

The five things to look for when selecting your science content

With the release of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), science standards are becoming more complex and rigorous across states, with an emphasis on integrating literacy and inquiry-based skills. These changes require future-proof science curriculum to utilize content that exposes students to real-world phenomena, moving more towards "doing science," and away from rote memorization. With this shift in instruction, teachers need engaging, real-world, text-based phenomena to address the new standards in a way that feels accessible and aligned to priorities, while also integrating literacy into their existing instructional practices.

With these changes in mind, we've rounded up the 5 things to look for when selecting content for your science instruction in order for teachers to teach scientific concepts while also developing literacy.



ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

Science is becoming more complex to teach. Content not only needs to be aligned to your adopted science standards, but also accessible and approachable in a way that teachers can integrate literacy into their science instruction. Materials should provide consistent opportunities for phenomena-based learning and enable inquiry so all teachers can support their school or district's instructional goals.



AUTHENTIC

Science should be relevant and engaging to students' lives. Provide teachers with authentic content that includes real-world phenomena and current events to drive inquiry-based skills and spark students' exploration on how science relates to their lives and their communities.



ACCESSIBILITY

Scientific concepts can be challenging for students at any grade level. With a larger emphasis on science-specific literacy, content used in your classrooms should be differentiated so students can access the materials regardless of their reading level. Content should engage students in science and engineering practices like gathering evidence to craft scientific arguments and effectively evaluating and communicating scientific information.



UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES

With the fast-paced growth of technology, new discoveries are being made in science every day and materials should be refreshed routinely to incorporate them in classroom learning. With active and current content, students can learn to think critically and engage in scientific concepts and events within the world they live in.



TRUSTWORTHINESS

Science is changing every day and while search engines may make content readily available, that doesn't always mean it has been vetted to reflect accuracy. To promote literacy within their science instruction, teachers should source content that comes from trustworthy, reliable sources.

USE THE RUBRIC BELOW TO EVALUATE HOW YOUR SCIENCE CONTENT IS DOING:

	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS
<p>ALIGNED</p> <p>Is our content aligned to state science standards?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not provide connections between disciplinary ideas Does not build science and engineering practices, with few opportunities for literacy development Does not cover disciplinary core ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has some connections between disciplinary ideas Builds science and engineering practices, but has limited some opportunities for literacy development Has coverage of disciplinary core ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports cross-cutting connections between disciplinary ideas Builds science and engineering practices, with specific opportunities for literacy development Has full coverage of disciplinary core ideas <p>/3</p>
<p>AUTHENTIC</p> <p>Does our content use real world examples?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides few opportunities for student-led investigations Does not provide real-world examples of phenomena or evidence of cross-cutting concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some opportunities for student-led investigation Gives students some exposure to real-world phenomena, with limited cross-cutting concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates multiple opportunities for student-led investigations Provides a variety of real-world phenomena, with cross-cutting concepts <p>/3</p>
<p>ACCESSIBLE</p> <p>Is our content approachable and rigorous?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not developmentally appropriate for students and does not provide entry points to complex scientific concepts Is not differentiated for students to access texts across different reading levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some developmentally appropriate content, but scientific concepts and/or texts are still too advanced or oversimplified Has some differentiation, but not enough for all students to access the text at their zone of proximal development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is developmentally appropriate and allows discussion on a wide range of scientific concepts Is rigorously differentiated and has scaffolds for students above or below grade level, making both text and concept accessible for all students <p>/3</p>
<p>TIMELY</p> <p>Is our content up-to-date with the latest research?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has not been updated or refreshed to reflect the most up-to-date scientific discoveries Does not include science-related current events or reflect the world today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes some science-related current events, but teachers still need to supplement with more up-to-date resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is regularly refreshed with the most up-to-date scientific discoveries Includes current events so students are able to think critically about scientific concepts in the context of the world they live in <p>/3</p>
<p>TRUSTWORTHY</p> <p>Does our content come from reliable and vetted sources?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not well-sourced or does not have evidence of being backed by scientific research Does not include examples of reputable sources, like a peer-reviewed scientific journal, research publication, or fact-checked science news source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some texts that are well-sourced and research-backed, but teachers still need to supplement with external resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a variety of well-sourced and research-backed texts Comes from reputable sources, like a peer-reviewed scientific journal, research publication, or fact-checked science news source <p>/3</p>
			<p>15 /15</p>

Newsela’s content is published daily from trusted and vetted sources at 5 different reading levels. Teachers can find a wide range of authentic and high-interest science texts to support instruction aligned to your adopted science standards.



Go to newsela.com to learn how you can enhance your curriculum materials with Newsela and score a 15/15 every time!