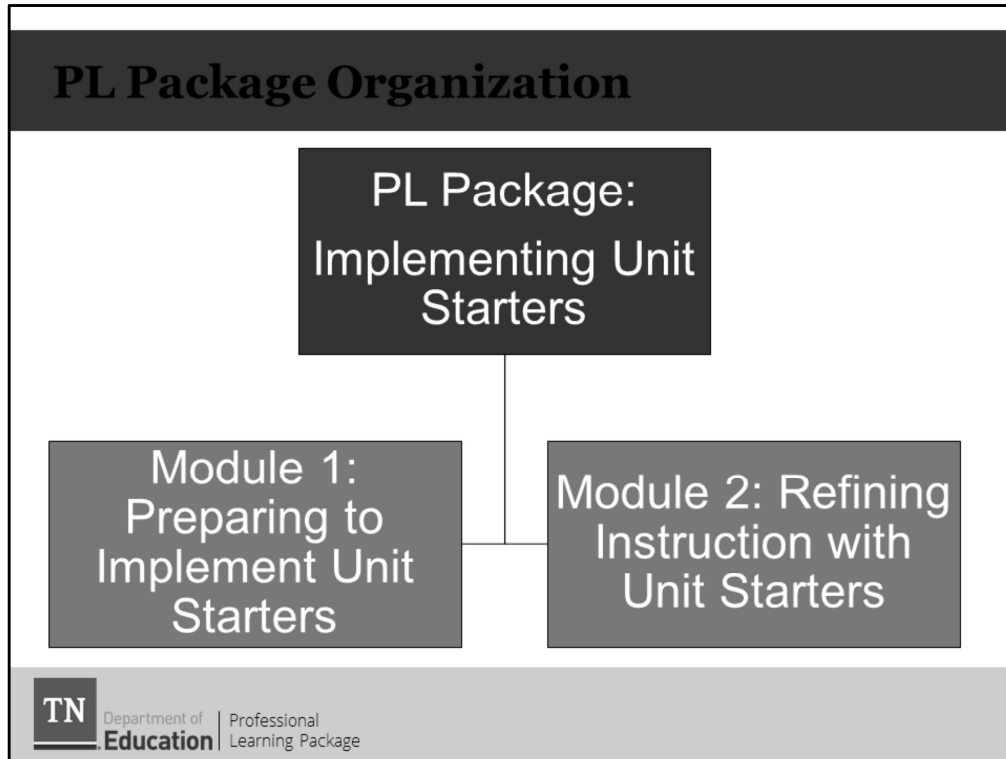




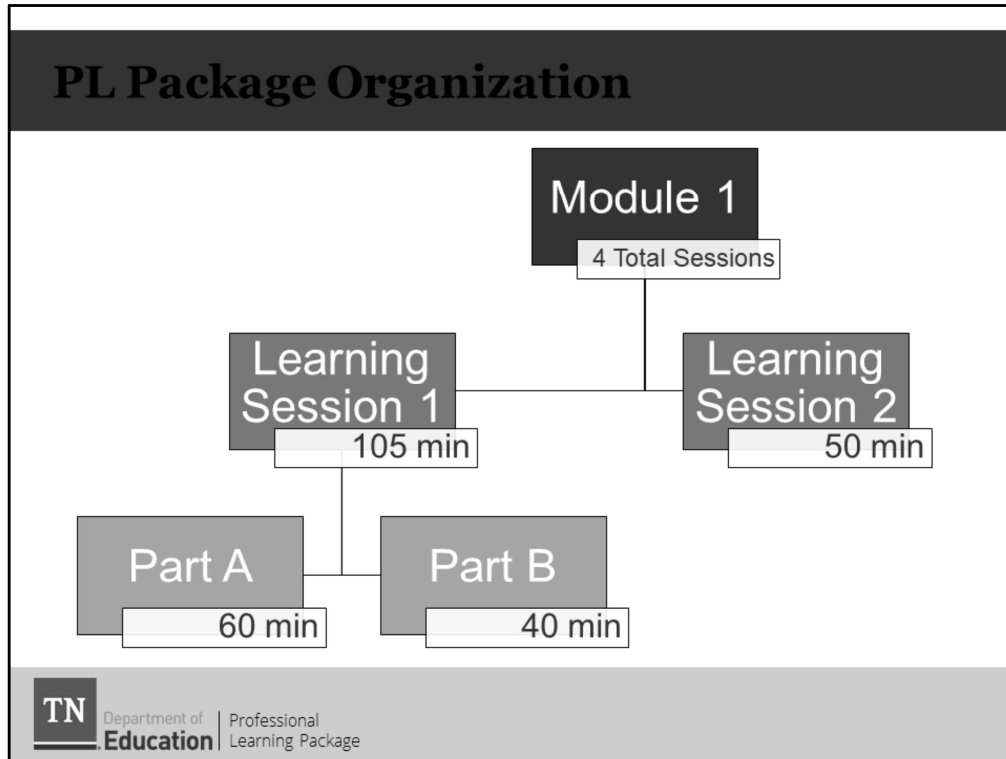
## **Professional Learning Package: Implementing Unit Starters**



**Time:** 1 min (*amount of time needed for this slide*) – 0:01 (*at the end of this slide, this is how much total time will have passed in the learning session*)

**Script:** “This PL Package is organized into two modules. The first module focuses on preparing educators to teach with Unit Starters. The second module is intended to support educators after they have taught a Unit Starter in reflecting on and refining their instruction.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



**Time:** 1 min – 0:02

**Script:** “This PL Package is also organized for flexible engagement. Some teams may want to complete each learning session in a single sitting, such as during a half-day PD session. Other teams may want to complete the learning sessions in pieces over the course of a series of shorter PLC meetings. Accordingly, each Module is broken down into learning sessions. learning sessions are organized around one or more related guiding questions. Each learning session is then chunked into parts. The graphic on this slide shows an example. The first module contains four total learning sessions. learning session 1 takes 105 min. Because it’s longer, it is also separated into two parts, Part A which is 60 min and Part B which is 40 min (a five minute introduction, which is where we are now, takes up the other 5 min). Educators can complete all parts of the learning session at one time, or they can complete each part on different days. learning session 2, on the other hand, is shorter, and can be completed in its entirety in 50 mins. learning session 2 is not separated into parts.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Discuss with educators the format that you will use to complete this PL Package. Will you complete all the learning sessions in one sitting during a whole day? Will you complete them over time, doing 1-2 parts each time?

## Guiding Questions for Module 1

- What is a Unit Starter?
- Why teach with Unit Starters?
- What resources are included in the Unit Starter?
- How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?
- How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?
- How are concepts and understandings supported by the Unit Starter's texts, tasks, and question sequences?
- How can I prepare to teach with the Unit Starter?

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**Time:** 1 min – 0:03

**Script:** “These questions will guide our study of the Unit Starters during Module 1. As you can see, these questions cover the what, why, and how of teaching with Unit Starters. Let’s read them...” Read the questions aloud or invite educators to read them.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



## Guiding Questions for Module 2

- What growth did students make as a result of engagement with the Unit Starters?
- What growth did I make as a teacher as a result of engagement with the Unit Starters?
- How can I refine my instruction moving forward?



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**Time:** 1 min – 0:04


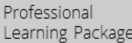
**Script:** “These questions will guide reflection and refinement during Module 2. Remember, Module 2 is designed to be completed after we have taught a Unit Starter.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



**Module 1:**  
**Preparing to Teach with**  
**Unit Starters**  
*Learning Session 1*

Module 1 Learning Sessions		
Session	Guiding Questions	Time
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is a Unit Starter?</li> <li>Why teach with Unit Starters?</li> <li>What resources are included in the Unit Starter?</li> <li>How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?</li> </ul>	1 hour 45 min
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?</li> </ul>	50 min
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are concepts and understandings supported by the Unit Starter's texts, tasks, and question sequences?</li> </ul>	3 hours 30 min
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can I prepare to teach with the Unit Starter?</li> </ul>	1 hour


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**Time:** 1 min – 0:05


**Script:** “For Module 1, we will discuss the guiding questions over a series of four learning sessions. The first session covers the what and the why, and the remaining sessions focus on the how. The sessions vary in length. While time allocations are recommended, we’re the ones leading this. If we find ourselves needing more time to finish a particular session we can always pause in the middle and come back to it later.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Educator teams should feel free to make these learning sessions their own. The only non-negotiables are that educators work through all slides – don’t skip anything – and that they complete the first four sessions prior to teaching with the Unit Starter. Educator teams can choose to complete these sessions in one long day, over two half days, or by doing each session at a time over a number of days.

