



## Quick Start Guide

K-8 by Great Minds® | Everything you need to launch your first year with confidence

### Welcome to *Wit & Wisdom!*

**Your first year will feel challenging—and that's okay.** Trust the sequence.

*Wit & Wisdom's* lessons are carefully designed backward from the End-of-Module Task, so every text, question, and task has a purpose. The more closely you follow the structure this year, the more your students will grow. You'll see knowledge accumulate in real time, through the Content and Craft Stages, the student journals, and the Essential and Focusing Questions that give every lesson a sense of direction. When you're not sure why a lesson asks you to do something, return to the Module Study Protocol and the Prepare section of your lesson, which gives the purpose and framing for the lesson in the sequence. After year one, prep gets faster and the payoff gets even clearer.



## 1. What makes *Wit & Wisdom* so special?

*Wit & Wisdom* is built on a foundational idea: students read and think more deeply when they have knowledge to bring to a text. Instead of practicing skills on disconnected passages, students read rich, complex literary and informational texts that are carefully sequenced, so each one builds the vocabulary and knowledge they need for the next. Reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, and visual art are all woven into every module through two interlocking progressions: Content Stages for reading and thinking and Craft Stages for writing and speaking. Nothing feels like an add-on. It is a curriculum in which every student gets to feel like a reader, a thinker, and a writer.

## 2. What's Included: Your Core Materials

Each grade level has four modules plus Module 0, a short module that introduces students and teachers to the program. Each core lesson is 75 minutes, followed by a 15-minute Deep Dive, for a total lesson time of 90 minutes.

Material	Who Uses It	What It Contains
<b>Teacher Edition (TE)</b>	Teacher	Primary instructional guide—one book per module. Contains Module Overview, 30–38 core lessons each with a 15-min Deep Dive, and Appendices A–E with resources for text complexity, vocabulary, and assessment. Print and digital.
<b>Student Edition (SE)</b>	Students	Students' consumable workbook. Graphic organizers, handouts, Volume of Reading Reflection Questions, and Family Tip Sheets. Used in nearly every lesson.
<b>Core Texts (class sets)</b>	Both	Carefully curated literary and informational texts selected to build knowledge cumulatively. Class sets in formats matched to lesson use.
<b>Assessment Packs</b>	Both	Print class sets (30 copies) of major assessment materials, also available digitally in the Teacher Edition.
<b>Family Tip Sheets</b>	Families	Downloadable PDFs for each module with an overview of topics, core texts, Essential and Focusing Questions, and ideas for families to explore at home.
<b>Student Journals* (3 per student)</b>  *not provided	Students	The program requires three distinct journals: Response Journal for daily thinking and writing, Vocabulary Journal for word work, and Knowledge Journal for Know-lesson synthesis. Can be three composition books, a binder, or a three-part spiral.

### 3. How a Module Works

Each module is a self-contained unit of study built around one topic and an Essential Question—the big question students investigate through all texts and tasks. Six structural elements shape every module.

Element	What It Does
<b>Essential Question</b>	The overarching inquiry question posted from Day 1, printed on every lesson page. Guides students' reading, thinking, discussion, and writing throughout the module. Example (Gr. 5): How can sports influence individuals and societies?
<b>Focusing Questions</b>	Three to six deeper investigations of different aspects of the Essential Question. Each Focusing Question organizes an arc of lessons and culminates in a Focusing Question Task. Students' reading, discussion, and writing within each arc build toward the EOM Task.
<b>Knowledge Goals</b>	The essential knowledge students should develop through the module texts—the core takeaways articulated for every module. Every lesson, task, and assessment aligns to these goals.
<b>Text Set</b>	A curated sequence of literary and informational texts selected to build knowledge cumulatively. Each text deepens understanding from the one before. Texts span multiple genres and represent diverse voices.
<b>Content &amp; Craft Stages</b>	Lesson in Focusing Questions are organized by Content Stages (Wonder → Organize → Reveal → Distill → Know) and parallel Craft Stages (Examine → Experiment → Execute → Excel). Together these progressions move students from curiosity through comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and independent creation.
<b>End-of-Module Task</b>	The culminating writing or performance task for each module. Students draw on all module learning to produce a full written or spoken product. Scored with Achievement-Descriptor-aligned rubrics from the Assessment Pack.

