

A GUIDE TO COMPLEMENTING YOUR CURRICULUM

6 common gaps in core materials and how to fill them



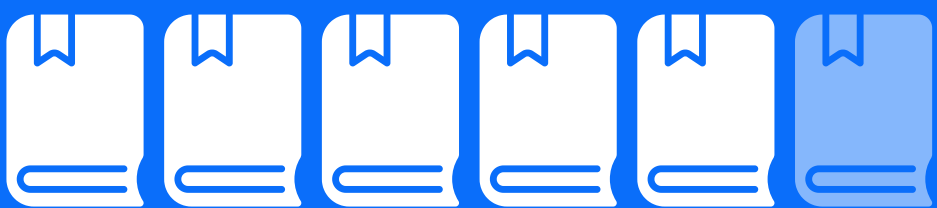
Continue for answers, tips, and strategies
for filling common curriculum gaps



Administrators acknowledge that even the best core materials have some gaps...

3 of 5 

administrators agree that their core ELA & Social Studies resources have critical gaps that must be covered by supplemental resources.*

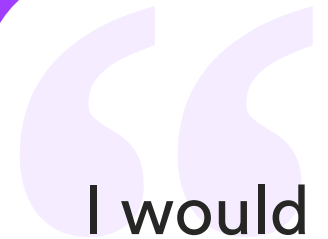
85% 

of administrators feel that teachers should be able to substitute texts, activities, and other materials (as long as they are aligned to standards and priorities).*



... and no single core resource can do it all.

Quotes from June 2021 study of 100 district curriculum leaders*



I would prefer to have a core program that has everything we need exactly. It's easier. It's usually cheaper. But we have rarely found core resources that cover everything we need.”



I love the idea of one-stop-shopping, that silver bullet, but I haven't been able to find it yet.”



Some are better for some pieces, and others are better for others – so there's probably not going to be one that will meet all of the goals of our curriculum.”

6 common gaps in core resources

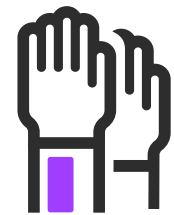
Even the best core resources are missing one or more of the following...



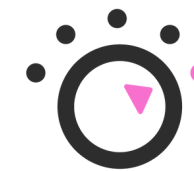
Relevant and culturally responsive content



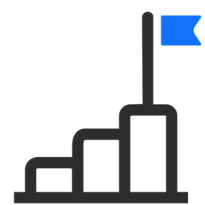
Opportunities for in-context skills practice



Opportunities for student agency and choice



Responsiveness to changing standards or instructional needs



Background knowledge and scaffolds for students needing support



Promotion of literacy skills within non-ELA subjects

When teachers aren't provided with what they need to fill these gaps,
they turn to unvetted sources on the internet
– leading to poor academic outcomes for the most vulnerable students.



95%

of teachers report using resources they found on the internet to supplement core materials*

95%

Internet resources

64%

of resources found on popular websites were rated low quality in a study by the Fordham Institute**

64%

Low quality internet resources

**ONLY
14%**

of these resources offer supports for low-performing students, those with disabilities, or English Language Learners**