Educators may notice that learning session 3 is long. It is separated into four parts. Both learning sessions 2 and 4 are designed to be completed in a single sitting.

## Group Norms

- Be fully present.
- Actively participate.
- Embrace collaboration.
- Keep students at the center.



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**Time:** 1 min - 0:06

**Script:** "Let's take a moment to review our group norms so we can all engage in a productive learning experience..."

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Add further group norms if desired

## Learning Session 1

- Guiding questions:
  - Part A (60 min)
    - What is a Unit Starter?
    - Why teach with Unit Starters?
  - Part B (40 min)
    - What resources are included in the Unit Starter?
    - How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?

**Time:** 1 min – 0:07

**Script:** “The focus of this first session is on understanding what Unit Starters, what resources they include, and how they support standards-based instruction. We’ll also talk about why teaching with Unit Starters is a good thing for our students.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Tell educators how they will work through this learning session – will they do Part A at this time and Part B later? Or will they complete all of learning session 1 in this sitting?



**Part A:  
What is a Unit  
Starter?**

## What is a Unit Starter?

- A K-3 Literacy Unit Starter is a set of instructional materials that includes texts, question sequences, and tasks. The materials are purposefully designed for literacy instruction that develops knowledge of concepts related to grade-level content area standards.

**Time:** 1 min – 0:08

**Script:** Read the definition of a Unit Starter aloud.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## What is a Unit Starter?

- Take **five minutes** to explore the Unit Starter you plan to teach. Find the following components:
  - A **unit overview** that describes the desired results for learners
  - The **unit content goals**, which include enduring and disciplinary understandings
  - A list of **texts** that support strong interactive reading and shared reading experiences
  - The **end-of-unit task**
  - The **daily task** and **question sequence** for the first lesson of the unit



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**Time:** 5 min – 0:13

**Script:** “Let’s start by exploring the Unit Starter on our own...” Read the directions on the slide

**Additional Facilitator Information:** The sections listed on this slide are central to the unit. You may want to encourage educators to bookmark these items for easy reference later on.



## What is a Unit Starter?

- What will students learn in this unit?
- How will they learn it?

**Time:** 3 min – 0:16

**Script:** “Based on your initial exploration of the Unit Starter, discuss the following questions...” Read the prompts aloud to your group. If the group is small, discuss the questions together. If the group is larger, invite educators to discuss in trios. If educators discuss in trios, conclude by inviting 1-2 of them to share their responses with the whole group.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## What is a Unit Starter?

- Unit Starters are instructional materials designed to support planning for English language arts instruction in kindergarten through third grade classrooms.
- They include a set of appropriately complex texts for interactive read aloud and shared reading experiences, daily tasks, question sequences, and an end-of-unit task.
- All materials are designed to develop literacy skills and understandings and build knowledge of concepts related to grade-level science and social studies standards.
- Materials are designed for all students as part of core instruction.

**Time:** 2 min – 0:18

**Script:** “This slide builds on the definition we read at the beginning of this section.” Read the bullets aloud or invite other educators to read them aloud.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Be sure to emphasize the following points:

- The Unit Starters are intended to **support** planning. They are not a complete curriculum. Teachers will need to differentiate the materials to meet the diverse needs of their students. The Unit Starters do not include lessons for all Tennessee Academic Standards in English language arts. Teachers will need to follow their scope and sequence and teach additional lessons within and alongside the Unit Starter to ensure students receive instruction in all the academic standards for their grade level.
- The Unit Starters are designed for ELA instruction and align to ELA standards. Concepts in the Unit Starters connect to science and social studies standards, but are not intended to replace instruction in these areas.



**Time:** 3 min – 0:21

**Script:** “Now that we have a clearer sense of what Unit Starters are, let’s stop and think about why teaching with them will help our students. Given what you know about Unit Starters, based on the brief exploration we did earlier and anything else you’ve heard about them, what advantages do you think teaching with Unit Starters bring?” Give educators time to think independently and then invite a few to share their thoughts with the group.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Unit Starters support teachers in:

- **Connecting to** the content of **Tennessee Academic Standards** for English language arts and science or social studies
- **Building students' content knowledge** through the study of appropriately complex texts
- **Teaching conceptually** by basing units and lessons around a connected series of concepts and understandings
- **Implementing a unit design framework** that focuses on texts, question sequences, daily tasks, and an end-of-unit task

**Time:** 1 min – 0:22

**Script:** Read the bullets aloud or invite other educators to read them.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Be sure to emphasize the bolded terms and ideas:

- The Unit Starters connect to science and social studies standards, but are not intended to replace instruction in those areas.
- Unit Starters align to ELA standards.
- Knowledge is developed through the study of texts
- The Unit Starters use a specific framework for conceptual teaching (which we will explore in depth in a later session)

## Building Content Knowledge Through Literacy

- **Willingham, 2016:** Whether or not readers understand a text depends far more on how much **background knowledge and vocabulary** they have relating to the topic than on how much they've practiced comprehension skills. Students need deep knowledge of a subject in order to think creatively or critically about it.
- **Shanahan, 2018:** Research has long shown the importance of **knowledge in comprehension**. If a reader knows much about a topic, his/her reading comprehension rises.
- **Adams, 2018:** All students need access to **high-quality complex texts**. Giving children easier texts when they're weaker readers denies them the very language and information they need to build knowledge.

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**Time:** 3 min – 0:25

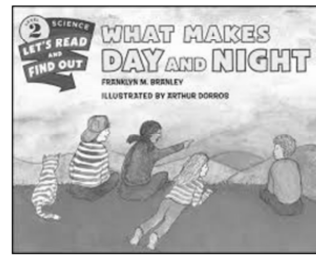
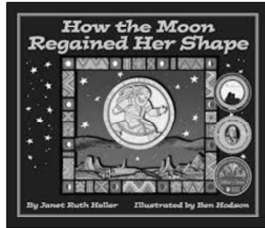
**Script:** “Let’s talk a bit more about the relationship between knowledge, comprehension, and texts by hearing recent ideas from some literacy experts.” Invite educators to read the three bullets. Ask educators which citation stands out most to them and why. Briefly discuss the ideas on this slide.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** If educators are interested in learning more, share the links below:

Sources:

- <http://knowledgematterscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Willingham-brief.pdf>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/04/-american-students-reading/557915/>
- <http://shanahanonliteracy.com/blog/knowning-and-reading-what-can-we-do-to-make-sure-kids-know-enough-to-comprehend#sthash.KzB8MVe3.sHkBTfcC.dpbs>

## Unit Starters build knowledge and vocabulary.



Research tells us that reading or listening to a series of texts focused on a rich **concept** (not a theme or topic) can yield as much as **four times the vocabulary growth** (Landauer & Dumais, 1997).

**Example:** *Observable patterns in the Earth, sun, moon, and stars (concept)*

**Non Example:** *Stars (topic), friendship (theme)*

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**Time:** 3 min – 0:28

**Script:** “Research from Landauer and Dumais (1997) tells us that reading or listening to a series of texts on the same concept (not theme) can yield as much as four times the vocabulary growth.

This occurs because we connect old words to new ones and develop nuanced understandings based on this development. To do this we need to use text sets: a series of texts on a rich concept.

Themes are typically focused on something that is topical that lacks critical deeper levels of understanding that develops over time. Sometimes we see teachers teaching units on themes such as “Stars” or “Friendship”. These text groupings don’t afford the same opportunities to build knowledge and vocabulary.

