR 2.0 test items delivered with the similar STAAR tools / features.

Teachers and co-teachers can easily customize assignments for individual students, small groups, or the entire class.



Using Sirius for Different Contexts

Sirius offers easy-to-use, adaptable resources for multiple implementation models.

Multiple Implementation Models

TIME FRAMES		
Fall Semester • Beginning of Year • First 9-Week Benchmark		Spring Semester • Mid-Year Benchmark • After Spring Break
ABILITY LEVELS	GROUPS	INSTRUCTION
• Does Not Meet Grade Level • Approaches Grade Level • Meets Grade Level • Masters Grade Level	• Whole Class • Small Groups • Partners • Individuals	• Teacher-Led • Student-Centered • Asynchronous

* The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) framework promotes a careful and deliberate transition of cognitive tasks, from teacher modeling to shared responsibility between teachers and students, and finally to independent practice and application by students.

Sirius Online Supports Differentiation

Sirius Online supports differentiation by empowering teachers to curate:

- **What** content to assign based on topic, TEKS, or student needs.
- **Who** to assign content to: whole class, small groups, individuals.
- **Pacing** used: how many assignments and how fast they expect students to complete them.
- **How** assignments are conducted, ranging from teacher-led to student-centered, and synchronous to asynchronous.

Sirius Online and the RtI Framework

A practical approach to organizing the implementation of *Sirius Online* is to frame it using the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) model with Tier 1, 2, and 3 pathways.*

Sirius Online Provides Consistent Instructional Routines

Research shows strong support for the RtI framework in improving **learning for all students**. With *Sirius Online*, you can create consistent instructional routines that support both Tier 1 and 2 students.

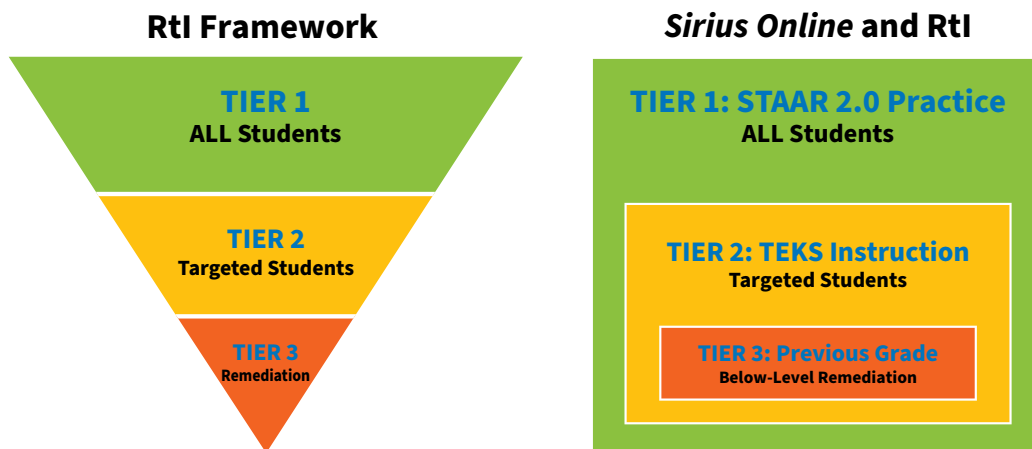
The Need for High Quality Tier 1 Instruction

All students benefit from instruction that is aligned with exactly what students need to *know* and *do* on the STAAR tests. Students should get regular exposure all year long to learn the STAAR-tested thinking. This includes developing fluency with online testing tools and features.

Aligning Tier 2 Support with Classroom Instruction

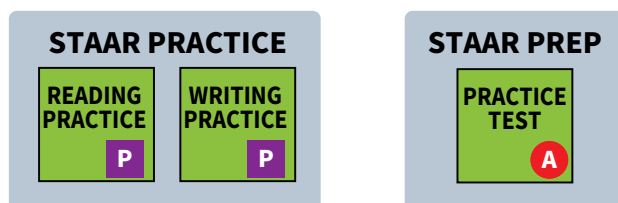
Tier 2 and Accelerated Instruction students often receive instruction that is unrelated to classroom instruction. *Sirius Online* empowers teachers to guide group and individual interventions for struggling Tier 2 students. With *Sirius Online*, targeted students get explicit and systematic instruction in the essential TEKS.

* Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-tiered approach to early identification and support for students with learning and behavior needs. It involves three tiers: Tier 1: universal interventions for all students, Tier 2: targeted group interventions for those needing additional support, and Tier 3: intensive individual interventions for students requiring specialized assistance.



TIER 1 STAAR 2.0 Practice to Show Progress for ALL Students

The new Texas accountability system emphasizes progress for all students, and rewards moving students to the Meets and Masters Grade Level. So throughout the year, all students should receive regular authentic STAAR 2.0 practice in analyzing reading and writing selections to find the best evidence-based answer. This helps students transfer what they learn in class to the content and format of the online STAAR test.

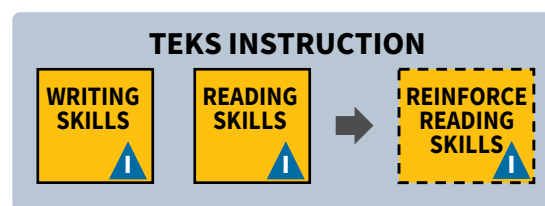


In the weeks before the STAAR test, use Practice Test as a full-length “dress rehearsal.” This builds test-taking confidence and provides high quality data.

TIER 2 TEKS Instruction for Targeted On-Level Support

Sirius Online supports targeted TEKS-based instruction with on-level skills instruction teachers can use to support struggling and Accelerated Instruction students.

