

# Introduction to Grade I

All units in *SRA Open Court Reading* are organized around a central theme. Some units allow students to expand their perspectives on universal themes, such as *Be My Friend* and *Art in Motion*, by relating what they read to their own experiences. Other units, such as *Science Cycles* and *Stars and Stripes*, involve students in the research process, giving them the tools they need to discover and learn on their own and as part of a collaborative group. Each selection in a unit adds more information or a different perspective to students' growing knowledge of the unit theme or concept.

Each unit also has an Inquiry to investigate. Inquiry is a time within the lesson that allows students to research a topic that interests them and that is related to the theme. Inquiry begins in Lesson I and develops across each unit. At the end of each unit, students will present the results of their investigations through a variety of formats.

## Inquiry is designed to help students

- deepen their comprehension by enabling them to apply the skills they are learning to texts and activities of their own choosing.
- synthesize and organize what they are learning in order to present their findings to their classmates.
- determine suitable avenues of Inquiry and methods of presentation.
- become more independent and responsible about their time and efforts.
- work efficiently in collaborative groups.

## Lesson Format

All lessons are divided into three parts:

- **Part 1:** *Foundational Skills* focuses on phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, and building fluency.
- **Part 2:** *Reading and Responding* addresses comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and Inquiry.
- **Part 3:** *Language Arts* contains the writing process; penmanship; grammar, usage, and mechanics; and spelling.

Instructional and management routines are incorporated into each part of the lesson.

At the beginning of the year, the teacher will model reading skills and strategies for students by reading aloud from the Grade I *Big Books*. Starting midway through Unit 5, students will transition to reading on their own when the *First Reader* is introduced. Units 5 and 6 each use a *Big Book* for the beginning of the unit, with teachers modeling fluent reading. The *First Reader* is used during the second half of these units, with teachers providing support and prompting as students use the reading skills and strategies. By Unit 7, students begin to lead the reading in the *Student Anthologies* as they transition to becoming independent readers.

## Assessment

*SRA Open Court Reading* has a four-step assessment cycle. It starts with a Diagnostic Assessment used for screening at the beginning of the year. Tools to monitor progress and differentiate instruction are built into each lesson. At the end of each lesson is a Lesson Assessment, while a Unit Assessment concludes each unit. A Benchmark Assessment is available to monitor student progress periodically over the course of the school year.