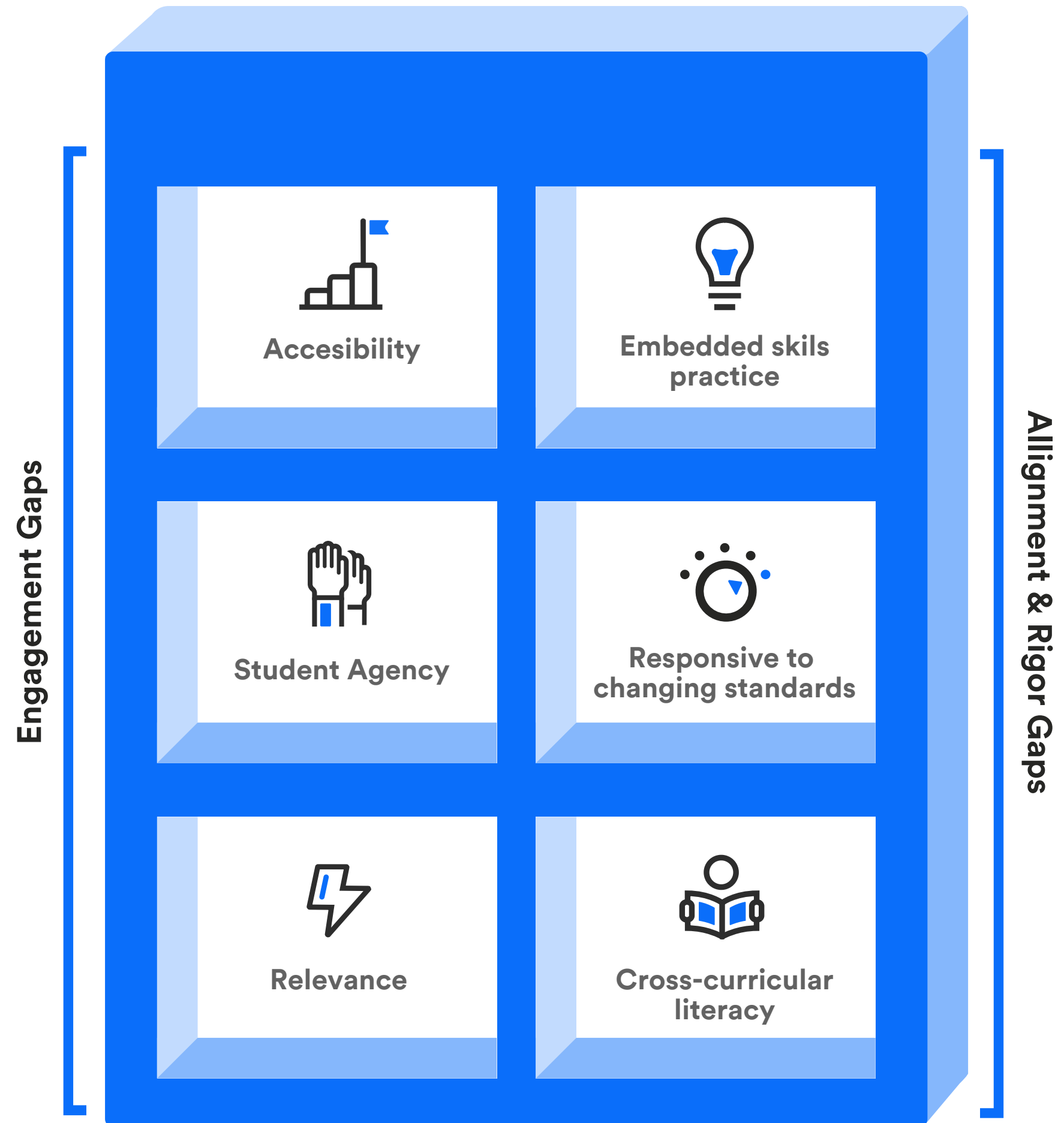
14%
Provide
necessary
support



Every month,
teachers and students
nationwide access
over **1,400 different
edtech products***.

When administrators purchase
too many point solutions that only
address 1 or 2 gaps, teachers are less
likely to use any of them with fidelity
– **leading to wasted resources on
procurement and implementation.**

What you need is a plan for **complete content coverage** that makes it easy for teachers to fill any of these gaps – without sacrificing engagement or rigor.