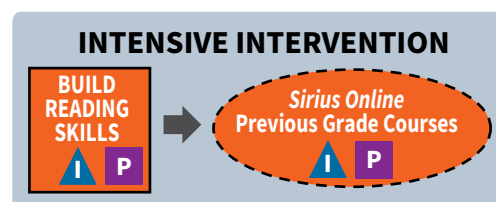
In *Sirius Online* Reports, teachers can easily make individual or group assignments by TEKS to target specific needs.



TIER 3 Remediation for Intensive Below-Level Support

Sirius Online Tier 3 implementations are mostly limited to scaffolded instruction in the previous grade level reading skills (Build Reading Skills) needed for on-level instruction.

Also, the previous grade-level courses are available for free, and their Readiness TEKS lessons can help students with prerequisites.



Assignment Planning and Pacing Guide

Sirius Online can be used over different time frames and for different needs. The table below shows two use cases: all students (Tier 1) and targeted students (Tier 2). Both uses can be combined by assigning additional resources for Tier 2 students.

TIER 1 On-Level for ALL Students

Authentic and rigorous STAAR 2.0 practice and assessment so ALL students learn how analyze reading and writing selections and find the best answer.

TIER 2 On-Level for Targeted Students Instruction

Scaffolded TEKS instruction gives Accelerated Instruction and struggling students explicit instruction in how the TEKS are actually tested in STAAR.

TIER 3 Below-Level Remediation Instruction

Sirius Online Tier 3 implementations are mostly limited to building key reading skills using the Build Reading Skills. NOT shown below.

Sirius Online Assignments		ALL Students TIER 1 (0.5 h / wk)	Targeted Students TIER 2 (1 h / wk)
READINESS ASSESSMENT			
Diagnostic Tests	A	Optional	Encouraged
INSTRUCTION & PRACTICE			
Skill Lessons	I	Encouraged	Recommended
STAAR Practice	P	Recommended	Recommended
ECR Writing Skills	I	Recommended	Recommended
ECR Prompt Practice	P	Recommended	Recommended
Build Skills	I P	Encouraged	Recommended
Review Skills	I P	Optional	Encouraged
POST ASSESSMENT & PREP			
Post Tests	A	Optional	Encouraged
Practice Test	A	Recommended	Recommended

ASSIGNMENT TYPE

-  Instruction
-  Practice
-  Assessment

PRIORITY KEY

-  Recommended: the suggested minimum
-  Encouraged: helpful in certain contexts
-  Optional: when time permits

INSTRUCTION & PRACTICE DESCRIPTIONS

SKILL LESSONS provide TEKS-based instruction in answering STAAR test questions.
STAAR PRACTICE provides authentic STAAR2.0 selections and questions with robust feedback.
ECR provides extended constructed writing instruction and practice for key reading selections.
BUILD SKILLS focuses on the key TEKS with concise instruction and modified practice.
REVIEW SKILLS use less complex selections and items from the previous grade for remediation.

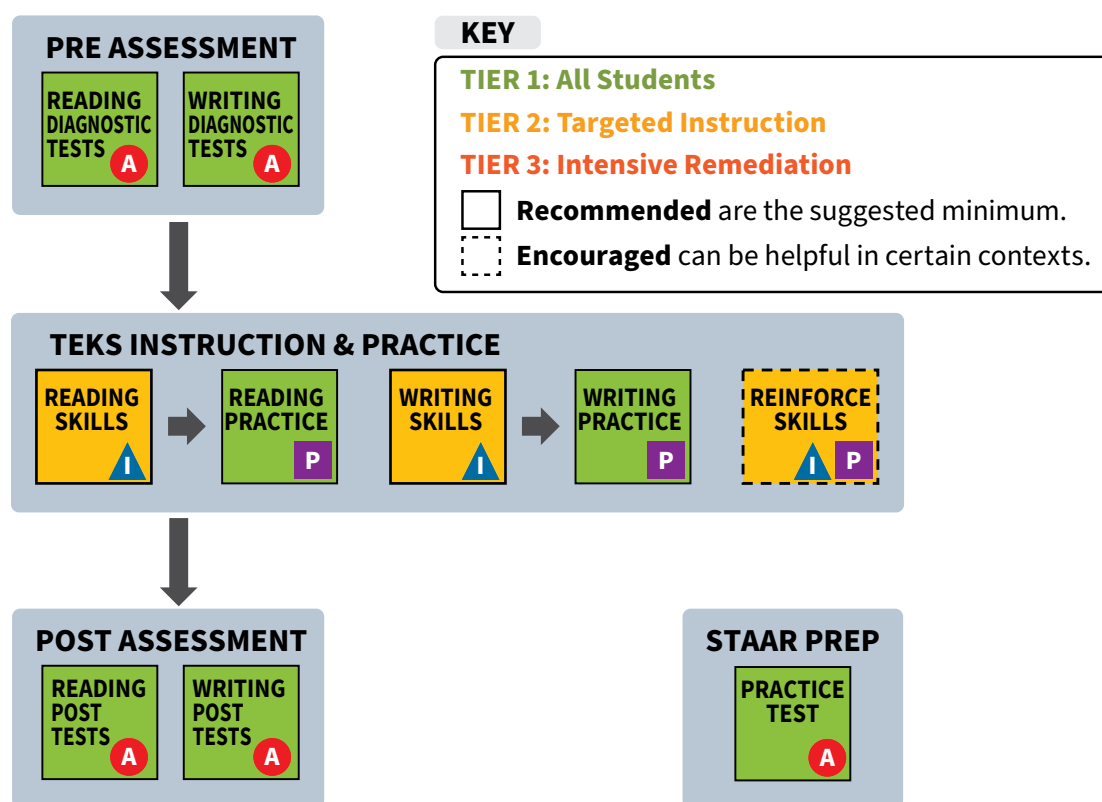
Visualizing How *Sirius Online* Assignments Interrelate

Sirius Online is a comprehensive resource that supports many distinct student needs. Below is a visualization to show how the assignments can be coordinated for each of the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) pathways, as shown below.

