



National Geographic: Time Zones

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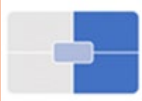

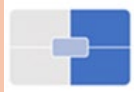










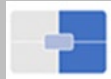
Evaluating High Quality NGESL Instructional Materials (HQIM-NGESL) Introduction – From the Publisher



“Time Zones is a stunning five-level program designed to teach teenagers how to use English effectively. The engaging real-world content brings National Geographic Explorers and 21st century topics into the classroom. The Starter level prepares true beginners with no English background with the essential language skills that they need. Time Zones is perfect for teachers who have 3-4 hours a week with students.”



Evaluating High Quality NGESL Instructional Materials (HQIM-NGESL)

The Overall Bottom Line

Section A: Curricular Structure	Section B: Student-Centered Instructional Materials
 Alignment to Massachusetts Definition of ESL	 Asset-Based Orientation
 Curricular Map	 Linguistically Responsive
 Unit Language Goals	 Critical Stance
 Lesson Objectives	 Oral Language Development
 Assessment	 Formative Assessment
 Functional Approach	 Scaffolds and Supports
 Shared Responsibility	 Universal Design and Accessibility

	Evidence is strong and comprehensive: clear connection to four indicators.
	Evidence is present: clear connection to three indicators.



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Evidence is present but insufficient: clear connection to two indicators.



Evidence is not yet sufficiently present: connection to one indicator or less.

Summary of the Bottomline

The materials provide opportunities for explicit language instruction and practice across a variety of content-related topics. However, they fall short in demonstrating clear alignment with grade-level academic standards and language development standards. While the goals generally align with core academic standards, they lack detailed specificity. While the materials touch on Key Language Uses and their linguistic features, there's an opportunity to delve deeper for a more comprehensive understanding.

The logical structure of the materials and the scope and sequence present a good starting point, with room for further refinement to clearly illustrate the progression of language development. The unit outcomes, while currently simplistic and activity-driven, have the potential to be developed into more rigorous independent practice opportunities. The structured assessment framework contains a variety of embedded assessments. With additional guidance for teachers on formative assessment practices, it could be a powerful tool for instruction. The materials offer a range of engaging topics designed to pique student interest. However, they lack consistent guidance for teachers on how to integrate students' cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds into instruction. The materials provide embedded linguistic scaffolds, but there is potential for improvement. They incorporate aspects of Universal Design and Accessibility, and with more explicit guidance aimed at supporting students with disabilities and alternative methods for students to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge, the materials could be even more inclusive.



Evaluating High Quality NGESL Instructional Materials (HQIM-NGESL)

The Next Generation ESL Curriculum Review Rubric

Section A: Curricular Structure

Alignment to Massachusetts Definition of ESL



Materials are designed for dedicated ESL instruction with an explicit, sustained, and systematic focus on language development in the integrated context of grade-level content and the ELD Framework.

Strengths:

The materials offer opportunities for students to develop language and content concurrently. They feature explicit language development opportunities in each unit, which are aligned with general topics from various content areas. For instance, Chapter 1 of the starter materials, titled “Hello,” emphasizes contextualized practice with the verb ‘to be’, possessive adjectives, and singular possessives. Similarly, in Level 1, Chapter 12, titled “What did you do for New Year’s?”, students practice using prepositions of time in context, which is necessary for discussing different festival traditions.

Throughout the materials, students engage with language development for academic and social and instructional purposes as they explore topics designed to capture student interests. Students are provided with opportunities to engage with language development within the context of real-life situations such as giving advice and learning about careers.

Challenges:

While the materials do offer some integration of discipline-specific learning, there is a lack of clear connection to grade-level academic content standards or WIDA English Language Development Standards. Furthermore, despite the materials providing opportunities for the simultaneous development of language and content, there is currently no explicit alignment to, or deeper exploration of, the genres of the WIDA Key Language Uses.

There was no evidence found of Indicator 3, which ensures language is taught within rich, contextualized, and meaningful circumstances by incorporating grade-level cluster content standards, analytical practices, and components of the ELD Framework. Specifically, there was no clear alignment to grade-level academic content standards or WIDA ELD standards.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials offer opportunities for explicit language instruction aligned to a range of topics and content. However, presently, the materials do not demonstrate clear alignment to grade-level academic standards and language development standards. Educators using these materials may need to consider ways to incorporate additional opportunities for standards aligned language development.



