

# Lexia PowerUp Literacy US National Progress Report

2019-20 School Year Results



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## Program Description

The Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® program (PowerUp) is a blended learning program that provides a personalized literacy learning experience for struggling and non-proficient readers in Grades 6-12. PowerUp helps educators simultaneously address gaps in fundamental literacy skills while helping students build the higher-order skills they need to comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and compare increasingly complex literature and informational texts. Students work online in three separate instructional strands -- Word Study, Grammar, and Comprehension -- to build independence in reading and understanding complex, authentic texts.

## Key Findings

- ▶ **Program Usage:** Nearly 360,000 students in grades 6-12 used PowerUp during the 2019-20 school year across the United States. Struggling and non-proficient readers require substantial intervention to achieve literacy gains. On their way to achieving these gains, students used PowerUp for a total of over 3 million hours during the 2019-20 school year.
- ▶ **Skills Growth:** In total, students completed nearly 7.1 million activities in PowerUp this year -- each supporting the instruction of several specific literacy skills. Students who used the online components of PowerUp as recommended completed on average 72 activities across the three strands of instruction during the 2019-20 school year.
- ▶ **Student Progress:** Students who used the online portion of PowerUp as recommended made substantial advances towards grade-level content. Most of these students (86%) moved up at least two zones (bands of content in each strand covering approximately three grade levels of skills). Over half of these students (59%) moved up one zone or more in all three strands.

While COVID-19 caused an undeniable educational disruption starting March 2020, many students were able to learn from home using PowerUp, including around **38,800 6-12th grade students who first started using PowerUp during the educational disruption period.**

## UNDERSTANDING PLACEMENT

When students first use PowerUp, an embedded automated assessment feature places them into an appropriate starting level within each strand and determines their weekly usage target for each strand.

## UNDERSTANDING ACTIVITIES

Each level of PowerUp is composed of several activities. Activities typically cover multiple skills. For example, in each level of the Grammar strand, students work through four activities: Parts of Speech, Parts of Sentences, Capitalization/Punctuation, and Text Structure.

## Description of Reporting Sample

During the 2019-20 school year, PowerUp was used by 359,512 students in grades 6-12 across 5,939 schools in the United States.

## Program Usage for All PowerUp Students

Struggling and non-proficient readers require substantial intervention to achieve literacy gains. During the 2019-20 school year, **students used PowerUp for an average of 34 minutes per week across all strands**, but total and weekly minutes in the program were higher for students who used PowerUp for a greater proportion of the school year (see Table 1).

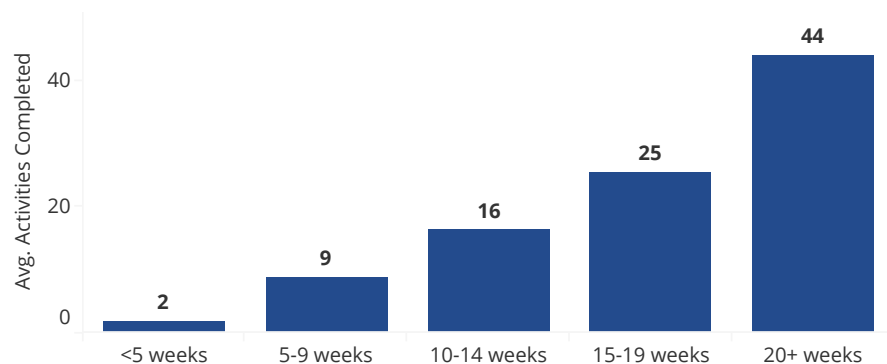
Table 1. Student Usage Details by Implementation Length

Weeks of Use	# of Students	Avg. Total Strand Minutes	Avg. Weekly Minutes Across All Strands
<5 weeks	84,912	54	20
5-9 weeks	76,149	227	33
10-14 weeks	54,478	410	34
15-19 weeks	50,417	646	38
20+ weeks	93,556	1,205	47

## Skill Growth for All PowerUp Students

Activities within each level of PowerUp support the instruction of several specific literacy skills. **Each student in the reporting sample completed around 20 activities** during the 2019-20 school year. Students who used the program over the course of more weeks tended to complete more activities, and therefore master more skills. In shorter implementations of 10-14 weeks, students typically completed around 16 activities. **Students who used the program for the recommended 20+ weeks completed on average 44 activities** across the three strands of instruction (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. PowerUp Activities Completed by Implementation Length



\* Note that schools are user-defined, and may not directly correspond to physical schools.

