



# ThinkCERCA-Texas Frequently Asked Questions

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Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
<p>Are ThinkCERCA materials aligned with the <i>NEW</i> TEKS?</p>	<p>Absolutely! Designed by NCTE teachers and nationally recognized literacy experts, ThinkCERCA is built upon proven methods for developing students’ language and literacy skills. Our ELA curriculum is designed to build knowledge in a meaningful continuum and meets 100% TEKS requirements with newly added lessons.</p>
<p>Do ThinkCERCA materials require students to practice at the level of rigor demanded by the TEKS?</p>	<p>Yes! In ThinkCERCA, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● synthesize themes across historical and current events to see the cyclical nature of human behavior.</li> <li>● connect the material to real-life examples and situations.</li> <li>● have opportunities to synthesize data or themes throughout multiple sources or perspectives.</li> <li>● reflect on their progress and efforts.</li> <li>● build on their classmate’s comments and understand their perspectives</li> </ul> <p>Our professional development sessions help teachers to present students with evidence and see where it takes them. The teachers don’t draw conclusions for their students. Their classroom environment advocates a high-degree of achievement from each student, and instruction and assignments are designed to lead students to expected outcomes.</p>
<p>Do ThinkCERCA materials contain appropriate TEKS level vocabulary?</p>	<p>Yes! Our materials enable teachers to introduce vocabulary related to the Applied Reading and Writing Lesson to bridge the personal connection to the content students will be reading about. We also provide <a href="#">ThinkCERCA Vocabulary Routines</a> as a way to support all learners, especially those who may be at various levels of acquiring English, as teachers have their students working in small groups to deepen their understanding of the vocabulary words critical for comprehension in the text.</p>
<p>Is the readability of ThinkCERCA materials appropriate for students?</p>	<p>Absolutely! We know one of the biggest blended learning challenges teachers face is the time-consuming process of gathering a variety of resources together into coherent units and individual learning experiences. With this in mind, we built grade-level text sets into the platform that teachers can use to differentiate instruction quickly. These sets are developed using both quantitative and qualitative measures as well as practical knowledge of classrooms and students and are designed to support any curriculum. Whether you teach these sets alongside a novel, as part of a hands-on science experiment, as a stand-alone unit, or within a separate RTI or test prep setting, ThinkCERCA’s differentiated modules are designed to help students develop critical literacy skills through practice with complex texts.</p>

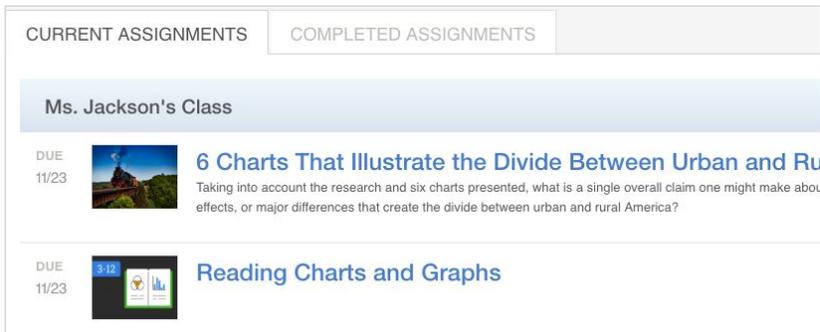
Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
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(continued)	Our content developers consider much more than algorithms when thinking about text complexity. We also analyze other qualitative aspects of a text, including knowledge demands, themes, structural complexity, and words and phrases that implicitly or explicitly create sentence- and paragraph-level cohesion. These factors often have a far greater impact on student success.
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Do the visuals present in ThinkCERCA materials enhance student interest and understanding?	Yes! Our lessons contain high-interest, authentic texts across all genres – featuring videos, graphs, charts, and other visual sources – that build up students’ discipline-specific background knowledge.
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Does ThinkCERCA have an online copy available?	Yes! ThinkCERCA is a digital personalized literacy program and curriculum for teaching close reading and academic writing across all four core subjects. Unlike other literacy products, ThinkCERCA gives instructional leaders one cohesive online platform for delivering rigorous instruction, not just rote practice, across an entire school or district.
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Do indices in ThinkCERCA materials enable students to locate information?	Not quite; students access a personalized dashboard of differentiated lessons for their readiness level so they are challenged and inspired with “just right” texts and tasks.
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Does the information in ThinkCERCA materials represent the latest content standards and discovery?	Yes! Because ThinkCERCA is a web-based curriculum, we are able to continuously add to and update the lesson library in response to customer needs and current events. We continually add new lessons and revise existing lessons to ensure content remains current and accurate.
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Are ThinkCERCA’s chapter reviews aligned to chapter content?	ThinkCERCA is not organized by chapters. Instead, our <a href="#">Scope and Sequence</a> is organized by thematic units that are comprised of a series of modules related to the unit’s theme.
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## Frequently Asked Question