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Curricular Map



Materials contain a clear curricular map with a coherent sequence of units for ESL instruction throughout the year.

Strengths:

The instructional materials selected are presented in a logical fashion. In both the starter level and level 1 materials, instruction scaffolds learning from the familiar to the unfamiliar. For example, in chapter 1 of the starter materials the unit begins with spelling names and then it leads to how people say different greetings. Additionally, in the unit “What did you do for New Year’s?” students are provided with opportunities to reflect on ways they celebrate New Year’s while also exploring the Day of the Dead and the Harbin Ice Festival. Additionally, throughout the instructional materials, students are given multiple opportunities to practice the different domains of listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

Challenges:

While the materials are logically structured and contain a scope and sequence, they currently present more of a list of explored topics rather than a clear curricular alignment to standards. Additionally, the scope and sequence at times does not provide insight into how skills progress throughout the year. Although unit outcomes are present, they are found to be simple and more activity-driven, occasionally lacking sufficient opportunities for independent practice with rigorous activities. Furthermore, the materials currently do not include benchmarks across units or assessments. The WIDA Key Language Uses were not presented in depth at the curricular map level. While Key Language Uses such as Narrate, Explain, and Inform were found in the materials, there were not enough instances of Argue.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials follow a logical progression, scaffolding learning effectively from familiar to unfamiliar topics. They provide ample opportunities for practice across all language domains. However, the materials exhibit challenges in terms of clear alignment with standards, as well as in demonstrating skill progression within the scope and sequence. Unit outcomes are simplistic and activity-driven, and at times miss rigorous independent practice opportunities. Moreover, the exploration of the WIDA Key Language Uses, especially the KLU “Argue”, is limited.



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Unit Language Goals



Materials articulate clear standards-based unit-level goals for content-driven language instruction.

Strengths:

The starter and level 1 materials feature clearly defined, student-friendly unit goals. These goals provide a language focus, allowing students to explore specific language functions, grammar points, and related vocabulary. The materials effectively engage students with WIDA ELD Standard 1 (Language for Social and Instructional Purposes) through diverse topics such as greetings, advice, hobbies, wishes, cultural current events, and weather. Each unit is designed for approximately two weeks of instruction with four hours of weekly engagement, as outlined in the middle school comparison chart.

Challenges:

The unit-level goals, while broad enough to touch on core academic standards and Key Language Uses, only briefly introduce linguistic features before moving to new language points. This cursory exploration limits students' opportunities for in-depth analysis of Key Language Uses and may not adequately prepare them to master discipline-specific language functions. While each unit does articulate goals, these are presented in the scope and sequence as a list of language skills and tasks within the unit context, rather than as comprehensive unit-level goals. Furthermore, the materials lack clear articulation of content connections. This structure may impact students' ability to fully explore the interplay between language and academic content.

Bottomline:

Unit goals provide a language focus that introduces students to specific language functions, grammar points, and vocabulary. However, this approach may be insufficient for students to fully develop language functions within content areas. The materials briefly touch on Key Language Uses and their linguistic features before quickly moving to new language points, potentially limiting depth of understanding. While goals broadly align with core academic standards, they lack specificity. Consequently, educators using these materials may need to develop more targeted, comprehensive unit-level language goals to ensure students develop proficiency in both language and content. This refinement could bridge the gap between the current generalized approach and the need for more in-depth, content-integrated language instruction.



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Lesson Objectives



Materials contain lesson-level language objectives that align to and build towards unit language goals.

Strengths:

The lesson-level materials offer educators *an overview* of the language skills and tasks students will encounter within each lesson's context. This articulation of target skills and tasks enables educators to monitor student progress throughout the lesson. To reinforce unit goals, the materials include a self-assessment feature where students actively restate the unit goals using three checkboxes to monitor their learning. This structure not only guides instruction but also promotes student metacognition and accountability for their learning goals.

Challenges: At the time of the review, the reviewers did not observe lesson-specific language objectives.

Bottomline:

The lesson level materials offer educators a clear outline of the language skills and tasks that students will engage within the context of the lesson, facilitating monitoring of student learning. However, reviewers noted an absence of lesson-specific language objectives during the review. Educators using these materials may need to articulate specific lesson level language objectives.



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Assessment



Assessments (pre-, post, interim, unit, lesson, formative) elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student is increasing language proficiency and using language independently within academic contexts in a range of communication modes.

