

**2021 Instructional Material Summer Review Institute**

**Review Team Appraisal of Title**

**6-8 English Language Arts**

This appraisal form is provided for use by educators responsible for the selection of instructional materials for implementation with districts and charter schools across New Mexico to meet the need of their student populations.

This appraisal form should be used in conjunction with the publisher provided Form D: Research Based Effectiveness Determination that supports this reviewed material which can be found on the Instructional Material Bureau website.

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/instructional-materials/the-adoption-cycle/>

Text Title	LearnZillion EL Education Student Digital License Grade 8 (cost per student)- 1 year	Publisher	LearnZillion Inc.
SE ISBN	9781648857669	TE ISBN	9781648857690
SW ISBN	9781648857683	Grade Level/Content	Grade 8 ELA

**Core Instructional Material Designation** (*Core Instructional Material is the comprehensive print or digital educational material, including basal material, which constitutes the necessary instructional components of a full academic course of study in those subjects for which the department has adopted content standards and benchmarks.*)

**Recommended**  
(90% and above)



**Recommended with  
Reservations** (80-89%)



**Not Recommended and  
Not Adopted**  
(below 80%)



**Total Score** - The final score for the materials is averaged between the team of reviewers.

**Average Score**

91%

**Cultural and Linguistic Relevance Recognition** - *Materials are reviewed for relevant criteria pertaining to the support for teachers and students in the material regarding cultural relevance and the inclusion of a culturally responsive lens. Those materials receiving a score of 90% or above on the CLR portion of the review are recognized as culturally and linguistically relevant.*

**CLR Recognized**



**Average Score**

91%

Materials take into account cultural perspectives.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence (autofilled from All Content Appraisal tab):*

Overall, this level gives students many cultural perspectives. In the first Module, students are engaged with Hispanic folklore and mythology. In the third Module, students engage with the experience of European Jews during WWII, and in the fourth Module, students get to engage with the cultural experience of Japanese-Americans during WWII. Students get to see history from various lenses, enriching their understanding of the past while making connections to the present.

Materials include a culturally responsive lens.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence (autofilled from All Content Appraisal tab):*

In addition to providing students with cultural perspectives, students are also asked to engage with the materials in a responsive manner. Students are asked to create the story of a fictional upstander in WWII and become activists against internment on American soil. They are asked to understand the impact of GMO farming on the food supply, and how mythology functions within Hispanic heritage. Overall, students are asked to see the world from perspectives outside of their own and respond accordingly and respectfully.

**Standards Review** - Materials are reviewed for alignment with the state adopted content standards, benchmarks and performance standards.

Average Score

90%

Materials align with grade level ELA standards overall.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

The content and materials provide students with the opportunity to engage with rich, real-world texts such as *Summer of the Mariposas* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. In addition, the materials offer students the ability to engage with vocabulary and writing in various contexts. Supports are provided to enhance student learning and engage learners who fall into various learning subcategories.

Materials align to reading standards.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Students are given the opportunity to engage with works of both fiction in the case of Hispanic mythology (La Llorona) and non-fiction in the case studies of Holocaust victims and upstanders. Additionally, students are encouraged to do their own on-level research reading to expand their knowledge of various historical events. Reading is challenging and encourages students to grow as readers.

Materials align to writing standards.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Students are given a variety of writing tasks in which to participate. These tasks incorporate the use of technology in which students are to create an infographic regarding the use of GMOs as well as encourage students to engage in different types of discourse from small group discussions within multiple units to large group presentations such as the mock interview in Module 4. These writing tasks enable students on their path of college or career readiness, as several incorporate real-world style writing and communication.

Materials align to speaking and listening standards.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Each module encourages students to become active listeners and speakers. Students are taught how to engage in conversations and bring textual evidence to back their assessment of a text. They are also taught how to listen to the perspectives of their peers and take opposing views into account.

Materials align to language standards.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

The materials in this level not only encourage students to understand the English language, but also how other languages blend into English to make it a more inclusive language. This happens specifically in *Summer of the Mariposas*, where students are encouraged to add Spanish words to their vocabulary dictionaries, and in Module 3, where students are asked to include domain specific vocabulary relating back to the Holocaust. Students are also guided in mini-lessons to enhance their capabilities with syntax and structure.