## UNDERSTANDING STRANDS

Students work online in three different instructional strands based on the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986): **Word Study**, **Grammar**, and **Comprehension**. Proficiency in each of the three strands is necessary to achieve independence in reading and understanding complex, authentic texts.

## UNDERSTANDING ZONES

Each strand is broken up into three zones. The **Foundational (K-2)** and **Intermediate (3-5)** zones provide the practice that builds automaticity of essential literary skills. The content and instruction of the **Advanced (6-8)** zone represent what on-grade-level, proficient adolescent readers should know and be able to do.

## Online Program Fidelity

While students gained skills even during abbreviated implementations of PowerUp (Figure 1), students who used the program for 20 weeks or more made greater progress. In addition to using PowerUp across at least 20 weeks of the school year, it is also recommended that students meet weekly usage targets for each instructional strand. These weekly usage targets vary from 25 to 45 minutes per strand, and update based on a student's zone and progress in each strand. Students are considered to have used the online portion of PowerUp as recommended (*with minimum fidelity*) if they used the program for at least 20 weeks, met their usage targets 50% or more of those weeks, and started using the program before the end of 2019. During the 2019-20 school year, 12,232 students met the minimum requirement for usage fidelity. By the end of the year, **these students mastered an average of 72 skills in PowerUp.**

## Usage Across Strands for Students Who Met Online Fidelity

In PowerUp, students have the agency to choose whether to work in Word Study, Grammar, or Comprehension. On average, students who met the minimum requirement for fidelity used PowerUp for **approximately 80 minutes per week across all strands**, and spent the most weekly time in the Comprehension strand.

Figure 2. Average Time Spent by Strand for Students Who Met Minimum Fidelity in PowerUp (N=12,232)



## Progress across Strands for Students Who Met Online Fidelity

Students work through three zones of content in each strand, with each zone encompassing approximately 3 grade levels of skills. Moving up a zone and ultimately reaching the Advanced zone are indicators of substantial student progress in the program. Among students who met minimum fidelity in PowerUp:

- ▶ **86%** moved up at least two zones
- ▶ **59%** moved up one zone or more in each of the three strands