## ThinkCERCA Response

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Each ThinkCERCA module includes a short automated assessment to gauge reading comprehension while getting students accustomed to the kinds of questioning found in growth assessments. These assessments include:

- Standards-aligned, discipline-specific items that mirror state assessments.
- Item analysis reporting by standard for teachers and administrators.
- Real-time automatic grading.

We are also in the process of building effective assessments through project-based learning opportunities at the end of each unit in our core [scope and sequence](#).

Are essential questions included in ThinkCERCA's chapters or lessons to encourage the application of higher-level thinking skills?

Absolutely! The use of writing prompts and essential questions to discuss texts is key to ThinkCERCA's pedagogy. To ensure that students are able to balance informational reading and literary works, we help teachers pair literature with informational texts that relate to a theme or topic. ThinkCERCA Units and Reading and Writing Modules address key questions for collaborative discussions and debates.

Are activities contained in the text focused on student engagement?

Yes! Great educators know that collaboration and discussion are essential for student engagement and improved student outcomes. That's why we've designed ThinkCERCA with multiple opportunities for students to share their thoughts and build knowledge with their peers. We provide resources and professional development to enable teachers to use these strategies to help students collaborate in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class with ThinkCERCA lessons:

- [Jigsaw](#) - students work in both "home" and "expert" teams to learn about topics and share with classmates
- [Silent Conversation](#) - students take notes and write questions as they're working independently, for their partners to read and respond.
- [Vote with Your Feet; Take a Stand](#) - an out-of-your-seat strategy where students express their points of view or position on a topic by standing in different areas of the room or on a continuum
- [Think, Pair, Share](#) - students think independently about their answer, discuss their thoughts with a partner, and share with the class.
- [Prediction Strategies](#) - students predict the answer to a multiple choice question before looking at the answer options.
- [Error Analysis](#) - students look back at the multiple choice questions they got wrong, find the correct answer in the text, and write why the correct answer is correct.

## Frequently Asked Question

## ThinkCERCA Response

(continued)

- [Collaborating to Find Evidence](#) - students work in partners and then in small groups discuss the evidence they're finding and the reasoning they're writing.
- Summarizing - students pair up and share their summaries, then write one combined summary for their pair.
- [Gallery Walk](#) - students work together to write each CERCA component on sticky notes, place the sticky notes on chart paper, and place the chart paper on the wall. They walk around the room, read the sticky notes, and discuss what they noticed.
- [Socratic Discussion](#) - teachers begin with an open-ended question with many possible answers. Students respond and ask questions of one another. The questions and discussions build off the previous participants' ideas.
- [The Debate Game](#) - students organize into teams, representing a position on a particular topic. Each team works together to develop an argument and later a rebuttal to the opposing team.
- [Peer Editing](#) - students switch written responses and highlight their partner's claim, reasons, evidence, reasoning and counterargument all in different colors. Afterward, partners can focus on editing conventions.
- [Turn and Face](#) - students stand with their backs to each other, have 1 minute to think of their answer to a question, then 30 seconds to turn and face to share their Claims, Evidence, and Reasoning. Students turn back around for 30 seconds to think of why they disagree, then turn to share the reasons why they disagree. Students repeat for 5 questions.

Are opportunities for exploration evident in student activities?

Yes! In a classroom with leveled groups, students working at different levels of readiness read differentiated texts and build background knowledge to engage with peers in exploring essential questions centered around themes, such as, "How can we improve student learning?" or "What role should the government play in regulating health?"

Are there open-ended constructive student response opportunities in ThinkCERCA?

Absolutely! ThinkCERCA's differentiated curriculum makes it easy for teachers to challenge students with texts and tasks that are "just right" for them. Our lesson sets feature 10 leveled readings that are organized around a central, discipline-specific theme and open-ended question to get all students engaged. Plus, we never dilute texts—every lesson features a real-world, authentic text.

