



# INTERVENTION BRIEF

Topic Area: Adolescent Literacy



## Passport Reading Journeys™

Literacy skills are critical to students' academic achievement and setting them on a path to successful high school graduation and readiness for college and careers. *Passport Reading Journeys™* is a supplemental literacy curriculum designed to help improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and writing skills of struggling readers in grades 6–12. Lessons incorporate both teacher-led instruction and technology, including whole-class and small-group instruction, independent reading, video segments, and independent computer-based practice. The curriculum includes a series of two-week, ten-lesson instructional sequences on topics in science, math, fine art, literature, and social studies. Each sequence is themed as an expedition or journey for students.

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Adolescent Literacy topic area, explores the effects of *Passport Reading Journeys™* on student literacy. The WWC identified six studies of *Passport Reading Journeys™*. Three of these studies meet WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report is from studies of the impacts of *Passport Reading Journeys™* on students—including white, black, and Hispanic students—in a range of grades—Grade 6 through 9—and a variety of school settings, including urban, suburban, and rural districts.

### What Happens When Students Participate in *Passport Reading Journeys™*

The evidence indicates that implementing *Passport Reading Journeys™*:

- has inconsistent effects on comprehension
- may result in little to no change in general literacy achievement

Findings on *Passport Reading Journeys™* from three studies that meet WWC standards are shown in Table 1. For each outcome reviewed by the WWC, an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings are presented. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention's effect on an outcome. It can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. The finding on comprehension is based on analyses that include 2,001 students. The findings on general literacy achievement is based on analyses including 2,316 students. See Box 1 for a description of WWC effectiveness ratings.

**Table 1. Summary of findings on *Passport Reading Journeys™* from studies that meet WWC Standards**

Outcome domain	Effectiveness rating	Study findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
Comprehension	Mixed effects	+4	3	2,001
General literacy achievement	No discernible effects	0	3	2,316

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +4 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 4 points if the student received *Passport Reading Journeys™*. The improvement index values are generated by averaging findings from the outcome analyses that meet WWC standards, as reported by Dimitrov et al. (2012), Schenck et al. (2012), and Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012). Comprehension outcomes reported in these studies include the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests. General literacy achievement outcomes reported include the EXPLORE test, the Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, and the Virginia Standards of Learning assessment. The effects of *Passport Reading Journeys™* are not known for other outcomes within the Adolescent Literacy topic area, including alphabetics, reading fluency, writing conventions, writing productivity, and writing quality.

## BOX 1. HOW THE WWC REVIEWS AND DESCRIBES EVIDENCE

The WWC evaluates evidence based on the quality and results of reviewed studies. The criteria the WWC uses for evaluating evidence are defined in the [Procedures and Standards Handbooks](#) and the [Review Protocols](#). The studies summarized in this report were reviewed under WWC Standards (version 4.0) and the Adolescent Literacy topic area protocol (version 4.0).

To determine the effectiveness rating, the WWC considers what methods each study used, the direction of the effects, and the number of studies that tested the intervention. The higher the effectiveness rating, the more certain the WWC is about the reported results and about what will happen if the same intervention is implemented again. The following key explains the relationship between effectiveness ratings and the statements used in this report:

Effectiveness rating	Rating interpretation	Description of the evidence
Positive (or negative) effects	The intervention is <i>likely</i> to change an outcome	Strong evidence of a positive effect, with no overriding contrary evidence
Potentially positive (or negative) effects	The intervention <i>may</i> change an outcome	Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence
No discernible effects	The intervention <i>may result in little to no change</i> in an outcome	No affirmative evidence of effects
Mixed effects	The intervention <i>has inconsistent effects</i> on an outcome	Evidence includes studies in at least two of these categories: studies with positive effects, studies with negative effects, or more studies with indeterminate effects than with positive or negative effects

## How is *Passport Reading Journeys*™ Implemented?

The following section provides details of how *Passport Reading Journeys*™ was implemented. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing *Passport Reading Journeys*™ and determine whether implementing this curriculum would be feasible in their districts or schools. Information on *Passport Reading Journeys*™ presented in this section comes from the three studies that meet WWC standards (Dimitrov et al., 2012; Schenck et al., 2012; Vaden-Kiernan et al., 2012) and from correspondence with the developer, Cambium Learning Group. Voyager Sopris Learning® is the distributor.

- **Goal:** *Passport Reading Journeys*™ aims to improve literacy skills of struggling students, including reading comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and writing skills.
- **Target population:** The program targets students in grades 6–12 who are reading one to three years below grade level, including students with varied needs such as English language learners. The three studies evaluated in this report include students who were at least two years below their current grade level, or scored below average on reading assessments.
- **Method of delivery:** *Passport Reading Journeys*™ is a reading curriculum that is delivered as a supplement to students' regular English language arts or reading instruction. Instruction includes a combination of whole-class instruction, small-group instruction, independent reading, video segments, and individualized computer-based practice.
- **Frequency and duration of service:** The *Passport Reading Journeys*™ curriculum is designed to be delivered daily for the entire school year.
- **Intervention components:** Four versions of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ are available, which are tailored to different grades and Lexile® levels: grade 6 (Beginnings), grade 7 (Level I), grade 8 (Level II), and high school (Level III). Each version includes several key components and features, as noted in Table 2.

