



every child
is capable of
greatness



**WIT &
WISDOM[®]**

Getting Started Guide
Grade 4 Module 1

Getting Started

This Getting Started Guide provides contextual information as you review the sample *Wit & Wisdom*® lesson. Follow along as we explore the contents of the lesson and learn how students gain content knowledge and develop skills in reading texts, writing, speaking, and listening.

More Meaningful Language Arts Instruction

Wit & Wisdom is a knowledge-building K–8 curriculum that has transformed English language arts (ELA) instruction in classrooms across the nation. Great Minds® believes that classrooms are places where students and teachers encounter wit, wisdom, wonder, rigor, and knowledge, and that literature, history, art, and science all have a place in ELA instruction. *Wit & Wisdom* helps students build rich layers of knowledge. Our learning design inspires teachers and students to experience complex texts and ideas on a deeper level by fostering the questioning spirit that will shape the next generation of great writers, thinkers, and leaders.

Understanding *Wit & Wisdom*

The [Wit & Wisdom Implementation Guide](#) helps educators bring the curriculum into their classrooms. The guide provides a detailed map of the resources built into the curriculum and offers advice on how to prepare to teach each module. We'll highlight some of the information covered in the Implementation Guide to help you explore *Wit & Wisdom* Grade 4 Module 1.



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Guidance Built into Every Lesson

Our teacher-writers crafted *Wit & Wisdom* to provide students with a knowledge-building learning experience while giving teachers support in every module to facilitate the learning. Examples of supports include the following:

- Getting Started videos for teachers
- [The Teacher Resource Pack](#)
- Preparation Protocols
- Scaffold, extension, and differentiation notes
- Point-of-use Teacher Notes
- Multilingual Glossaries
- [Curriculum Overview for Families](#)
- Teacher Edition appendices resources

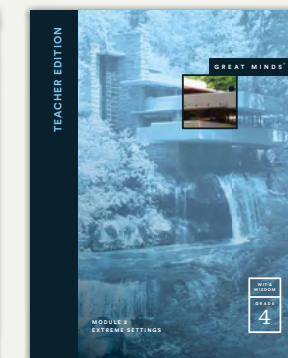
Building Knowledge Through Complex Texts

Wit & Wisdom teacher-writers identified texts and topics that will build students' knowledge of key topics in history/social studies, science, literature, and the arts. These topics and associated texts increase in complexity across the year and vertically across grade bands. Students build knowledge across diverse disciplines throughout each of the modules in Grade 4.

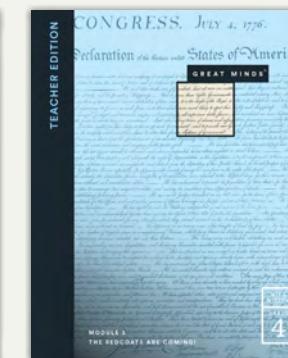
Grade 4 Module Topics and Texts



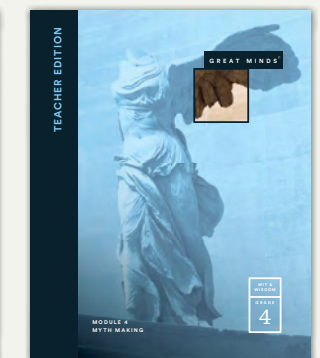
Module 1:
A Great Heart



Module 2:
Extreme Settings



Module 3:
The Redcoats Are Coming



Module 4:
Myth Making

What students learn in one lesson, an arc of lessons, a module, and a grade level prepares them for the next lesson, arc of lessons, module, and grade level. Each experience builds on the previous one, so students establish strong background knowledge.

A Map to the *Learning*

Wit & Wisdom modules are organized around a compelling topic, an **Essential Question**, a curated set of texts, and a series of **Focusing Questions** that build students' knowledge and skills and prepare students for the module's culminating assessment—the End-of-Module (EOM) Task. Modules are written in a careful horizontal progression, each one building on the previous one through routines, content knowledge, skills, developmental appropriateness, and rigor. Each module is designed to support educators with the introductory Module Overview, which reviews the module's focus, organization, and elements.

For a snapshot of Grade 4 Module 1: *A Great Heart*, head to the **Module Overview**. The overview sums up the student learning goals, provides insights on previous knowledge students will use in this module, shows where in the curriculum students will use this module's learning to build new layers of understanding complex knowledge, lists the core texts and topics students will examine, and finally lists the standards this module will address.

