

Approach to research

The selection process for text in the Amplify Library was guided by the recommendations of highly respected professional publications, including Booklist, School Library Journal, Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA), Horn Book, Kirkus, and Publishers Weekly. Selections include winners of the most prestigious awards, including Caldecott, Newbery, Coretta Scott King, Michael L. Printz, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age, ALA Notable Books, Bank Street College Best Children's Books of the Year, and others. Publishers in the collection include: Penguin/Random House; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; HarperCollins; Little, Brown; Oxford University Press; Candlewick Press; and others.

Narrative non-fiction

Most important, however, is that the collection is engaging in a way that provides for student interest and motivation. Narrative non-fiction is especially important in the CA ELA/ELD Framework's discussion of non-fiction, and, within that genre, the sub-genres of biography and memoir. These form a major component of the Amplify Library's non-fiction collection, which features sports, business, and political figures, while also giving special focus to those who've struggled throughout history for human rights.

Biographies and memoirs

Biographies and memoirs of contemporary and familiar figures are particularly compelling to students. The Amplify Library has a selection of such texts, including biographies of Apple founder Steve Jobs and of Tumblr founder David Karp. Other books in the collection are more historic, such as the personal stories of Benjamin Franklin and John Glenn, and many of these feature voices and stories traditionally left out of the history taught in school—those of women and minorities. Students get to read the words of Sarah Morgan Dawson in *A Confederate Girl's Diary*, as well as three different memoirs and biographies of African-American slaves, or the story of Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina member of the US Supreme Court.

A focus on human rights and achievements

The struggle for human rights is a sub-genre of its own among memoirs and biographies, with stories from the Nazi Holocaust, Gandhi's stand against British rule in the 1930s, the fight for women's rights in Iran and Afghanistan, and life under repressive regimes in China. Sports memoirs and biographies capitalize on another area of student interest, and there, too, at least 12 focus on minorities and women of pioneering achievement in their disciplines, from track's Wilma Rudolph and Jesse Owens to soccer's Hope Solo and skating's Michelle Kwan.

Science and history

Our collection of science texts are focused on contemporary topics, including the revolutionary ideas of biologist Rob Dunn, who suggests that our germ-free modern life is at the root of many disorders endemic to the current age. The evolution of scientific understanding is another sub-genre of the Amplify Library, beginning with the curriculum units on brain science and space exploration, and extending through texts students can read independently (such as a story on the 19th-century archaeologist who claimed to have discovered ancient Troy). The independent reading texts also include histories of engineering science, transportation, and architecture. Other history texts include the 10-volume *History of US* series by Hakim Joy, specifically recommended by the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy as an exemplary informational text.

The library's offerings in the many sub-genres of fiction are vast and inclusive. Some of the most popular contemporary novels for middle schoolers, such as the Lemony Snicket series, take their place alongside the classics: Jules Verne, Agatha Christie, L. Frank Baum, Herman Melville, and many others. A good way to get a sense of the selection is to browse our reading suggestions by using the book lists provided. The titles themselves make the clearest statement of the range, the challenge, and the specific strength of the Amplify Library in the areas prioritized by the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy.

Structured Research Collections

Guided, inquiry-based skill development within the curriculum

Should chocolate be part of school lunches?

The question forms the focus of a class debate—but not before students have developed informational literacy skills, learning how to evaluate online sources and avoid plagiarism. And not before they have explored the Amplify Research Collections by means of a scavenger hunt and finally moved beyond the Collections environment to research further in the wide world of the Internet. Only then are they fully prepared to debate the pressing question of whether or not chocolate should be included in school lunches. After the debate, students move on to writing a research paper and creating and presenting a multimedia project.

The work within the Collection units have a particular structure that is designed to introduce, reinforce, and develop research skills. The Collections are focused on a variety of topics, including: the California Gold Rush, the *Titanic*, the Space Race, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, and the art, history, and science of chocolate. The pattern of the unit stays the same but the level of competence—in planning, evaluating sources, gathering ideas and information, and integrating them into presentations—builds with each experience.