Strengths:

The starter level and level 1 materials employ a logical assessment framework that utilizes the workbook to progressively build and assess student learning. Each unit begins with a preview section, allowing students to collaborate with partners and share ideas. This is followed by a "Real English" segment, presenting contextual sample conversations within the context of content learning. Students then engage with a cloze passage or content-related video, gradually building skills towards an extended writing component. These materials incorporate diverse, frequent assessments to gauge student progress. Assessment types vary, including multiple-choice questions, speaking/recording tasks, writing exercises, and listening comprehension. The materials also provide sample student conversations, questions, and some models, though these are limited in scope.

Challenges:

The workbook in the starter and level 1 materials offers various assessment opportunities, including matching exercises, fill-in-the-blank questions, word selection tasks, and cloze activities. However, reviewers noted a gap in authentic assessments that measure the depth of language knowledge and the ability to transfer learned language skills. At the time of review, explicit assessment criteria or rubrics were notably absent. The materials primarily relied on checklists that lacked specific criteria for success, potentially limiting student self-assessment and teacher evaluation. While the starter and level 1 materials presented a logical assessment framework, this consistency was not maintained across all levels.

Bottomline:

The starter level and level 1 materials feature a structured assessment framework aimed at gradually developing and providing opportunities for evaluating student learning. Each unit incorporates partner activities, real-life English examples, cloze passages or videos, and culminates in extended writing tasks. While frequent assessments are present, authentic measures for assessing depth of language knowledge and transfer are not, at present, consistently incorporated in the materials. Explicit assessment criteria or rubrics were not observed during the review. Educators using these materials may require additional professional development to effectively utilize the workbook assessments to guide instruction. This framework, while providing a foundation for assessment, presents opportunities for enhancement in authenticity, clarity of evaluation criteria, and instructional application.



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Functional Approach



Materials take a functional approach to language development focused on grade-level disciplinary learning.

Strengths:

Each unit in the instructional materials offers opportunities to explore some language functions and overarching communicative purposes, such as discussing one's family or sharing traditions. Additionally, the materials include embedded grammar point reviews, providing students with chances to discuss the mechanics of language.

Challenges:

Although the materials contain some exploration of how language works, there is a lack of deeper analysis and explicit instruction on word choices and the roles of purpose and audience in communication. For example, while students are given opportunities to discuss topics such as their families, there is no exploration of how such discussions would vary across different contexts and audiences. Additionally, despite exploring short topics of interest, there is no evidence of a deeper analysis of the discourse dimension. Explicit connections to students' metalinguistic knowledge are also absent.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials offer opportunities to explore various language functions and communicative purposes within each unit, such as discussing family or traditions. Additionally, embedded grammar point reviews provide further opportunities to understand language mechanics. However, while the materials touch on these mechanics, they lack deeper analysis and explicit instruction on word choice, the depth of communicative purposes, and audience considerations. There is also limited exploration of language use within diverse sociocultural contexts. Explicit instruction and practice with purposeful language use in these contexts are missing. Although some functional language development indicators are present, the materials predominantly feature similar texts. These do not consistently provide opportunities for exploring language as a dynamic set of choices, or for deeper learning, application of literacy skills, and student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and reflection.



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Shared Responsibility



Materials promote shared expertise, responsibility, and accountability for students in the program.

Strengths:

Not observed at this time.

Challenges:

There was no explicit evidence of prompts, guidance, routines, or discussion points to support collaboration with colleagues.

Bottomline:

No opportunities for collaboration were identified. For example, there were no prompts for content and language teachers to collaborate, and there were no routines to establish discussion points with colleagues.



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Section B: Student-Centered Instructional Materials

Asset-Based Orientation



Materials prompt educators to know and understand students, the assets they bring (e.g., cultures, languages, funds of knowledge), what students can do, and what motivates and engages students in learning.

Strengths:

The instructional materials include a range of contexts and topics designed to capture students' interest. These topics provide opportunities for students to discuss and write from their own perspectives, share their opinions, and express their goals. The materials are visually appealing, incorporate experiences and sources from around the world, and feature images that display rich diversity.

For example, one unit explores the different ways to say hello and communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, showcasing a variety of communication methods. Another unit examines festivals from around the world, encouraging students to share diverse traditions. These topics are often paired with writing prompts that allow students to share personal experiences. For instance, students might describe a festival they have recently attended or celebrated and share the experience in a postcard to a friend.