## 4. The Content & Craft Stages: The Learning Progressions

Post the Content Framing Question every day. Every lesson's Content Framing Question corresponds to one of the five Content Stages below. The Craft Stages scaffold writing and speaking development across the module.

### Content Stages

Stage	What Students Do—and Why It Matters
<b>Wonder</b>	First encounter with new texts. Students read or listen with wide-open curiosity, noticing details, asking questions, generating wonders. Builds initial vocabulary and literal comprehension that supports all deeper work ahead.
<b>Organize</b>	Students develop literal understanding through re-reading, sorting, and structuring. They identify key elements (characters, setting, main ideas, text structure) using graphic organizers. Sets up analysis.
<b>Reveal</b>	Students zoom in on how the text works by examining author's craft: word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, point of view, or artistic decisions. Develops ability to analyze and interpret.
<b>Distill</b>	Students zoom out to synthesize by discerning the text's overall meaning, drawing conclusions, identifying central ideas/themes, connecting evidence from multiple texts to answer the Essential Question. Discussion is central.
<b>Know</b>	Students consolidate what they've learned and connect explicitly to the Essential Question and Knowledge Threads. The World Knowledge Chart and ELA Knowledge Chart are updated here.

### Craft Stages

Stage	What Students Do—and Why It Matters
<b>Examine</b>	Students analyze a high-quality exemplar of a writing or speaking skill from authentic texts, class writing, or a module resource to identify criteria for quality communication.
<b>Experiment</b>	Students practice the target skill in a scaffolded task that limits volume, provides sentence starters, or focuses on a simple topic.
<b>Execute</b>	Students plan or draft a full writing or speaking piece, applying the target strategy purposefully.
<b>Excel</b>	Students revise, edit, and respond to feedback on their drafts from the Execute stage. They reflect on their use of the strategy to refine thinking for current and future tasks.

## 5. Anatomy of a Lesson

Every *Wit & Wisdom* lesson follows the same structure: Welcome → Launch → Learn → Land → Wrap, plus a Deep Dive. Read the full Prepare section before teaching to learn what students will do, why the activities are sequenced as they are, and how the lesson connects to module goals.

Section	Time	Purpose & What Happens
<b>Welcome</b>	5 min	Students independently engage in a brief task that prepares them for the lesson's learning. Sets the tone and activates prior knowledge before instruction begins.
<b>Launch</b>	3 min	Teacher introduces the lesson's Content Framing Question and Craft Question (when applicable). Students interact with the question, unpacking terminology or connecting to the Focusing or Essential Question. Teacher ensures understanding of the Learning Goals.
<b>Learn</b>	60 min	The heart of the lesson. Through a variety of instructional routines and text-dependent tasks, students engage in productive struggle, independently and with peers, developing the knowledge and skills needed to answer the Content Framing Question.
<b>Land</b>	5 min	Teacher facilitates student reflections on how they met lesson goals and answered the Content Framing Question. Students update journals. Never skip Land: this is the moment that moves new learning into long-term memory.
<b>Wrap</b>	2 min	Teacher directs closing activities, such as assigning homework or Volume of Reading.
<b>Deep Dive</b>	15 min	A 15-minute study of vocabulary, grammar, or style and conventions connected directly to the core lesson. The Deep Dive is also organized into Launch, Learn, and Land sections. Total lesson time = 90 minutes.

Two additional teacher-facing sections frame each lesson:

Stage	What Students Do—and Why It Matters
<b>Prepare (start of lesson)</b>	Teacher-facing section that lists the lesson's guiding questions, explains what students do in the lesson, describes the relationship between activities, and connects the lesson's learning to broader module goals. Read during preparation, not during instruction.
<b>Analyze (end of lesson)</b>	Teacher-facing section that explains the key assessment in the lesson, offers guidance on evaluating student success on the Check for Understanding, and provides actionable next steps for scaffolding when students struggle.