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
Does ThinkCERCA provide ideas for content area writing?	<p>Yes! We provide schools and districts with a common language for teaching literacy – specifically writing – across English language arts, social studies, science, or math. ThinkCERCA includes a common language for the entire team, a scaffolded approach for teaching writing across subjects, and a streamlined process for developing students’ critical thinking skills.</p>
Are ThinkCERCA activities varied?	<p>Yes! ThinkCERCA offers several lesson types to help develop students’ literacy skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Applied Reading and Writing Lessons ask students to use close reading strategies and build formal written compositions (informational, argumentative, and narrative) around a given text.</li> <li>● Skills Lessons are interactive lessons that provide grade-level instruction and practice in critical literacy skills. These lessons give students the opportunity to dynamically engage with texts by highlighting and annotating and include scaffolded checks and graded assessments for measuring understanding.</li> <li>● Direct Instruction lessons are expert introductions to standards-aligned skills and concepts. They are presented in a flipbook-style format that can be taught whole group (teacher-led) or assigned to individual students.</li> <li>● Reading Practice lessons contain high-interest, authentic texts – featuring videos, graphs, charts, and other visual sources – that build up students’ discipline-specific background knowledge. At the end of each lesson, students answer five multiple-choice questions to gauge comprehension and get them accustomed to the kinds of questioning found in assessments.</li> <li>● Custom Lessons are teacher-created lessons that allow educators to combine ThinkCERCA’s framework with readings and writing prompts of their own creation.</li> </ul>
Does ThinkCERCA provide materials for mini labs ideas?	<p>Yes! Teachers and students are invited to engage in mini labs through Themes and Reading and Writing Modules. To address the theme of Policy and Debate, for example, students and teachers engage with Reading and Writing Modules on <a href="#">Crime Prevention</a>, <a href="#">Disease Networks</a>, <a href="#">Endangered Animals</a>, and <a href="#">The Best Policy</a>. Teachers can use these themes as mini labs, having students dive into a single Module to share with their classmates or having students engage with all Modules before engaging in a larger Project-Based Learning process.</p>

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
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(continued)	<p>Teachers can also engage students in Reading and Writing Modules as mini labs. Within a Reading and Writing Module, students interact with several types of materials, all focused on an essential question. For example, in a Reading and Writing Module on <a href="#">Family History</a>, students learn about <a href="#">Central Ideas</a>, <a href="#">The Thesis Statement in Informational Text</a>, read the anchor text "<a href="#">The New Middle Class Family</a>," write an argumentative response to the prompt "Is the author convincing in his argument that living in a multigenerational family is a good response to the post-recession economy?," and choose several pieces of independent reading, such as "<a href="#">Naomi Shihab Nye and the Power of Stories</a>," or "<a href="#">The Children's Blizzard</a>."</p>
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Yes! Helping our students develop sufficient background knowledge (across disciplines) is a critical component of delivering rigorous instruction. Without first having the background knowledge to comprehend a topic, students cannot engage in higher-order thinking about it. Depth is essential for formulating cohesive arguments. Our content creates coherence across schools through leveled text sets—not rewritten texts for multiple readiness levels—that build up students' background knowledge and allow them to support more complex texts in the future.

Do ThinkCERCA materials demonstrate rigor appropriate to grade-level with frequent progress monitoring checks?

As lifelong educators, we know just how much time and energy it takes teachers to find standards-aligned informational and literary texts, let alone texts that engage every student in the classroom and encourage peer-to-peer knowledge building. ThinkCERCA's robust, standards-aligned lesson library includes engaging texts from authentic sources, including the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian Magazine* and more, to help your students learn important background knowledge.

Each CERCA Reading and Writing Module includes texts for 10 different levels of readiness (grades 3 through 12) that are grouped thematically around a key question. These themes make it easy for teachers to match standards-aligned texts to existing curriculum. More importantly, our scaffolded lessons help students strengthen their critical reading skills so they won't just learn—but also retain—this valuable background knowledge.