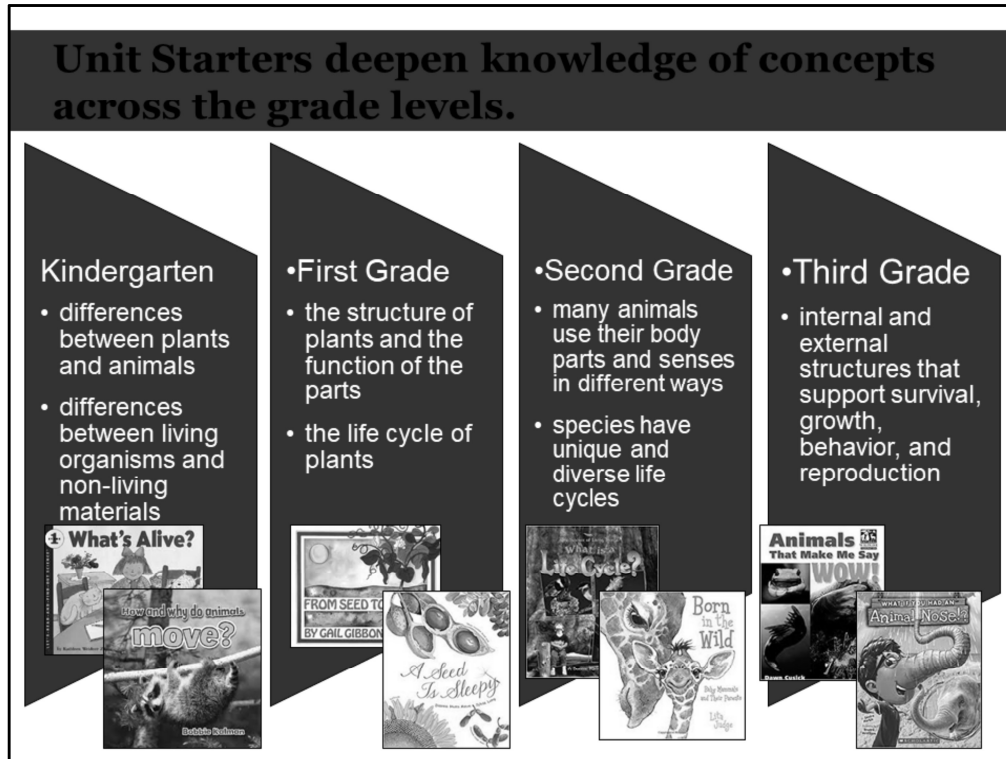
Text sets focused on a concept, rather than a theme, go deeper and focus on developing more meaningful understanding over time. Units focused on concepts are more beneficial to students because texts sets focused on concepts have a much higher likelihood of repeated and related vocabulary, as well as a chance to build deep and nuanced conceptual understanding of an idea.

For example, this unit focuses on the concept of observable patterns in the Earth, Sun, Moon, and Stars. These texts are focused around building a conceptual understanding of

how different bodies in space move – how they rotate, revolve, and in some cases, like the sun, only appear to move – and how those movements create patterns that we can see and predict, like day and night, the phases of the moon, and the changing seasons. The texts enable students to build knowledge about this concept and also to encounter and use words such as *rotation*, *phase*, and *observe* throughout the unit.

Consider the knowledge and vocabulary students could develop if they consistently engaged in units that focus on strategic sequences of high quality texts targeting a single concept like this one.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** If text sets or conceptual teaching are new ideas for educators, consider pausing here and giving them time to share what they think about this kind of approach.



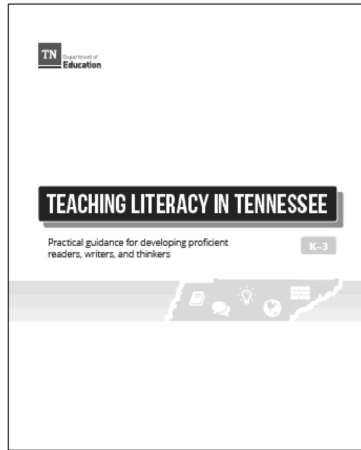
**Time:** 1 min – 0:29

**Script:** “Unit Starters support the progression of knowledge through the grade levels, as intended by our standards. If students engage with Unit Starters that share universal and unit concepts across the grade levels, they will build and deepen knowledge of these concepts. Revisiting concepts over time also supports students in retaining and expanding vocabulary associated with the unit concepts.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



## Unit Starters align with *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*.



Unit Starters support the theory of action and instructional framework that are the foundation of *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*.

**Time:** 1 min – 0:30

**Script:** “It should also be noted that Unit Starters are consistent with the model of instruction put forth in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, which we explored in earlier learning sessions. The Unit Starters are designed in line with Tennessee’s theory of action.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Our Theory of Action

**If we provide daily opportunities for ALL students to build skills-based and knowledge-based competencies by...**

- engaging in a high volume of reading;
- reading and listening to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level;
- thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing;
- developing the skill and craft of a writer; and
- practicing foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing...

**then, we will meet or exceed our goal of having 75 percent of Tennessee third graders reading on grade level by 2025.**

**Time:** 1 min – 0:31

**Script:** “Let’s quickly revisit Tennessee’s theory of action...” Read the slide aloud or invite educators to read the bullets aloud.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## “Engaging in a high volume of reading”

### Texts for Interactive Read Aloud and Shared Reading

TITLE	AUTHOR
<i>On Earth</i>	G. Brian Karas
<i>What Makes Day and Night?</i>	Franklyn M. Branley
<i>The Reasons for Seasons</i>	Gail Gibbons
<i>Sunshine Makes the Seasons</i>	Franklyn M. Branley
<i>Starry Messenger</i>	Peter Sis
<i>Looking Through a Telescope</i>	Linda Bullock
<i>The Big Dipper</i>	Franklyn M. Branley
<i>Coyote Places the Stars</i>	Harriet Peck Taylor
<i>The Moon Book</i>	Gail Gibbons
<i>How the Moon Regained Her Shape</i>	Janet Ruth Heller
<i>Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me</i>	Eric Carle
<i>If You Decide to Go to the Moon</i>	Faith McNulty

Find the text lists in the Unit Starter you will teach.

### Suggested Resources for Small Group and Independent Reading

TITLE (TEXTS, VIDEOS & ELECTRONIC RESOURCES)	AUTHOR
<i>When the Moon is Full</i> (poems)	Penny Pollock
<i>The Moon Seems to Change</i>	Franklyn M. Branley
<i>Why Does the Earth Spin? And Other Questions About Our Planet</i>	Mary Kay Carson
<i>Interplanet Janet</i>	Schoolhouse Rock
<i>Birth of the Solar System</i>	National Geographic
<i>Our Sun</i>	Kristine Carlson
<i>Stargazers</i>	Gail Gibbons
<i>There's No Place Like Space: A Cat in the Hat Book</i>	Tish Rabe
<i>Faces of the Moon</i>	Bob Crelin
<i>Our Stars</i>	Anne Rockwell
<i>The Sky Is Full of Stars</i>	Franklyn M. Branley
<i>Space: A Nonfiction Companion to Midnight on the Moon</i>	Will Osborne and Mary Pope Osborne
<i>Stars</i>	Kristine Asselin
<i>The Disappearing Moon</i>	Reading A-Z
<i>On the Moon</i>	Reading A-Z

**Time:** 3 min – 0:34

**Script:** “Now we’re going to look at how the structure of the Unit Starter and specific resources within it support Tennessee’s theory of action. To support students in engaging in a high volume of reading, the Unit Starters include a list of appropriately complex texts for interactive read aloud and shared reading, as well as suggested resources for small group and independent reading that can be matched to students’ independent reading range. We know it’s important for students to spend time reading and listening to complex texts, but it’s also important for students to spend time reading texts that support their phase of reader development, and the Unit Starters provide texts for both. The images on this slide show the text lists for these different instructional strategies. Now, take a minute and find these text lists in the Unit Starter you will teach.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## “Reading and listening to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level”

*The Big Dipper*

by Franklyn M. Branley

First Grade,  
Interactive Read Aloud  
and Shared Reading

Find an example of text  
complexity analysis in  
the Unit Starter you will  
teach.

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TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS	
QUANTITATIVE COMPLEXITY MEASURES	
AD460L	
QUALITATIVE COMPLEXITY MEASURES	
TEXT STRUCTURE	LANGUAGE FEATURES
The structure of this text is <b>moderately complex</b> . Ideas are organized in a mostly sequential way, however there is some going back and forth between past and present (There are multiple references to how people thought about the Big Dipper and North Star “long ago”). There are few text features in this story, though when they are used, such as picture labels, they are easy to understand and support the text. The graphics/illustrations are mostly supplementary and enhance understanding. For example, when the author explains that the Big Dipper looks different in different seasons, the characters on the page are dressed in different ways corresponding to the seasons, which may help children understand the passage of time. Some graphics, however, are essential to understanding key information. On some pages, the author writes only that “the Big Dipper looks like this” and readers must reference and understand the illustrations to comprehend how the Big Dipper’s position looks different during different seasons.	The language features of this text are <b>slightly complex</b> . Language is straightforward and literal and vocabulary is mostly familiar and conversational. The term “Dipper”, which is essential to the text, may be unfamiliar, but the author defines it, with the support of an illustration, on page 12. The names of the stars in the Big Dipper will be unfamiliar to most readers and difficult to pronounce, such as Alkaid, Phecda, and Dubhe. But, these names are not relevant to the main idea of the text. The author shares the Latin constellation names of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, which are also likely to be unfamiliar words, though the text explains that “ursa” means bear, that “major” means big, and that “minor” means little.
MEANING/PURPOSE	KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS
The purpose of this text is <b>moderately complex</b> . The author does not explicitly state the main idea or purpose of the text, though readers should be able to infer that the Big Dipper is a group of stars, that it looks different at different points in the year, and that people both past and present look for the Big Dipper and North Star for different purposes (i.e., for navigation, as constellations).	The knowledge demands of this text are <b>moderately complex</b> . Most readers will have background knowledge on stars. However, the concept of constellations is important to fully comprehend this text and students without prior knowledge of constellations may have difficulty understanding why people past and present would have interest in finding shapes in groups of stars. The text also assumes that readers have some prior knowledge related to navigation. Specifically, it assumes that students have some understanding of cardinal directions and know what a compass is. Without this knowledge, students may have difficulty comprehending why the North Star is important.