## 6. Instructional Routines

Routine	Purpose	Grouping
<b>Chalk Talk</b>	Silent written discussion that helps students organize thinking and fosters universal participation. Can serve as pre-work for Socratic Seminars.	Whole group, small groups, or pairs
<b>Choral Reading</b>	Teacher and students read designated text in unison. Appropriate for early elementary grades to build fluency with challenging text.	Whole group
<b>Echo Reading</b>	Teacher models fluent reading, and students echo the same phrases back, mimicking voice, inflection, and phrasing. Use during early reads with challenging vocabulary or syntax.	Whole group
<b>Fishbowl</b>	Inner circle practices a skill (discussion, questioning, listening) while outer circle observes. Fosters metacognition and models collaborative behaviors.	Whole group
<b>Gallery Walk</b>	Students circulate around the room viewing posted work, texts, or images. Students shape, and are shaped by, peers' thinking. Can include written responses.	Small groups, pairs, or individuals
<b>Give One–Get One–Move On</b>	Students record key ideas, then circulate to trade and collect ideas from a series of partners. Promotes equity by ensuring all students both give and receive.	Pairs
<b>Jigsaw</b>	Students become experts on one text section, then regroup to share with home-group peers. Covers more content efficiently while maintaining accountability. Variation: One Stay, Three Stray.	Small groups
<b>Mix and Mingle</b>	Students circulate and share responses orally with a series of partners. Active and accessible—also called Standing Think–Pair–Share or Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face.	Whole group, small groups, or pairs
<b>Question Corners</b>	Students choose a position on a question or statement, move to that corner of the room, and discuss with classmates. Promotes decision-making and verbal reasoning.	Small groups, then whole group
<b>Quick Write</b>	A brief written response used as warm-up, mid-lesson reflection, or closing summary. Provides ongoing assessment data for teachers and helps students track their thinking.	Individuals

## Instructional Routines (cont.)

Routine	Purpose	Grouping
<b>Readers' Theater</b>	Student groups perform a section of text using scripts. Authentic purpose for reading aloud; fosters fluency, engagement, comprehension, and creative interpretation.	Whole group, small groups, or pairs
<b>Socratic Seminar</b>	Structured academic discussion in which students use evidence from texts to explore the Essential or Focusing Question. A major formative/summative assessment opportunity (2–3 per module). Requires explicit preparation.	Whole group
<b>Stop and Jot</b>	Students pause during a task to write a brief response to a question, then discuss with a partner. Provides ongoing CFU data. Variation: Stop and Draw (Grades K–2).	Individuals, then pairs or whole group
<b>Tableau</b>	Student groups create a silent frozen scene representing an idea or text excerpt. Kinesthetic and creative; deepens understanding. Variation: Moving Tableau for kinesthetic learners.	Small groups or pairs
<b>Think–Pair–Share</b>	Students think independently, share with a partner, then discuss with the group. Fosters reflection and collaborative learning. Variations: Think–Pair, Think–Pair–Square, Jot–Pair–Share.	Individuals, pairs, then group

## 7. Pacing Your Year

*Wit & Wisdom* Modules 0–4 include approximately 150 lessons across a grade level. With a 180-day school year, this leaves roughly 30 flexible days for school-wide events, assessments, reteaching, and Pause Points within modules.

Principle	What It Means
<b>4 modules per grade (+ Module 0)</b>	Modules 1–4 are the core curriculum. Module 0 provides six abbreviated introductory lessons (K–8) that walk students through the Content and Craft Stages and establish key routines before Module 1 begins.
<b>One lesson per day</b>	The 90-minute block is intentional, allowing for focused reading, writing, discussion, and vocabulary study. Rushing or compressing undermines the knowledge-building progression.
<b>~35 flex days</b>	Use time between modules for short text studies, research, or field trips to connect to module topics. Use Pause Points within modules to reteach, scaffold, or respond to current events.
<b>30–38 lessons per module</b>	Each module has approximately 30–38 core lessons, each 75 minutes (+15-min Deep Dive = 90 min total). Across all four modules, this yields approximately 145 days of instruction.
<b>Schedule around long breaks</b>	Modules work best when they are not split across extended vacations or prolonged assessment windows. Plan your module calendar before school starts to protect module flow.