The scaffolded steps of our Applied Reading and Writing Lessons, along with ThinkCERCA's built-in vocabulary and audio support tools, keep students engaged in rigorous cognitive tasks while helping them learn and retain valuable background knowledge. Our Progress Monitoring materials include a variety of automated and teacher-graded assessments:

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
(continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reading Leveling assessments to measure and confirm student reading levels. This information is used to differentiate Applied Reading and Writing Lessons for students.</li> <li>● Writing Benchmarks to measure student writing progress at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.</li> <li>● Direct Instruction lessons for assessing conceptual understanding</li> <li>● Reading Practice lessons for assessing the level of achievement on reading skills</li> <li>● Applied Reading and Writing Lessons for gathering student writing samples</li> <li>● End of Year assessments with reading and writing for measuring student growth over the year</li> </ul>
Do ThinkCERCA materials support multiple learning styles?	<p>Absolutely! ThinkCERCA resources and professional development sessions train teachers in developing stations, scheduling discussions, supporting personalized remediation, and addressing a variety of learning styles. We help teachers adjust their conception of a “lesson” to include variations of flipped classrooms, station rotations, and flex lesson styles. Our resources support teachers in working with classroom technology to engage each student in their own learning goals. Our materials feature discussions, debates, and collaborations to help students answer one another’s questions and challenge unsupported guesses.</p>
Are ThinkCERCA chapters dependent upon a sequence?	<p>No! ThinkCERCA is designed to easily fit into your school or district in a variety of ways. We work with instructional leaders all across the nation to help them achieve their instructional goals. No matter which implementation you choose, ThinkCERCA always supports 10 levels of differentiation and is aligned to meet today’s rigorous reading and writing standards. Many districts and schools rearrange ThinkCERCA’s scope and sequence to fit into existing curriculum resources, including novel units, teacher-created units of study, and project-based-learning experiences.</p>
Does ThinkCERCA provide appropriate readings to support student learning?	<p>Yes! Our multi-step, interactive lessons help students work through complex texts and concepts while building upon high-level literacy skills. By practicing close reading and academic writing in school, students develop the communication skills to express their ideas effectively in any personal, professional, or academic setting. Our lesson library includes relevant, leveled texts and tasks that build students’ background knowledge while making close reading engaging and fun. Our discipline-specific close reading prompts help students to practice the standards while developing a point of view on the topic.</p>

## Frequently Asked Question

## ThinkCERCA Response

Do materials include suggestions for how to demonstrate or model skills or use of knowledge?

Yes! For example, to ensure that students learn the structure of a well-organized composition, ThinkCERCA materials provide students with the opportunity to read and analyze a model essay with their writing partner. While reading, students might be directed to consider whether the writer makes a strong claim, whether the claim is logical, and whether the evidence and reasoning support the claim. Students then discuss their observations and share their analyses with the whole class. Teachers might share a ThinkCERCA poster of an essay outline and encourage students to refer to the outline when writing to ensure their own compositions are well-organized and logical. Then, students might complete a self-assessment using the rubric provided by ThinkCERCA or create an outline of their next composition by referring to the poster.

Does ThinkCERCA provide suggestions for effective instructional practices and learning theories that reflect current research in pedagogy?

Absolutely! As a literacy partner, helping schools to realize high achievement for all students is part of what we do. ThinkCERCA integrates with classes across the curriculum to provide extensive writing supports. As [decades of research by the University of Chicago shows](#), writing across these subjects can impact achievement on multiple assessments. Here is how writing helps students to achieve content mastery across subject areas:

- Math - Mathematical reasoning is a foundational math skill. When students defend their mathematical solutions in writing, they provide clear evidence of their understanding. Writing forces students to slow down and explain a solution in their own words.
- Science - In science classes, students can use the argumentative writing process to generate explanations by critically examining the claims, evidence, reasoning, and counterarguments scientists would consider in developing their ideas.
- Social Studies - By writing arguments in social studies, students learn how to assess the causes and effects of historical events. They engage in a process that explicitly requires consideration of multiple perspectives and evaluation of evidence.
- English Language Arts - In ELA classes, students build the foundational skills of literacy that transfer over to other disciplines. Providing opportunities to write about, discuss, and debate complex ideas helps students tackle concepts in all subjects.

ThinkCERCA provides the platform, pedagogy, and professional development to help teachers make instructional shifts. Our differentiated lessons provide teachers and students with a flexible framework that guides readers and writers. As students strengthen their literacy skills using ThinkCERCA, studies show they can achieve an average of two years of growth in a single school year.

