

Amplify CKLA's Alignment Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework

Amplify CKLA (Core Knowledge Language Arts) materials align with the expectations outlined in the **New York City Department of Education Definition of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education** and the **New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework**. Amplify CKLA understands that students must be able both to respect their own backgrounds and experiences and confidently communicate and work with peers from around the world. To that end, the program offers many opportunities for students to recognize themselves in familiar characters and to open their minds to new perspectives—all while developing a lifelong love of reading and learning. For additional information, including the diversity of characters and authors, please see the Amplify CKLA **Culturally Responsive Curriculum Overview**.

Amplify CKLA presents multifaceted pictures of people by introducing students to a broad range of identity factors while avoiding stereotypes. Throughout, students encounter people from different backgrounds performing everyday roles that underscore the common things that connect us all while also dispelling stereotypes. The program builds students' knowledge of diverse cultural backgrounds through different historical eras, helping them understand what connects us to our predecessors and how we remain distinct from them. Materials place particular emphasis on representing different aspects, including names, of African and Hispanic/Latino cultures, tracing their history from their earliest civilizations up through their many contributions to contemporary society. For examples, see Grade 1, Domain 4 (Early World Civilizations) and Domain 5 (Early American Civilizations). For additional information on diversity, equity, and inclusion, please see the [Amplify CKLA DEI Program Overview](#).

At Amplify, we believe that every child is capable of becoming a skilled reader. For us, that belief is more than just a nice idea. It is a foundation for action and an urgent call for high-quality materials that give every child the same opportunity. And the latest reading science shows that the best instruction supports all students. We have identified the four pillars of equity based on that science. These key starting points offer concrete actions teachers can take to create a classroom where every student succeeds at reading—and to open numerous opportunities for every student. For more information, please see the Amplify CKLA [Four Pillars of Equity](#) brief.

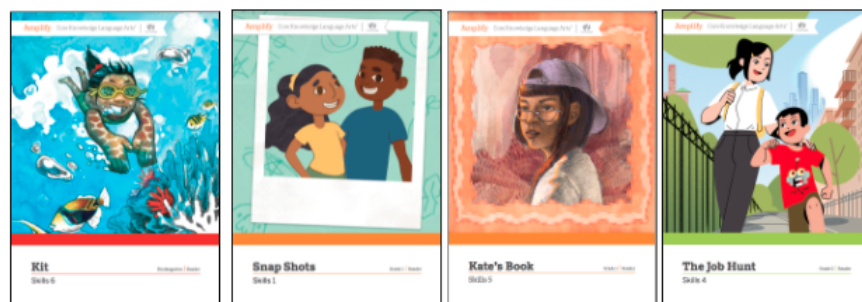
Amplify CKLA recognizes the importance of social-emotional learning and has created the digital **Social-Emotional Learning Guide**. It offers flexible activities and resources teachers may use to support students in developing these crucial Social-Emotional competencies. These engaging activities will help further promote self-awareness through CKLA core instruction. The lesson topics include recognizing emotions and their influence on behavior as well as assessing personal strengths and limitations.

Amplify CKLA's unique knowledge-centered approach allows students to explore great civilizations, meet remarkable people, and examine world-changing events and ideas—all while developing them as proficient readers, writers, and conversationalists with sophisticated ability in textual analysis. And in the process, it helps prepare them to engage with many facets of the world and its people, to understand and appreciate their perspectives, values, beliefs, and contributions. Amplify CKLA brings the world to kids—and helps them appreciate the world.

Amplify CKLA includes teacher guidance for addressing social justice and equity content in every Knowledge Domain in Grades K-2 and each unit in Grades 3-5. The program's systematic Knowledge Sequence ensures that as students progress through each grade of study, they gain significant information about the different cultural, historical, and social contexts relevant to each knowledge domain. The **Amplify CKLA DEI and Social Justice Guides** highlight activities within each Knowledge Domain that support students' understanding of issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The guide for each grade details how each domain aligns to outcomes identified in the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards. This tool enables teachers to understand how students work toward these outcomes through the Amplify CKLA program. It also includes a DEI question for each domain or unit that teachers may use to further develop students' understanding of how the content area connects to these issues. For additional information, please see the DEI and Social Justice Guides: [Grade K](#), [Grade 1](#), [Grade 2](#), [Grade 3](#), [Grade 4](#), [Grade 5](#).

Amplify CKLA's Knowledge Research Units incorporate culturally relevant topics and instruction for Grades K-5. The diverse set of materials provide students with windows and mirrors as they build knowledge through a lens of multiple perspectives. For example, in the Adventure Stories Unit, Grade 1 students will study the careers of real-world explorers Dr. Eugenie Clark and Sophia Danenberg while thinking critically about how teamwork and collaboration can make greater adventures possible. Each new Research Unit includes a high-interest authentic tradebook collection that will spark student curiosity and inquiry. In Grade 2, students will soar to new heights through stories of early aviators including the Tuskegee Airmen, Louis Blériot, Aida de Acosta, Alberto Santos-Dumont, and Amelia Earhart. For additional information about these units, please visit the [CKLA Research Unit Overview](#) page.