## Literacy Block Planning by Grade Band

Grade Band	Arts & Letters Block	Additional Literacy Time to Plan
<b>K–2</b>	90 min (core + Deep Dive)	30 min small-group literacy instruction with <i>Geodes</i> or <i>Volume of Reading</i> + 30 min foundational literacy skills (phonics/phonemic awareness)
<b>3–5</b>	90 min (core + Deep Dive)	40 min differentiated <i>Volume of Reading</i> and small-group literacy instruction
<b>6–8</b>	90 min (core + Deep Dive)	Deep Dive and <i>Volume of Reading</i> homework (30 min); additional small-group support as needed

## Setting Up Your Classroom

Display When	What to Post
<b>All year</b>	Projection device or interactive whiteboard for displaying art, writing models, and lesson visuals. Student access to technology (computer lab or devices) for writing and research.
<b>All module long</b>	Essential Question. Anchor charts built during instruction. Student work displays. Family Tip Sheet for the current module (optional).
<b>Every lesson</b>	Content Framing Question (today's focus). Craft Question when applicable. Update and replace each day.
<b>Always available</b>	Have student journals (Response, Vocabulary, Knowledge) accessible every lesson. Distribute Student Edition handouts as needed.

## 8. Assessment at a Glance

Each module includes five types of formal assessment. All Assessment Guides, rubrics, and scoring resources are on the digital platform. Assessments draw on knowledge students have built together so every student enters from the same foundation.

Assessment	Frequency	What Students Do
<b>Check for Understanding (CFU)</b>	1+ per lesson	Lesson-level formative checks. These are the teacher's primary in-lesson evidence of student understanding. Described in the Prepare section; evaluated in the Analyze section at the end of every lesson.
<b>Focusing Question Task</b>	3–6 per module	Formative or summative assessment at the end of each Focusing Question arc. Students demonstrate knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, and/or language, building toward the EOM Task.
<b>New-Read Assessment</b>	2–3 per module	Students apply module reading and language skills to a new, related text. Assesses transfer to address whether students can use what they've learned with unfamiliar content.
<b>Socratic Seminar</b>	2–3 per module	Structured discussion assessed for knowledge, speaking, and language goals. Students use evidence from module texts to explore the Essential or Focusing Question.
<b>End-of-Module Task (EOM)</b>	1 per module	Culminating writing or performance task. Students draw on all module learning. Scored against rubrics in the Assessment Pack. The EOM Task is the destination toward which all other assessments build.

### Responding to Assessment Data

- **Read the Assessment Pack rubrics** before Module 1 so you know what proficiency looks like before students start writing.
- **Use the Check for Understanding** in each lesson as your primary in-lesson formative check. Don't wait for Focusing Question Tasks.
- **The Analyze box** at the end of each lesson gives specific guidance for supporting students who struggle with the CFU.
- **Use EOM Task data alongside Focusing Question Task data** to see growth across the module. One task alone does not show the full picture.
- **Wit & Wisdom** assigns no specific grading method; use the rubrics, checklists, and student work to generate grades that fit your school's reporting system.

## 9. Getting Started Checklist

Work through this before your first module and revisit the module-level and lesson-level sections before every module and lesson.

### Before the School Year/Before Module 1

	Confirm arrival of all materials: <i>Teach</i> books, <i>Learn</i> books, <i>Prologue</i> books, Knowledge Deck Cards, module texts, and posters.
	Complete digital platform setup: teacher and student access credentials, student rostering, digital <i>Learn</i> assignments.
	Download the grade-level Materials Checklist from the digital platform.
	Read the Module 1 <i>Teach</i> book from cover to cover: Summary, Essential Question, Knowledge Threads, Learning Goals, Assessments, and Module Plan.
	Read all Module 1 texts before Lesson 1. Your content knowledge is your most important classroom asset.
	Hang the Content Stages poster and Fluency Reference Chart. These stay up all year.
	Decide where students will keep <i>Learn</i> books and journals; teach students this routine on day 1.
	Identify which students may benefit from <i>Prologue</i> support; plan when and how to deliver it.