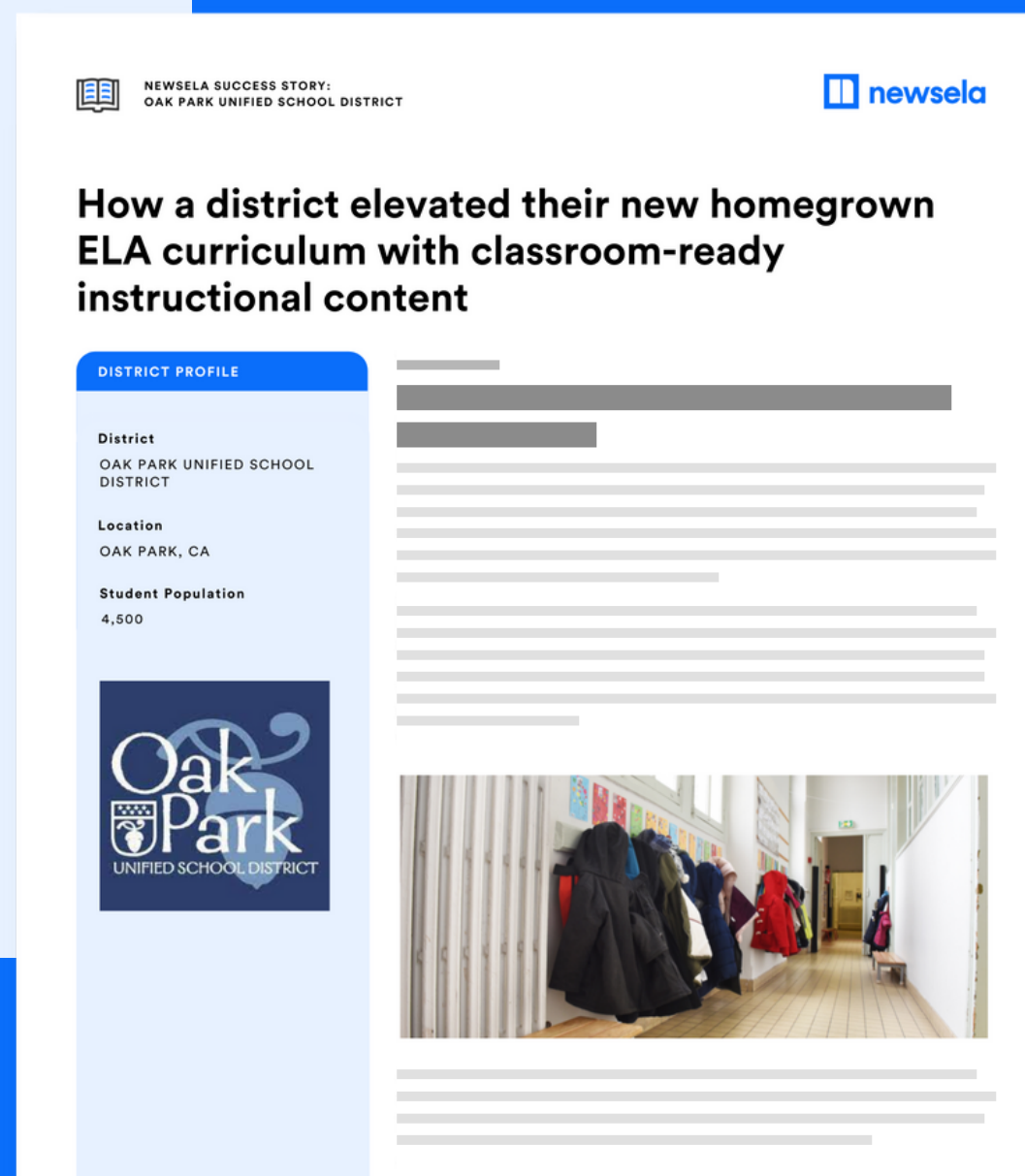
Signs you have a **relevance** gap

- ✓ Students struggle to see the broader purpose in what they're learning
- ✓ Teachers frequently search the internet for current events connections
- ✓ Student subgroups often don't see themselves reflected in their instructional materials

Why and how to address it

Adjusting instruction to make lessons more relevant is an essential part of a teacher's job – but they need the right materials to do so.

Ensure teachers have a single resource with structured choice of high-quality, relevant content.



NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY

[Read more](#) →

Engaging students with timely, relevant content

Oak Park USD, California

When administrators noticed that middle school students were becoming increasingly interested in trends on the news, they knew they needed opportunities for structured conversations around these topics in the classroom. That's why they chose Newsela – to make it easy for teachers to find vetted, relevant content to use with their students.

"The work has been done for the teachers. You don't have to search for it. The content is there and you can just assign it."
– Ericka Jauchen, Teacher on Special Assignment

Signs you have a student agency gap

- ✓ Students rarely have choices or options in what they're learning
- ✓ Most instructional units don't include project-based learning activities
- ✓ Students are rarely guiding their own learning by asking questions

Why and how to address it

Students will be more engaged with your curriculum if they have choices and are able to be more proactive in their learning.

Ensure instructional units include opportunities for students to explore topics they're passionate about.

 NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY:
HALL COUNTY SCHOOLS



How Hall County teachers build student agency through high-quality, engaging content, and formative assessments

DISTRICT PROFILE

District
HALL COUNTY SCHOOLS

Location
GEORGIA

Student Population
27,000





"It's about agility: quickly and efficiently responding to changes."

Emily Lott
ELA DEPARTMENT CHAIR

NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY

Building student agency through high-quality, engaging content

Hall County, Georgia

Hall County teachers had been moving away from widespread textbook use and instead were looking for instructional materials that engaged students while building autonomy.

By embracing Newsela, they were able to help students find their own voices by exploring their interests.

"We can tell kids 'you are welcome to look at any article on Newsela,' and there's a psychological safety for the teacher in doing that." – Emily Lott, ELA Department Chair

[Read more](#) →

Signs you have a responsiveness gap

- ✓ You need to approach new vendors every time there's a new instructional mandate
- ✓ You're not confident in the way teachers are addressing new standards or mandates
- ✓ Your current materials can't support sudden changes to instructional needs (e.g., in-person vs. remote)

Why and how to address it

Administrators are ultimately accountable for implementing new standards and helping teachers adapt to shifting instructional needs.

Choose a digital-first supplemental provider you can trust to respond to these changes quickly and with fidelity.


NEWSELA CASE STUDY:
CABELL COUNTY SCHOOLS


newsela

How one district created a bespoke ELA resource for new state standards with Newsela

DISTRICT PROFILE

Cabell County Schools
WEST VIRGINIA
Student Population
~12,000
Middle Schools
4





“Industry texts are super complex and if you don't have contextual knowledge, or the relevant background information, it's really difficult to make that content accessible.”

Kristin Sobotka
MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY
ACADEMIC SPECIALIST

NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY

[Read more](#) →

Supporting new state ELA standards with a custom resource

Cabell County, West Virginia

When the state passed legislation requiring Career Literacy education, Cabell County needed to adapt quickly. They developed a curriculum to weave into ELA instruction and partnered with Newsela to create a custom resource aligned to their scope and sequence.

“We collaborated and just talked it out... The [Newsela] team established the content and took our Career Literacy Curriculum to the next step that we were really needing help with.”

– Kristin Sobotka, Middle School Literacy Academic Specialist


Signs you have a skills reinforcement gap

- ✓ Teachers turn to unvetted online resources whenever students need more skills practice
- ✓ The content your students use for skills practice is not authentic
- ✓ Students of different abilities practice skills on different content

Why and how to address it

Overuse of tools with repetitive skills practice risks disengaging and demoralizing students.

Instead, weave literacy skills practice into engaging lessons with authentic, relevant content at the center.

 NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY: KINGMAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



How Kingman USD creates new possibilities for teaching and learning through flexible, relevant content

DISTRICT PROFILE

District
KINGMAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Location
KINGMAN, AZ

Student Population
6,800



NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY

Embracing a new approach to skills practice with engagement at the center

Kingman USD, Arizona

Rather than focusing on a skill and drill approach, Kingman wanted to ensure interventions are accessible, flexible, and engaging for all students. With Newsela, their teachers can root skills practice in leveled content that students love while utilizing formative assessments that paint a clear picture of each student's capabilities.

