

What Works Clearinghouse



Houghton Mifflin Reading[®]

Effectiveness No studies of *Houghton Mifflin Reading*[®] that fall within the scope of the Beginning Reading review meet WWC evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *Houghton Mifflin Reading*[®].

Program Description¹

The *Houghton Mifflin Reading*[®] system is a reading program for instruction in grades K – 6. It uses Big Books (authentic literature), anthologies, Read Alouds, and audio compact discs to provide step-by-step instruction in reading. According to the developer's website, *Houghton Mifflin Reading*[®] was developed based on the findings of the National Reading Panel. The product is designed to be used as a full-year curriculum program

with instruction on developing oral language and comprehension, phonemic awareness, decoding skills (phonics, analogy, context, and word recognition), fluency, reading comprehension, writing, spelling, and grammar. Instruction is organized by a set of themes (10 for grades K-1 and 6 for grades 2-6) with selected Big Books (fiction and non-fiction literature) and other classroom activities to highlight the theme.

The WWC identified 9 studies of *Houghton Mifflin Reading*[®] that were published or released between 1985 and 2007.

Six studies are within the scope of the review and have an eligible design, but do not meet WWC evidence standards.

- Two studies do not establish that the comparison group was comparable to the treatment group prior to the start of the intervention.
- Four studies have confounding factors, such as combining with other interventions, which makes it impossible to attribute the observed effect solely to *Houghton Mifflin Reading*[®].

One study is out of the scope of the review because it has an ineligible study design that does not meet WWC evidence standards, such as having no comparison group.

Two studies are out of the scope of the review, as defined by the Beginning Reading protocol, because they do not disaggregate the findings for the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

¹The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly-available source: the program's website (www.eduplace.com, downloaded July 2008). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.

References Studies that fall outside the Beginning Reading protocol or do not meet evidence standards

Barnes, S. (2007). *The effects of curriculum structure on the achievement of grade 3 and grade 5 mobile students as measured by the Maryland school assessment*. Unpublished dissertation, Duquesne University: Pittsburgh, PA. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

EDSTAR. (2002). *Analysis of the effects of using Houghton Mifflin Reading programs on reading test scores in Chicago Public Schools*. Raleigh, NC: EDSTAR Inc. The study is ineligible for review because it does not disaggregate findings for the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

Foorman, B. R., Schatschneider, C., Eakin, M. N., Fletcher, J. M., Moats, L. C., & Francis, D. J. (2006). The impact of instructional practices in grades 1 and 2 on reading and spelling achievement in high poverty schools. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 31(1)*, 1-29. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention.

Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & Varma, S. (2005). *Reading First year 3 evaluation report*. Morgan Hill, CA: Educational Data Systems. The study did not meet WWC evidence standards — the measures of effect cannot be attributed solely to the intervention — the intervention was combined with another intervention.

Additional sources:

Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & McMillan, S. (2006). *Reading First year 4 evaluation report*. Morgan Hill, CA: Educational Data Systems.

Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & McMillan, S. (2008). *Reading First year 5 evaluation report*. Morgan Hill, CA: Educational Data Systems.

Levin, J., Haertel, E., Kirst, M., & Williams, T. (2006). *Similar students, different results: Why do some schools do better? Additional findings: Elementary school curriculum program and API: A more detailed examination*. Mountain View, CA: Edsource. The study is ineligible for review because it does not disaggregate findings for the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

Ryder, R. J., Burton, J. L., & Silberg, A. (2006). Longitudinal study of direct instruction effects from first through third grades. *Journal of Educational Research, 99(3)*, 180-191. The study did not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effect cannot be attributed solely to the intervention — there was only one unit of analysis in one or both conditions.

Swartz, J & Johnston, K. (2003). *Efficacy study of Houghton Mifflin Reading: A legacy of literacy, final report*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates. The study did not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.