Cooperativity and additivity in plant enhancers

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ABSTRACT

Enhancers are *cis*-regulatory elements that shape gene expression in response to numerous developmental and environmental cues. In animals, several models have been proposed to explain how enhancers integrate the activity of multiple transcription factors. However, it remains largely unknown how plant enhancers integrate transcription factor activity. Here, we use Plant STARR-seq to characterize three light-responsive plant enhancers—*AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9*—derived from genes active in photosynthesis. Saturation mutagenesis reveals mutations, many of which cluster in short regions, that strongly reduce enhancer activity in the light, in the dark or in both conditions. When tested in the light, these mutation-sensitive regions do not function on their own; rather, cooperative interactions with other such regions are required for full activity. Epistatic interactions occur between mutations in adjacent mutation-sensitive regions, and the spacing and order of mutation-sensitive regions in synthetic enhancers affects enhancer activity. In contrast, when tested in the dark, mutation-sensitive regions act independently and additively in conferring enhancer activity. Taken together, this work demonstrates that plant enhancers show evidence for both cooperative and additive interactions among their functional elements. This knowledge can be harnessed to design strong, condition-specific synthetic enhancers.

Key words: plant gene regulation, enhancer, transcription factor, cooperativity, additivity, enhanceosome, billboard, circadian rhythm

INTRODUCTION

Enhancers play a pivotal role in orchestrating the precise gene expression programs required for plants to develop and thrive in concert with their ever-changing abiotic and biotic environments (Schmitz et al., 2022; Marand et al., 2023). They integrate spatiotemporal, developmental, and environmental cues by binding to transcription factors to enhance the transcription of their target genes.

Three models have been proposed to explain how enhancers in animal cells integrate the activity of multiple transcription factors (Arnosti and Kulkarni, 2005; Spitz and Furlong, 2012; Jindal and Farley, 2021; Kim and Wysocka, 2023). In the “billboard” model, the binding or activity of individual transcription factors is not dependent on other factors binding to the same enhancer (Kulkarni and Arnosti, 2003; de Boer et al., 2020). In contrast, in the “enhanceosome” model, enhancers recruit a highly ordered transcription factor complex (Thanos and Maniatis, 1995; Panne, 2008). Full activity is reached only in the presence of all complex members, and enhancer activity is drastically reduced if even a single transcription factor is missing or if the enhancer grammar—the orientation, spacing, and order of the individual transcription factor binding sites—is altered. Finally, the “transcription factor collective” model describes enhancers that recruit a complex composed of multiple transcription factors—all of which are necessary for full activity—without requiring a fixed enhancer grammar (Junion et al., 2012; Uhl et al., 2016). The three models differ in two main aspects: their requirement for a specific enhancer grammar (high for the enhanceosome model; low for the billboard and transcription factor collective models) and the degree of cooperativity between the recruited transcription factors (high for the enhanceosome and transcription factor collective models; low for the billboard model). Hence, grammar and cooperativity are key characteristics of enhancers (Kim et al., 2022; Friedman et al., 2023; Song et al., 2023).

To date, only a few enhancers in plants have been well characterized (Weber et al., 2016; Schmitz et al., 2022). Like their animal counterparts, plant enhancers function independently of orientation, are active over a wide range of distances, and occur upstream or downstream of their target promoter (Weber et al., 2016; Schmitz et al., 2022; Marand et al., 2023). Despite these similarities, enhancers in plants and animals differ in their histone modifications (Lu et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2019; Silver et al., 2023). The absence in plants of the canonical histone modifications that mark active enhancers in animals is consistent with the absence of functional enhancer RNAs in plants (Erhard

et al., 2015; Hetzel et al., 2016; Thieffry et al., 2020). Thus, plants appear to use different mechanisms than animals for enhancer activity.

Promoter-bashing approaches and testing of synthetic promoters assembled from transcription factor binding sites have generated evidence for cooperative interactions between functional sub-elements in plants (Benfey et al., 1990; Walcher and Nemhauser, 2012; Cai et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). However, we sought to interrogate enhancers at nucleotide resolution with saturation mutagenesis. We therefore took advantage of the Plant STARR-seq method (Jores et al., 2020, 2023) to characterize the functional underpinnings of three light-responsive plant enhancers: *AB80* from the pea *Pisum sativum*, *Cab-1* from the wheat *Triticum aestivum*, and *rbcS-E9* from *P. sativum*. We identify several mutation-sensitive regions within each enhancer that are crucial for condition-specific activity. In the light, strong cooperativity between these regions is displayed, whereas in the dark the mutation-sensitive regions that contribute to enhancer activity function largely independent of each other.

RESULTS

Enhancers from photosynthesis genes show light-responsive activity

We used Plant STARR-seq to dissect three enhancers that are associated with photosynthesis genes and possess light-responsive activity (Fluhr et al., 1986; Simpson et al., 1986; Nagy et al., 1987). The *AB80* and *Cab-1* enhancers drive the expression of chlorophyl a-b binding proteins, and the *rbcS-E9* enhancer regulates the expression of a small subunit of the ribulose-1,5-bisphosphate carboxylase. We previously demonstrated that Plant STARR-seq detects the light-responsive activity of these three enhancers (Jores et al., 2020).

We sought to carry out complete saturation mutagenesis of the three enhancers using array synthesis, which limits the length of oligonucleotides that can be synthesized. Therefore, we first tested whether 169-bp long segments, that are amenable to array synthesis, derived from the 5′ or 3′ end of each enhancer show light-responsive activity.

We cloned the full-length and truncated enhancer segments upstream of the 35S minimal promoter controlling the expression of a barcoded green fluorescent protein (GFP) reporter gene and subjected the pooled library to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco (*Nicotiana benthamiana*) leaves (Figure 1A). To test for light-responsive enhancer activity, we kept the transformed tobacco plants in either normal light/dark cycles (16 h light and 8 h dark) or completely in the dark for two days prior to RNA extraction. While the 35S enhancer, included as a control, showed strong and largely light-independent activity, the activity of the three plant enhancers was light-dependent (Figure 1B and 1C).

In the light, the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80* enhancer were active, albeit not to the extent of the full-length enhancer. In the dark, the *AB80* 5′ segment retained the weak activity of the full-length enhancer, whereas its 3′ segment was inactive (Figure 1B). In the light, the *Cab-1* 3′ segment showed similar strength compared to the full-length enhancer; however, in the dark this segment showed 2-fold higher activity than the full-length enhancer did. The *Cab-1* 5′ segment showed no enhancer activity in either condition (Figure 1B). The *rbcS-E9* enhancer showed stronger activity in the dark than in the light, and this activity was retained in both the 5′ and 3′ segments. However, in the light, the *rbcS-E9* 3′ segment showed approximately 3-fold more activity than the full-length enhancer, whereas the 5′ segment was inactive (Figure 1B).

Enhancer constructs were tested both in the forward and the reverse orientation because enhancers are expected to function in an orientation-independent manner (Banerji et al., 1981; Fang et al., 1989; Jores et al., 2020; Schmitz et al., 2022). Indeed, we observed this property for the full-length and truncated plant enhancers assayed here (Supplemental Figure 1). At least two biological replicates were performed for all experiments, and the results were highly reproducible ($R^2 \geq 0.87$; Supplemental Figure 2).

Finally, we confirmed that the 169-bp enhancer segments active in the transient Plant STARR-seq assay also show enhancer activity when assayed in stable transgenic lines.

We cloned the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers upstream of a 35S minimal promoter driving the expression of nanoluciferase. The T-DNA also contained a luciferase gene controlled by the constitutive *Arabidopsis thaliana POLYUBIQUITIN 10* promoter to control for effects on expression due to genomic context (Figure 1D). We generated transgenic *Arabidopsis* Col-0 lines harboring these T-DNAs and measured nanoluciferase and luciferase activities in T2 plants from five independent lines. We detected high enhancer activity (indicated by a high nanoluciferase/luciferase ratio) for the 3′ segments of the *AB80* and *rbcS-E9* enhancers in *Arabidopsis*. However, the 3′ segment of the *Cab-1* enhancer showed low activity (Figure 1E). Shifting the transgenic *Arabidopsis* plants to the dark for four days prior to sample collection did not change the observed nanoluciferase/luciferase ratios (Supplemental Figure 3), presumably because nanoluciferase protein turnover is low *in planta*. Nonetheless, we observed a strong correlation between the Plant STARR-seq and dual-luciferase assays in the light (Figure 1F).

In summary, except for the 5′ segment of *Cab-1*, the 169-bp enhancer segments function as enhancers in at least one light regime, either upregulated in the light or upregulated in the dark (Figure 1B). Therefore, the shortened enhancer segments can be used to study the condition-specific activity of plant enhancers.

Plant enhancers contain multiple mutation-sensitive regions

To identify regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers that confer enhancer activity, we subjected the shortened enhancer segments to saturation mutagenesis. We array-synthesized all possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the three enhancers, and measured their enhancer strength with Plant STARR-seq in the light and the dark. We determined the activity of over 99% of all possible single-nucleotide variants (Supplemental Data Set 1). While most mutations had little to no effect, some of the variants resulted in an up to four-fold increase or to a decrease to as low as 1/20 in enhancer strength relative to the wild-type sequence (Supplemental Figure 4).

Mutations in all three enhancers with a negative effect on enhancer strength often clustered together, revealing mutation-sensitive regions (Figure 2 and Supplemental Figure 5). The effect sizes of mutations within the mutation-sensitive regions in each enhancer were consistent with our observations on the light-responsive activity of the respective wild-type enhancer segments (Figure 1B). For the *AB80* and *Cab-1* enhancers, the effect sizes of mutations within the mutation-sensitive regions were much greater in the light than in the dark (Figure 2A and 2B). For the *rbcS-E9* enhancer, mutation-sensitive regions in the dark overlapped between the 5' and 3' segments, while mutation-sensitive regions in the light resided both in the overlap region and closer to the 3' end (Figure 2C). These observations are consistent with our findings that both segments showed similar enhancer strength in the dark compared to the full-length enhancer, whereas only the 3' segment was active in the light (Figure 1B).