"Newsela helps us see where students' reading level is, and it helps us see what we can do to help kids grow."
– Shelley Oestmann, Federal Programs Director, Kingman USD

[Read more](#) →

Signs you have an accessibility gap

- ✓ Students of varying abilities have to read different content
- ✓ Students with disabilities have trouble engaging with core materials
- ✓ Teachers have to provide 1:1 support in order to differentiate instruction

Why and how to address it

Scaffolding and background knowledge are key to reading comprehension and accelerating learning.

Supplement your core materials with leveled, information-rich content that's accessible to all students.



How Upper Merion used flexible digital content to double-down on equity efforts

DISTRICT PROFILE

District
UPPER MERION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Location
UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP, PA

Student Population
4,264

District Challenge
ENSURING EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION AMIDST DISRUPTION



[Read more](#) →

NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY

Doubling down on equity and accessibility with flexible, digital content

Upper Merion, Pennsylvania

As a district with significant populations of low-income, Special Education, and English as a Second Language students, Upper Merion has always been dedicated to equity. In selecting content, their teachers leverage both the curations and close reading features of Newsela to ensure all students can access materials.

“If you’re differentiating in the classroom, you can use Newsela... it’s a quick way to find content that all kids can access.”

- Dr. Susan Silver, Assistant Superintendent of C&I


Signs you have a cross-curricular literacy gap


- ✓ Your students are only practicing literacy skills during ELA instruction
- ✓ Your materials for social studies and science don't include scaffolds for emerging readers
- ✓ More and more time is taken from social studies and science instruction in favor of ELA

Why and how to address it

Social studies and science specialists can help improve cross-curricular literacy. They just need the support and resources to do it well.

Use leveled content with formative assessments to promote literacy across the curriculum – without taking time away from content areas.

 NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY:
NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



How Norwalk Public Schools Used Differentiated Digital Content to Make Its Curriculum Accessible to All Students


DISTRICT PROFILE

























District
NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

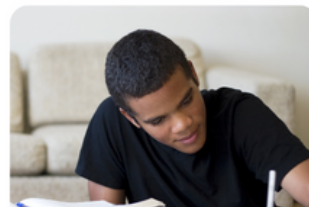
Location
NORWALK, CT

Student Population
11,000

Back to school challenge:
DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION FOR ALL LEARNERS ACROSS CONTENT AREAS—STARTING WITH STEM