Challenges:

Although the materials incorporate content from various locations and traditions and include images from around the world, they do not consistently draw upon the cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds of multilingual learners. These diverse perspectives are not regularly integrated into learning tasks, activities, and texts. Additionally, while the materials provide students with opportunities to share their experiences, they do not consistently prompt teachers to continuously seek and integrate knowledge of students' cultures, languages, backgrounds, previous experiences, funds of knowledge, interests, perspectives, individual abilities, goals, and future dreams into instruction.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials offer diverse and engaging topics that capture student interest, featuring visually appealing content from around the world and promoting a variety of perspectives, voices, and narratives. Occasionally, students are encouraged to share their personal experiences. However, while the materials showcase diverse perspectives, they do not consistently incorporate the backgrounds of multilingual learners into learning tasks. Additionally, they do not provide consistent guidance for teachers on integrating students' cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds into instruction. Educators using these materials may need to take additional steps to integrate their students' assets, such as cultures, languages, and funds of knowledge, into the materials.



Evaluating High Quality NGESL Instructional Materials (HQIM-NGESL)

Linguistically Responsive



Materials support the asset-based learning, development, and engagement of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Strengths:

The instructional materials contain some linguistic scaffolds, particularly in the starter and level 1 sections. For instance, both sections include linguistic support in the "Working with a Partner" activities, such as speech bubbles that provide sample questions and answers for students to use during discussions with their partners. Additionally, the materials offer further support like embedded pronunciation guides. For example, in the unit "What Did You Do for New Year's?", students can access pronunciation guides for stressed and unstressed syllables.

Challenges:

While the materials contain embedded linguistic scaffolds, there is no evidence of guidance or prompting for educators to leverage students' full linguistic repertoires (such as home languages and translanguaging) during instruction. Furthermore, explicit opportunities for fostering metalinguistic or metacognitive awareness, as well as connections to the WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors, were not observed.

Bottomline:

While the instructional materials do offer embedded linguistic scaffolds, especially in starter and level 1 materials (such as speech bubbles and pronunciation guides), these scaffolds are limited. Providing additional guidance and prompts for educators on leveraging students' full linguistic repertoires and fostering metalinguistic awareness would enhance the materials' linguistic responsiveness. This guidance could guide educators to effectively utilize the embedded scaffolds to continuously expand students' next linguistic moves and goals.



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Critical Stance



Materials highlight and support student criticality, agency, and identity.

Strengths:

The instructional materials indeed facilitate communication for learning, expressing personal needs, and building relationships. Students encounter ample opportunities to share opinions, advocate for important matters, and express their needs. For instance, in level 2, students delve into volunteering and create an article or advertisement promoting participation in the “ugly food” event. Meanwhile, in level 4, they engage in advising scenarios related to job-related issues and conduct interviews to explore both positive and negative aspects of different jobs.

Challenges:

Although the materials provide opportunities for students to communicate about a range of issues, at the time of review the panelists did not observe opportunities for students to engage with student-generated themes, authentic problem-posing, or to act upon inequities, injustices, and issues that are important to them and their communities.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials effectively support students in communication skills, including expressing opinions, some self-advocacy, and conveying personal needs. However, they lack opportunities for students to engage with self-generated themes, authentic problem-solving, or addressing important community issues. While opportunities for sharing opinions on a range of topics/issues exist, the issues explored are provided rather than identified by students themselves. Affirmation of students' identities and agency is not explicit and the materials offer limited discussion on inequities and injustices, with only one chapter dedicated to the topic.



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Oral Language Development



Materials provide daily opportunities for all students to engage in discussions and interactions with peers and teachers around challenging content activities.

Strengths:

The instructional materials offer daily engagement opportunities for students with their peers. Interaction prompts are integrated throughout the lessons, encompassing a variety of activities. For instance, in level 4, activities such as discussing advice with a partner are included, fostering peer interaction. In level 2, students are given the responsibility of planning a school charity sale collaboratively. The materials incorporate elements like speech bubbles, conversation prompts, and partner work. These structures are particularly beneficial for newcomers and those at the earliest proficiency levels, facilitating daily peer interactions.

Challenges:

While the materials do offer daily opportunities for students to engage in oral discussions with peers, the speaking portion of the lesson at times is brief. These short exchanges may not provide sufficient sustained interactions around essential grade-level questions and compelling topics. Furthermore, there was an observed lack of consistent embedded structures for prolonged academic conversations during the review. For instance, while the exploration of the Day of the Dead lessons provides excellent prompts, the lesson lacks discipline-specific sentence frames or question frames to support student engagement in the dialogue. Additionally, although there are embedded peer to peer interactions in the lesson materials, no consistent opportunities for students to interact with adults were observed.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials offer daily opportunities for peer interaction through varied activities and embedded structures. However, there's a challenge in maintaining sustained oral discussions, with some lessons lacking depth and specific support for sustained disciplinary specific academic conversations.