The 5′ and 3′ segments of each enhancer overlap partially (overlap length: 91 bp for *AB80*, 70 bp for *Cab-1*, and 104 bp for *rbcS-E9*). We asked whether mutations in the overlap region show similar effects when tested in the context of the 5′ or 3′ segment in the light or dark. In the dark, context did not matter for the effects of mutations. For example, the mutation-sensitive regions in the *rbcS-E9* enhancer reside in similar positions (Figure 2C) and mutational effects in the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *rbcS-E9* enhancer strongly correlated (Supplemental Figure 6). Although the *AB80* and *Cab-1* enhancers showed little activity in the dark, the variant effects in their respective overlap regions showed positive correlation in this condition. In contrast, for all three enhancers, correlations between variant effects in the overlap region were lower in the light (Supplemental Figure 6). In the light, both the *Cab-1* and the *rbcS-E9* enhancer harbored mutation-sensitive regions in the parts of the 3′ segment part that overlap with the 5′ segment. However, mutations in the corresponding locations of the 5′ segment were weaker or showed no effect on enhancer function (Figure 2B and 2C). We conclude that the presence of a mutation-sensitive region, and the effect sizes of mutations within it, depends on the surrounding sequence context in the light, suggesting cooperative interactions among individual enhancer regions in this condition.

Mutation-sensitive regions harbor transcription factor binding sites

Because enhancers function by recruiting transcription factors, we searched the enhancer sequences for matches to known transcription factor binding motifs (O'Malley et al., 2016; Tian et al., 2020; Jores et al., 2021). This approach identified several putative binding sites; however, most of them were located outside of mutation-sensitive regions, and several mutation-sensitive regions were not predicted to contain any transcription factor binding site (Supplemental Figure 7).

As an alternative approach, we leveraged the saturation mutagenesis data to identify sequence motifs that contribute to enhancer function. To this end, we first examined regions (referred to by lowercase letters from a to e) in the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers with strong mutational sensitivity (Figure 2 and Figure 3A). We then used the measured enhancer strength in the light for all possible single-nucleotide substitution variants in these regions to generate sequence logo plots, which show position-specific nucleotide preferences associated with enhancer strength. All but one of the motifs generated in this way matched known transcription factor binding sites. Putative binding sites for MYB family transcription factors are found in *AB80* regions a and d, in *Cab-1* regions b and c, and in *rbcS-E9* regions b, c, and e. A G-box motif, a potential binding site for bHLH and bZip transcription factors (O'Malley et al., 2016), is found in *AB80* region b and *rbcS-E9* region a. A putative binding site for TCP family transcription factors is found in *Cab-1* region a. Although no matching transcription factor binding motif was found for *AB80* region c and *Cab-1* region d, both regions contain a mutation-sensitive CCAAT sequence which could be a target of Nuclear Factor Y transcription factors (Gnesutta et al., 2019). Similarly, *rbcS-E9* region d contains a TGTGG pentanucleotide which could be a target of the *CONSTANS* transcription factor and related CCT transcription factors, which form hetero-trimers with Nuclear Factor Y transcription factors (Tiwari et al., 2010; Gnesutta et al., 2017).

Since the *rbcS-E9* regions a, b, and c also showed mutational sensitivity in the dark, we performed the same analysis for these regions using enhancer strength measurements

in the dark (Figure 3E). The ‘dark’ motifs generated for regions b and c are similar to those found in the light. In contrast, for region a, only the last four nucleotides of the G-box were highly sensitive to substitutions in the dark, indicating that this region might be bound by a different transcription factor in the dark than in the light.

Taken together, by leveraging our saturation mutagenesis data, we were able to assign putative transcription factor binding sites to almost all mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* 3′ segments (Figure 3). In contrast, the commonly employed motif-scanning approach did not yield results for most mutation-sensitive regions (Supplemental Figure 7). We attribute the failure of the motif-scanning approach to the fact that the three enhancer sequences analyzed here often deviate from the consensus transcription factor binding motif by one or two nucleotides. Suboptimal transcription factor binding sites have been observed in animal enhancers, where they ensure precise regulation of enhancer activity by requiring cooperative transcription factors for efficient binding (Farley et al., 2015, 2016). Saturation mutagenesis detects the relevance of such suboptimal motifs by sampling all possible nucleotides.

The *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers are regulated by the circadian clock

The *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers contain putative binding sites for MYB family transcription factors, which have been implicated in the regulation of multiple biological processes, including the circadian clock (Carré and Kim, 2002; Laosuntisuk et al., 2023). Since *Cab-1* is regulated by the circadian clock (Fejes et al., 1990), we asked whether the same is true for the *AB80* and *rbcS-E9* enhancers, and if so, whether we can pinpoint the sequence motifs that mediate this circadian regulation. To address these questions, we used Plant STARR-seq to measure the activity of all single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers in constant light over a time course of 24 hours, with samples taken every 6 hours (Figure 4A). Consistent with the hypothesis that the circadian clock affects the activity of these enhancers, the correlation between Plant STARR-seq samples was highest for samples obtained 24

hours apart from each other and lowest for samples separated by 12 hours (Supplemental Figure 8).

The activity of all three enhancers was influenced by the circadian clock. The *AB80* and *Cab-1* enhancers showed greatest activity shortly after mid-day (ZT ~10), when their enhancer strength was approximately 60–100% higher than at its lowest point (ZT ~22). In contrast, the *rbcS-E9* enhancer was strongest close to midnight (ZT 19), and its enhancer strength dropped to approximately 40% of its maximum during the day (Figure 4B).

Next, we sought to identify mutations in the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers that disrupt their circadian regulation. We found that the amplitude of the circadian oscillation in enhancer strength remained largely unchanged across all single-nucleotide enhancer variants in our library (Figure 4C, Supplemental Figure 9–Supplemental Figure 12, and Supplemental Data Set 2). Nearly all enhancer variants showed activity profiles across time points that matched their corresponding wild-type enhancer, especially when variants with very low and hence noisy enhancer strength values were excluded from the analysis (Figure 4D). Consistent with the observed lack of circadian cycle-specific variant effects, variant effects measured in this experiment correlated well with those measured in long-day light/dark cycles (Figure 4C and Supplemental Figure 8B). In summary, the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers are regulated by the circadian clock, and this regulation is robustly encoded in their sequence, as individual single-nucleotide mutations did not abolish it.

Epistatic interactions between mutations in adjacent mutation-sensitive regions

Given the observed differences in activity caused by the same mutations when present in the 5’ vs. 3’ enhancer segment of the three enhancers, we hypothesized that the mutation-sensitive regions interact in a cooperative manner. To test this hypothesis, we looked for epistatic interactions between pairs of mutations in mutation-sensitive regions. In the absence of cooperativity, the change in enhancer strength relative to the

wild-type enhancer caused by two mutations should equal the sum of the changes observed for the corresponding single mutations. In contrast, epistatic interactions between individual mutations would lead to less reduction in enhancer strength than expected based on the single mutation effects.

We created a Plant STARR-seq library containing single-nucleotide deletion variants of the *AB80* (19 deletions), *Cab-1* (32 deletions), and *rbcS-E9* (25 deletions) enhancers, as well as all possible variants containing a combination of two of these deletions within the same enhancer. The enhancer strength of the single-nucleotide deletion variants in this small library correlated well with the values measured in the comprehensive single-nucleotide variant library (Supplemental Figure 13A).

We compared the strength of the enhancer variants carrying two deletions to predictions based on the additive strength of the two single deletions and found strong concordance overall (Figure 5A). When tested in the light, however, several variants with pairs of deletions showed greater enhancer strength than predicted (Figure 5A). In these cases, the two deletions tended to be relatively close to each other (8-20 bp; deletion pairs with a distance of less than 8 bp were excluded from this analysis). The same analysis for the *rbcS-E9* enhancer in the dark found fewer deletion pairs with epistatic interactions than in the light (Figure 5B). The strength of the *AB80* and *Cab-1* enhancers in the dark is too low to draw reliable conclusions from this analysis.

Taken together, we observed epistatic interactions between deletions in mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers. The effect of these interactions dissipated over distance and was most pronounced in the light.

The number, spacing, and order of mutation-sensitive regions affects enhancer strength

We selected 20 short (17–47 bp) fragments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers that span one to three mutation-sensitive regions to address how the number, spacing and order of mutation-sensitive regions affect enhancer strength. We

also selected two control fragments, one derived from a mutation-insensitive region of the *Cab-1* enhancer and another from a randomly shuffled version of the *AB80* fragment d. Individual fragments as well as synthetic enhancers (combinations of two or three fragments) were cloned upstream of the 35S minimal promoter, and their enhancer strength in the light and dark was measured with Plant STARR-seq (Figure 6A and Supplemental Data Set 3). The individual fragments showed little to no enhancer activity in either condition (Figure 6B), consistent with our finding on cooperativity of mutation-sensitive regions. To systematically compare the enhancer strength of the individual enhancer fragments to the results of the saturation mutagenesis, we used the area under the curve in the mutational sensitivity plots (Figure 2) as a proxy for how much a fragment contributes to the strength of the full-length enhancer. In the light, there was no correlation between the strength of the enhancer fragments and their respective area under the curve observed in the saturation mutagenesis. In contrast, these metrics were well correlated in the dark (Figure 6C).

Most synthetic enhancers showed only weak enhancer activity (Figure 6B), indicating that simply combining mutation-sensitive regions is not sufficient for cooperative interactions. To test if the spacing of mutation-sensitive regions affects enhancer activity, we compared the strength of enhancer fragments spanning two such regions (with both regions present at the same distance as in the wild-type enhancer) to synthetic enhancers composed of the two individual fragments (with altered spacing between the mutation-sensitive regions). In almost all cases, the fragment spanning two mutation-sensitive regions was stronger than the combination of the individual fragments (Figure 6D, 6E, and Supplemental Figure 14). In addition to the spacing, the order of enhancer fragments also affected the strength of the resulting synthetic enhancers, and this effect was stronger in the light (Figure 6D–F).