ON-LEVEL All students benefit from rigorous authentic STAAR 2.0 practice (Tier 1). For Tier 2 students, teachers provide TEKS skills instruction on analyzing selections to find the best answer.

BELOW-LEVEL Teachers can identify and reinforce key foundational reading skills for Tier 3 interventions.

ON-LEVEL RESOURCES



BELOW-LEVEL RESOURCES



Three Assignment Types

Sirius Online is a comprehensive supplement with instruction, practice, and assessment. Each assignment fits into one of these 3 types described below.

Assignment Type	Question Types	Student Feedback	Delivery Mode	TEKS Alignment
Instruction  Explicit TEKS instruction in Reading and Writing using the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model.	STAAR and non-STAAR format items	Immediate correct or incorrect, some teacher-graded responses	Practice mode	Lesson level
Practice  Authentic STAAR 2.0 selections and questions with instructional scaffolds to support analyzing evidence.	STAAR 2.0 items only	Immediate with support scaffolds and sample written responses	Practice mode	Each item
Assessment  Authentic STAAR 2.0 selections and questions with all online STAAR tools.	STAAR 2.0 items only	No immediate feedback, some teacher-graded responses	Test mode	Each item

Instruction vs Practice Assignments

The focus of *Sirius Online* **Instruction** assignments is on learning the TEKS skills and concepts and connecting it to students' prior experiences and understanding. Therefore, instructional questions and activities may not be authentic STAAR 2.0 items or use STAAR formats.

Skill lessons as a whole are TEKS aligned and apply the TEKS conceptually so that students gain understanding of the skill, as well as experiencing how the TEKS is applied in the STAAR test. In contrast, **Practice** and **Assessments** always use authentic STAAR 2.0 items, and each item is TEKS aligned.

Accommodations

Sirius Online provides multiple STAAR test accommodations so students can *routinely, independently, and effectively* use these designated supports during classroom instruction and classroom testing. These accommodations satisfy the Texas Education Agency’s student eligibility criteria requirements. Regular use of these accommodations throughout the school year can help students build fluency with the accommodations features of the STAAR exam, leading students to use those features more effectively on exam day.

All *Sirius Online* accommodations are set to “on” by default. This gives students greater control of their learning process, supporting a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) experience. Review the Accommodations settings for assessments to ensure that your students receive the supports they need.

Designated Supports ⓘ					UDL Supports ⓘ				
Basic Calculator	Text To Speech	Translation	Content & Language ⓘ	Spelling Assistance	Basic Calculator	Text To Speech	Translation	Dictionary	Spelling Assistance

Teachers can turn any of the above accommodations on or off for any student by class. So, to create separate RLA and other content area accommodations, the students must be in separate classes.

Many accommodations are especially helpful for Emergent Bilingual students who are preparing to take tests in English.

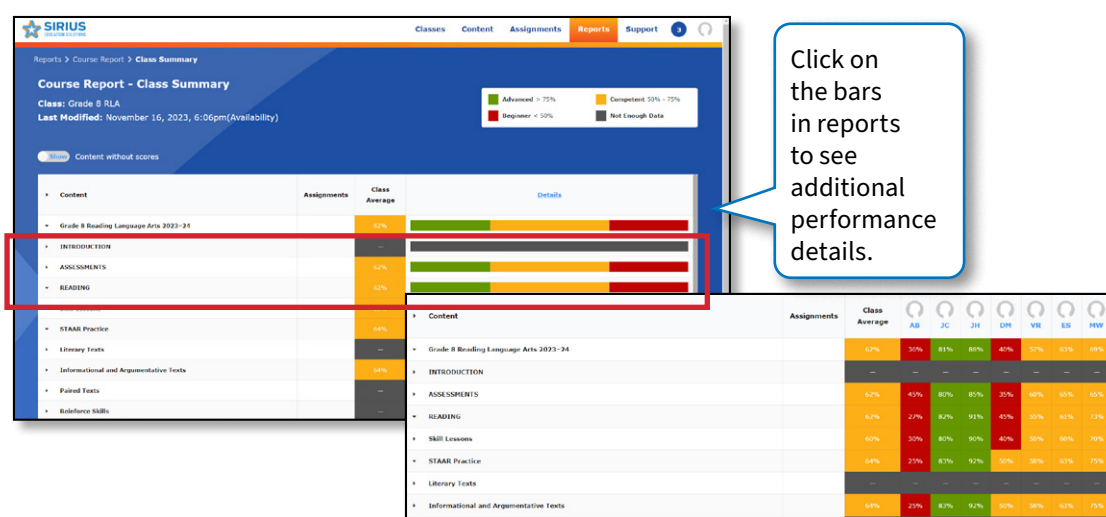
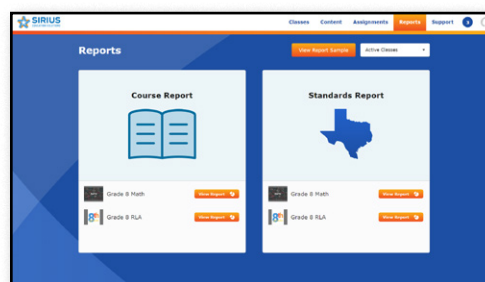
Accommodation Features

ONLINE ACCOMMODATION FEATURES		STAAR	<i>Sirius Online</i>
	Text-to-Speech (TTS) allows students to have the computer read aloud the words on the screen while highlighting them.		
	Content and Language Supports provide pop-up supports with simplified language, definitions, and images for STAAR assessment passages and items.		
	Spelling Assistance flags misspelled words in student writing and offers replacements. This encourages reluctant student writers to write more.		
	Translation gives text translations in over 100 languages. Students can also have these translations spoken aloud using Text-to-Speech. NOTE: Translate is unavailable for all assessments.		