Evaluating High Quality NGESL Instructional Materials (HQIM-NGESL)

Formative Assessment



Materials support educators and students to interact throughout lessons, prompting collection and interpretation of evidence of learning - thus enabling teachers and students to notice growth and reflect on the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Strengths:

The materials provide a variety of embedded assessments that range from checking off answers, multiple choice responses, engaging with discussion prompts, and writing prompts. Units contain workbooks that contain numerous assessments throughout the learning experiences. Many lessons include a video/audio component thus providing opportunities for supporting student development of listening skills. Additionally, many of the workbooks include a self-check at the end to prompt student self-reflection on learning.

Challenges:

While the materials contain numerous opportunities for measuring student learning, there was a lack of observed explicit guidance and prompts to aid teachers in ongoing formative assessment practices that would allow for the collection of evidence of student learning throughout lessons. Furthermore, despite the unit workbooks containing a multitude of assessments, there was no observed explicit guidance or suggestions for processes to formatively assess each student's language development. There was also a lack of guidance on providing actionable feedback or tools for adjusting instruction towards planned goals in a flexible manner.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials offer a range of embedded assessments, including various question formats and self-checks, that can be used to measure student learning. However, there's a lack of explicit guidance for teachers on formative assessment practices and strategies for assessing language development and providing actionable feedback.



Evaluating High Quality NGESL Instructional Materials (HQIM-NGESL)

Scaffolds and Supports



Materials prompt teachers to differentiate, support, and scaffold learning in tandem with the planned yearlong trajectory of materials.

Strengths:

The instructional materials contain supports for partner interactions such as embedded speech bubbles sample questions and answers. Interactive scaffolds for partner work are consistently incorporated into the materials. The teacher's guide also includes a support section, which provides educators with guidance ranging from the use of graphic organizers to the creation of games for unit review.. In addition to the support section, the materials feature a challenge note box that offers additional activity prompts, which can be seamlessly integrated into the lesson.

Challenges:

Although the materials do incorporate certain embedded supports, notably for peer-to-peer interactions, there seems to be an inconsistency in the integration of diverse supports and a variety of evidence-based instructional strategies. Furthermore, there was no consistent guidance or structures observed that would support educators in actively implementing scaffolding practices throughout the materials. The teacher's guide does include support and challenge boxes, but these often contain additional activity prompts rather than embedded evidence-based instructional strategies. These strategies could be used by educators to differentiate instruction and actively assist students at various proficiency levels in identifying, organizing, and creating texts for meaningful grade-level purposes.

Bottomline:

The instructional materials provide consistent support for partner interactions through embedded speech bubbles. However, there's a lack of consistent incorporation of varied instructional strategies and guidance for educators to implement scaffolding practices effectively. While additional activity suggestions are available, there's a need for more embedded evidence-based instructional strategies to assist students at different proficiency levels.



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Universal Design and Accessibility



Materials provide varied means for accessing the content and demonstrating learning, helping teachers meet the diverse needs and abilities of a variety of students, including those with disabilities and those working above or below grade-level.

Strengths:

The materials incorporate certain elements of Universal Design and Accessibility. They offer a variety of perspectives and provide various response methods, consistently incorporating partner-based activities. A significant portion of the activities are interactive, with videos and audio embedded within the program. These included videos are concise, offering a comprehensive preview of the topic at hand. In addition, these videos come with captions and feature slower speaking speeds for enhanced comprehension. It's also noteworthy that the workbooks offer students opportunities to engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Challenges:

The materials and teacher guidance did not offer explicit guidance or support for students with disabilities. Furthermore, while the materials did provide opportunities for students to engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, there was no evidence found of students being offered alternative methods to demonstrate their knowledge. This suggests a potential area for improvement in the materials to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all students.

Bottomline:

The materials incorporate aspects of Universal Design and Accessibility, offering varied perspectives, interactive activities, and multimedia content with captions and slower speaking speeds. However, there is a noticeable absence of explicit guidance aimed at assisting students with disabilities. Furthermore, the materials do not offer alternative methods for students to showcase their understanding and knowledge.