Diving into a *Lesson*

Grade 4 Module 1: *A Great Heart*, Lesson 7

In the module we've selected, students will examine the complexity of the human heart. Not only is the heart a biological wonder, it is also a symbol of human emotions. As students read different informational and literary texts, they will explore what it means to have a "great heart," both literally and figuratively. In your sampler, you will find a copy of *The Circulatory Story* by Mary K. Corcoran and illustrated by Jef Czekaj. With rich, scientific information about the heart and the circulatory system paired with figurative language, humor, and engaging illustrations, this core text serves as a vehicle for students to become adept at distinguishing between the literal and the figurative.

The image displays three overlapping screenshots of a digital curriculum interface. The leftmost screenshot shows the 'Module Summary' page with a quote: "If I were to speak of war, it would not be to show you the glories of conquering armies but the mischief and misery they sown in their tracks and how, while they marched on with tread of iron and plumes proudly tossing in the breeze, someone must follow closely in their steps, crouching to the earth, taking in the rain and darkness, shelterless themselves, with no thought of pride or glory, fame or praise, or reward; hearts breaking with pity, faces bathed in tears and hands in blood. This is the side which history never shows." Below this is a navigation menu with options: Module Overview, Module Summary, Essential Question, Suggested Student Understandings, Texts, Module Learning Goals, and Module in Context. The middle screenshot shows the 'Lesson 7' page with a 'Focusing Question: LESSONS 7-17' and a 'Content Framing Question: LESSON 7'. It also includes a 'Summary' section and a 'Materials' list: Chart paper, Modeling clay, Stamps, Index cards, Sticky notes, Handout 7A, Active Listening Strategies, and Handout 7B: The Circulatory Story Vocabulary. The rightmost screenshot shows a 'Lesson 7' navigation menu with options: Lesson 7 Overview, Welcome/Launch, Learn - View the Video, Learn - Define the Listening Goal, Learn - Notice and Wonder, and Land/Wrap.

Achieving the *Standards*

Wit & Wisdom integrates practice with the reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills students need in Kindergarten through Grade 8 to prepare for the demands of future study and ultimately for college and their careers. All reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language standards appear as Focus Standards in one or more modules, where they are explicitly taught, repeatedly practiced, and formally assessed. You can see a full list of the Focus Standards and Continuing Standards under **Standards** in the **Module Overview**.

Art in *Context*

We recognize that visual art is a universal and essential form of expression and communication, accessible to all learners. Each *Wit & Wisdom* module provides multiple opportunities for students to engage with significant works of art, such as paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, architecture, and photographs. *Wit & Wisdom* teacher-writers chose each work to inspire students to grapple with broader concepts related to each module's knowledge story. In Module 1, students continue to deepen their understanding of the concept of a figurative great heart through a careful observation of Thomas Eakins' painting, *Portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross (The Gross Clinic)*.



Portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross (The Gross Clinic), Thomas Eakins

Text-Dependent Questions

In all grades of *Wit & Wisdom*, students learn how to read, access, and analyze complex texts by working through a sequence of five Content Stages: Wonder, Organize, Reveal, Distill, and Know.

Each lesson begins and ends with a Content Framing Question that provides an overarching learning purpose for the text-dependent tasks and **text-dependent questions (TDQs)** in the lesson. The Content Framing Questions align with the Content Stages for close reading and follow a repeating structure. Framing each lesson with familiar questions helps students build the habits of mind they need to become independent close readers. The discussions, text-dependent tasks, and TDQs in each Content Stage serve a distinct purpose, illuminating key close-reading approaches.



WONDER: Students generate their own observations and questions, forming an initial impression of the text.



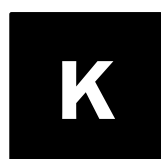
ORGANIZE: This stage ensures literal comprehension of the text's characters, events, and setting and the historical facts upon which it is based.



REVEAL: Readers focus intently on different and unique aspects of the text, such as language choice, literary devices, or structure and analyze how each element affects meaning.



