

## NEWS RELEASE

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*For Immediate Release*

## **Benchmark Education Announces the First Literacy Program Designed to Match Student Books to Individual ELA Standards**

*New print or online Standard Close-Up program for grades 2–5 provides specific reading books for specific English language arts standards*

**NEW ROCHELLE, NY, Sept. 12, 2017** — Literacy publisher [Benchmark Education Company](#) (BEC) released award-winning *Standards Close-Up*, the first literacy program designed to increase students' performance in language arts with student reading books matched to the specific standards they need to master. The innovative new literacy program for grades 2–5 in print and online formats features specific reading books to address specific English language arts (ELA) standards. *Standards Close-Up* also targets science and social studies standards and integrates opportunities to teach and build genre writing skills. It helps teachers educate their students on specific skills and strategies that have been identified as areas of weakness for each student. Individual students benefit from customized instruction. With schools receiving standardized testing results now that identify students' strengths and weaknesses, *Standards Close-Up* is ready to help teachers target the exact skills that students need to master to improve ELA knowledge and performance right away.

States across the country are adopting new ELA standards, but may not have the professional development budgets or manpower to help teachers transition to these new instructional goals. *Standards Close Up* breaks down the ambitious new standards into manageable chunks that help teachers and students achieve standards mastery. While helpful for every teacher, this approach is especially valuable to first-time teachers who may be overwhelmed, or to schools without a budget to launch a more comprehensive professional development training plan.

The original nonfiction books in this program are organized into two-book topic sets, with each book covering a different aspect of the target standard that allows students to gain comprehensive mastery of the strategies needed to address it. Each set targets a specific informational text standard while building science and/or social studies content knowledge. Inquiry-based projects and writing skills are woven throughout each book to integrate reading, writing, and content instruction.

*Standards Close-Up* addresses the three key shifts called for by new ELA standards: Practice using complex texts and academic language; Finding and using text evidence in reading, writing, and conversation; and Building knowledge and vocabulary through content-rich texts. Grade-level sets include six copies of 18 titles each with customized teacher support, a Program Overview, a Writing Exemplars with Rubrics Handbook, and an Assessments and Re-teaching Book.

“Educators across the country seek instructional resources that will help their students master the new standards and the strategic thinking behind them,” said Susan Rivers, Benchmark Education SVP of Sales & Marketing. “Rather than overwhelm students, *Standards Close-Up* addresses the new standards by

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unpacking them one at a time. The simplicity of this approach provides students with a strong foundation upon which to prepare for the rigorous expectations placed upon them.”

### **Features**

*Standards Close-Up* is designed to support small-group instruction in a variety of settings. Through this program, students have the support they need to master the new, more challenging standards. The books break down the standards into manageable skills and strategies that make them more accessible to students and facilitate mastery. Modeling the focus skill or strategy provides extra scaffolding not found in other leveled texts. The Teacher’s Guides offer unique flexibility by providing two lesson plans for every reading passage in the book – one standards-based or strategy-based lesson plan, as well as one guided-reading lesson plan, allowing teachers multiple ways to use the materials for a variety of instructional goals.

Every book begins with a mini-lesson that targets a specific ELA standard. A sample prompt and annotated student response follows the mini-lesson, allowing students insight into the strategies they will need to address the target standard. The back of the book features a glossary to build and explain on-grade level content vocabulary. A set of text evidence questions follows the glossary, in which students are given prompts relating to the specific standard taught in the book. A separate Text Evidence Question Card is also provided, which asks questions about the book and draws upon a variety of ELA standards.

The inside back cover of every book gives students the opportunity to write about their reading and while maintaining a focus on the target ELA standard. Each writing prompt features a specific genre and includes genre-specific graphic organizers to guide students’ planning of their writing. Writing Exemplars with Rubrics Handbooks for each grade level provide a range of exemplars for each *Write to Sources* prompt in the student books, as well as teacher and student rubrics and graphic organizers to help students plan their writing.

An online subscription that includes every *Standards Close-Up* title and all supporting teacher resources is also available bundled with the print materials or as a stand-alone purchase. Through the online subscription, accessible on any computer or mobile device, teachers can create and assign customized “bookshelves” to meet students’ individual needs. Students can write close-reading notes on either margin to facilitate text-based comprehension. Both teachers and students can insert new pages into an e-book to embed videos, paste images, add links, and much more. Synchronized audio and highlighting links text to sounds, building listening comprehension. Intuitive filtering tools help search books by ELA standard, content-area, or grade. Teachers can also customize individual e-books for students, and share their customizations with other teachers within their school.

Assessments and Re-teaching Handbooks for each grade level are used to identify proficiency with pre- and post-assessments, and monitor comprehension and progress with book-specific assessments. The re-teaching lessons can also be used for Tier II intervention, providing teachers with yet another way to maximize the instructional value of this program in the classroom.

Beautiful photography, whimsical illustrations, maps, tables, and additional graphic features provide a dynamic reading experience and facilitate students’ enjoyment of the text.

### **Availability**

*Standards Close-Up* is available in print, online, or blended (print and online) formats. The online subscription includes fully interactive e-books and instructional resources. A computer or device with

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Internet access is needed to access those components. The product is available for immediate shipment through Benchmark Education.

*Standards Close-Up* is sold by individual grades starting at \$859. The price for the complete grades 2–5 print and online set is \$3,825. The school-wide annual stand-alone online subscription for the complete grades 2–5 set is \$385. Single-copy sets and individual 6-packs are also available for purchase. For information about *Standards Close-Up* or to purchase this and other Benchmark Education products, visit [www.BenchmarkEducation.com](http://www.BenchmarkEducation.com) or call [877-236-2465](tel:877-236-2465).

**Benchmark Education Company**

Headquartered in New Rochelle, NY, [Benchmark Education Company](http://www.BenchmarkEducation.com) is a leading publisher of PreK–12 core, supplemental, and intervention literacy resources in English and Spanish. These resources are supported by instructional technology solutions as well as on-site and online customized professional development training for teachers and administrators. Benchmark Education’s print and online resources are research-based and differentiated to support all learners in a wide variety of instructional settings. In addition to extensive educational use in the USA, Benchmark Education resources are also used in schools and training centers in the Middle East, Canada, South America, and Asia.

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