NEWSELA SUCCESS STORY

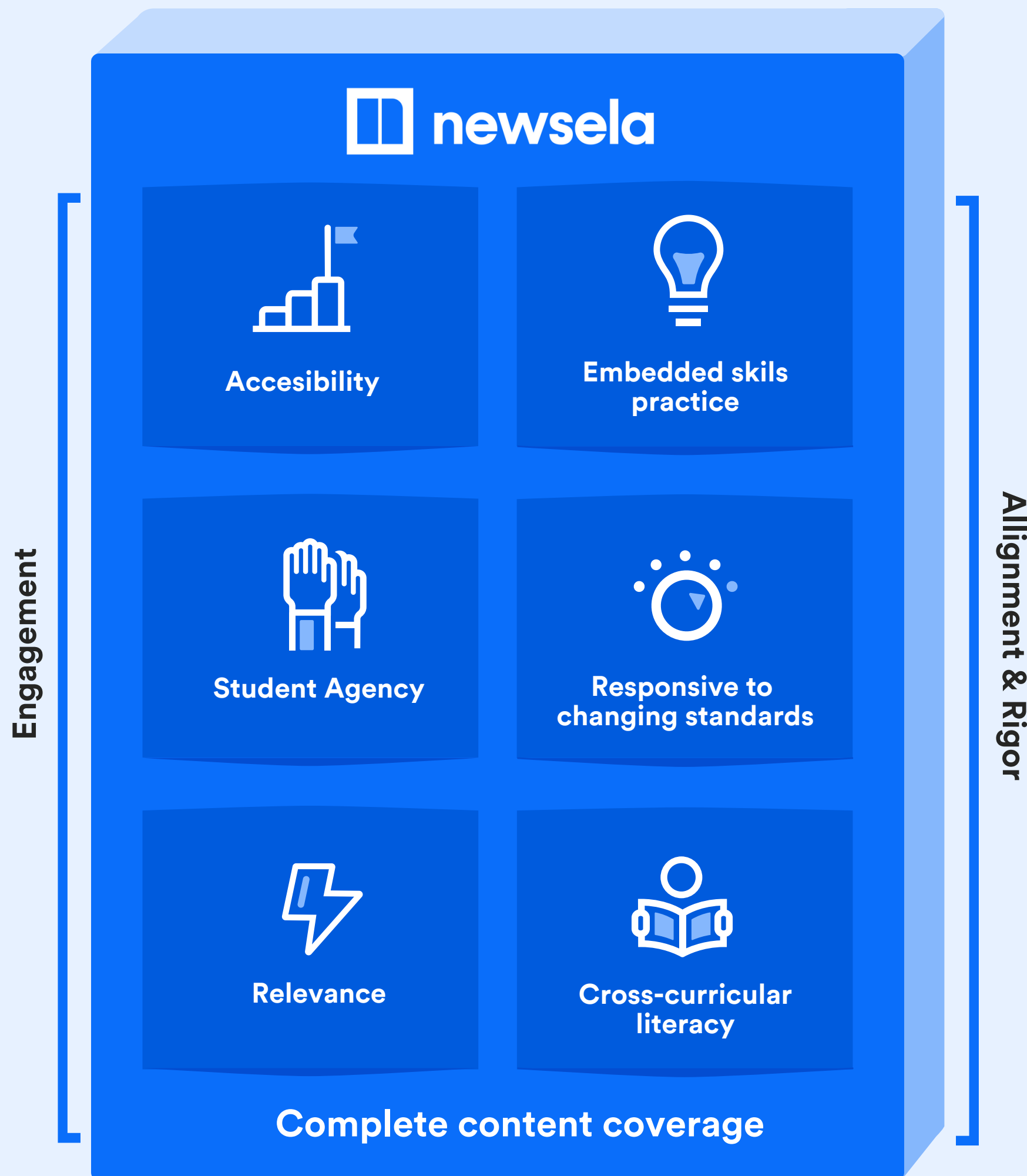
[Read more](#) →

Infusing science curriculum with literacy to support all students

Norwalk Schools, Connecticut

As Norwalk Schools created its newest science program, they wanted to put literacy at the forefront in order to engage all students and differentiate instruction. By starting with clearly defined science phenomena as the foundation, they leveraged Newsela content to create a scope and sequence that was accessible to all students.

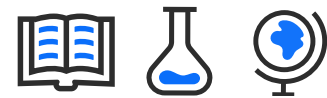
“The ability to vary the reading levels gives more students access to the science content.” – Tina Henckel, K-12 Director of STEM



One supplemental resource for complete content coverage

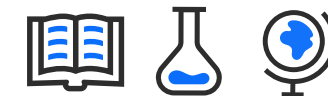
You don't have to purchase different products for different gaps. The right resource will complement your core materials holistically.

3 ways to complement your ELA, social studies, or science curriculum with Newsela



Core subject products

Access 15,000+ pieces of authentic, standards-aligned content and instructional collections. Included with the purchase of Newsela subject products.



Curriculum complements

Curated resources purpose-built to align to and enhance 50+ popular core providers. Included with the purchase of Newsela subject products.



Build a custom resource

Partner with Newsela to build a resource that aligns to your district's scope and sequence and instructional priorities.



Contact us to make
meaningful classroom
learning a reality for
every student.