**ELA Content Review** - Materials are reviewed for relevant criteria pertaining to the support for teachers and students in the specific content area reviewed.

Average Score

96%

Materials provide a selection and range of high-quality texts worthy of students' time and attention, exhibiting exceptional craft and thought and/or providing useful information.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

The texts incorporated in this grade level are high quality and high interest. They are either at or above grade appropriate Lexile level (*Farewell to Manzanar* has a Lexile score of 1040L), with scaffolds in place to assist struggling readers. In addition, the supplementary texts compliment the anchor texts and are also worthy of the students' time and attention.

Questions in the materials are high-quality text-dependent and text-specific questions. The overwhelming majority of these questions are text-specific and draw student attention to the particulars in the text.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Students are asked to engage with the text in both written and oral mediums, as can be seen in Module 4, where students are asked to compare the text and film versions of *Farewell to Manzanar*. These engagements include surface understanding as well as upper-level analysis. Students must be able to cite textual evidence to support their claims regardless of the level of the question.

Materials provide scaffolding and supports to enable students' learning of English language arts.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Scaffolding and supports are available to assist teachers in enabling student learning. Scaffolds for ELLs are readily present and located in the "Teacher Notes" section of each lesson. Scaffolds for struggling and advanced learners are also available, if not as readily located.

**All Content Review** - Materials are reviewed for relevant criteria pertaining to the support for teachers and students in the material regarding the progression of the standards, lesson structure, pacing, assessment, individual learners and cultural relevance.

Average Score

92%

Materials are coherent and consistent with the standards that all students should study in order to be college and career ready.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

The materials in this level are of high quality and high interest. Students are asked to look at a popular Southwestern myth in Module 1, with the inclusion of "La Llorona." They are asked to look at how GMOs affect their own bodies when reading *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. They represent an appropriate degree of difficulty and topics are sequenced as to engage the learner and have them participate in a deep-dive of the materials and their significance. For instance, Module 3 directly feeds into Module 4 as students examine stories of Jews in Europe during WWII and then seamlessly move into the stories of Japanese Americans and their experience in internment camps in *Farewell to Manzanar*.

Materials are well designed and take into account effective lesson structure and pacing.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Each lesson in the modules comes with an effective TE to guide the instructor in engaging their students. Additionally, the lessons come with optional opportunities to help teachers keep more advanced students engaged and interacting with the materials. Units come with a pacing guide, giving teachers an idea of approximately how much time should be spent on each slide deck.

Materials support teacher planning, learning, and understanding of the standards.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

The modules come with instructions for the teacher on how to prepare for teaching the unit. The slide decks also come with an integrated TE, which gives instruction on how to keep students engaged with the material. Scripts for the teacher are also provided on a limited basis.

Materials offer teachers resources and tools to collect ongoing data about student progress on the standards.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

LearnZillion has a Digital Platform that teachers can utilize to keep track of student progress and data. This platform is in a general location and not specific to level.

Materials support effective use of technology to enhance student learning.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Students are given multiple opportunities to engage with technology, from basic word processing in Module 1's compare and contrast essay, to more creative applications. Some of the performance tasks include the creation of infographics (Module 2) to interviews (Module 4) to storyboards (Module 3). Technology is used in mock real-world scenarios, preparing students for the world outside of school.

Materials can be easily customized for individual learners.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

The material does offer opportunities to customize materials for individual learners, but the options are limited and not easily located within the platform. There is one all-inclusive Digital Platform that accommodates grades 6-8, and it is not readily found within the levels, but must be searched for independently. The accommodations for ELLs are readily present and incorporated into each lesson.

Materials give all students extensive opportunities and support to explore key concepts.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Lessons in these materials come with Language Dives and Deep Dives, which encourage students to have a thorough knowledge of the material and language standards. Students must engage with their peers, be able to cite textual evidence accurately and thoroughly, and engage in the academic conversation. By the end of each unit, students should have a mastery of the content as well as the incorporated language skills.