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
Do ThinkCERCA materials link to web-based resources?	Yes! Each Reading and Writing Module is paired with a Teaching Resource that includes background building resources available via our linked Pinterest boards. For example, our Social Media Reading and Writing Module Teaching Resources links to <a href="#">this Pinterest board</a> to help students address the question “What are the benefits and drawbacks of using social media?”
Does ThinkCERCA provide a student appropriate glossary in multiple languages?	Not quite; each Applied Reading and Writing Lesson features an accompanying <a href="#">English Language Development support</a> to help developing bilingual students access the same great content as their peers. These resources include step-by-step guides for teaching students at WIDA Level 3-4/Expanding and Level 4-5/Bridging, student handouts featuring additional vocabulary support and sentence frames, and Spanish-language translations of lesson summaries and vocabulary words.
Does ThinkCERCA provide ideas for technology integration?	Yes! From detailed timelines to curriculum integration resources, ThinkCERCA materials were designed to help schools and districts feel prepared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our <a href="#">Implementation Roadmap</a> helps make sure districts and schools are staying on track.</li> <li>• Our <a href="#">Planning Tool</a> helps schools and teachers explore blended implementations aligned to the available level of technology access, schedule, and instructional plan.</li> </ul>
Does ThinkCERCA provide instructional strategies for ELL, Special Education, and struggling students?	Yes! ThinkCERCA helps teachers and schools reach all students through easy-to-use personalization tools. Our Reading and Writing Modules contain original lessons that can be personalized for 10 different levels of readiness. Each lesson within the Module contains a different reading passage from an authentic source, but all of the passages are built around a common theme to encourage peer-to-peer discussion and debate. <p>ThinkCERCA is 100% aligned with the Texas ELPS and provides teachers with everything they need to support developing bilinguals in their academic English fluency. In addition to research-based approaches embedded in the pedagogy of our software, we provide direct instruction in standards-aligned practices that help English language learners succeed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions and parts of speech are provided for Tier 2 (cross-content) and Tier 3 (content-specific) words.</li> <li>• Topic overviews support big ideas and development of schemas.</li> </ul>

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
(continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Each ThinkCERCA text is accompanied by a fluent and expressive audio reading for students to listen along while reading at their own pace, providing an entry point into the text for English learners.</li> <li>● Sentence frames provide students with structures to support the development of their productive academic language.</li> <li>● The use of graphic organizers for the writing process in ThinkCERCA ensure that students can organize their thinking, develop conceptual understanding, and facilitate comprehension.</li> </ul>
Does the formatting of graphics in ThinkCERCA assist students' understanding?	<p>Yes! Our Applied Reading and Writing Lessons follow a clear format that asks students to use close reading strategies and build formal compositions around a given text. When students work on an Applied Reading and Writing Lesson, they go through an explicit multi-step process to build their formal argument:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect - students read a topic overview that models the conceptual vocabulary they will need to understand the context of the argument at hand and make a personal connection to the topic.</li> <li>2. Read - Students read materials (with or without audio support) and complete a five-question comprehension check.</li> <li>3. Engage with Text - Students highlight and annotate to gather evidence from the text.</li> <li>4. Summarize - Students can use the provided sentence stems to summarize their findings from the text.</li> <li>5. Build a Draft - Students use a graphic organizer to create a written draft with the CERCA framework.</li> <li>6. Write an Essay - Students write their formal piece of writing in response to the writing prompt.</li> </ol>
Does ThinkCERCA contain multiple assessment options?	<p>Yes! Every ThinkCERCA lesson includes a short automated assessment to gauge reading comprehension while getting students accustomed to the kinds of questioning found in growth assessments. These assessments include standards-aligned, discipline-specific items that mirror state assessments, item analysis reporting by standard for teachers and administrators, and real-time automatic grading. Reading Leveling assessments measure student reading levels to differentiate Applied Reading and Writing Lessons for students later on. Writing Benchmarks measure student writing progress at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to gain insight into students' writing abilities and personalize instruction throughout the school year.</p>

## Frequently Asked Question

## ThinkCERCA Response

Does ThinkCERCA provide high-quality assessments with project-based tasks and portfolios?

Yes! Each unit culminates in a Project-Based Learning Activity. For example, at the end of a unit on Policy and Debate, students consider a policy they would like to see changed at their school, in their community, or nationally. They must interview various stakeholders and create a presentation with recommended changes and a plan for implementation. In addition to this PBL Unit Activity, all student work is saved for students to use in a portfolio or share with their parents, teachers, and fellow classmates.

Does ThinkCERCA provide graphic organizers?