Reports

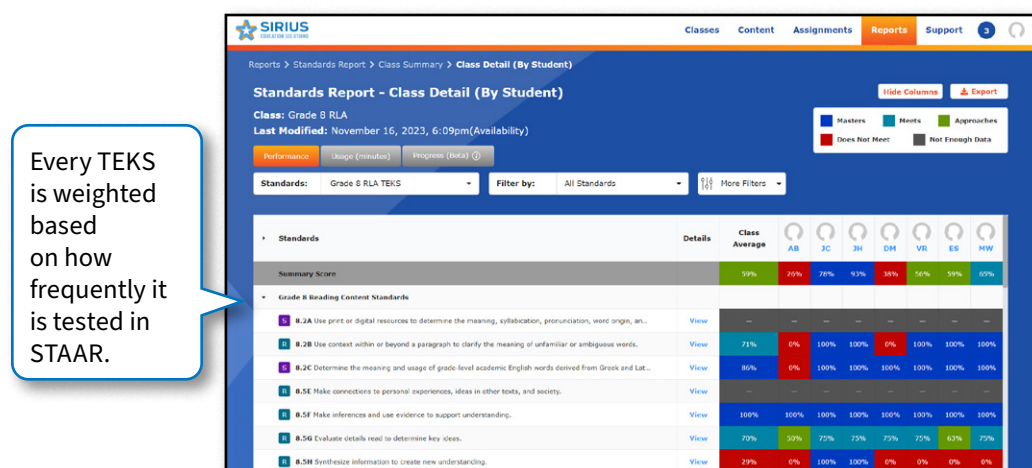
Sirius Online has reports for teachers and administrators that offer distinct but mutually supportive perspectives: **Course Reports** and **Standards Reports**. Each report provides insights into students' performance and usage.

Course Reports use a Table of Contents view divided into smaller content sections or assignments. Each assignment has three views with **Performance**, **Usage**, and **Engagement** reports by student, class, teacher, school, and even by district.



Standard Reports use the course TEKS, which can be filtered by TEKS (Readiness Standards first and then Supporting), by Reporting Categories, etc. You can analyze students' data via **Performance**, **Usage**, and **Progress** reports.

Sirius **performance levels** match STAAR with cut score percentages for Does Not Meet, Approaches, Meets, and Masters Grade Level.



Getting Help

Read On!

The Using *Sirius Online* section of this Teacher's Guide begins on the next page. It provides more in-depth information about *Sirius Online* as well as recommendations on how to implement *Sirius Online* in your classroom.

Access Platform Support

Sirius Online Support is available directly inside the platform through the Support tab to the left of your profile image.



Check the Sirius Knowledge Base

Our comprehensive, searchable knowledge base provides detailed step-by-step support instructions, including videos. It is available 24 hours/day and 7 days/week via our website [here](#).

Connect With Sirius Professionals

You can quickly connect with Sirius Technical and Customer Support in multiple ways:

Phone

(800) 942-1379, Option 2. Monday–Friday 7 am–5 pm CT

Chat

www.SiriusEducationSolutions.com

You can access the chat function in the bottom right corner of our website anytime day or night. Use chat for product support, to locate your sales representative, or to get product or order information.

Email

Support@SiriusEducationSolutions.com

Online Tickets

<https://Sirius4Learning.zohodesk.com/portal/en/home>

If you would like to track a technical or customer support issue, you can create an online ticket to view and manage the progress of your inquiry.

USING SIRIUS ONLINE

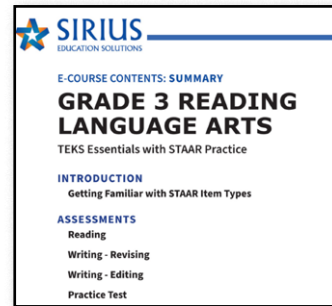
Explore in-depth information about *Sirius Online*, and recommendations for ways to implement *Sirius Online* in your classroom.

1 Introduction

1.1 Course Contents

A Summary that shows the course organization, and a Detailed View that lists every assignment in the course.

Use the contents to help you plan when to use *Sirius Online* assignments.

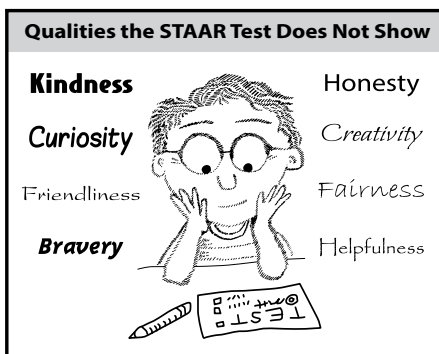


1.2 ELPS Teacher Resources

A guide with teacher resources for differentiating instructional assignments for all proficiency levels. These guides are easy to use to enrich instructional lessons for all students, while catering to the diverse needs of Emergent Bilingual students.

1.3 Welcome Letter

The Welcome Letter introduces the *Sirius Online* Reading Language Arts course to students and seeks to provide context and motivation to students.



The Welcome Letter is available to students through the *Sirius Online* Reading Language Arts course. You will need to assign the Welcome Letter as an assignment for your students.

We encourage use of this activity to help students process their feelings about STAAR tests. STAAR tests measure a limited range of capacities, as shown by this comic.

We sincerely believe that students who learn exactly what is tested will indeed succeed and show progress.

1.4 Getting Familiar with STAAR Item Types P



MULTIPART

HOT TEXT

SHORT CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE

ASSIGNMENT TYPE



Instruction



Practice



Assessment

Getting Familiar with STAAR Item Types are introductory lessons about the new STAAR 2.0 questions. Students will practice these items throughout the course, so familiarity will become fluency, which then lead to confidence.