In summary, the activity of the full-length enhancers is the result of cooperative interactions between their constituent mutation-sensitive regions, in particular in the light. This interpretation is supported by the observation that the enhancer strength of

the combinations of mutation-sensitive regions depends on their spacing and order. In contrast, the mutation-sensitive regions of the *rbcS-E9* enhancer function largely independently and additively in the dark.

Enhancer fragments can be used to design synthetic enhancers

Although many of the synthetic enhancers created by combining fragments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers were inactive (940 enhancers), more than half of them showed activity in at least one condition (1,364 enhancers with $\log_2$[enhancer strength] > 1; Figure 7A). Of the active synthetic enhancers, most showed highest strength in the dark (728 enhancers). In contrast, only 203 synthetic enhancers were active specifically in the light, despite being comprised largely of mutation-sensitive regions found in the light. Finally, 433 synthetic enhancers were active in both the light and the dark. We validated these results by retesting a subset of approximately 400 synthetic enhancers in a separate library (Supplemental Figure 13B). Moreover, we measured the activity of 11 synthetic enhancers in stable *Arabidopsis* lines using the dual-luciferase assay (Figure 7B) and observed strong correlation with the enhancer strengths measured by Plant STARR-seq (Figure 7C).

Lastly, we asked if the strength of a given synthetic enhancer can be predicted based on the strength of its constituent fragments, despite the observed cooperativity in the light. A simple linear model based on the enhancer strength of the 22 individual enhancer fragments was able to predict the strength of synthetic enhancers with high accuracy (Figure 7D). Consistent with our cooperativity results, the model performed best when applied to measurements obtained in the dark (R^2 = 0.84), but it also showed predictive power in the light (R^2 = 0.65). A similar model that predicted the light-responsiveness of the synthetic enhancers showed somewhat lower accuracy (R^2 = 0.42; Supplemental Figure 15). In short, a relatively small number of well-characterized enhancer fragments is sufficient to create a diverse set of short (less than 150 bp) synthetic enhancers with condition-specific activity.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we used Plant STARR-seq to characterize the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers under two different light regimes. We observed that, in the light, the activity of the three enhancers is influenced by their grammar and by cooperative interactions between constituent functional regions defined by mutational sensitivity. Thus, these plant enhancers appear to show enhanceosome features in the light. Enhanceosomes in animal cells contain dense arrays of transcription factor binding sites in specific orientation, spacing, and order that together recruit transcription factor complexes (Thanos and Maniatis, 1995; Panne, 2008); full activity requires cooperative binding of all complex members. In the dark, the three plant enhancers show stronger resemblance to billboard or transcription factor collective enhancers, with reduced dependency on grammar and cooperativity.

Because of the small number of plant enhancers tested, we cannot conclude whether enhancer activity in the light generally relies more on cooperativity than activity in the dark. It is tempting, however, to speculate that enhancers that respond to stimuli may adhere more to an enhanceosome model because they need to integrate multiple environmental signals. This integration, which is critical for plant growth and development, would be expected to involve multiple different transcription factors acting in concert. However, we presently lack such transcription factor binding data in our assay.

We identify regions important for enhancer activity and demonstrate that these regions harbor putative binding sites for transcription factors. A previous study identified several regions of the *Cab-1* enhancer that are protected from DNase I digestion in the presence of a nuclear extract from light-grown tobacco (Gotor et al., 1993). These DNase I-protected regions overlap with the mutation-sensitive regions of *Cab-1* identified here, supporting the hypothesis that mutation-sensitive regions are bound by transcription factors *in planta*.

As transcription factors of the same family often bind to highly similar motifs (O'Malley et al., 2016; Jores et al., 2021; Zenker et al., 2023), we cannot pinpoint the specific family member(s) binding to a given site. Nonetheless, our results point to an important role of MYB family transcription factors in generating enhancer activity of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers in the light and in the dark. While it might seem counterintuitive that the same transcription factors are recruited to enhancers that function in different conditions (light or dark) and via different models (enhanceosome or billboard), similar observations have been made in *Drosophila melanogaster* (Liu and Posakony, 2012).

Our results highlight the crucial role that enhancer grammar can play in determining enhancer strength. However, future studies will be required to decipher in-depth the rules of how the order, spacing and orientation of transcription factor binding sites affects activity or if such rules even exist. This knowledge is crucial for the rational *de novo* design of highly specific enhanceosome enhancers, which is not possible to date. As an alternative, we demonstrate that enhancer fragments with known activity can be combined in an additive, billboard-like fashion to build synthetic enhancers with high activity and condition-specificity. The success of this approach is rooted in the hierarchical structure of enhancers (Fromental et al., 1988; Ondek et al., 1988). At the base level, enhancers consist of transcription factor binding sites (called "enhansons" in the 1988 studies) that are combined with an optimized grammar to form short "proto-enhancers" or "enhancer elements." These proto-enhancers are then combined with a more flexible grammar to form full-length enhancers.

METHODS

Library design and construction

The full-length *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers and their 169-bp 3′ and 5′ segments as well as the 35S enhancer were PCR amplified from pZS*11_4enh (Addgene no. 149423; https://www.addgene.org/149423/; Jores et al., 2020). The sequences of all oligonucleotides used for cloning and sequencing are included in Supplemental Table 1.

Single-nucleotide and double-deletion variants of the three plant enhancers with 15-bp flanking sequences (5′ TAACTCGCCTCGATC and 3′ CCGTGACAGGTCATT for *AB80*; 5′ ACATGGGGGATCATG and 3′ GCATTAGCCAGTCTG for *Cab-1*; 5′ GCTCCAGTTCCCAAC and 3′ GATCGTCCAGTCTGA for *rbcS-E9*) for amplification were ordered as an oligonucleotide array from Twist Bioscience.

Enhancers fragments (Figure 6A) with 5′ GTGATG overhangs and their reverse-complements with 5′ CATCAC overhangs were ordered as oligonucleotides, annealed, and 5′ phosphorylated with T4 Polynucleotide Kinase (NEB). The fragments were mixed with Golden Gate cloning adaptors (5′ adapter: GAGAGGGTCTCCACTC and CATCACGAGTGGAGACCCTCTC; 3′ adapter: GTGATGAGGACGAGACCCTCTC and GAGAGGGTCTCGTCCT; annealed and 5′ phosphorylated) and ligated with T4 DNA ligase. The ligation products were size-selected to exclude constructs over 150 bp. Enhancer fragment combinations for the validation library were ordered as an oligonucleotide array from Twist Bioscience.

All libraries used in this study were constructed using pPSup (Addgene no. 149416; https://www.addgene.org/149416/; Jores et al., 2020) as the base plasmid. The plasmid's T-DNA region harbors a phosphinothricin resistance gene (BlpR) and a GFP reporter construct terminated by the poly(A) site of the *Arabidopsis thaliana* ribulose bisphosphate carboxylase small chain 1A gene. The 35S minimal promoter followed by the synthetic 5′ UTR synJ (ACACGCTGGAATTCTAGTATACTAAACC; Kanoria and Burma, 2012), an ATG start codon and a 15-bp random barcode (VNNVNNVNNVNNVNN; V = A, C, or G) was cloned in front of the second codon of GFP by Golden Gate cloning (Engler et al., 2008) using BbsI-HF (NEB). Enhancers, enhancer variants, and enhancer fragment combinations were cloned upstream of the 35S minimal promoter by Golden Gate cloning using BsaI-HFv2 (NEB). The resulting libraries were bottlenecked to yield 10–20 barcodes per enhancer.

The base plasmid pDL for dual-luciferase constructs was created from pPSup after the 35S minimal promoter and synJ 5′ UTR were inserted into the BbsI Golden Gate site.

The GFP reporter gene was replaced with nanoluciferase by Gibson Assembly. A second round of Gibson Assembly was used to insert the luciferase gene driven by the *Arabidopsis UBQ10* promoter (TAIR10 Chr4:2716532–2718558) and terminated by the 35S terminator between the T-DNA left border and the BlpR gene. The nanoluciferase coding sequence and the 35S terminator were ordered as synthesized DNA fragments. The luciferase coding sequence was amplified from pGreen_dualluc_3'UTR_sensor (Addgene no. 55206; https://www.addgene.org/55206/; Liu et al., 2014) and the *UBQ10* promoter was amplified for *Arabidopsis* Col-0 genomic DNA. The assembled plasmid pDL was deposited at Addgene (Addgene no. 208978; https://www.addgene.org/208978/). The 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers and the synthetic enhancers syn1–11 were cloned upstream of the 35S minimal promoter in pDL by Golden Gate cloning using BsaI-HFv2 (NEB). The synthetic enhancers were ordered as synthesized DNA fragments.

Plant cultivation and transformation

Tobacco (*Nicotiana benthamiana*) was grown in soil (Sunshine Mix no. 4) at 25°C in a long-day photoperiod (16 h light and 8 h dark; cool-white fluorescent lights [Philips TL-D 58 W/840]; intensity 300 µmol m^{-2} s^{-1}). Plants were transformed approximately 3 weeks after germination. For transient transformation of tobacco leaves, enhancer libraries were introduced into *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain GV3101 (harboring the virulence plasmid pMP90 and the helper plasmid pSoup) by electroporation. An overnight culture of the transformed *A. tumefaciens* was diluted into 100 ml YEP medium (1% [w/v] yeast extract and 2% [w/v] peptone) and grown at 28°C for 8 h. A 5-ml input sample of the cells was collected, and plasmids were isolated from it using the QIAprep Spin Miniprep Kit (QIAGEN) according to the manufacturer's instructions. The remaining cells were harvested and resuspended in 100 ml induction medium (M9 medium [3 g/L KH_2PO_4, 0.5 g/L NaCl, 6.8 g/L Na_2HPO_4, and 1 g/L NH_4Cl] supplemented with 1% [w/v] glucose, 10 mM MES, pH 5.2, 100 µM $CaCl_2$, 2 mM $MgSO_4$, and 100 µM acetosyringone). After overnight growth, the *Agrobacteria* were harvested, resuspended in infiltration solution (10 mM MES, pH 5.2, 10 mM $MgCl_2$, 150 µM

acetosyringone, and 5 μM lipoic acid) to an optical density of 1 and infiltrated into leaves 3 and 4 of six tobacco plants. The plants were further grown for 48 h under normal conditions (16 h light and 8 h dark) or in the dark before mRNA extraction.