Materials take into account cultural perspectives.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

Overall, this level gives students many cultural perspectives. In the first Module, students are engaged with Hispanic folklore and mythology. In the third Module, students engage with the experience of European Jews during WWII, and in the fourth Module, students get to engage with the cultural experience of Japanese-Americans during WWII. Students get to see history from various lenses, enriching their understanding of the past while making connections to the present.

Materials include a culturally responsive lens.

*Statements of appraisal and supporting evidence:*

In addition to providing students with cultural perspectives, students are also asked to engage with the materials in a responsive manner. Students are asked to create the story of a fictional upstander in WWII and become activists against internment on American soil. They are asked to understand the impact of GMO farming on the food supply, and how mythology functions within Hispanic heritage. Overall, students are asked to see the world from perspectives outside of their own and respond accordingly and respectfully.

**Reviewers' Professional Summation** - These materials are reviewed by Level II and Level III educators from across New Mexico. The reviewers have brought their knowledge, experience and expertise into the review of these materials. They offer here their individual summary of the material as a whole.

Reviewer #: 25

*Background and experience:*

Reviewer 25 is an ELA department chair and adjunct professor with 19 years of experience. The reviewer holds a Level III teaching license in the State of New Mexico in addition to active teaching licenses in two other states. They are the AP coordinator in their high school as well as the advisor for the National Honor Society. Reviewer 25 holds Bachelor's degrees in History/Political Science and Journalism and a Master's degree in English literature, as well as various certifications.

*Professional summary of material:*

Overall, the materials in this level are rich and engaging. The Performance Tasks are interesting and challenged students to go outside of their comfort zones, both with their content and with their ability to interact with others. The lessons are well-developed, well-sequenced, and provide several opportunities for students to engage with content from both a personal and cultural perspective. There are guideposts within each lesson for teachers to use to make sure they are keeping pace with the content, and opportunities for differentiation for learners at different levels. Teachers unfamiliar with LearnZillion will not find the platforms for data collection and differentiation for learners other than ELLs readily. Once they are found, however, they are user-friendly. Other than that, the content and materials, both primary and supportive, are appropriate, engaging, and provide adequate levels of challenge.

Reviewer #: 26

*Background and experience:*

Reviewer 26 is a teacher with 15 years of classroom experience. She holds a Level 3 New Mexico Teaching license in English/Language Arts, with endorsements in Reading, TESOL, and Library Sciences. She is also Nationally Board Certified and a Certified Google Trainer. She taught elementary library and has been a middle school and high school teacher. She has taught all areas of English/Language arts and was an ELD program coordinator. She currently works as a technology support specialist, working with teachers to more effectively use technology and integrate technology into the classroom.

*Professional summary of material:*

Overall, the texts are interesting and engaging for students and exactly what I would pick if I were teaching 8th grade. The assessments are standards based and easy to assign. The performance tasks are unique, engaging, and will prepare students for real world writing tasks. Pairing Holocaust stories with Japanese internment gives students a much deeper understanding of World War II than studying each separately. The 8th grade LearnZillion textbook has better cultural connections and attention to grammar and language standards than the other levels of textbooks we reviewed. The lessons are well paced, and structured in a way to scaffold student learning. The teacher's notes are helpful for scripting, accommodations, and questions and are easy to locate next to the student slides. Other accommodations and modifications are a little harder to find within the LearnZillion website.

Reviewer #: 27

*Background and experience:*

Reviewer 27 is a teacher with 11 years experience. She is a National Board Certified Teacher with a Level 3 Administrative License and a Master's in TESOL. She has taught 5th and 6th grade in all subjects in a self-contained classroom.

*Professional summary of material:*

Overall, the text selections are all of high caliber and engaging topics. Students receive quality materials, instructions, activities, and lessons to aid in their understanding of relevant historical topics and informational texts. While the materials are more geared to provide support for English Language Learners, the Digital Platform allows teachers to completely customize their lessons and activities for a variety of learners at a variety of levels. This curriculum is one that I would choose to utilize in my classroom, as it effectively enhances student learning and mastery of the topics and standards. The writing activities as well as the built in SIOP activities allow all students to thrive and learn, no matter where they are from or what language they speak. I highly recommend this curriculum for someone that wants everything they need in one curriculum and not have to search for supplemental high quality materials, especially if you have ELLs in your classroom.