**Comparison group:** In the three studies that contribute to this intervention report, students in the comparison group received a supplemental elective course that did not provide any literacy instruction.

**Table 2. Components of *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup>**

Key component	Description
Reading materials	Reading materials are organized into ten-lesson topical sequences called “expeditions”, which guide instruction in word study, fluency, informational and literary text, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and content-area reading. Each expedition sequence includes materials designed to engage students in a nonfiction topic such as forensics, space, money, the environment, the Internet, and archaeology. An optional reading bookshelf provides a collection of novels and magazines, each of which is assigned a reading level according to the Lexile <sup>®</sup> system. Reading materials can be delivered completely in digital format or through a combination of print and digital formats.
Whole-class instruction	To begin each expedition sequence, the teacher introduces the expedition topic to the class with a presentation. Teachers also provide whole-class instruction in eight of the ten lessons. Whole-class instruction includes (1) before-reading activities that introduce a topic or review the previous lesson; (2) reading activities that include close reading or re-reading passages with prompts, and (3) after-reading activities that include guided practice in comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.
Independent reading and technology-based practice	In each expedition, two lessons focus solely on independent practice, and three other lessons include additional practice. During independent reading, students have access to an online library of text selections (ReadingScape), which are organized by Lexile <sup>®</sup> score ranges. The online library includes animations and audio, and enables students to annotate, write, and bookmark digital materials. Students can also practice vocabulary independently using an online computer application (VocabJourney) that provides activities tailored to the needs of each student.
Collaborative student- and teacher-led small-group instruction	Three lessons in each expedition conclude with small-group word study. Small-group instruction includes teacher-guided modeling and think-aloud activities, writing practice, and the opportunity to receive immediate, corrective feedback.
Assessments	Assessments are embedded in the curriculum to enable teachers to monitor progress and differentiate instruction using an online data management system. Teachers can adjust instructional goals frequently using up-to-date information provided about how a student’s progress compares to typical rates of learning. Students’ scores on benchmark assessments determine their placements in the interactive online learning system and text library. To track student progress, all students complete benchmark assessments in reading three times per school year: at entry, mid-year, and exit. High school students also take semester exams that focus on vocabulary and comprehension strategies taught through the expeditions. Additional progress monitoring, including short comprehension and vocabulary assessments conducted once or twice per expedition, supports differentiated pacing through the program. The end-of-year exit evaluation identifies the reading skills and knowledge that students have gained as a result of the program.  Additional guided and independent practice is provided to students not reaching the mid-year benchmark. In addition to regular vocabulary and reading practice using VocabJourney and ReadingScape, the computer application PowerPass allows students to take practice assessments that consist of reading passages and corresponding questions.

## What Does *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> Cost?

This preliminary list of costs is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it provides educators an overview of the major resources needed to implement *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup>. The program costs described below are based on the information available as of June 2019.

- **Equipment and materials costs:** The *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> classroom system for one reading achievement level, including the digital library and bookshelf, costs \$3,500. A classroom system without the bookshelf is \$2,800. Each classroom system includes one Teacher Resource Kit, which consists of the teacher editions of classroom materials, wall charts, and access to the data management system. In addition, optional student reading packs for each level cost \$69 per student, with a \$29 annual renewal fee. Each student reading pack includes student books, a student anthology, a word study book, and access to digital resources consisting of e-books, ReadingScape, VocabJourney, and Power Pass.
- **Personnel costs:** *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> is delivered by a classroom teacher in addition to students’ regular reading and literacy instruction. The standard service package costs \$2,500 and includes one or two days of online or face-to-face training for all participating teachers at a school at the launch of the program; additional ongoing online product training and online support for teachers is available for \$250 per hour. School districts and schools can purchase additional services such as ongoing consultation, coursework on literacy instruction, and data analysis meetings.
- **Facilities costs:** The program is delivered in a classroom setting. Access to computers or handheld devices is needed. *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> materials can be provided completely in digital format or through a combination of print and digital formats.
- **Costs paid by students or parents:** No information is available.
- **In-kind supports:** No information is available.
- **Sources of funding:** School districts or schools usually purchase *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup>.

### For More Information:

#### About *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup>

Cambium Learning Group, 17855 Dallas Parkway, Suite 400, Dallas, TX 75287

Web: <https://www.voyagersopris.com/>. Phone: (800) 547-6747

#### About the cost of the intervention

Web: <https://store.voyagersopris.com/passport-reading-journeys-with-updated-content/>

## In What Context Was *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting of the three studies of *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> that meet WWC standards, and a description of the participants in the research. This information can help educators understand the context in which the studies of *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> were conducted, and determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.

### WHERE THE STUDIES WERE CONDUCTED



**3** studies, **2,316** students in **25** middle and high schools in **11** districts in **Illinois, Louisiana, and Virginia**

• Urban, suburban, and rural districts

#### RACE

**67%**

African American

#### GENDER

**44%**

Female

**56%**

Male

**ENGLISH LEARNERS: 5%**

**FREE & REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH: 87%**

#### GRADES

PK

K

1

2

3

4

5



**6**

**7**

**8**

**9**

10

11

12

PS



**Grades: 6–9**

### LEARN MORE



Read more about the *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>™</sup> intervention and the studies that are summarized here in the [Intervention Report](#).