Arabidopsis thaliana Col-0 was grown in soil (Sunshine Mix no. 4) at 20°C in a long-day photoperiod (16 h light and 8 h dark; cool-white fluorescent lights [Sylvania FO32/841/ECO 32W]; intensity 100 μmol m^{-2} s^{-1}). For transformation, dual-luciferase plasmids were introduced into *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain GV3101 (harboring the virulence plasmid pMP90 and the helper plasmid pSoup) by electroporation. Transgenic *Arabidopsis* plants were generated by floral dipping (Clough and Bent, 1998) and selected for by spraying with a 0.01% Glufosinate solution.

Plant STARR-seq

For all Plant STARR-seq experiments, at least two independent biological replicates were performed. Different plants and fresh *Agrobacterium* cultures were used for each biological replicate.

Transiently transformed tobacco leaves were harvested 2 days after infiltration and partitioned into two batches of 6 leaves each. The leaf batches were frozen in liquid nitrogen, finely ground with mortar and pestle, and immediately resuspended in 12 mL TRIzol (Thermo Fisher Scientific). The suspensions from both leaf batches were pooled and cleared by centrifugation (5 min, 4,000 x g, 4°C). The supernatant was mixed with 5 mL chloroform and centrifuged (15 min, 4,000 x g, 4°C). The upper, aqueous phase was transferred to a new tube and was washed once more with 5 mL chloroform. The aqueous phase (approximately 10 mL) was transferred to a new tube, and mixed by inversion with 10 mL isopropanol and 10 mL high salt buffer (0.8 M sodium citrate, 1.2 M NaCl). The solution was incubated for 15 min at RT to precipitate the RNA and centrifuged (30 min, 4,000 x g, 4°C). The pellet was washed in 25 mL ice-cold 70% ethanol, centrifuged (5 min, 4000 x g, 4°C), and air-dried. The pellet was resuspended in 2.4 mL of warm (65°C) nuclease-free water and split into two aliquots. From each aliquot, mRNAs were isolated using 150 µL magnetic Oligo$(dT)_{25}$ beads (Thermo Fisher

Scientific) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Elution was performed with 40 µL 10 mM Tris (pH 7.4) and the eluates from both aliquots were pooled. To remove DNA contaminations, the mRNA solution was mixed 10 µL DNase I buffer without $MnCl_2$, 10 µL 100 mM $MnCl_2$, 1 µL RNaseOUT, and 2 µL DNase I (Thermo Fisher Scientific), and incubated for 1 h at 37°C. To precipitate the mRNA, 1 µL 20 mg/mL glycogen (Thermo Fisher Scientific), 10 µL ice-cold 8M LiCl and 250 µL ice-cold 100% ethanol was added. After incubation for 15 min at −80°C, the RNA was pelleted by centrifugation (20 min, 20,000 x g, 4°C). The pellet was washed with 200 µL ice-cold 70% ethanol, centrifuged (5 min, 20,000 x g, 4°C), air-dried, and resuspended in 100 µL nuclease-free water. For cDNA synthesis, eight reactions with 11 µL mRNA solution, 1 µL 2 µM GFP-specific reverse transcription primer, and 1 µL 10 mM dNTPs were incubated at 65°C for 5 min then immediately placed on ice. The reactions were supplemented with 4 µL 5X SuperScript IV buffer, 1 µL 100 mM DTT, 1 µL RNaseOUT, and 1 µL SuperScript IV reverse transcriptase (ThermoFisher Scientific). To ensure that the samples were largely free of DNA contamination, four reactions were used as controls, where the reverse transcriptase and RNaseOUT were replaced with water. Reactions were incubated for 10 min at 55°C, followed by 10 min at 80°C. Sets of 4 reactions each were pooled. The cDNA was purified with the Zymo Clean&Concentrate-5 kit, and eluted in 20 µL 10 mM Tris. The barcode was amplified with 10-20 cycles of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and read out by next generation sequencing.

Subassembly and barcode sequencing

Paired-end sequencing on an Illumina NextSeq 550 platform was used to link terminators to their respective barcodes. The enhancer region was sequenced using paired 144-bp reads, and two 15-bp indexing reads were used to sequence the barcodes. The paired enhancer and barcode reads were assembled using PANDAseq (version 2.11; Masella et al., 2012). Enhancer-barcode pairs with less than 5 reads and enhancers with a mutation or truncation were discarded.

For each Plant STARR-seq experiment, barcodes were sequenced using paired-end reads on an Illumina NextSeq 500, 550, or 2000 system. The paired barcode reads were assembled using PANDAseq.

Computational methods

The code used for the analysis and to generate the figures is available on GitHub (https://github.com/tobjores/cooperativity-and-additivity-in-plant-enhancers).

For analysis of the Plant STARR-seq experiments, the reads for each barcode were counted in the input and cDNA samples. Barcode counts below 5 and barcodes present in only one replicate were discarded. Barcode counts were normalized to the sum of all counts in the respective sample. For barcodes, enhancer strength was calculated by dividing the normalized barcode counts in the cDNA sample by that in the corresponding input sample. The sum of the normalized counts for all barcodes associated with a given enhancer, enhancer variant, or enhancer fragment combination were used to calculate its strength. For each replicate, enhancer strength was normalized to the median enhancer strength. Unless indicated otherwise, the mean enhancer strength across all replicates was used for analyses. Spearman and Pearson's correlation were calculated using base R (version 4.3.1).

To identify putative transcription factor binding sites within the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers, we used the universalmotif package (version 1.18.1) in R to scan the enhancer sequences for matches to known transcription factor binding motifs (obtained from Jores et al., 2021). For the generation of sequence logo plots for mutation-sensitive regions we adapted previously published approaches (Andrilenas et al., 2018; Ireland et al., 2020). The enhancer strength of all variants within a given mutation-sensitive region was normalized to the strength of the wild-type variant, scaled by a factor β, and turned into an information content matrix using the create_motif() function of the universalmotif package. The scaling factor β was chosen such that the final motif had an average per-base information content of 1. The generated motifs were

compared to known transcription factor binding motifs using the compare_motifs() function of the universalmotif package.

For the generation of circadian rhythm curves, a linear model was fitted to the time course Plant STARR-seq data using the lm() function in R with the formula: log2(enhancer strength) = sin(2 · π · time / 24) + cos(2 · π · time / 24), where time refers to the time in hours when the samples were harvested.

To predict the strength of synthetic enhancers generated by combining enhancer fragments, a liner model was fitted to Plant STARR-seq data using the lm() function in R with the formula: log2(enhancer strength) = log2(enhancer strength fragment 3) + log2(enhancer strength fragment 2) + log2(enhancer strength fragment 1), where log2(enhancer strength fragment 1–3) is the enhancer strength of the corresponding fragment when tested individually. Fragments are numbered by increasing distance from the minimal promoter (fragment 1 is the fragment closest to the promoter, fragment 3 the most distal one). For combinations of two fragments, log2(enhancer strength fragment 3) was set to 0.

Dual-luciferase assay

Transgenic *Arabidopsis* lines (T2 generation) with dual-luciferase constructs were grown in soil for 3 weeks. A cork borer (4 mm diameter) was used to collect a total of 3 leaf discs from the third and fourth leaf of the plants. The leaf discs were transferred to 1.5 mL tubes filled with approximately 10 glass beads (1 mm diameter), snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen, and disrupted by shaking twice for 5 sec in a Silamat S6 (Ivoclar) homogenizer. The leaf disc debris was resuspended in 100 µL 1X Passive Lysis Buffer (Promega). The solution was cleared by centrifugation (5 min, 20,000 x g, RT) and 10 µL of the supernatant were mixed with 90 µL 1X passive lysis buffer. Luciferase and nanoluciferase activity were measured on a Biotek Synergy H1 plate reader using the Promega Nano-Glo Dual-Luciferase Reporter Assay System according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Specifically, 10 µL of the leaf extracts were combined with 75 µL ONE-Glo EX Reagent, mixed for 3 min at 425 rpm, and incubated for 2 min

before measuring luciferase activity. Subsequently, 75 µL NanoDLR Stop&Glo Reagent were added to them sample. After 3 min mixing at 425 rpm and 12 min incubation, nanoluciferase activity was measured. Three independent biological replicates were performed.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The code used for the analysis and to generate the figures is available on GitHub (https://github.com/tobjores/cooperativity-and-additivity-in-plant-enhancers). All barcode sequencing reads were deposited in the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) Sequence Read Archive under the BioProject accession PRJNA1015372 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/bioproject/1015372/). The sequences for the enhancers can be obtained from NCBI (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore/) using the following accessions: V00141 (35S), X03074 (*AB80*), X05823 (*Cab-1*), and X00806 (*rbcS-E9*).