For the 2022–23 Academic Year, Amplify CKLA launched new **Skills Readers** for K–2, which will feature a wide range of visually diverse characters in a variety of locations. Each reader was developed by an international team of illustrators who share characteristics with the people represented in the text, ensuring sensitive, authentic portrayals.



How does CKLA align to NYC DOE's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework?

- **See and value the background, views, and needs of all students. This includes experiences related to race, culture, language, or ability.**
 - Amplify CKLA materials value the background, views, and needs of all students. Amplify CKLA instills appreciation for the value of all people—including people with different backgrounds and people with differing physical, mental, and neurological circumstances—and it does not communicate negativity or hostility toward any people. Throughout the program, students learn about different communities and civilizations from around the world, further instilling in them an appreciation for the value and accomplishments of various groups of people. For selected examples, see Grade 1, Domain 5 (Early American Civilizations); Grade 2, Domain 2 (Early Asian Civilizations); and Grade 3, Unit 8 (Native Americans). They also encounter contemporary figures from historically marginalized backgrounds, including Mae Jemison, Victor Chang, Cesar Chavez, and others.
- **Be aware of past and present forms of bias and oppression.**
 - Throughout Amplify CKLA, students encounter a broad and balanced range of texts designed to help them understand different points of view on societal issues. Discussion questions about the texts include literal, inferential, and evaluative questions and are designed for students to carefully consider each point of view they have read. For example, in units like Grade 2, Domain 12, Fighting for a Cause, students learn about American figures like Mary McLeod Bethune and Cesar Chavez who were critical of America's status quo and fought for equality in various ways. In Grade 5, Unit 9, Chemical Matter, students grapple with how to understand different people, how a person's point of view or bias can influence their ideas about others, and how important it can be to offer forgiveness and understanding. Furthermore, units like Personal Narratives in Grades 4 and 5 give students a chance to share their own experiences, points of view, and individual voices.

Amplify CKLA teachers can find a number of different supports for recognizing and honoring students' cultures. The Amplify CKLA [Equity Guides](#) highlight activities within each domain (Grades K-2) and unit (Grades 3-5) that support understanding of issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The guide for each grade details how each domain of the Knowledge Strand (K-2) or each unit (3-5) aligns to outcomes identified in the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards. This tool enables teachers to understand how the Amplify CKLA program connects to these standards.

- **Identify and stop practices that boost historically advantaged groups at the expense of marginalized students.**
 - Throughout Amplify CKLA, characters of marginalized backgrounds are highlighted for their important contributions to society. Kindergarten students will encounter real life and fictional characters that demonstrate the significance of scientists of color. Through Amplify's collaboration with ReadWorks, students also read about performers such as Duke Ellington, Celia Cruz, Alvin Ailey, and Lin-Manuel Miranda; inventors such as George Washington Carver and Lyda Newman; politicians and activists such as Shirley Chisholm

and Bertie Bowman; and artists such as Jean-Michael Basquiat, Frieda Kahlo, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Edmonia Lewis. Students also read texts such as “Sharon and Shirley Firth” and “A Native American Ballerina” (a biography of Maria Tallchief), which offer a contemporary perspective to help students understand that Native Americans are more than figures from history. Instead, they are vibrant, varied individuals—just like those in all the other cultures Amplify CKLA students’ study.

- **Use teaching methods that are challenging, but honor students’ diversity. Students’ lives and identities should connect to their education. They should become critical thinkers and feel the agency to end inequality.**
 - Amplify CKLA routinely connects students’ learning to the many social, political, and environmental concerns that affect their lives. Amplify CKLA includes teacher guidance for addressing social justice and equity content in every domain (Grade K-2) and unit (Grades 3-5). The program’s systematic Knowledge Sequence ensures that as students progress through each grade of study, they gain significant information about the different cultural, historical, and social contexts relevant to each knowledge domain. For example, in Grade 5, students look critically at the interactions between nineteenth-century federal government officials and members of Native American tribes. For additional examples, see Grade 2, Domain 12 (Fighting for a Cause) and Grade 3, Unit 11 (Ecology).
- **Employ staff with high expectations for all students. They must be able to examine their own personal beliefs around identity, while giving professional learning and support.**
 - Amplify CKLA celebrates diverse identities, seeing them as assets and strengths. This mindset informs the program’s content and its instructional model. Students are frequently asked to speak about their identities and experiences, adding nuance and individualization to the topics being studied. Teacher Guides include guidance on grouping strategies, including using heterogeneous grouping to help students gain new kinds of knowledge from their peers. Students are also given many opportunities to celebrate their unique identities. The Amplify CKLA Equity Guide highlights additional opportunities to promote student identities and experiences.
- **Build strong connections with students. Understand their lives, backgrounds, and identities.**
 - Amplify CKLA offers numerous opportunities for students to connect the academic content they are studying with their local neighborhood, culture, environment, and resources. In every Knowledge domain, Knowledge Builder videos take historical or scientific content and show students these experiences with real kids around their own age in their own community. Articles connected to topics in science, social studies, and the arts offer additional real-world connections to issues and topics students will encounter in their own lives and communities. For example, students learn about how other children recycle, how one group of students worked together to make a difference in a cause they believed in, and how state governments and constitutions support citizens in bettering their neighborhood and environment. Additional activities within lessons support students’ connections; for example, in Kindergarten, Domain 8 (Seasons and Weather), students connect the science concepts they are studying with the weather in their own town, using directed observations and hands-on activities associated with documenting the daily weather— such as looking at a thermometer,