**Time:** 3 min – 0:37

**Script:** “Unit Starters support students in reading and listening to complex texts that are on or above grade level. The Unit Starters include a text complexity analysis chart for each of the interactive read aloud and shared reading texts. These charts help us understand the unique complexities of each text and help us prepare to teach it. Find an example of a text complexity analysis chart in the Unit Starter you will teach and read through the analysis. As you read, consider how the information and guidance in the chart will help you effectively teach that text.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:** If text complexity analysis is a new idea for educators, consider pausing here and asking educators to share how having this resource and thinking ahead of time about a text’s complexity will help them as they teach that text.

## “Thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing”

PAGE/PART OF TEXT	QUESTION SEQUENCE	EXEMPLAR STUDENT RESPONSE
	Teacher's Note: Given the complexity of portions of this text, adjustments to shared reading methods might be made for certain sections of this text that present new or challenging information to students (e.g., choral reading with teacher's voice as the lead, echo reading, etc.). As needed, sections for these adjustments might include: pages 12-14, 18-22, 24, and 29.	
Page 10	Teacher's Script: "Let's stop and think about what we've learned about stars so far. Take a few seconds to think of one fact you've learned about stars, and then tell it to your partner."  (This is an opportunity for a collaborative talk structure.)	Answers will vary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes stars are bright.</li> <li>• Stars look close, but you can't touch them because they're far away.</li> <li>• Stars look different in summer and in winter.</li> <li>• Some stars can be seen in both summer and winter.</li> </ul>
Page 13	On these pages, the author uses the name Big Dipper. But, the author doesn't tell us exactly what the Big Dipper is. Using the words and illustrations from the text and what you already know about stars, what do you think the Big Dipper is?	The Big Dipper is a group of stars that looks like a water dipper. A water dipper has a handle and a bowl.

*The Big Dipper* by Franklyn M. Branley, First Grade

### Daily Task

What is the Big Dipper? Include at least three facts from the text that help explain what the Big Dipper is.

Your writing should:

- introduce your topic;
- supply at least three facts about the topic;
- use vocabulary from the text; and
- provide some sense of closure.

Find an example of a question sequence and daily task in the Unit Starter you will teach.

**Time:** 3 min – 0:40

**Script:** “Unit Starters support students in thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing. The Unit Starters include question sequences for each text that promote talking and thinking about the text. The daily tasks also encourage discussion and most tasks also prompt students to write. Find an example of a question sequence and a daily task in the Unit Starter you will teach and consider how those key resources will help students develop their speaking and writing skill.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## “Developing the skill and craft of a writer”

### End-of-Unit Task, First Grade

#### Part 1:

- You are an astronomer working for U.S. Space and Rocket Center. You have been asked to create a student-friendly brochure that you will share with students during a school field trip that explains (1) observable patterns in the day and night sky, (2) the seasons that impact Earth, and (3) the phases of the moon. Use illustrations and descriptions to explain these observable patterns.
- Your brochure should include:
  - a front cover that illustrates and names the topic of the brochure;
  - a section that illustrates and describes observable patterns from the day and night sky and explains why we observe those patterns;
  - a section that illustrates and describes the pattern in Earth's seasons and explains why changes in season occur; and
  - a section that illustrates and describes phases of the moon and explains why we observe those patterns.
- Be sure to:
  - provide some sense of closure;
  - use details from the texts we have read; and
  - use vocabulary words from the word display in our unit.

#### Part 2:

- When you're almost finished with your brochure, practice presenting your information to a co-worker (student partner) before you deliver it to the students on the field trip. Seek your co-worker's feedback on your writing.

**Time:** 3 min – 0:43

**Script:** “The Unit Starters support students in developing the skill and craft of a writer. We just explored how the daily tasks help students develop as writers, and the end-of-unit tasks do too. Let’s take a closer look at this one. Read the description of this task and then talk with a partner about how this task would help develop students skill and craft as a writer.” After partner discussion, invite a few educators to share their ideas with the whole group.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** Make sure educators talk about both the content and the mechanics of the task. The task helps students develop ideas and organization while also calling for them to write in complete sentences, and use correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Educators may have concerns about the rigor of the end-of-unit task. They may wonder if some students will be able to do it. Assure them that that the Unit Starter is designed to scaffold students to the level of thinking of the end-of-unit task. Students will have opportunities to talk and write throughout the unit that will prepare them for the end-of-unit task.

**“Practicing foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing”**

- Unit Starters provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge of foundational skills through reading and writing.
- The Unit Starters do not provide explicit lessons for foundational skill instruction.

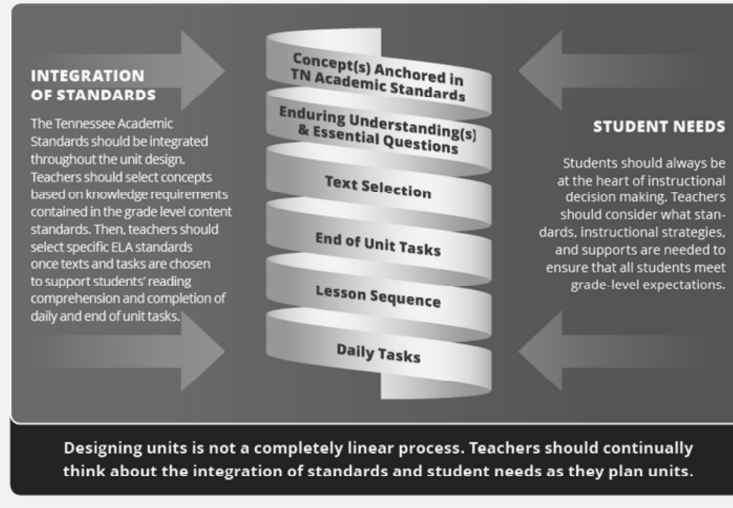
**Time:** 1 min – 0:44

**Script:** “The last piece of our theory of action is about foundational skills. It’s important that students practice foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing. The Unit Starters provide many opportunities for students to apply knowledge of foundational skills through reading and writing, such as during shared reading experiences or writing tasks. However, the Unit Starters do not provide explicit lessons for foundational skill instruction. We will talk more about the Unit Starters and foundational skills later on.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

# Unit Design Framework

## FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE



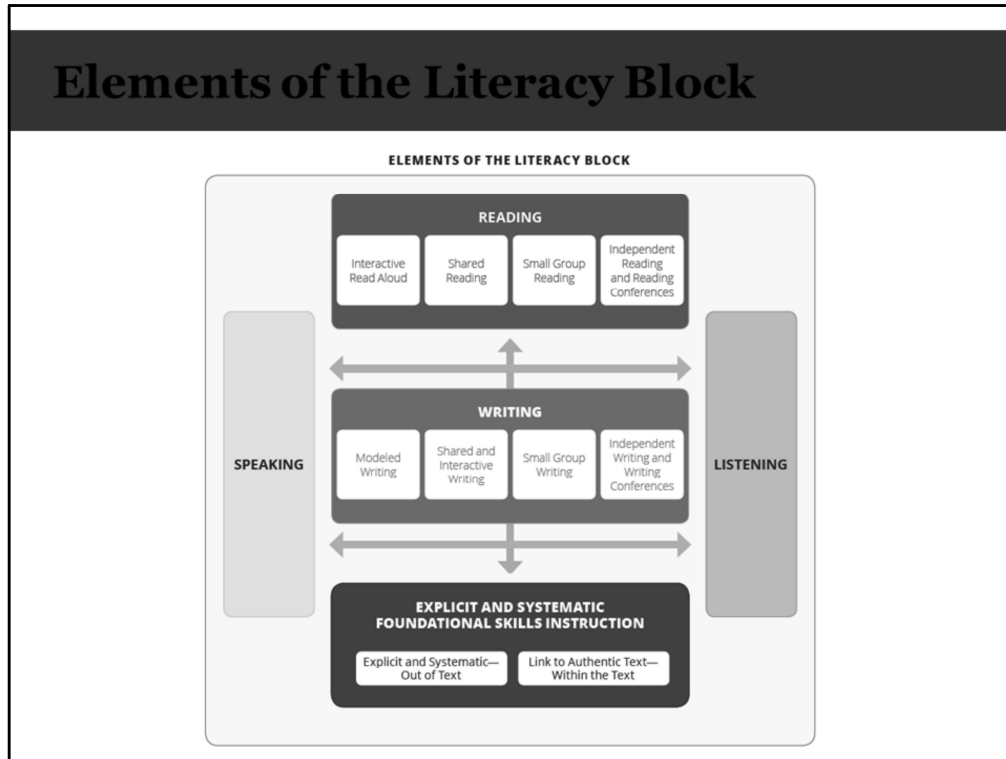
Adapted from McTighe, J. & Seif, E. (2011), Wiggins, G. & McTighe (2013).