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Supplemental Figure 1. Enhancer strength and light-responsiveness is orientation-independent

Supplemental Figure 2. Plant STARR-seq yields highly reproducible results

Supplemental Figure 3. The dual-luciferase assay cannot detect light-responsive enhancer activity

Supplemental Figure 4. Few single-nucleotide mutations have a strong effect on enhancer strength

Supplemental Figure 5. Saturation mutagenesis reveals mutation-sensitive patches in plant enhancers

Supplemental Figure 6. Effects of mutations in the overlap region of the 5′ and 3′ enhancer segments are more similar in the dark

Supplemental Figure 7. Mutation-sensitive regions contain few strong matches to known transcription factor binding motifs

Supplemental Figure 8. Strong correlation between Plant STARR-seq samples obtained 24 hours apart from each other

Supplemental Figure 9. Saturation mutagenesis maps of the *AB80* enhancer do not change much over time in constant light

Supplemental Figure 10. Saturation mutagenesis maps of the *Cab-1* enhancer do not change much over time in constant light

Supplemental Figure 11. Saturation mutagenesis maps of the *rbcS-E9* enhancer do not change much over time in constant light

Supplemental Figure 12. Mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers are conserved over time in constant light

Supplemental Figure 13. Plant STARR-seq experiments are reproducible across libraries

Supplemental Figure 14. Correct spacing between mutation-sensitive regions is required for full activity

Supplemental Figure 15. A linear model can predict the light-responsiveness of synthetic enhancers

Supplemental Data Set 1. Enhancer strength of single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers in the light or dark

Supplemental Data Set 2. Enhancer strength of single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers in time course experiment

Supplemental Data Set 3. Enhancer strength of combinations of fragments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers in the light or dark

Supplemental Table 1. Oligonucleotides used in this study

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors conceived and interpreted experiments; T.J., J.T., and N.A.M performed experiments; T.J., and J.T. analyzed the data; T.J., S.F., and C.Q. prepared the manuscript and figures. All authors read and revised the manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interests.

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Enhancers from photosynthesis genes show light-responsive activity.

(A and B) Full-length (FL) enhancers, as well as 169-bp long segments from their 5′ or 3′ end, of the *Pisum sativum AB80* and *rbcS-E9* genes and the *Triticum aestivum Cab-1* gene were cloned upstream of the 35S minimal promoter driving the expression of a barcoded GFP reporter gene **(A)**. All constructs were pooled and the viral 35S enhancer was added as an internal control. The pooled enhancer library was subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves with plants grown for 2 days in normal light/dark cycles (+ light) or completely in the dark (− light) prior to RNA extraction **(B)**. Enhancer strength was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer ($\log_2$ set to 0).

(C) Light-responsiveness ($\log_2$[enhancer strength^{light}/enhancer strength^{dark}]) was determined for the indicated enhancer segments.

(D) Transgenic Arabidopsis lines were generated with T-DNAs harboring a constitutively expressed luciferase (Luc) gene and a nanoluciferase (NanoLuc) gene under control of a 35S minimal promoter coupled to the 35S enhancer or the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, or *rbcS-E9* enhancers.

(E) Nanoluciferase activity was measured in 5 T2 plants from these lines and normalized to the activity of luciferase. The NanoLuc/Luc ratio was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer (none; $\log_2$ set to 0).

(F) The mean NanoLuc/Luc ratio was compared to the mean enhancer strength determined by STARR-seq. Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancers are indicated. A linear regression line is shown as a dashed line. Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval.

Box plots in **(B)**, **(C)**, and **€** represent the median (center line), upper and lower quartiles (box limits), 1.5× interquartile range (whiskers), and outliers (points) for all corresponding barcodes **(B and C)** or plant lines **(E)** from two **(B and C)** or three **(E)** independent replicates. Numbers at the bottom of each box plot indicate the number of samples in each group.

Figure 2. The *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers contain multiple mutation-sensitive regions.

(A–C) All possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80* **(A)**, *Cab-1* **(B)**, and *rbcS-E9* **(C)** enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0). A sliding average (window size = 6 bp) of the mean enhancer strength for all variants at a given position is shown. The shaded area indicates the region where the 5′ and 3′ segments overlap. Mutation-sensitive regions in the 3′ enhancer segments are indicated by shaded rectangles labeled a–e.

Figure 3. Mutation-sensitive regions harbor transcription factor binding sites.

(A) 4 to 5 mutation-sensitive regions (shaded rectangles; labeled a–e) were defined for the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers. The mutational sensitivity plots are reproduced from Figure 2.

(B–E) Sequence logo plots were generated from the enhancer strength in the light **(B–D)** or dark **(E)** of all possible single-nucleotide substitution variants within the indicated mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80* **(B)**, *Cab-1* **(C)**, or *rbcS-E9* **(D and E)** enhancers. The sequence of the wild-type enhancer and the position along it is shown on the x axis. Letters with dark colors in the logo plot represent wild-type bases. The sequence logos for each region were compared to known transcription factor binding motifs and significant matches are shown below the plots.

Figure 4. Circadian oscillation is robustly encoded in the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers.

(A) All possible single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves. On the morning of the third day after transformation (ZT 0), the plants were shifted to constant light. Leaves were harvested for RNA extraction starting at mid-day (ZT 8) and in 6 hour intervals (ZT 14, 20, 26, and 32) afterwards.

(B) A sine wave with a period of 24 h was fitted to the enhancer strength of a given variant across all sampled time points. The fitted line is plotted together with the measured data points for the wild-type enhancers. The equilibrium point of the curves was set to 0. The amplitude is shown as a two-sided arrow at the time of highest enhancer strength (peak time). The goodness-of-fit (R^2) is indicated. The shaded gray area represents the timing of the dark period if the plants had not been shifted to constant light.

(C and D) Histograms of the difference between the amplitude **(C)** and peak time **(D)** of each single-nucleotide variant relative to the wild-type enhancer. For comparison, the

difference in enhancer strength at ZT 8 is also shown in **(C)**. Variants with a below average goodness-of-fit are grayed out in **(D)**.

Figure 5. Epistatic interactions between single-nucleotide deletions.

(A and B) Selected single-nucleotide deletion variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers and all possible combinations with two of these deletions were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles **(A)** or completely in the dark **(B)** for two days prior to RNA extraction. For each pair of deletions, the expected enhancer strength based on the sum of the effects of the individual deletions (additive model) is plotted against the measured enhancer strength. The color of the points represents the distance between the two deletions in a pair.

Figure 6. The number, spacing, and order of mutation-sensitive regions affects enhancer strength.

(A) Fragments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers spanning 1–3 mutation-sensitive regions (shaded rectangles; labeled a–e, ab, abc, bc, de) as well as a control fragment (ctrl) from a mutation-insensitive region in *Cab-1* and a shuffled version of the *AB80* fragment d were ordered as oligonucleotides. These fragments were randomly combined to create synthetic enhancers with up to three fragments which were then subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. The mutational sensitivity plots are reproduced from Figure 2.

(B) Violin plots of the strength of the synthetic enhancers grouped by the number of contained fragments.

(C) For each enhancer fragment, the area under the curve (AUC) in the mutational sensitivity plots was calculated and plotted against the fragment's enhancer strength. AUCs in the dark or light for *rbcS-E9* fragments c and d, respectively, are shown in **(A)**. Pearson's R^2 , Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer fragments are indicated. A linear regression line is shown as a dashed line.

(D and E) Plots of the strength of enhancer fragments or fragment combinations (separated by a + sign and shown in the order in which they appear in the construct) in three replicates (points) and the mean strength (lines).

(F) Violin plots of the difference in enhancer strength between synthetic enhancers harboring the same two enhancer fragments but in different order. The *p*-value from a two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test comparing light and dark results is indicated (*p*).

Violin plots in **(B)** and **(F)** represent the kernel density distribution and the box plots inside represent the median (center line), upper and lower quartiles and 1.5× interquartile range (whiskers) for all corresponding synthetic enhancers. Numbers at the bottom of each violin indicate the number of elements in each group. Enhancer strength in **(B)**–**(E)** was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer ($\log_2$ set to 0).

Figure 7. Enhancer fragments can be used to build condition-specific synthetic enhancers.

(A) Plot of the strength of synthetic enhancers created by randomly combining up to three fragments derived from mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers (see Figure 6A) as measured by Plant STARR-seq in the light or dark. The synthetic enhancers were grouped into four categories: inactive, $\log_2$(enhancer strength) ≤ 1 in both conditions; constitutive, similar strength in both conditions; light-activated, at least two-fold more active in the light; dark-activated, at least two-fold more active in the dark. The number (*n*) of synthetic enhancers in each category is indicated.

(B) Dual-luciferase reporter constructs (see Figure 1D) were created for 11 synthetic enhancers (syn1–11). Nanoluciferase activity was measured in at least 4 T2 plants from these lines and normalized to the activity of luciferase. The NanoLuc/Luc ratio was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer (none; $\log_2$ set to 0). Box plots are as defined in Figure 1E.

(C) The mean NanoLuc/Luc ratio was compared to the mean enhancer strength determined by STARR-seq. A linear regression line is shown as a dashed line. Error

bars represent the 95% confidence interval. The constituent fragments of the synthetic enhancers are indicated with fragments separated by a + sign. The first letter indicates the enhancer from which the fragment is derived (A, *AB80*; C, *Cab-1*; R, *rbcS-E9*) and the lowercase letters represent the fragment name.

(D) A linear model was built to predict the strength of the synthetic enhancers based on the strength of the constituent individual fragments. Hexbin plots (color represents the count of points in each hexagon) of the correlation between the model's prediction and the measured data are shown.

In **(C)** and **(D)**, Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of synthetic enhancers are indicated.