examining precipitation collected in a rain gauge, or observing the types of clouds in the sky—to help them more fully grasp the concepts they are learning about.

- **Build partnerships with families and communities. These bonds can be a source of knowledge, and help shape school priorities.**
 - Amplify CKLA offers extensive materials to help bridge the connection between school and home, including family letters embedded throughout the program that offer background information and context about what students are learning and provide suggestions on how family members can support that learning by reinforcing main lesson objectives, helping students share knowledge content, and promoting vocabulary development at home. These letters particularly help family members support students' learning at home in such areas as foundational skills, comprehension, and higher-order questioning. Family letters are embedded in student Activity Books; see examples in the Kindergarten Skills Unit 3 Activity Book, the Grade 2 Knowledge Domains 1-4 Activity Book, and the Grade 3 Unit 4 Activity Book.
- **Create emotional safe spaces and foster trust among students. In a conflict, use restorative practices to reconcile both sides. Nurture students' identities and give them a sense of ownership and belonging.**
 - Throughout Amplify CKLA, teachers receive substantial support and guidance for how to help students grapple with culturally sensitive learning activities. Notes and scaffolds built into the lessons at point of use offer suggestions for in-the-moment support. Additional instructional materials, such as the Knowledge Builder videos that accompany each K-2 Knowledge domain, help students engage with domain content, giving them models of youngsters like themselves grappling with culturally sensitive content. For example, the video associated with Grade 2, Domain 12 (Fighting for a Cause) shows a contemporary girl who speaks up about an instance of systemic racism in her own community. See also the Social Emotional Learning Guide and Equity Guides, which offer program-level and unit-level guidance, respectively, to aid teachers in engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities.

The New York State guidelines for **Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education** are grounded in a VISION of an education system that creates:

- **Students who experience academic success**
 - Educators know that student mindset matters. But so does our mindset. It is essential for educators to enter the classroom with high expectations for all students—and with the belief that every student is capable of meeting, even exceeding, those expectations. This attitude can change the way we teach, and thus the way students learn. This equity pillar provides the foundation and motivation for the other three. When we believe in every student's capacity to succeed, we make sure every student has rich content, complex texts, and powerful tools for learning. In other words, we provide high-quality instructional material based on reading science. Reading science bears out something educators know intuitively: equity focused literacy instruction is not just the right thing to do. It's the way all children learn best—and the way toward offering them a better future. At Amplify, we believe that educators and students alike benefit from equity-based instruction. Our CKLA program shows this, and our all-green ratings from

EdReports.com confirm it: at Amplify, building high-quality, equity-based curricula is our priority.

- **Students who are socio-politically conscious and socioculturally responsive**
 - Amplify CKLA was designed to support students promoting equity both in school settings and in the broader context of their communities. Materials embedded within the curriculum help students explore a wide range of ways to combat inequity and promote equity. From the earliest grades, materials help students consider issues of fairness and justice, and this develops throughout the program, encompassing issues such as the responsibility we bear to our community and surroundings (Kindergarten, Domain 11, Taking Care of the Earth), to advocating for equity in civil and human rights causes (Grade 2, Domain 12, Fighting for a Cause) to considering the ways different people have been treated throughout history (Grade 5, Unit 8, Native Americans). The program also includes an Equity Guide with specific suggestions to help students consider questions of justice, equity, and diversity in the context of every domain (K-2) and unit (3-5).

- **Students who have a critical lens through which they challenge inequitable systems of access, power, and privilege.**
 - The range of topics in Amplify CKLA facilitates a deeper study and understanding for students about the world's people, places, and events in historical and contemporary contexts that exist outside of the dominant culture. The program instills in students the knowledge that people and communities across the ages and the world have made important contributions politically, scientifically, and artistically. They learn that people have lived in both harmony and conflict over thousands of years, but that these commonalities and differences have acted to enrich each. To help students truly value humanity's diversity, Amplify CKLA ensures that children become familiar with ancient civilizations from around the world. To help students truly value America's diversity, Amplify CKLA devotes a substantial amount of time to our country's laudable, yet troubled history. By introducing core concepts early and then slowly building more detailed knowledge, Amplify CKLA enables students to understand that the US is both an imperfect nation and a great nation—a nation whose best qualities emerge from its diverse people, often with widely-different perspectives, and their shared devotion to democracy.