Absolutely! Teaching students to organize their ideas is essential for helping them produce cohesive academic writing. Whether students are writing narratives, arguments, or explanatory pieces, they can use ThinkCERCA graphic organizers to take notes, support their understanding of a text, and plan their writing.

- These organizers support students in organizing their ideas before using ThinkCERCA's interactive graphic organizer online.
  - [English & Spanish](#) (3rd - 5th Grade)
  - [English & Spanish](#) (6th - 12th Grade)
  - [More Robust Version](#)
  - [Reason and Reasoning](#)
- Webs provide students with opportunities to brainstorm before they begin to draft their writing.
  - [Thought Web](#)
  - [Idea Web](#)
- These note-taking charts support students as they go through the process of reading, push student thinking, and encourage more research or investigation on a topic.
  - [KWL Chart](#)
  - [KWLQ Chart](#)
  - [Cornell notes](#)
- These organizers help students pull out main ideas and key supporting details as they engage with reading and analyzing a text. They also help students ask the right questions of a text as they read.
  - [Five W's and an H](#)
  - [Main Idea & Details Chart](#)
  - [Summary Chart](#)
- These graphic organizers support students in planning and drafting the main components of their narrative writing.
  - [Beginning, Middle, and End Chart](#)
  - [Narrative Arc](#)
  - [Storyboard](#)
  - [Character Study](#)

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
(continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These organizers provide students with guided structures to examine a variety of relationships among information, individuals, events, and ideas in a text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Cause &amp; Effect Chart</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Causes &amp; Multiple Effects</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Multiple Causes &amp; Effects</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Problem/Solution Chart</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Sequence Chart</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● These graphic organizers give students the opportunity to practice the important skill of comparing and contrasting topics, ideas, events, or characteristics in different ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Compare &amp; Contrast Chart</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Venn Diagram</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● These blank organizers are provided for you to structure and customize to whatever your students are currently learning about. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">2-Column Chart</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">3-Column Chart</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">4-Column Chart</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Is there adequate student practice available in ThinkCERCA?	<p>Yes! In order for students to write effective arguments, they must be skilled in selecting and evaluating evidence from complex texts across content areas. In ThinkCERCA, students practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highlighting and annotating evidence from rigorous texts.</li> <li>● Analyzing differentiated, discipline-specific prompts.</li> <li>● Reading closely across four content areas.</li> </ul> <p>Students can also practice interactions found on new assessments by dragging and dropping various arrangements of their argument as they draft their responses. ThinkCERCA includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Built-in sentence stems for summarizing texts.</li> <li>● Scaffolded supports for developing a cohesive argument.</li> <li>● Opportunities to practice writing evidence-based essays.</li> </ul>
Does ThinkCERCA provide an online test bank?	<p>No, but ThinkCERCA offers a wide variety of TEKS-aligned lessons to introduce or review key literacy concepts with your students. For intensive assessment preparation strategies, we recommend using our core <a href="#">scope and sequence</a> that will expose students to the kinds of texts and tasks found on state assessments. We recommend pairing these lessons with proven test prep strategies to help students prepare for assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Timed Practice</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Annotation</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Prediction</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Error Analysis</a></li> </ul>

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
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Does ThinkCERCA use evidence-based design principles outlined in TEKS standards documents and educational research literature?

Yes! ThinkCERCA was built upon an ever-growing body of research as well as years of practice and continuous learning conducted by our design team. [5 Essentials](#) research on continuous school improvement offers a framework for thinking about how to improve learning in schools. Unlike other literacy approaches, we recognize the role schools as organizations can play in scaling best practices that improve the cognitive experiences of students. [Another influential University of Chicago study](#) (see page 50), revealed the positive impact shared core practices, argumentation, and writing can have on a student’s ACT scores. Writing across subjects five or more times per month compared to less than five times per month had the single greatest impact on student achievement. The data also showed discussion, debate, and collaborative classroom activities practices like peer editing are the keys to success in all subjects.

Does ThinkCERCA enable independent learning and understanding of new concepts?

Yes! Skills Lessons are interactive lessons that provide grade-level instruction and practice in critical literacy skills. These lessons give students the opportunity to dynamically engage with texts by highlighting and annotating and include scaffolded checks and graded assessments for measuring understanding. All Skills Lessons are discrete and aligned to TEKS. They can be used as both an introduction to new material or as a platform to practice and sharpen skills that have been previously taught.

Does ThinkCERCA enable independent practice skills?