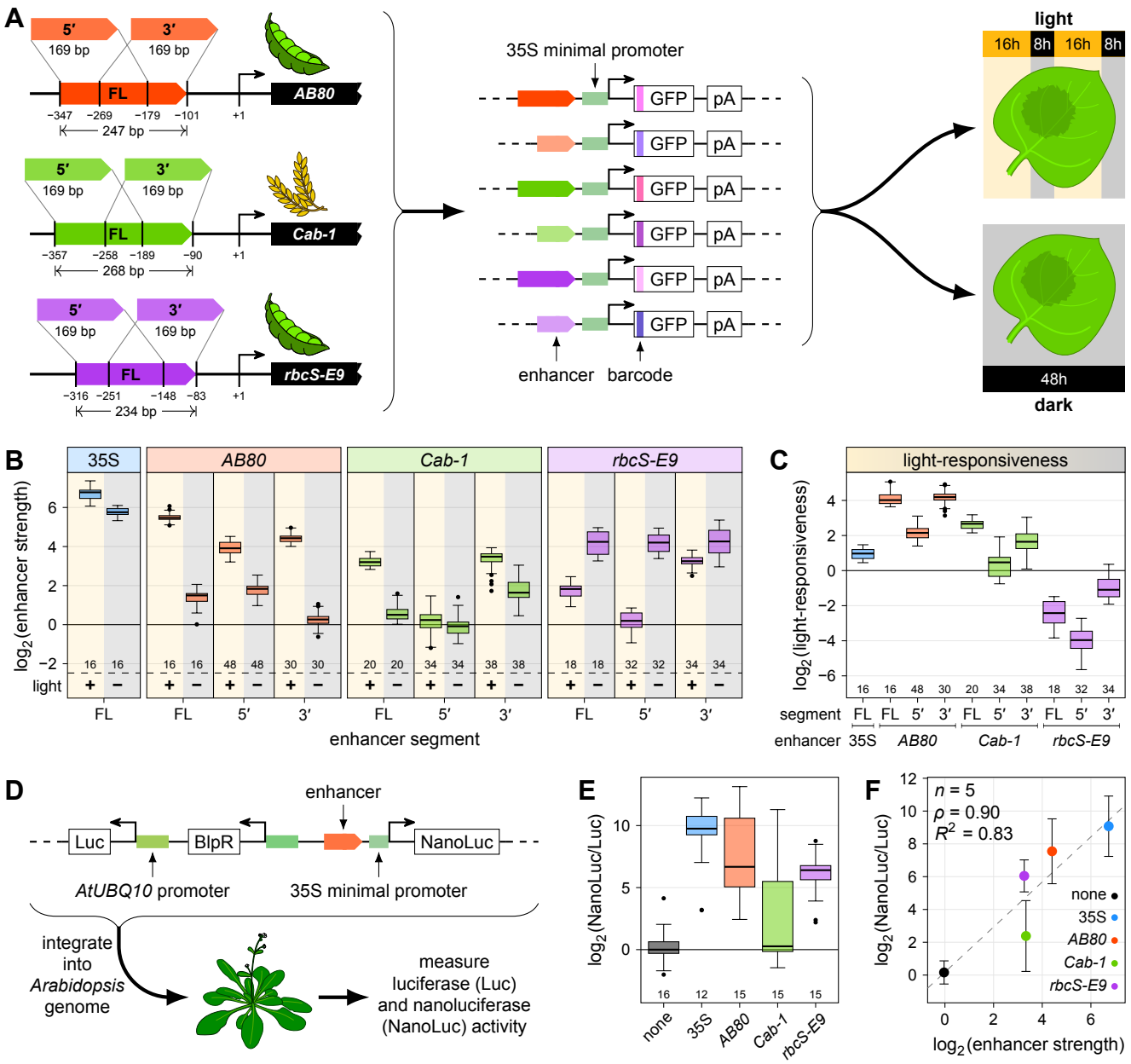

A
5′
3′
169 bp
169 bp
FL
AB80
−347 −269 −179 −101 +1
247 bp
Cab-1
−357 −258 −189 −90 +1
268 bp
rbcS-E9
−316 −251 −148 −83 +1
234 bp
35S minimal promoter
GFP
pA
enhancer
barcode
light
16h 8h 16h 8h
48h
dark
B
35S
AB80
Cab-1
rbcS-E9
log2(enhancer strength)
light
FL
5′
3′
enhancer segment
C
light-responsiveness
log2(light-responsiveness)
segment
enhancer
D
enhancer
Luc
BlpR
NanoLuc
AtUBQ10 promoter
35S minimal promoter
integrate into Arabidopsis genome
measure luciferase (Luc) and nanoluciferase (NanoLuc) activity
E
log2(NanoLuc/Luc)
none
35S
AB80
Cab-1
rbcS-E9
F
n = 5
ρ = 0.90
R2 = 0.83
log2(enhancer strength)

Figure 1. Enhancers from photosynthesis genes show light-responsive activity.

(A and B) Full-length (FL) enhancers, as well as 169-bp long segments from their 5′ or 3′ end, of the *Pisum sativum AB80* and *rbcS-E9* genes and the *Triticum aestivum Cab-1* gene were cloned upstream of the 35S minimal promoter driving the expression of a barcoded GFP reporter gene **(A)**. All constructs were pooled and the viral 35S enhancer was added as an internal control. The pooled enhancer library was subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves with plants grown for 2 days in normal light/dark cycles (+ light) or completely in the dark (− light) prior to RNA extraction **(B)**. Enhancer strength was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer ($\log_2$ set to 0).

(C) Light-responsiveness ($\log_2$[enhancer strength^{light}/enhancer strength^{dark}]) was determined for the indicated enhancer segments.

(D) Transgenic *Arabidopsis* lines were generated with T-DNAs harboring a constitutively expressed luciferase (Luc) gene and a nanoluciferase (NanoLuc) gene under control of a 35S minimal promoter coupled to the 35S enhancer or the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, or *rbcS-E9* enhancers.

(E) Nanoluciferase activity was measured in 5 T2 plants from these lines and normalized to the activity of luciferase. The NanoLuc/Luc ratio was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer (none; $\log_2$ set to 0).

(F) The mean NanoLuc/Luc ratio was compared to the mean enhancer strength determined by STARR-seq. Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancers are indicated. A linear regression line is shown as a dashed line. Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval.

Box plots in **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(E)** represent the median (center line), upper and lower quartiles (box limits), 1.5× interquartile range (whiskers), and outliers (points) for all corresponding barcodes **(B and C)** or plant lines **(E)** from two **(B and C)** or three **(E)** independent replicates. Numbers at the bottom of each box plot indicate the number of samples in each group.

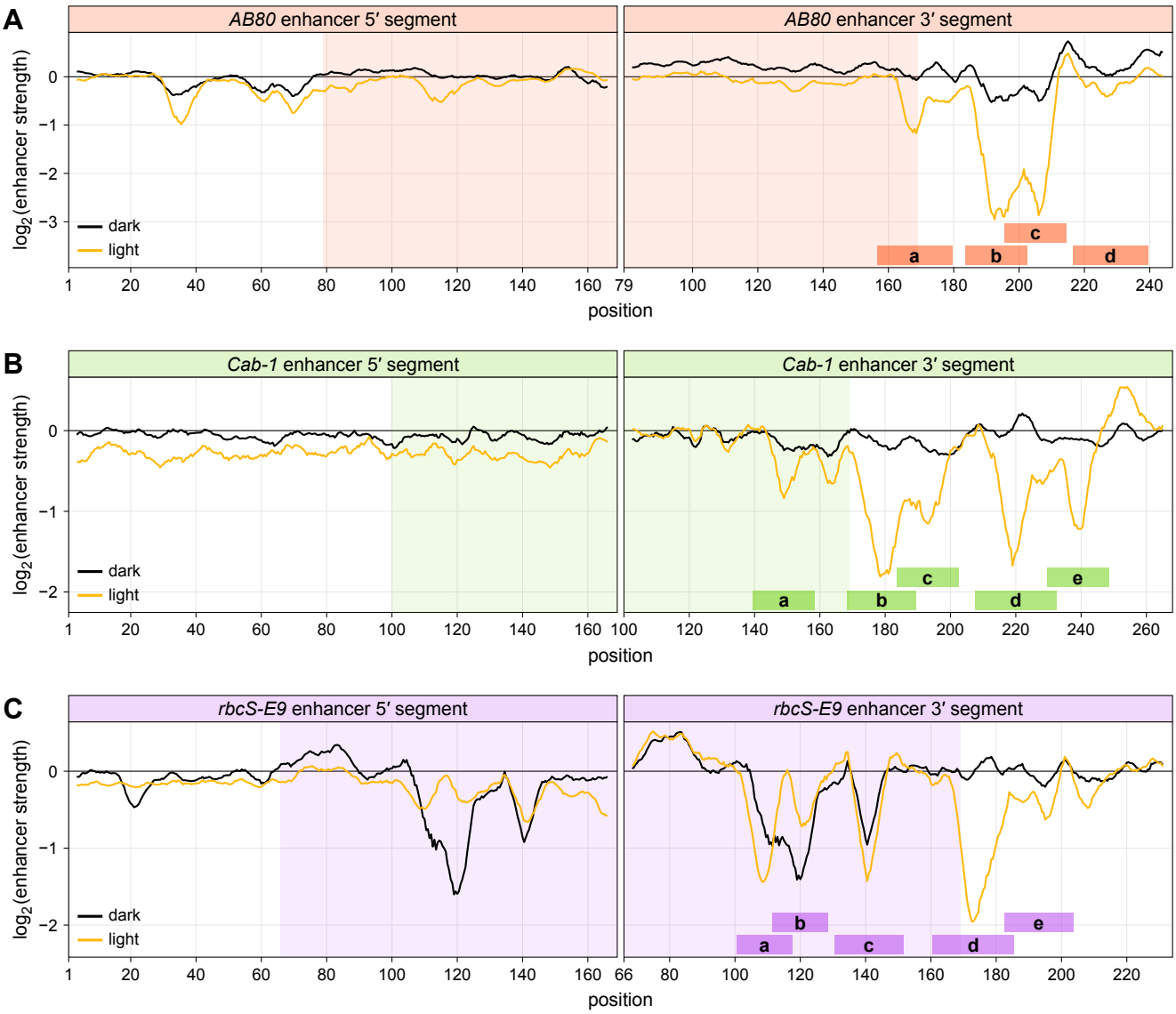


Figure 2. The *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers contain multiple mutation-sensitive regions.
(A–C) All possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80* **(A)**, *Cab-1* **(B)**, and *rbcS-E9* **(C)** enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0). A sliding average (window size = 6 bp) of the mean enhancer strength for all variants at a given position is shown. The shaded area indicates the region where the 5′ and 3′ segments overlap. Mutation-sensitive regions in the 3′ enhancer segments are indicated by shaded rectangles labeled a–e.