### Before Each Module

	Complete the Module Study Protocol: review Essential Question, texts, Knowledge Threads, Learning Goals, Materials & Preparation, and Assessments.
	Post the new Essential Question and prepare fresh World Knowledge and ELA Knowledge Charts.
	Review the EOM Task expectations so you can set students up from day 1 of the module.
	Read the Assessment Guide for this module's assessments on the digital platform.
	Confirm all module text class sets are accounted for and ready to distribute.

### Before Each Lesson

	Complete the Lesson Study Protocol: read the full <i>Teach</i> book lesson including all preparation steps.
	Complete all preparation steps from the Lesson Overview (display charts, duplicate materials, arrange texts).
	Open lesson slides on the digital platform and confirm technology is working.
	Check the P icon—note which students need <i>Prologue</i> support for this lesson.
	Identify Differentiation Support and Challenge notes for your specific students.
	Know the Content Framing Question and be ready to post it and echo-read it with students at the start of Launch.

## Keys to Success: Five Teaching Tips for New Teachers

Tip	What It Means
<b>Internalize, don't just read.</b>	<i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> is not a scripted program. Use the Module Study Protocol and Lesson Study Protocol to deeply understand the curriculum's what and why. Then make sound decisions during instruction based on your students.
<b>Never skip Land.</b>	It is the easiest part to cut and the most important not to. Even five minutes of synthesis, such as a journal entry or a quick verbal response to the Content Framing Question, cements the day's learning.
<b>Post the Content Framing Question every day.</b>	Students need to see the purpose of their work in writing, not just hear it spoken. The question frames the lesson and gives Land its anchor.
<b>Use the slide decks.</b>	The <i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> in Sync slide decks reduce prep time, support pacing, and ensure nothing important is skipped, especially the display of art and writing models.
<b>Teach with integrity, not just fidelity.</b>	Honor the essential components: Essential, Focusing, and Content Framing Questions; Learning Goals; and assessments. But customize lessons to meet your students' needs. The goal is optimal learning, not robotic adherence.
<b>Annotate your Teach book.</b>	Flag what worked, what needed adjustment, and decisions made for your students. Year one becomes the foundation for year two.

## FAQs

Question	Answer
<b>What is Module 0 and do I have to teach it?</b>	Module 0 contains six abbreviated lessons (Grades K–8) that introduce students to the Content and Craft Stages, types of questions, and core instructional routines they will use in Modules 1–4. Highly recommended for first-year teachers and students new to <i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> .
<b>How does <i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> support students at different levels?</b>	Every lesson includes scaffolds for striving readers and English learners and extensions for students ready for deeper challenge. Lessons suggest differentiation within the main routine, not separate activities. The Analyze section guides you in responsive next steps based on CFU data.
<b>What specific supports exist for English Learners?</b>	<i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> supports English learners through deliberate text sequencing, predictable Content and Craft Stage structures, Deep Dives that focus on vocabulary and grammar, content in multiple forms (print, art, audio, video), sentence frames, and daily structured speaking and listening opportunities.
<b>What are the student journals and how do I use them?</b>	Three journals: (1) Response Journal for daily thinking during lessons; (2) Vocabulary Journal for word work; (3) Knowledge Journal for reflecting on and synthesizing module learning in Know. Set up a system (three-ring binder, separate composition books, or spiral) before Module 1 and teach the routine on Day 1.
<b>How is <i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> different from a scripted program?</b>	<i>Wit &amp; Wisdom</i> provides lesson plans and resources but expects teachers to internalize the material and make professional judgments based on student data. The preparation protocols exist to support that internalization. Honor the essential components while customizing for your students.