Yes! Skills Lessons include dynamic progress bars that indicate the instructional purpose of each screen:

- "Learn" indicates that students are learning concepts and practicing skills.
- "Check" indicates that students are going to be graded and assessed based on the question.

Does ThinkCERCA engage students in deep learning experiences?

Yes! The act of creating—i.e. writing—strengthens students' communication skills and pushes their learning to a deeper level. Using ThinkCERCA, students learn how to think critically, peeling back layers to get to something meaningful from our differentiated and authentic texts, formal writing prompts, class-wide discussions and debates, and student choice and voice in the classroom.

Does ThinkCERCA promote thinking across multiple grade levels, providing coherence and connections?

Yes! Our team of curriculum experts pulls leveled content from real-world sources like Smithsonian magazine and National Geographic to create high-quality, standards-aligned lessons that are rooted in effective literacy pedagogy. Using both quantitative and qualitative measures as well as practical knowledge of classrooms and students, our team creates grade-level lesson sets in a coherent curriculum that is connected across grade levels.

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
<p>Does ThinkCERCA support TEKS standards alignment?</p>	<p>Yes! ThinkCERCA is ideal for supporting Texas teachers and students in addressing the TEKS. In every reading selection and overview, vocabulary words are highlighted with boldface type and defined in a glossary. Additionally, sentence frames support students in using these words in their own writing.</p> <p>In Applied Reading and Writing Lessons, students first analyze the effect of authors' choices and then apply the same aspects of craft in their own writing. Students also use a variety of metacognitive skills for comprehension in every Applied Reading and Writing Lesson. In the lesson "The Violent Side of Video Games," for example, students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● read an overview from which they can make predictions and generate questions</li> <li>● write about connections with personal experiences or other ideas</li> <li>● make inferences and answer questions about claims, evidence, details, and key ideas</li> <li>● engage with the text by highlighting and annotating</li> <li>● synthesize information and demonstrate understanding in a summary</li> <li>● craft a formal writing piece and engage in peer collaboration throughout the process</li> </ul>
<p>Does ThinkCERCA provide accommodations for ELL students?</p>	<p>Yes! ThinkCERCA believes in great instruction for all students, including developing bilinguals. Our product's built-in supports and downloadable instructional resources are based on current research and best classroom practices to help teachers support their students' English language development.</p>
<p>Does ThinkCERCA provide accommodations for ELL students in multiple languages?</p>	<p>Not quite; ThinkCERCA contains Reading Practice and Direct Instruction lessons in both Spanish and English to build students' background knowledge and academic vocabulary while creating cohesion within the classroom. We are in the process of increasing our offerings in additional languages.</p>
<p>Does ThinkCERCA provide appropriate support for students with learning disabilities?</p>	<p>Yes! ThinkCERCA provides teachers with the ability to address the needs of a diverse population of students with differentiated yet rigorous content. Our platform is based on critical thinking through collaboration and writing. Teachers are trained by our staff to encourage an inclusive learning environment in their classroom. We also address critical student needs through embedded audio and visual accommodations, and by</p>

providing teachers and students with an effective modality for real-time growth mindset feedback on their work.

Frequently Asked Question	ThinkCERCA Response
Is learning and instruction available anytime, anywhere (24/7) in ThinkCERCA?	Absolutely! As a web-based curriculum, ThinkCERCA is always accessible by students and teachers.
Are pre- and post-mastery assessments built into ThinkCERCA?	Yes! ThinkCERCA’s Writing Benchmarks measure student writing progress at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Writing Benchmarks are a great way to gain insight into students’ writing abilities and personalize instruction throughout the school year.
Does ThinkCERCA provide specific, useful feedback to learners?	Students receive hints and rationales for questions throughout Skills Lesson, and automated feedback at the end of comprehension checks. ThinkCERCA professional development also enables teachers to leverage technology to facilitate small-group and one-on-one direct instruction, modeling, and conferencing with students.
Does ThinkCERCA use continuous, embedded formative assessment to adapt during every lesson?	Yes! Every ThinkCERCA lesson includes a short automated assessment to gauge reading comprehension while getting students accustomed to the kinds of questioning found in growth assessments. These assessments include standards-aligned, discipline-specific items that mirror state assessments, item analysis reporting by standard for teachers and administrators, and real-time automatic grading.
Does ThinkCERCA provide responsive scaffolding supports for sense-making and differentiation?	Yes! While completing Skills Lessons, students receive both hints and rationales that support independent learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hints gently guide students toward the correct answer.</li> <li>● Rationales are displayed for each question after students answer correctly.</li> </ul>
Does ThinkCERCA offer a Teacher Mode ability to view and monitor student progress?	Yes! After teachers have assigned lessons, they are able to monitor student progress as students are working through the lessons and keep track of what needs feedback, what has been completed, what has been returned for revision, and more. With their teacher account, they can also track students' performance by strand over time, as broken down by class. School and district leaders can also access the same information—plus a bit more—via Performance by Class and Performance by Grade reports.
Does ThinkCERCA offer personalized options for students to work at their own pace?	Absolutely! With individual or shared devices, teachers can set up stations for students to rotate through during each session. Students can be responsible for working at their own pace to complete all the steps of the lesson. Each ThinkCERCA text is accompanied by a fluent and expressive