**Time:** 1 min – 0:45

**Script:** “The Unit Starters are based on the unit design framework shared in Teaching Literacy in Tennessee. Concepts for the Unit Starters have roots in the Tennessee Academic Standards for science and social studies. These content area standards inspire the unit’s enduring understanding and essential questions. Texts and tasks support students in developing understanding of the unit concepts. At all levels of the unit, two key factors – the standards (point to green arrows on the left) and student needs (point to blue arrows on the right) – constantly influence the way the unit is taught.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**





**Time:** 2 min – 0:47

**Script:** “This graphic, which also comes from Teaching Literacy in Tennessee, illustrates the integration of the standards to be addressed, the instructional strategies to be used, and the grouping structures that teachers incorporate as they plan for literacy instruction on any given day. Teachers will not use all of these instructional strategies in a single day, and the timing for each will vary based on needs. Rather, teachers should flexibly select from multiple instructional strategies (e.g., interactive read aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, etc.) as they design a high-quality Tier I literacy block that reflects the expectations of the grade-level standards.

The Unit Starters provide texts for interactive read aloud and shared reading and suggested resources for small group reading and independent reading (point to blue box at the top of the graphic). The daily tasks and end-of-unit task lend themselves to the writing strategies shown here (point to green box). The Unit Starter’s writing tasks support independent writing. The other writing strategies, such as modeled writing and interactive writing, offer layers of support that promote independence.

It is important for students to regularly generate their own writing. Students are often tempted to duplicate writing they see their teachers do, often because they want to do it the “right” way. While modeled, shared, and interactive writing activities are helpful scaffolds for students, they should address writing prompts that are different from the prompts for students’ independent writing (otherwise, students may just copy the modeled

response).

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Why teach with Unit Starters?

- Unit Starters support students in listening to, reading about, and thinking about a high volume of texts at a range of complexity levels.
- Students engage with texts throughout the literacy block through various instructional strategies, including interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group reading.
- Students speak and write about each text and develop the skill and craft of a writer.
- By reading a high volume of texts on standards-based concepts, students build knowledge, vocabulary, and conceptual understanding.



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**Time:** 1 min – 0:48

**Script:** “This slide summarizes the benefits of teaching with Unit Starters for teachers and students...” Read the bullets, or invite other educators to read the bullet points. Ask educators if, given what they know so far, they can think of other reasons for why teaching with Unit Starters may help them and their students.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## What are educators saying about Unit Starters?

- *“The Unit Starters that have been implemented at Martin Primary School, when taught with fidelity, lend themselves to scores in the highest levels of the rubric on the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). Observation scores of lessons from the Unit Starters have been consistently above expectations. The excitement and knowledge that the students are showing is absolutely amazing! Unit Starters are very rewarding to teachers and administrators alike!”*

— Lea Ann Crowe, Assistant Principal

**How could teaching with Unit Starters lead to high scores on TEAM?**

**Time:** 2 min – 0:50

**Script:** “In case you’re still not sure about whether Unit Starters are worth it, take a look at some quotes from real educators who have used Unit Starters with their students.” Read the slide aloud. Ask educators why they think teaching with the Unit Starters would lead to high scores on TEAM.

Possible connections include:

- Standards and Objectives – Unit Starters are aligned to state standards and promote the integration of standards
- Motivating Students – Unit Starters provide opportunities for students to explore concepts in depth, which encourages inquiry and curiosity
- Questioning – Question sequences are provided that scaffold student understanding toward higher levels of thinking
- Teacher Content Knowledge – The design of the Unit Starters, which is based on a model of instruction that supports conceptual learning, helps teachers think more deeply about the content area standards in their grade level and encourages them to see connections between standards and concepts
- Thinking – The conceptual teaching in the Unit Starters promotes higher levels of student thinking

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## What are educators saying about Unit Starters?

- *“The Unit Starters have affected our instruction in a very positive way. More complex texts are being chosen. Teachers are taking a more facilitative role in the classroom. Students are thinking more deeply about texts they are reading and speaking and writing more about what they have read. Students are developing a rich vocabulary while also learning more about the world around them. Unit Starters have changed not only what students learn, but how teachers teach. The shift in mindset has been amazing.”*

— Emily Perry, Instructional Coach

**Time:** 1 min – 0:51

**Script:** “Let’s look at another quote...” Read the quote.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## What are educators saying about Unit Starters?

- *“The Unit Starters are incredible because they give true meaning to the phrase ‘rigorous classroom instruction.’ Prior to the unit, when asked if we were teaching to the highest level possible, we gave a resounding, ‘Yes!’ However, after implementing the unit, we realized how our previous expectations were not high enough and could not compare to the results of the unit.”*
  - Rachel Bearden, Rachel Cooper, & Beth Davidson,  
second grade teachers at Martin Primary School

**Time:** 1 min – 0:52

**Script:** “This final quote comes from a group of teachers...” Read the quote.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Sample Student Work – First Grade, Daily Task

- **Daily Task:** Write a letter to Monica explaining that the moon only seems to change, but actually goes through phases.
- **Exemplar Response:** Dear Monica, The moon doesn't actually get smaller. It goes through phases that make it look smaller when it is waning and larger when it is waxing. This is because of the movement and positions of Earth, the sun, and the moon. The moon is a celestial body that we need, so it must stay in the sky. Your friend, \_\_\_\_.

What content knowledge is this student developing? How is this student also showing progress toward mastery of ELA standards?

Dear Monica,  
The moon shrank because it  
was waning. It didn't  
disappear. It became a new moon.  
When the moon started growing,  
it was waxing. Then, when it was  
fully lit, it was a full moon.  
Your friend, Luke

**Time:** 3 min – 0:55

**Script:** “The teachers from Martin Primary School whose quote we just saw talked about how using the Unit Starters raised their expectations for students. To help show the kind of impact a conceptual approach can have for students, we’re going to look at some examples of student work. This is a daily task for one of the first grade Unit Starters on space...” Read the task aloud. “And this is the exemplar student response, or the kind of response we would hope our children would produce if they comprehended the unit’s concepts...” Read the exemplar response aloud. Then, have educators read the students’ work (if needed, a transcription of the student response is provided in the facilitator notes below).

Then, ask the question: What content knowledge is this student developing? How is this student also showing progress toward mastery of ELA standards?

### Additional Facilitator Information:

The student text reads: “Dear Monica, The moon shrank because it was waning. It didn’t disappear. It became a new moon! When the moon started growing, it was waxing. Then, when it was fully lit, it was a full moon! Your friend, Luke”

Educators should recognize in this example that the student understands the phases of the moon. He knows corresponding vocabulary – waning, waxing, new moon, full moon. He is also demonstrating command of grammar, including punctuation and capitalization. He is also demonstrating understanding of the

structure of friendly letters.



## Sample Student Work – Second Grade, Daily Task

**Daily Task:** Write a letter to a friend about some of the changes that can happen due to an earthquake. Include at least four ways earthquakes impact people and places. Also, include information about whether these changes are fast or slow.

**Exemplar Response:**

Dear Friend, I wanted to share some exciting information with you that I learned in school today. Did you know earthquakes are happening around the world all of the time, yet most of them we can barely feel? Here are some other important things I learned today. Earthquakes can cause large cities to be destroyed. They can cause lakes or rivers to be moved. They can also cause trees and houses to be destroyed. When the plates move under water, they can cause large waves such as tsunamis which could drown out entire villages. Earthquakes can be so scary! They are acts of nature that are very devastating and happen very quickly. I will write you more when I learn some new facts to share!