A multiselect item has a **question stem**, **directions**, and **answer choices**. Here is an example.

Which statements about The Big Bad Wolf are true? Question Stem

Select **TWO** correct answers. Directions

(A) The Big Bad Wolf likes pancakes.

(B) The Big Bad Wolf is mean.

(C) The Big Bad Wolf is scary. Answer Choices

These lessons explain the different components of the questions, including the directions, question stem, and area for response or answer choices.

These lessons also explain strategies students can employ in order to answer the questions.

You can assign all Getting Familiar assignments at one time, but we suggest spreading them out and using them with Teacher-led instruction.

2 Assessments

Sirius Online includes different reading and writing assessments for different purposes. Below is a description of each type of assessment with an explanation for when they can be used and the information they can provide to both teachers and students.

All *Sirius Online* assessments are **delivered in Test mode**—students do not receive any immediate feedback or Hints, and the final answer for each question is scored when the final Submit button is pressed. Most of the test items are **auto-scored**; however, **SCR** (Short Constructed Response) and **ECR** (Extended Constructed Response) questions require a human grader, similar to the actual STAAR test.

NOTE: If students **Exit** out of an assessment before pressing **Submit**, their work is saved. Students can return to a saved assessment and change any answers before pressing Submit. To limit cheating, we recommend that all assessments be given in class, and ideally under simulated STAAR **testing conditions**. When students experience *feelings* similar to those felt when taking the actual STAAR test, they get to rehearse this stressful context. This also results in more accurate performance data.

2.1 Authentic STAAR 2.0 Assessments

These authentic STAAR 2.0 assessments are useful tools for teachers to check and monitor students’ progress towards mastery of the eligible grade-level reading and writing TEKS. Reading includes all tested genres and Writing includes Revising and Editing passages.

DIAGNOSTIC TEST A	POST TEST A
• Efficiently assesses eligible TEKS with authentic STAAR 2.0 items • Matches the format of STAAR 2.0 including new question types • Includes all genres for Reading. Writing includes Revising and Editing • Diagnostic Test questions are used in Skill Lessons for deeper instruction and support	• A parallel form to the Diagnostic Test, assessing eligible TEKS • Matches the format of STAAR 2.0 including new question types • Matches the Reading and Writing tests • Can monitor progress and identify additional TEKS or genres for additional review



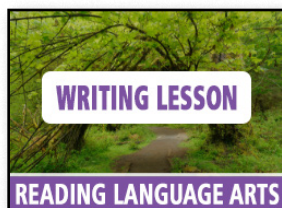
2.2 Practice Test: Full-Length STAAR 2.0 Assessment A

One full-length authentic STAAR test matches the STAAR redesign blueprint closely in all details. This test does not include additional field test items. It can provide insights into your students’ likely STAAR test performance. To learn more, visit [here](#).



3 TEKS Skill Lessons

Reading and writing TEKS skill lessons follows a sequence of instruction and practice shown below. The skill lessons are designed to introduce the skill, connect it to student experience, check for conceptual understanding, and then practice the skill in a STAAR format by using the diagnostic test texts.



INTRODUCTION & CHECK-IN

INTRODUCTION

Move the correct word to complete each sentence.

events characters theme never

A is an important idea, lesson, or message in a text.

The theme is almost said directly in the story.

The theme is developed by the in the story.

The theme is also developed by what happens to the .

[Submit Answer](#)

Explain the skill succinctly and then ask students to connect it to their prior experiences.

- Succinct explanation of the TEKS using academic language and STAAR terms
- Check-In Writing Prompt that activates prior knowledge and experiences
- Survey-style question to give qualitative student information for teachers

BUILD SKILLS

BUILD SKILLS

Complete the sentences by choosing the correct answers from the drop-down menus.

In this sentence, the word **important** is Choose... ▼.

In this sentence, the word style is Choose... ▼.

A Choose... ▼ tells the reader the subject of a group of paragraphs in a text.

A Choose... ▼ lists the selections and page numbers in a book.

A Choose... ▼ shows where places are on Earth.

A Choose... ▼ gives information about numbers.

A Choose... ▼ gives information about when things happened.

Systematic TEKS instruction in the skills and concepts that students apply in PRACTICE.

- TEKS review and reinforcement
- Step-by-step examples and activities
- Scaffolded student activities

GUIDED PRACTICE

GUIDED PRACTICE

Use this selection from the diagnostic test to complete the practice.



What is the most likely reason the author includes the illustration of the train track being constructed in the selection "The Great Railway Race"?

To answer this STAAR question, I should look for Choose... ▼.

[Submit Answer](#) [Show Hint](#)

Scaffolded instruction and practice in how to understand and answer STAAR questions.

- Revisits and reviews diagnostic test texts and questions
- Presents a strategy for answering STAAR items aligned to the skill lesson TEKS

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Read the selection.



Choose the best answer to the question. The most likely reason that the author provides the information in **paragraph 3** is —

(A) to explain why 1876 was an important year in Texas state history

(B) to explain why a railroad in Dallas was bad for business in Fort Worth

(C) to explain why cowboys enjoyed

Authentic STAAR 2.0 practice applying the TEKS to a new item.

- Less scaffolding and support for a more authentic experience
- Requires students to explain their thinking with reasoning or by citing evidence from the selection

CHECK-OUT

CHECK-OUT

Read the question carefully. Then enter your answer in the box provided.

What are clues you can use to find the author's purpose in choosing to write the text a certain way or to include certain facts?