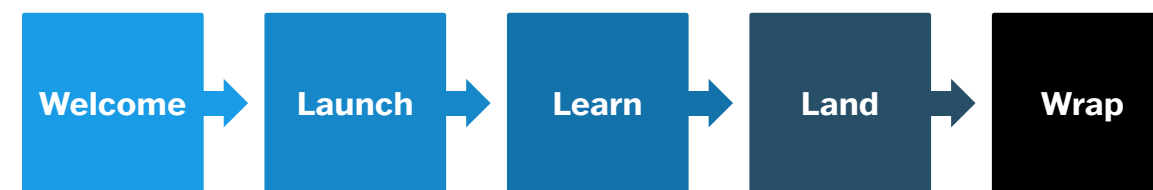
DISTILL: Students express the central ideas or themes of the text and determine how key aspects of the text support these ideas and themes.



KNOW: Students articulate how a text builds their knowledge, and they expand their knowledge by connecting the text to other texts and topics of study.

In Lesson 7, the Content Framing Question asks what do students notice and wonder about *The Circulatory Story*?

All *Wit & Wisdom* lessons organize student learning in the same five sections followed by a **Deep Dive**:



Grade 4 Module 1 Lesson 7

Lesson Section	Time	Description
Welcome	5 min.	Students engage in an activity that prepares them for the lesson's learning. Here, students will pair up and observe their pulse by using a piece of modeling clay and drinking straw. They will then respond in their journals by using the following prompt: What does seeing your pulse make you wonder about your heart?
Launch	5 min.	The teacher prepares students for the lesson by telling them that they will be building knowledge about the heart by exploring a new text, <i>The Circulatory Story</i> . They will then introduce the lesson's Content Framing Question : Wonder: What do I notice and wonder about <i>The Circulatory Story</i> ?
Learn	50 min.	Students participate in a Read-Aloud of the first half of <i>The Circulatory Story</i> , recording what they notice and wonder about the text. This is an opportunity for students to become familiar with the text and discover how it is organized. This challenging text is full of rich, scientific information about the heart and the circulatory system, but it blends this information with figurative language, humor, and engaging illustrations to make it more accessible. Students also define the listening goal and explore how concentrating can improve comprehension.
Land	10 min.	The teacher facilitates student reflections on how they met the learning goals and answered the Content Framing Question . Students discuss what they did and respond to why it's important to notice and wonder, especially with a challenging text.
Wrap	5 min.	The teacher assigns students the task of completing a handout where they study new vocabulary and draw pictures to help them remember the meaning of each word.
Deep Dive	15 min.	Formulate a definition for the word circulatory after studying the morphology of the word. The Deep Dive is divided into three sections: Launch, Learn, and Land. These sections align with the core lesson structure and provide predictability for teaching and learning.
Total Lesson Time = 90 min.		

Volume of Reading

In addition to core and supplementary texts, the curriculum includes a list of Volume of Reading texts. These are literary and informational texts that teachers can use for additional classroom instruction and that students can select for independent reading. *Wit & Wisdom* Volume of Reading texts help students of all abilities expand their knowledge of each module topic. [View the full Volume of Reading titles for each grade.](#)

Multimedia Learning Approach

Great Minds gives students varied access points to learning in each module. Lessons include ways for teachers to incorporate media and create digital learning experiences to engage students in exploring module concepts. For example, in Module 1 Lesson 7, students view the first four minutes of "[Exploring the Heart - The Circulatory System!](#)" to build background knowledge about the heart.



Assessing Knowledge and Understanding

Wit & Wisdom provides five major types of assessments.

Assessment	Frequency	Type	What Does It Assess?
Check for Understanding	1+ per lesson	Formative	Lesson-level learning goal(s)
Focusing Question Task	3-6 per module	Formative or summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, reading, writing, speaking, and/or language
New-Read Assessment	2-3 per module	Formative or summative	Transfer of reading and/or language module learning goals to a new text or a portion of text focused on a topic that has been introduced
Socratic Seminar	2-3 per module	Formative or summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, speaking, and language
End-of-Module Task	1 per module	Summative	Module learning goals for knowledge, reading, writing, speaking, and/or language