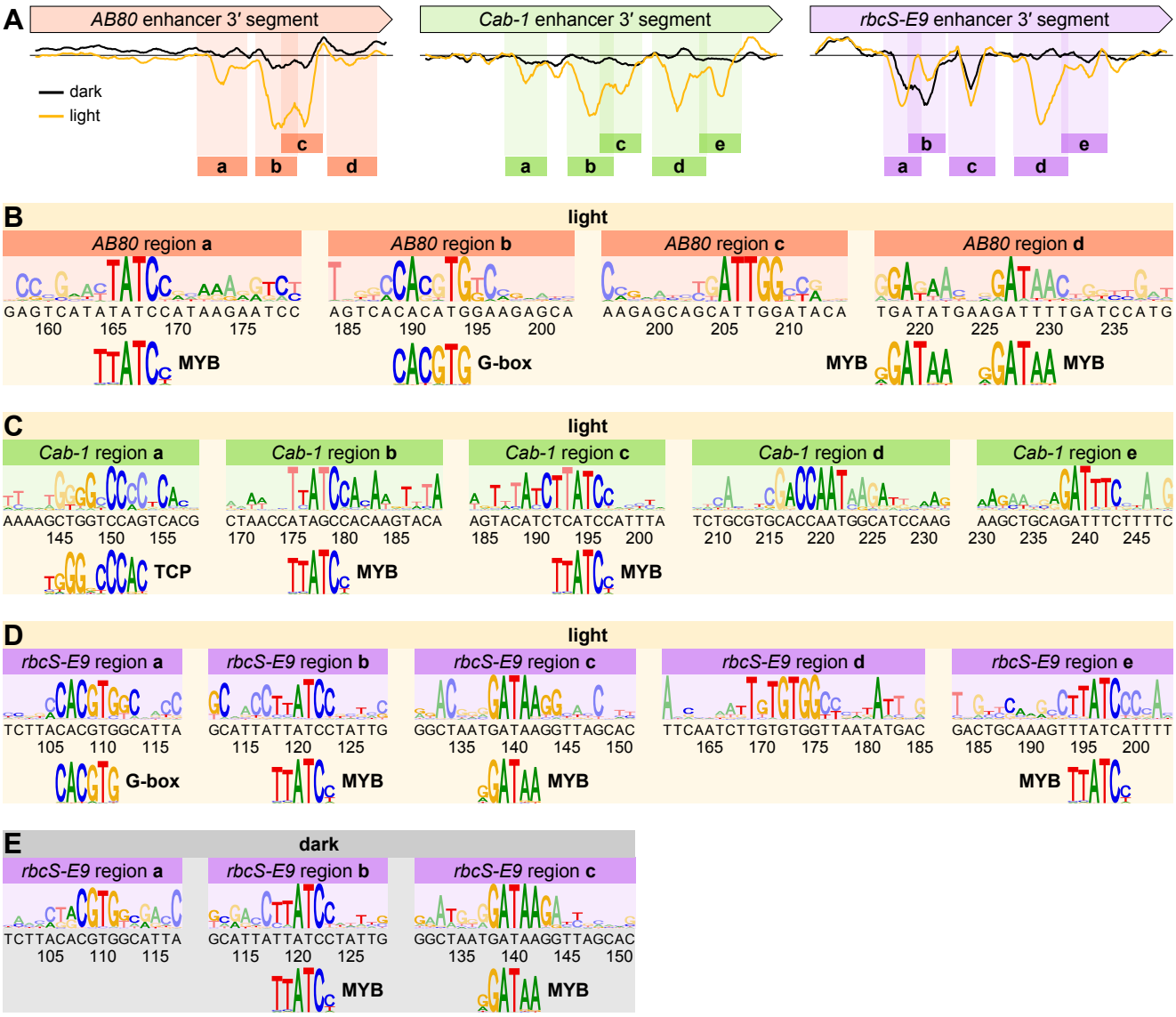


Figure 3. Mutation-sensitive regions harbor transcription factor binding sites.
(A) 4 to 5 mutation-sensitive regions (shaded rectangles; labeled a–e) were defined for the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers. The mutational sensitivity plots are reproduced from Figure 2.
(B–E) Sequence logo plots were generated from the enhancer strength in the light **(B–D)** or dark **(E)** of all possible single-nucleotide substitution variants within the indicated mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80* **(B)**, *Cab-1* **(C)**, or *rbcS-E9* **(D and E)** enhancers. The sequence of the wild-type enhancer and the position along it is shown on the x axis. Letters with dark colors in the logo plot represent wild-type bases. The sequence logos for each region were compared to known transcription factor binding motifs and significant matches are shown below the plots.

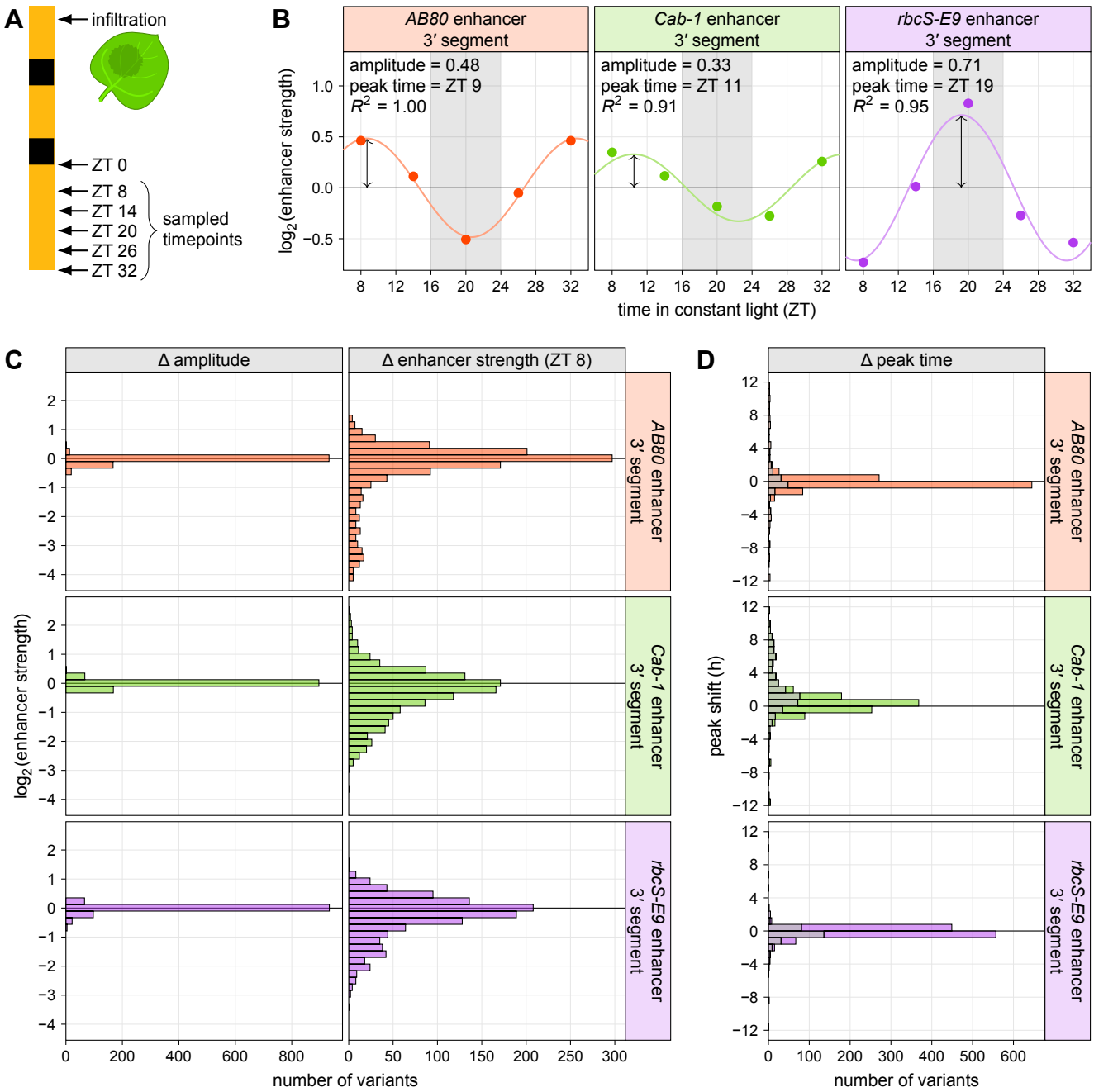


Figure 4. Circadian oscillation is robustly encoded in the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers.
(A) All possible single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves. On the morning of the third day after transformation (ZT 0), the plants were shifted to constant light. Leaves were harvested for RNA extraction starting at mid-day (ZT 8) and in 6 hour intervals (ZT 14, 20, 26, and 32) afterwards.
(B) A sine wave with a period of 24 h was fitted to the enhancer strength of a given variant across all sampled time points. The fitted line is plotted together with the measured data points for the wild-type enhancers. The equilibrium point of the curves was set to 0. The amplitude is shown as a two-sided arrow at the time of highest enhancer strength (peak time). The goodness-of-fit (R^2) is indicated. The shaded gray area represents the timing of the dark period if the plants had not been shifted to constant light.
(C and D) Histograms of the difference between the amplitude **(C)** and peak time **(D)** of each single-nucleotide variant relative to the wild-type enhancer. For comparison, the difference in enhancer strength at ZT 8 is also shown in **(C)**. Variants with a below average goodness-of-fit are grayed out in **(D)**.