Enter your text here

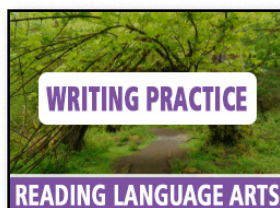
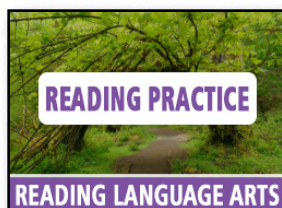
Save Answer

A second writing prompt helps students summarize and conclude the lesson

- Prompts students to summarize the practical applicability of strategies or thinking to specific TEKS-aligned items
- Provides teachers qualitative information to gauge student understanding of the TEKS

4 Authentic STAAR 2.0 Practice P

Authentic STAAR 2.0 practice for eligible and likely TEKS using multiple genres and item types, including the new question types, such as inline choice, multiselect, multipart, short constructed response(SCR), extended constructed response(ECR), and grade-level-specific types like hot text and match table grid. Practice covers single reading selections, paired reading selections, and revising and editing selections that match the new STAAR format.



Practice also includes scaffolding support, including hints and answer choice feedback to help students focus and refine their thinking.

Students will revisit a diagnostic test item and apply a specific strategy or understanding to answer it with scaffolded support before trying a new item based on the skill. Students are also asked to provide text-based evidence and reasoning for their answers to help show their thinking and eliminate “lucky guesses” in the independent practice.

Most assignments in the lesson are auto-scored and provide students with immediate feedback.

5 Reinforce Skills

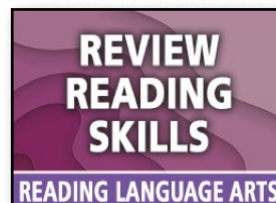
5.1 Build Skills

Build Skills instructional lessons help students in grades 4 and 5 practice important TEKS at grade level. Ideal for students needing additional instructional support for specific skills but are otherwise approaching or on grade level.



5.2 Review Skills

Review Skills lessons and practice give students in grade 4 and 5 additional instruction and practice with TEKS and STAAR items from the previous grade. Students can reinforce the foundational skills they need from a previous grade level to better support and ensure on-grade reading and writing STAAR success.



Lessons are interactive and contain a mix of instructional and practice that support general TEKS understanding and STAAR-specific application.

6 Planning *Sirius Online* Implementations

Sirius Online was designed to help ALL students learn the tested TEKS in the context of how they are tested in STAAR. And *Sirius Online* is a comprehensive supplement that is easily adapted for a wide range of use cases and student needs.

For support in creating a unique implementation for your particular needs, you may want to consider the following questions to guide your planning.

Questions to Guide Planning

Intentions	What are our goals?
Evaluation	What does success look like? How will we measure it?
Obstacles	What are our primary needs or challenges?
Timing	Where does the student instruction fit into the school year?
Integration	Where does <i>Sirius Online</i> integrate into the curriculum/classes?
Coordination	How does <i>Sirius Online</i> connect to your core curriculum?
Needs	What are the instructional pathways for different students?

There is no one best way to use *Sirius Online* because each classroom has unique needs. However, we strongly encourage implementations that extend throughout the full school year. Research shows that “cramming” is not effective for complex cognitive tasks, such as answering the online STAAR reading and writing selections.

6.1 Common Use Cases

Below are four common use cases based on start date.

Start Date		ALL Students TIER 1	Targeted Students TIER 2
FALL	Beginning of Year	STAAR Practice	+ Skill Instruction
	After First 9-Weeks	STAAR Practice	+ Skill Instruction
SPRING	After Mid-Year Benchmark	STAAR Practice	+ Skill Instruction
	After Spring Break	Practice Test	Practice Test

TIER 1 On-Level for ALL Students

Authentic and rigorous STAAR 2.0 practice and assessment so ALL students learn how to analyze reading and writing selections and find the best answer.

TIER 2 On-Level for Targeted Students

Scaffolded TEKS instruction gives Accelerated Instruction and struggling students explicit instruction in how the TEKS are actually tested in STAAR.

7 Instructional Tips for Using *Sirius Online*

7.1 Make a Commitment to Use *Sirius Online*

New habits do not just happen. They take deliberate effort. We encourage teachers to make a commitment to use *Sirius Online* (ideally each week), and to designate a certain day and time to assign, review student work, and plan for next steps.

In working with students, rhythm and routine can be powerful supports in encouraging them to apply themselves. Your internal commitment to use *Sirius Online* (something new) will be sensed and respected by students. Students tend to follow their teachers.

7.2 Use Instruction and Practice for Ungraded Activities

We highly recommend that **Instruction** and **Practice** assignments be ungraded. Research shows that students are more likely to take risks, make mistakes, and use the feedback to get better in low-stakes activities. In contrast, for **Assessments**, students should focus on getting the correct answer: performing instead of practicing.

Although teachers can convert **Practice** assignments into **Assessments** (so students get no immediate feedback), we suggest that this be used cautiously for special situations.

7.3 Release Assignments for Student Review

We encourage teachers to release assignments for students to review their work. Furthermore, teachers need to help students develop the habit of using the Review only mode to analyze the items that they got correct and/or incorrect. In Review mode, students also get access to full solutions as well as the tools that they used such as Highlights, Sticky Notes, and feedback comments from the teacher. For assessment, you can simply delay the release of any assessment until all students have submitted it.

7.4 Build Teacher-Student Relationships

We encourage teachers to take advantage of the student Self Evaluation at the end of each **Instruction** and **Practice** assignment. Teachers can respond directly to each student's written response to encourage, support, and challenge them individually.

- **Confidence** in what students learned/practiced
- **Effort** or how hard students tried
- **Reflect** or short written response (shared with teacher)

Sirius Online **Instruction** and **Practice** assignments ask students to reflect on their work with 3 end-of-assignment unscored questions:

CONFIDENCE How confident are you in what you learned?

I'm confused. I feel okay. I feel pretty confident. I'm an expert!

EFFORT How hard did you focus or try?