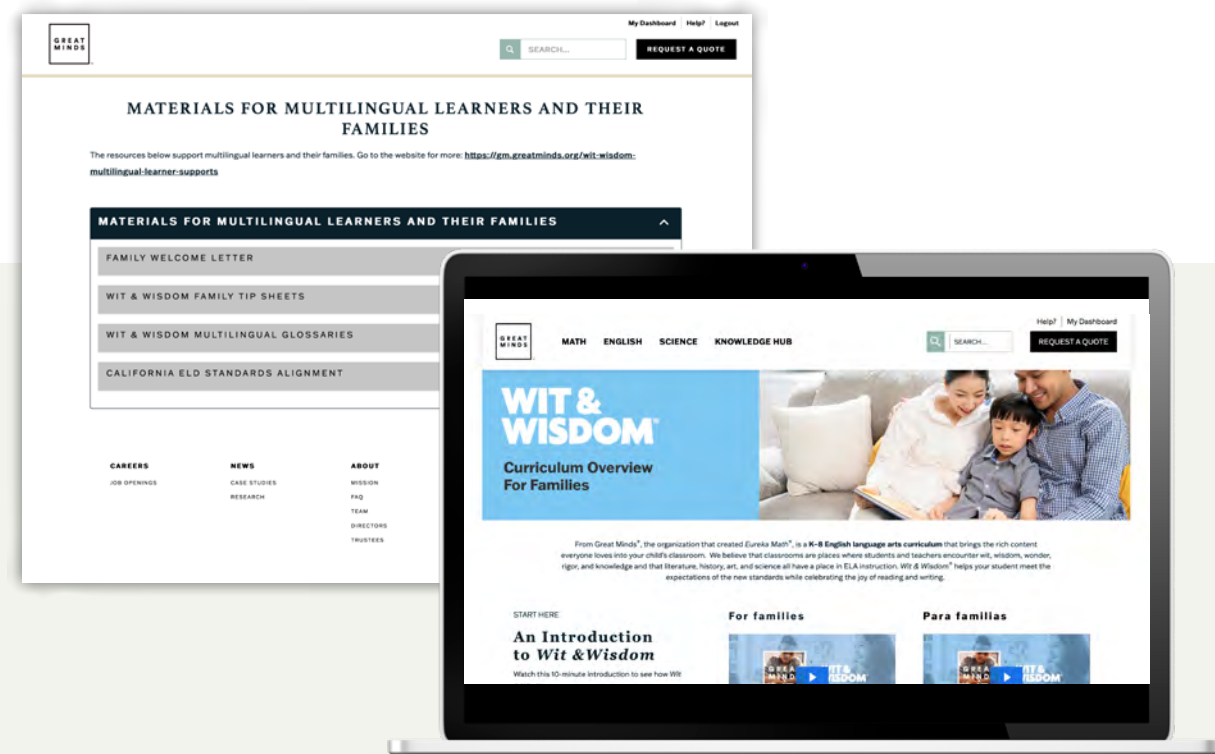
For more information about the structure and design of major assessments in Grade 4 Module 1, look for the **Major Assessments** section under the **Module Overview**.

Enhanced Supports for Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner Resources are research-aligned supports to boost grades K-5 multilingual learners' experience with *Wit & Wisdom* and can be found within the collection for each grade in the Digital Teacher Edition. Each resource includes:

- Multilingual Learner Resource Module Map, which lists the lessons and their supports in module sequence
- Overview of module learning and alignment to WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) and ELP (English Language Proficiency) standards
- Lesson-specific supports for each literacy strand: reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening; existing supports are listed first, followed by new recommendations.

The **Materials for Multilingual Learners and Their Families** resource found on the teacher dashboard invites families and caregivers of multilingual students to participate in their learning. Supports include multilingual glossaries for each grade, Welcome Letters, and Family Tip Sheets in multiple languages.



Engaging Learners and Boosting Literacy

At Great Minds, we strongly believe that every child is capable of greatness, especially when they're given access to engaging, knowledge-building instructional materials. For a deeper dive into the learning design behind *Wit & Wisdom*, check out the free Teacher Resource Pack or get in touch with your Great Minds representative.

Professional Learning From Trusted Colleagues

For schools and districts adopting *Wit & Wisdom*, we offer professional learning opportunities crafted by our team of teacher-writers. We've developed two tracks of learning, one for teachers and one for leaders. Our *Wit & Wisdom* Fellows, a cohort of seasoned *Wit & Wisdom* educators, also provide guidance and share their expertise on different platforms, from blogs and social media to digital and in-person training. Through ongoing support, we will help you effectively implement the curriculum and grow in confidence as you learn to lead your *Wit & Wisdom* classroom.



Please contact your Great Minds representative to access the digital *Wit & Wisdom* resources.