Your friend, Student Name

**Time:** 2 min – 0:57

**Script:** “This example is of a daily writing task for a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade unit on earth science. Here is the task and the exemplar student response.” Invite an educator to read the task and exemplar response aloud or have educators read them silently.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Sample Student Work – Second Grade, Daily Task

March 13, 2018  
Dear Mom and Dad,  
Did you know that earthquakes cause a lot of damage? They use a Richter scale to see how big an earthquake that are 7 or bigger and when that are 2. Some earthquakes can kill people and destroy houses and topple large buildings. And they can start fires and floods. Some time they can have tsunamis and can damage highways.

What content knowledge are these students developing? How are these students also showing progress toward mastery of ELA standards?

March 13, 2018  
Dear Bryson,  
Earthquakes can do a lot of damage when the Richter scale is above 7.0 or bigger like 9.0. The Richter scale tells you how big an Earthquake can be. Earthquakes can destroy houses, topple large buildings or thousands of people. Earthquakes can burn down lots of cities, trees or power lines. Some Earthquakes are under the water and can make tsunamis. tsunamis can make huge waves about over 100 feet tall. tsunamis can make huge damage to mostly anything because they are very powerful so are Earthquakes. Earthquakes can cause floods, landslides or can break highways.

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**Time:** 4 min – 1:01

**Script:** "Here are two examples of student work. The work on the left is from a student who the teacher described as being just below grade level and the work on the right is from a student who the teacher described as being proficient. What do you notice about the content knowledge they're developing?"

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Pause and Reflect

- Revisit the end-of-unit task for the Unit Starter you will teach, and read the exemplar student response.
- Think of the students in your class:
  - What would it look like for different students to meet the expectations of the end-of-unit task?
  - What would it mean for these students and their learning to be able to complete the end-of-unit task at the level of the exemplar student response?

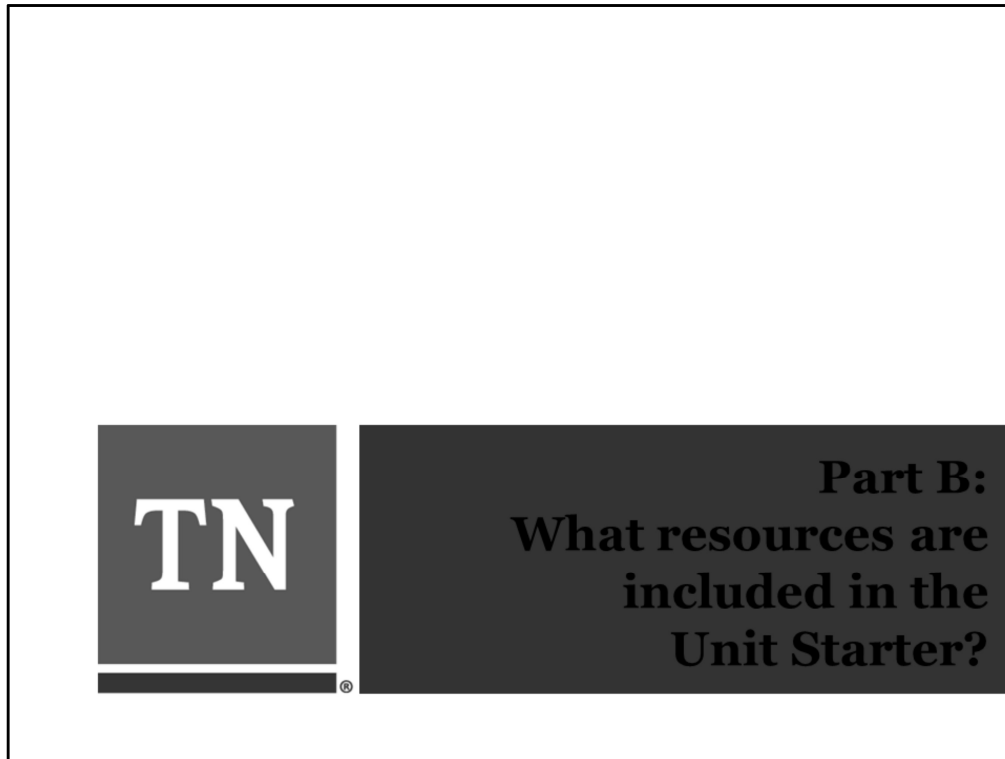


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**Time:** 4 min – 1:05

**Script:** This is the closing slide for Part A of learning session 1. Read the directions on the slide. Have educators think about the questions on their own, and then have them discuss in trios. To close, invite some educators to share thoughts with the whole group.


**Additional Facilitator Information:** With more time, move on to Part B of learning session 1.



**Time:** 1 min – 1:06

**Script:** “We just spent some time thinking about the ‘why’ of teaching with Unit Starters. Now, we’re going back to the ‘what’. In this next section we’re going to learn more about the nuts and bolts of what’s included in the Unit Starters and what’s not.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

Unit Starter Components	
WHAT IS INCLUDED?	WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?
<p>Resources that serve as the foundation for strong unit planning and preparation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unit concepts</li> <li>▪ A list of texts to support strong interactive read aloud and shared reading experiences</li> <li>▪ A list of resources to support small group and independent reading and writing</li> <li>▪ An end-of-unit task</li> <li>▪ Question sequences and daily tasks to support approximately three weeks of instruction</li> </ul>	<p>Instructional guidance to meet the diverse and unique needs of students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instructional guidance for small group and independent reading and writing</li> <li>▪ Modeled, shared, and interactive writing lessons</li> <li>▪ Instructional guidance and resources for explicit foundational skills instruction</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Reading foundational skills instruction should follow a year-long scope and sequence and be responsive to the unique needs of your students.</p>
	

**Time:** 3 min – 1:09 (Part B – 0:03)

**Script:** “Unit Starters provide the foundation for unit planning but are **not intended to be a comprehensive curriculum resource**. Instead, you must thoughtfully prepare from the resources that are included in the Unit Starter and plan for other components of the English language arts block.

The Unit Starters contain several resources that serve as the foundation for strong unit planning and preparation, including:

- Content goals for the unit
- Texts to be used for various purposes in the English language arts block
- A standards-aligned end-of-unit task
- Question sequences and tasks for approximately three weeks of instruction that include

These resources primarily support strong Interactive Read Aloud and Shared Reading experiences, with opportunities for students to respond to text orally or in writing.

However, they do not – and cannot - provide instructional guidance to meet the diverse and unique needs of your students. More specifically, you will still have to:

- Plan for **small group instruction**. You should group students flexibly and select texts to meet your students’ specific needs, which may change over time. The Unit Starter includes a list of suggested resources (texts, videos, online resources) that can be used

to support small group instruction.

- Plan for how you will use the suggested resources to engage students in a high-volume of **independent reading**. Consider setting up systems for accountability during independent work time such as one-on-one conferences, center assignments, and/or accountable independent reading structures.
- Plan **explicit foundational skills instruction**. It is recommended that you use an explicit and systematic approach for foundational skills instruction. Strong foundational skills lessons provide instruction that follows an intentional, research-based progression of foundational skills starting with phonemic awareness and moving toward phonics and word recognition.
- And critically, you will need to plan opportunities for students to **practice their newly acquired foundational skills in and out of context**. Foundational skills assessments should be ongoing, and should be used to determine when students have mastered the skill and are ready to move on to the next skill.
- The reason that foundational skill lessons are not included is because it's critical that teachers follow a year-long scope and sequence for foundational skill instruction. Since teachers will be using these Unit Starters at different points in the year, the department has no way of knowing where teachers will be in their scope and sequence. Many commonly used basal curricula, like Journeys, Reading Wonders, and Reading Street include resources for foundational skill instruction. However, teachers are encouraged to use the authentic texts from the Unit Starter (i.e., shared reading, small group reading, and independent reading) as texts where students apply their understanding of newly-learned foundational skills in context.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Unit Starter Components

- Unit Starters are **not:**
  - designed to provide comprehensive instructional materials for all essential components of the literacy block;
  - intended to replace time spent in explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction; nor
  - intended to replace science or social studies instruction.