audio reading for students to listen along while reading at their own pace, providing an entry point into the text for English learners.

## Frequently Asked Question

## ThinkCERCA Response

Does ThinkCERCA provide individualized learning paths with elements of student choice?

Yes! We incorporate [UDL principles](#), such as giving students choices, to increase their enthusiasm for the learning process. We train teachers to give their students the opportunity to choose which ThinkCERCA lesson to work on, which leads to increased engagement, collaboration, and idea sharing among students. Also, our lesson sets feature 10 leveled readings that are organized around a central, discipline-specific theme and open-ended question to get all students engaged and ensure that each student has access to “just right” texts.

Does ThinkCERCA provide an engaging environment that’s fun for students and makes learning enjoyable?

Yes! Many teachers know that learning deepens when students study a topic through multiple lenses. By connecting a topic to other classes, that lesson can become more fun and exciting; it shows students new ways to think about a concept. We promote [happy, noisy classrooms](#) that nurture curiosity, discovery, and the open exchange. They provide a solid foundation for students to hone the skills essential to 21st-century success: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem solving. In these talkative classrooms, students learn how to analyze complex topics from multiple viewpoints. In doing so, they bring strong points to engaging and insightful discussions.

Do ThinkCERCA materials adapt between lessons and make recommendations about student readiness levels?

While ThinkCERCA does provide leveling data, we believe teachers should always use their professional judgment, personal observations, and any student information, such as previous levels or testing data, to gather a well-rounded understanding of their students and help with the leveling process. As such, ThinkCERCA does not automatically adapt between lessons.

Does ThinkCERCA empower students to persist and progress?

Yes! With peer diversion, disinterest in a topic, and/or heavy cognitive load, it's easy to see why students succumb to falling off task. In order to encourage persistence, teachers must actively counteract the distracting influences students encounter. ThinkCERCA trains teachers to track progress, identify areas for growth, implement strategies, and assess their effectiveness to boost students' outcomes.

Are updates to online materials automatically made available to the user?

Yes! The ThinkCERCA team regularly releases new product features to make ThinkCERCA more intuitive and helpful for teachers, students, and administrators to use.

Does ThinkCERCA provide actionable, real-time student data to inform instruction?

Absolutely! Teachers can see students' performance by strand over time, as broken down by class, via the Performance by Class report. Teachers can drill down by strand, strand segment, or individual student to view different aspects of the data. School and district leaders can access the

same information—plus a bit more—via both the Performance by Class and Performance by Grade reports.

**Frequently Asked Question**

**ThinkCERCA Response**

Does ThinkCERCA support home-school partnership with progress reporting for parents?

Yes! Teachers and school leaders are provided with progress reports and can choose to share this information with parents if they choose to. The CERCA Framework does empower whole school teams by providing teachers, parents, administrators, and students with a common language to drive sustainable academic growth.

Is ThinkCERCA material user-friendly, with easy navigation to lessons and resources for students and teachers?

Yes! ThinkCERCA's User Experience and User Interface teams regularly visit our partner schools to engage in rapid prototyping, observing and learning from teachers and students actively using our resources. Quality Assurance is part of our build-measure-learn Design Cycle, which allows us to develop consistent, clear and relevant user-friendly icons, commands, maps and more. The ThinkCERCA platform autosaves work every 3 seconds and student work can easily be recovered if deleted. Our team is dedicated to offering a user interface that is simple, clean, and easy to navigate. Our icons, navigational commands, maps, and other prompts are clear, relevant, user-friendly, and accessible to students with different learning needs.