**PROGRESS  
EXAMPLES**

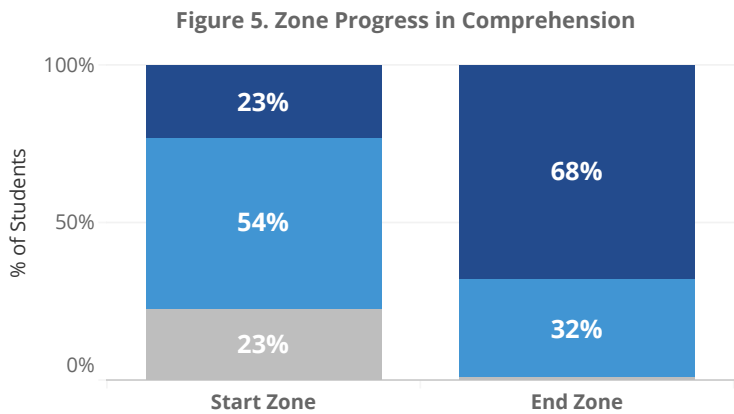
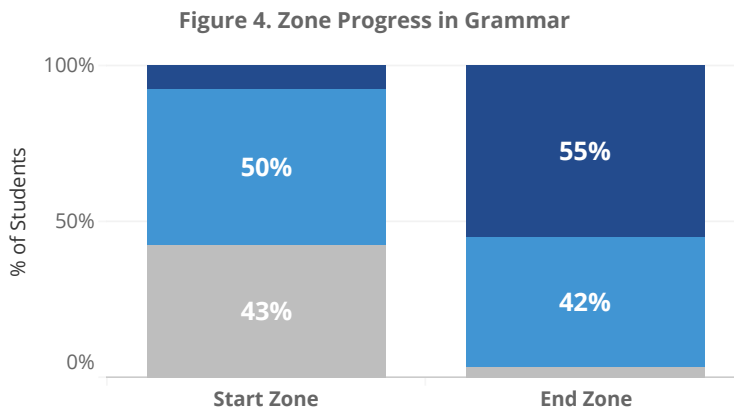
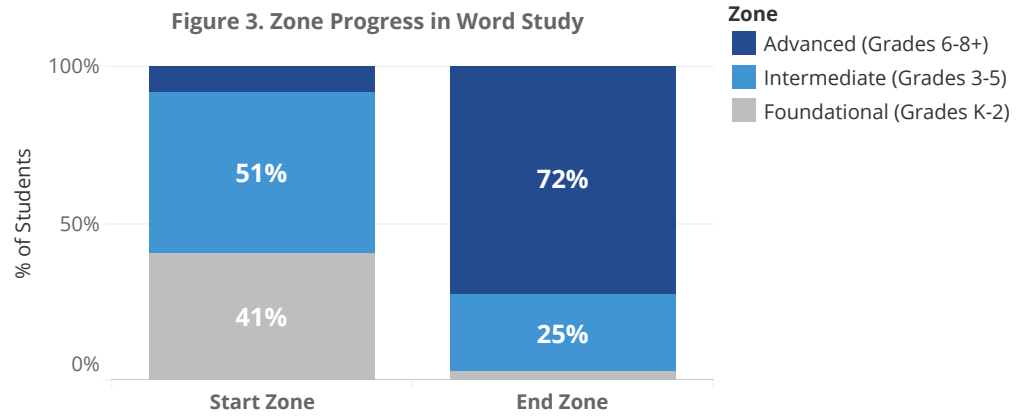
At the end of the year, students in the Advanced zone of Word Study were studying Greek and Latin word roots.

Students in the Advanced zone of Grammar at the end of the year were studying compound-complex sentences.

Students in the Advanced zone of Comprehension at the end of the year were reading complex texts in the 925L-1185L Lexile level range.

**Progress within Strands for Students Who Met Online Fidelity**

Students who used PowerUp as recommended made substantial progress in each strand. Most students completed sufficient content in the program to move up to higher zones. By the end of the year, **the percent of these students working in the Foundational zone dropped below 5% in all three strands** (see Figures 3-5, N=12,232).



\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## LEARNING FROM HOME

As part of an effort to expand access to literacy education during school closures, Lexia initiated a free, unlimited Learn From Home program in March 2020. This program offered free PowerUp licenses to over **16,000 schools** across the nation, supporting increased student access to remote literacy instruction and empowering educators throughout the state.

## The COVID-19 Disruption

Education was undeniably disrupted by nationwide school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This disruption caused student access, usage, and progress in PowerUp to look different in the 2019-2020 school year when compared to previous years. In particular, fewer students used PowerUp each week during the disruption period (March 15, 2020 - May 31, 2020) than in the months prior. During the disruption period, an average of around 63,000 students logged into PowerUp each week, with active students peaking at approximately 79,800 weekly users. This is down from an average of nearly 173,400 students who used PowerUp each week in the two months leading up to the school closures.

Despite the challenges posed by the educational disruption, students continued to learn from home and make literacy gains with PowerUp.



**Increased PowerUp access:** More than **38,800 6-12th grade students** first started learning from home with PowerUp during the disruption period. This includes students with pre-existing accounts who first used the program after school closures began, and new student accounts created during the disruption period. Despite the shortened implementation length, 485 of these new students still moved two or more zones during the disruption period.



**Increased weekly learning time:** While the number of students who used PowerUp regularly decreased during the disruption, weekly time spent in the program **increased by 17%**. In the first two months of 2020, students used PowerUp for an average of 61 minutes per week. During the disruption period, weekly usage increased to around 71 minutes per week.



**Increased implementation fidelity:** While learning from home during the disruption period, **a greater proportion of students met their weekly usage targets**. During the first two months of 2020, an average of 18% of students met their usage targets in PowerUp each week. This increased to an average of 28% of students meeting their weekly usage targets during the disruption period.