Not Much Effort Some Effort Good Effort My Best Effort

REFLECTION Complete one or more of the sentence stems below.

- I learned...
- I had difficulty...
- I feel...

Many students are poor judges of their **learning** and/or **effort**. Teachers should look for students who are particularly off—meaning their **performance** does not match their confidence and/or their **effort** does not match their **time on task**.

Understanding and working with students' self-perceptions can be a key factor in helping change student behaviors. Research shows that students' self-efficacy or beliefs may be the most important factor in student engagement.

Teachers can share observations including student written responses (anonymously) with the entire class. This shows the teacher is reviewing student work and that they are focusing on productive problem-solving behaviors instead of scores. When students feel seen, they tend to engage more deeply.

7.5 Focus on Reading with a Purpose

STAAR Reading Selections Require A Specific Kind of Reading

STAAR reading tests require specialized reading. Instead of reading for pleasure or for general understanding, students are reading the selections in order to find **specific text evidence** to answer the questions about the selection. Thus, STAAR test questions demand purposeful reading, identifying and understanding what is being asked, finding the relevant information in the selection, analyzing answer choices, and navigating new STAAR 2.0 question types as well as the online testing platform.

Reading Comprehension Is the Synthesis of Several Reading Skills

Helping students become better STAAR readers is challenging and requires covering several skills across multiple genres, both for reading and writing. And because the RLA test is made up of different, random genres each year, it can be difficult to plan for efficient or comprehensive practice. *Sirius Online* has ample practice across all eligible genres with different TEKS.

Reading eight selections and answering 40+ questions is hard work, and some students will be reluctant to apply themselves to reading carefully and thoughtfully. But you cannot do the work for students. Some teachers need to be careful to monitor and limit the help that they provide students to avoid undermining the necessary struggle. Because thinking is invisible, we cannot know for sure when students are thinking. Nor can we force students to think. We can only create the conditions that encourage and support thinking more deeply.

Three Key Thinking Habits Teachers Can Promote

To promote careful thinking and problem-solving, we suggest teachers focus on positive affirmations for three common bad thinking habits (and related limiting attitudes). Teacher can repeat each phrase regularly, such as after a student request for help.

Take time to think	Get students to slow down and resist impulsivity!
Keep at it	Get students to try again and practice persistence!
Consider all options	Get students to be systematic and not rigid!

For a singular instructional goal, we suggest anything that slows students down, so that they think more carefully. Most of human thinking happens fast and automatically. Careful and deliberate thinking takes time and effort.

7.6 Use Writing Resources to Support Students

STAAR Writing ECR and SCR Prompts Are Specific and Unique

Short and extended responses for the STAAR test are unique to the test. Both are governed by specific rubrics that measure development and organization of ideas as well as grade-appropriate language conventions. Students are asked to write, revise, and edit in a variety of modes, including informational, argumentative, fiction, literary nonfiction, and correspondence. While the STAAR rubric does score on traditional writing skills, such as the clear development of a central idea or thesis, students' knowing how to develop and organize their ideas in response to a specific prompt and using evidence from a reading selection or pair is challenging. Additionally, the online platform for the STAAR test presents physical challenges: Students must scroll and type their responses on a screen with limited box sizes.

For teachers, scoring student responses requires understanding the task, the rubrics, and some of the nuances in development and conventions that might increase or decrease the score of the student's writing.

Sirius Online provides tools for students to access and use a platform similar to the STAAR platform. These tools will help students become more experienced and comfortable. Students also have access to tools such as text-to-speech and spell-checking to support them as they write. Teachers have point-of-use rubrics to follow with student writing assignments, as well as high-level responses. These examples of high-scoring SCRs and ECRs aid both students and teachers to identify the most important points or the text evidence from the selection to include in a well-developed response.

8 Concluding Questions

8.1 What Is Special About *Sirius Online*?

TEKS-Focused Instruction

Sirius Online supplements enhance existing instructional materials by providing essential TEKS instruction and authentic STAAR 2.0 practice. *Sirius Online* is used along with a core curriculum, not as a replacement. However, *Sirius Online* is needed because it fills instructional gaps in older adopted materials by closely matching STAAR 2.0 in all its details: content, format, and rigor.

Essential TEKS with Authentic STAAR 2.0 Practice

Sirius Online focuses on the eligible TEKS and demonstrates how the TEKS are tested in STAAR in both reading and writing categories. By helping students apply key TEKS skills and concepts to multi-genre selections (including cross-curricular and argumentative passages), and by providing complex STAAR questions (including for Revising and Editing selections), *Sirius* adds depth and rigor to your curriculum. And by using an online platform that closely matches the online STAAR tests environment, students can move beyond mere familiarity with STAAR 2.0 to complete fluency.

High-Quality Feedback

Effective feedback enables learning and relies upon a culture that is open to using feedback to impact future choices—to feedforward. This is where *Sirius*' robust and high-quality feedback comes in. *Sirius Online*'s comprehensive feedback options are designed to empower students through choice, and to be supported by teachers who can focus on student learning.

8.2 How Do I Get Students and Parents to Support Use of *Sirius*?

Your belief that *Sirius* will help your students is the key, because this belief will be transmitted to students and parents in everything you say and do. Students and parents trust you and will see your sincere efforts to help.

No surprise, the more you understand *Sirius Online*, the better you can use and appreciate our value in helping you support your students in learning the essential tested TEKS and practicing them in the exact ways they are tested in STAAR 2.0.

Yes, *Sirius Online* can be an efficient way to improve your students' STAAR performance. But you are you are sharing with them a focus on a process of getting better at STAAR tested thinking. And all students can improve and show progress.

When talking with parents, it can be helpful to know how they perceive STAAR and testing in general. Because STAAR is a requirement, we suggest avoiding negative talk about STAAR tests. We encourage teachers to focus on students and their needs and how STAAR focuses on complex reading and writing activities.