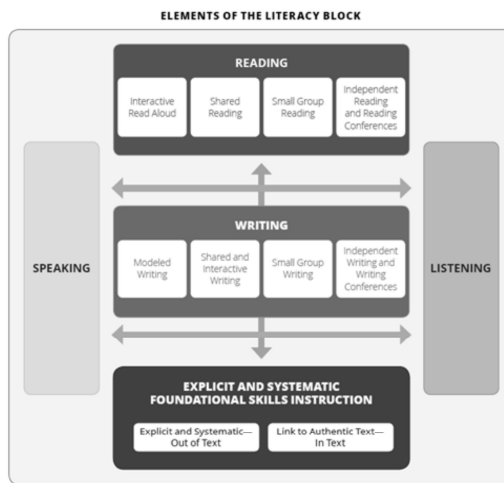
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**Time:** 1 min – 1:10 (Part B – 0:04)

**Script:** “To be clear, Unit Starters are not...” Read the bullets on the slide.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** If educators have more questions about what is and is not included in the Unit Starter and why, they can read the opening pages of the Unit Starter, which explain its components, and find additional information about Unit Starters on the department’s Read to be Ready website found at [tn.gov/readtobeready](http://tn.gov/readtobeready) under the Educators tab.

# Planning with Unit Starters



**KEY POINT:** The Unit Starter provides a rich set of concepts, texts, and resources that are fundamental for unit planning, but are not intended to be a comprehensive curriculum resource. Instead, educators must thoughtfully prepare from the resources that are included in the Unit Starter by adding additional resources as appropriate to meet instructional goals and student needs.

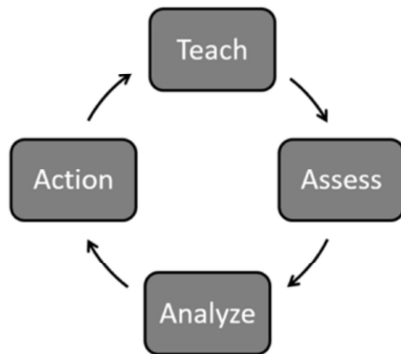
**Time:** 1 min – 1:11 (Part B – 0:05)

**Script:** This is the summary slide for this section. Read the key point on the slide.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



## Planning with Unit Starters



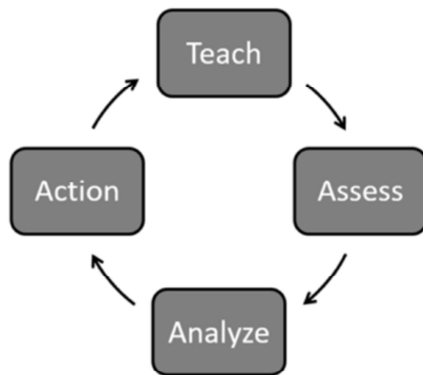
- Teachers can use their knowledge of students and the various instructional strategies of the literacy block to provide additional lessons and resources to support students in understanding the concepts of the Unit Starter.

**Time:** 2 min – 1:13 (Part B – 0:07)

**Script:** “But, there are many ways that teachers can plan for the elements of the literacy block that support the concepts of the Unit Starter. The graphic on the left, which may be familiar to educators who participated in the department’s training on ELA standards or other Read to be Ready learning sessions, illustrates the process for how teachers use data to make instructional decisions that meet the needs of all students. With that model in mind, the following slides provide three examples of how teachers can use their knowledge of students and the Elements of the Literacy Block to plan with the Unit Starter.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Planning with Unit Starters



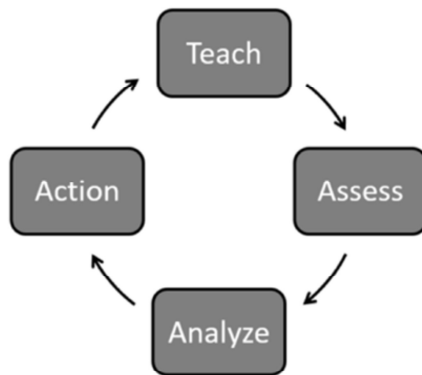
**Example 1:** A teacher uses multiple sources of data to place students in small groups. She finds texts from the Unit Starter's list of suggested resources for small group instruction that match the unique needs of each group.

**Time:** 1 min – 1:14 (Part B – 0:08)

**Script:** Read the example on the slide.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Planning with Unit Starters



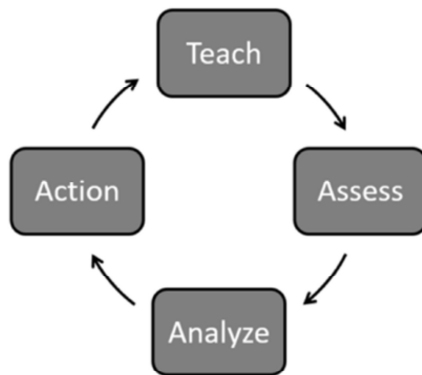
**Example 2:** A teacher plans supplemental modeled and shared writing lessons where students learn and practice skills similar to those they will be expected to demonstrate on the Unit Starter's daily writing tasks, which students complete independently. The modeled and shared writing lessons help scaffold instruction and prepare students for independent writing.

**Time:** 1 min – 1:15 (Part B – 0:09)

**Script:** Read the example on the slide

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Planning with Unit Starters



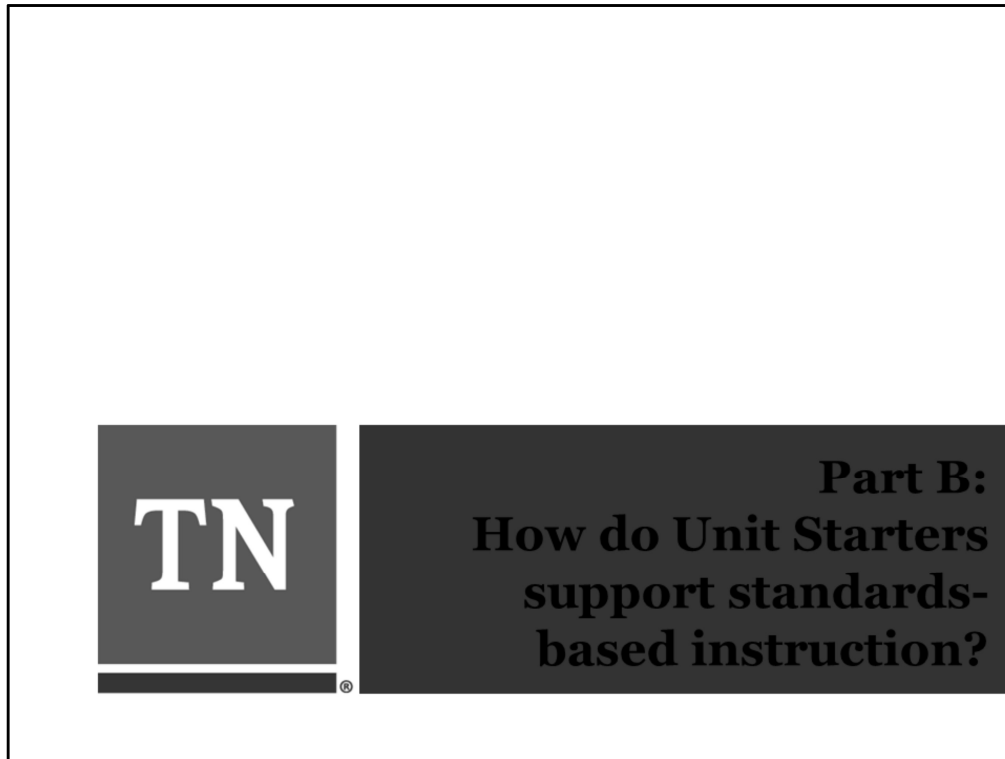
**Example 3:** A teacher has a group of students who are below grade level and who sometimes have difficulty keeping up with the Unit Starter's on-grade-level texts. To make sure these students have opportunities to read texts that match their phase of reader development and that also help build knowledge, the teacher selects independent reading texts for these students that align to the unit's concepts.

Given what you already know about Unit Starters, what other strategies can you think of for supporting both student needs and the conceptual goals of the unit?

**Time:** 3 min – 1:18 (Part B – 0:12)

**Script:** Read the example on the slide. Then, ask teachers to brainstorm other instructional strategies that could support both student needs and the conceptual goals of the unit.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



**Time:** 1 min – 1:19 (Part B – 0:13)

**Script:** “This is the final section of learning session 1. We know that the Unit Starters support standards-based instruction, but here we’re going to focus on exactly how they do it.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- Unit Starters are designed to support rigorous and standards-based instruction in **English language arts**. High-quality, complex texts are selected to build students' knowledge of the units' concepts and enduring understandings. **Based on the quantitative and qualitative demands of these texts, English language arts standards are purposefully and selectively chosen to support students' comprehension.**
- Additional ELA standards for speaking and writing are also included in the Unit Starters to support students' engagement with texts and their completion of writing tasks.

**Time:** 1 min – 1:20 (Part B – 0:14)

**Script:** It's important that educators understand the relationship between state academic standards and the Unit Starters. Please read aloud these slides as written.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- The Unit Starters' daily **lesson objectives** are intentionally designed to address learning goals for both content knowledge and English language arts.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE(S) FOR THIS READING

Students will understand that the change in seasons is created by the Earth's tilt, which causes different parts of the Earth to receive different amounts of sunlight.

To achieve this understanding, students will:

- retell key details from the text;
- use words and illustrations to describe the relationship between sunshine and the four seasons; and
- use writing and pictures to create a chart that organizes information about the seasons.

**Find a lesson objective in your Unit Starter. How does the lesson objective provide goals for both content knowledge and ELA?**

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**Time:** 4 min – 1:24 (Part B – 0:18)

**Script:** “The Unit Starters are designed to support students in progressing toward mastery of ELA standards. One specific way the Unit Starters do this is through the design of its lesson objectives. Each daily lesson objective addresses learning goals for both content knowledge and English language arts. As you can see in the example, knowledge goals are listed first. These knowledge goals are achieved through the application of ELA knowledge and skill, as stated in the second part of the lesson objective.” Have educators find a lesson objective in their Unit Starter and discuss the question on the slide with a partner.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- While Unit Starters are intended to support ELA instruction, they are not an ELA curriculum. That is, **Unit Starters do not encompass all of Tennessee’s English language arts standards** (e.g., some speaking and writing standards).
- Teachers should continue to follow a year-long scope and sequence as part of a guaranteed and viable curriculum – and use data to make responsive decisions based on students’ strengths and needs – to ensure students receive instruction on the full scope of grade-level standards.

**Time:** 1 min – 1:25 (Part B – 0:19)

**Script:** It’s important that educators understand the relationship between state academic standards and the Unit Starters. Please read aloud these slides as written.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



## How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- **Foundational literacy standards** are not explicitly included in the Unit Starters.
- Teachers should use their knowledge of foundational literacy **standards**, information from **assessments** and **knowledge of students**, and the guidance of a **year-long scope and sequence** to embed foundational literacy lessons into the scope of the unit.
- We encourage teachers to use the **Out of Text/In Text model** for foundational skill instruction that combines explicit and systematic teaching with authentic reading and writing experiences.
- The high-quality texts within the Unit Starter provide ample opportunities for **in-text application** of foundational skills.

**Time:** 1 min – 1:26 (Part B – 0:20)

**Script:** It's important that educators understand the relationship between state academic standards and the Unit Starters. Please read aloud these slides as written.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** The department will be creating other Professional Learning Packages that focus on the out of text/in text model for teaching foundational skills. Please see the Read to be Ready website for additional details.

## How do Unit Starters support the teaching of content area standards?

- Unit Starters are designed to **build knowledge of concepts related to grade-level science and social studies standards**. Unit Starters are designed around a *conceptual hierarchy*, which is a framework for unit design that supports conceptual understanding. Unit concepts and enduring understandings are developed with grade-level science and social studies standards in mind.
- The Unit Starters' daily **lesson objectives** include goals for content knowledge.
- Unit Starters are not intended to replace science or social studies instruction.

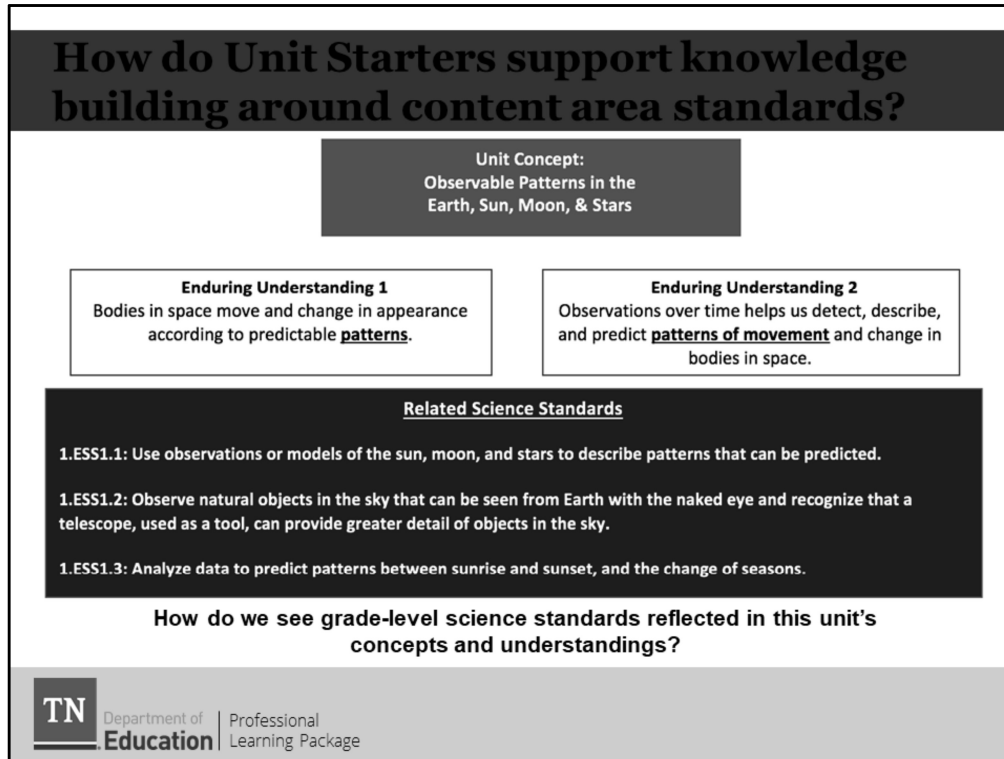
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**Time:** 1 min – 1:27 (Part B – 0:21)

**Script:** It's important that educators understand the relationship between state academic standards and the Unit Starters. Please read aloud these slides as written.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



**Time:** 3 min – 1:30 (Part B – 0:24)

**Script:** “This is an example of how the unit concepts and enduring understandings of the Unit Starters are inspired by content area standards.” Invite educators to read the standards and then the corresponding unit concepts and enduring understandings. Then, have them discuss the question on the slide.

**Additional Facilitator Information:** It is important to reinforce the idea that the Unit Starters are not designed to teach content area standards. The concepts in the Unit Starters are designed to support students in building knowledge related to grade level science and social studies standards.

## How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?

- Find the unit concepts and enduring understandings for the Unit Starter you will teach.
  - What connections do you see between these concepts and understandings and the science or social standards they're inspired by?
- Find the list of aligned standards for English language arts.
  - Which ELA standards are covered in this unit? Which are not?



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**Time:** 5 min – 1:35 (Part B – 0:29)

**Script:** Read the directions on the slide. Have educators think about the questions first independently and then discuss them with a trio or small group.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Closing Reflection

- What advantages do you see in teaching with the Unit Starters?
- What challenges might you face?
- What questions do you have about the Unit Starters?
- What information do you need to answer your questions?

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**Time:** 5 min – 1:40 (Part B – 0:34)

**Script:** “This is the end of the first learning session. We will close with a personal reflection about the Unit Starters.” Have educators discuss their responses with a trio, and then invite a few educators to share their responses with the whole groups. You may want to record challenges and questions on a piece of paper or poster and revisit them during future learning sessions. These challenges and questions may be addressed in future sessions.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Learning Session Summary

- In **learning session 1**, we addressed these questions:
  - What is a Unit Starter?
  - Why teach with Unit Starters?
  - What resources are included in the Unit Starter?
  - How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?
- In **learning session 2**, we will address these questions:
  - How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?

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**Time:** 1 min – 1:41 (Part B – 0:35)

**Script:** Quickly review the questions that were discussed in this learning session and preview the questions that will be addressed in the next learning session.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**



**Time:** 1 min – 1:42 (Part B – 0:36)

**Script:** “Each learning session closes with an activity titled ‘Learning to Application’. These activities are designed to help everyone build on the knowledge they developed during the learning session and prepare for the next one.”

**Additional Facilitator Information:**

## Learning to Application

Prior to our next learning session:

- Read the **Guidance for Educators** section of your Unit Starter (begins on p. 3).
- Review the **Unit Overview**, **Unit Content Goals**, **Unit Standards**, and **Text** sections.
- Review at least one set of **daily lesson** resources closely.

**Time:** 1 min – 1:43 (Part B – 0:37)

**Script:** Read the directions on the slide. Acknowledge that we looked at some of these sections already but that taking a closer look is important in preparation for the next session.

**Additional Facilitator Information:**





*Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.*

**Excellence | Optimism | Judgment | Courage | Teamwork**