This is the same message you communicate to students: you are helping them learn the thinking and rigor of STAAR. Complaining about STAAR to students can give them an excuse to not try their best and develop their capacities through hard work. And some students are looking for an excuse!

8.3 What Evidence Supports the Use of *Sirius Online*?

Sirius uses established research and design principles to ensure its resources are effective and easy to use to **support teachers** in **helping students** learn the essential TEKS and succeed on STAAR tests.

Sirius has partnered with McREL International

to research the following expected outcomes in students’

- STAAR test performance
- Engagement and motivation with STAAR content
- Confidence in answering complex STAAR questions
- Self-efficacy about improving STAAR test performance



Sirius Education Solutions is conducting ongoing user-experience and efficacy research to continuously improve the student and educator experience.

Sirius Companion Workbooks

Blended Learning That's Easy to Use

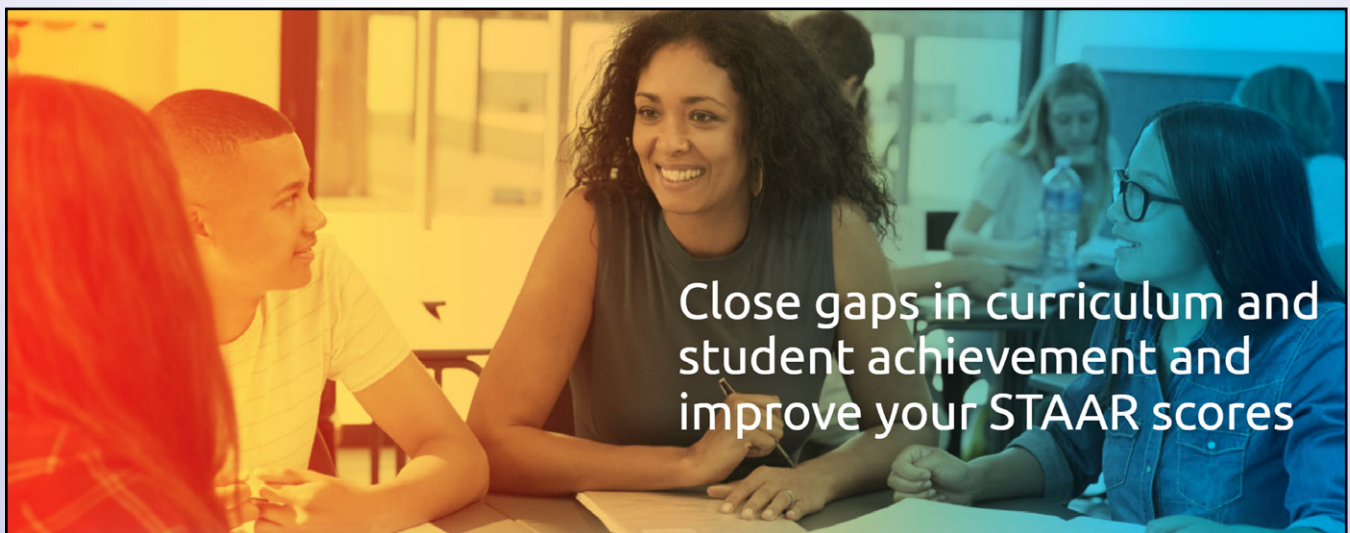
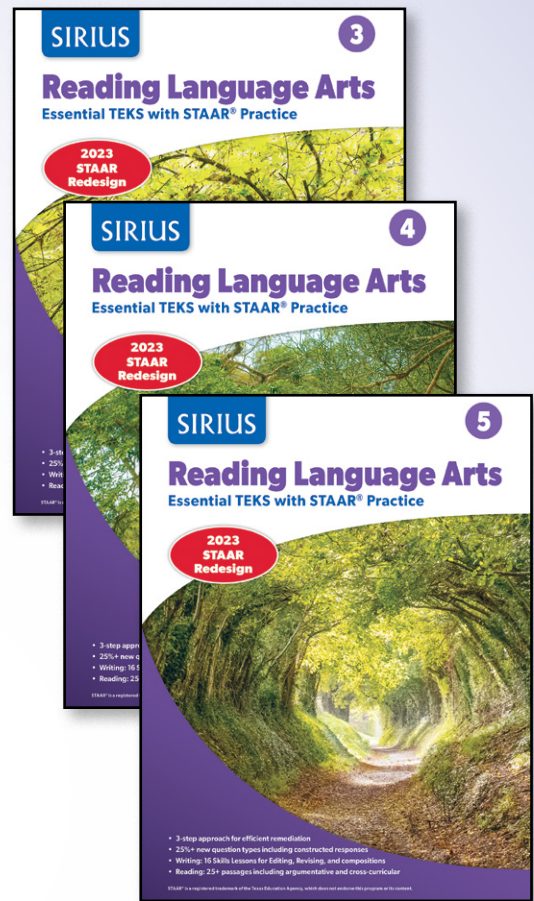
Sirius Online courses and our complementary print resources have similar organization and content so that you can easily move between each medium, adapting to best **serve the needs of your unique students.**

Many **struggling students often take greater ownership** of their learning when they can write in their OWN workbooks.

Additionally, students are better able to **transfer their thinking** processes to an online format when they experience the same content in both the print and online formats.

Sirius Online's **comprehensive RLA courses integrate all** the content from our print-based workbooks and include a full-length Practice Test. And with online resources, students get immediate feedback while teachers get auto scoring and powerful reporting.

You can register [here](#) to **examine our printed RLA workbooks** as eBooks.



Close gaps in curriculum and student achievement and improve your STAAR scores

Contact us at SiriusEducationSolutions.com to learn more!