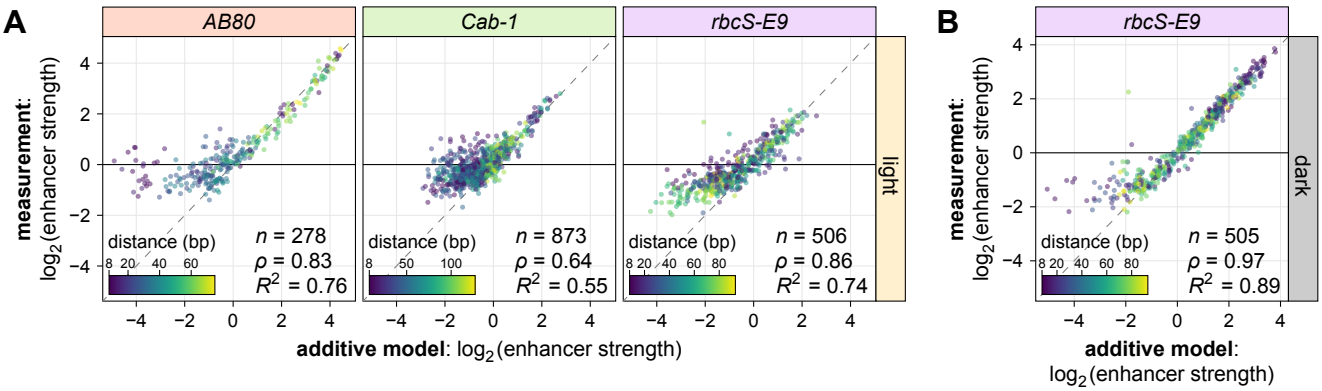


Figure 5. Epistatic interactions between single-nucleotide deletions.

(A and B) Selected single-nucleotide deletion variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers and all possible combinations with two of these deletions were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles **(A)** or completely in the dark **(B)** for two days prior to RNA extraction. For each pair of deletions, the expected enhancer strength based on the sum of the effects of the individual deletions (additive model) is plotted against the measured enhancer strength. The color of the points represents the distance between the two deletions in a pair.

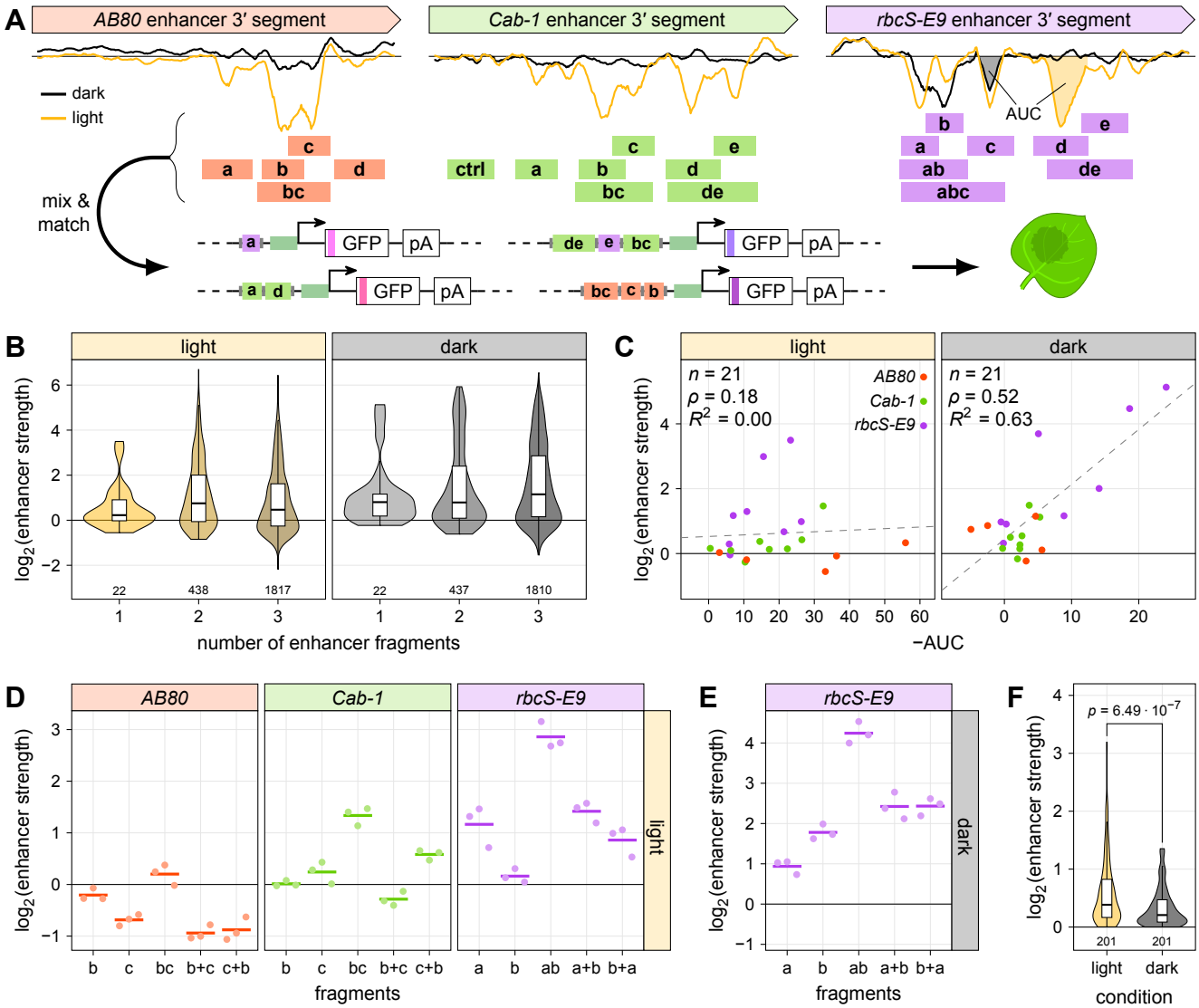


Figure 6. The number, spacing, and order of mutation-sensitive regions affects enhancer strength.
(A) Fragments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers spanning 1–3 mutation-sensitive regions (shaded rectangles; labeled a–e, ab, abc, bc, de) as well as a control fragment (ctrl) from a mutation-insensitive region in *Cab-1* and a shuffled version of the *AB80* fragment d were ordered as oligonucleotides. These fragments were randomly combined to create synthetic enhancers with up to three fragments which were then subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. The mutational sensitivity plots are reproduced from Figure 2.
(B) Violin plots of the strength of the synthetic enhancers grouped by the number of contained fragments.
(C) For each enhancer fragment, the area under the curve (AUC) in the mutational sensitivity plots was calculated and plotted against the fragment's enhancer strength. AUCs in the dark or light for *rbcS-E9* fragments c and d, respectively, are shown in **(A)**. Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer fragments are indicated. A linear regression line is shown as a dashed line.
(D and E) Plots of the strength of enhancer fragments or fragment combinations (separated by a + sign and shown in the order in which they appear in the construct) in three replicates (points) and the mean strength (lines).
(F) Violin plots of the difference in enhancer strength between synthetic enhancers harboring the same two enhancer fragments but in different order. The p-value from a two-sided Wilcoxon rank-sum test comparing light and dark results is indicated (p). Violin plots in **(B)** and **(F)** represent the kernel density distribution and the box plots inside represent the median (center line), upper and lower quartiles and 1.5× interquartile range (whiskers) for all corresponding synthetic enhancers. Numbers at the bottom of each violin indicate the number of elements in each group. Enhancer strength in **(B)**–**(E)** was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer ($\log_2$ set to 0).

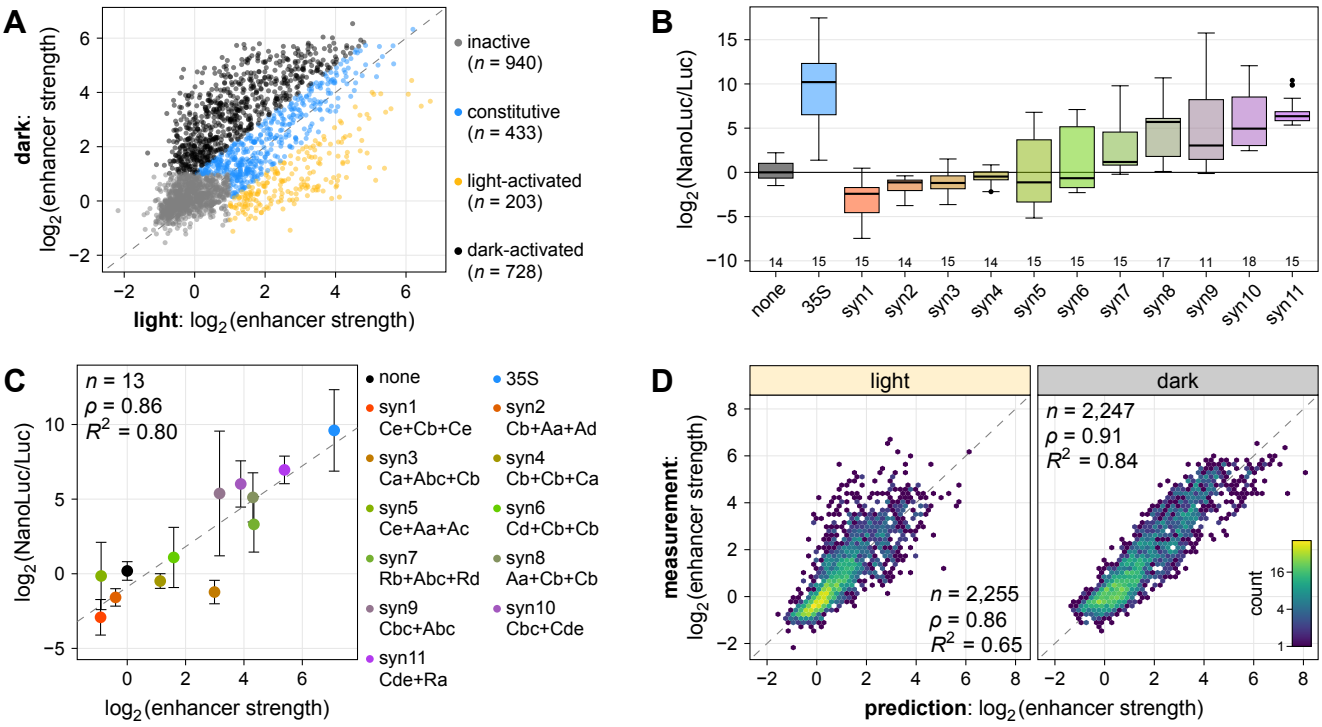
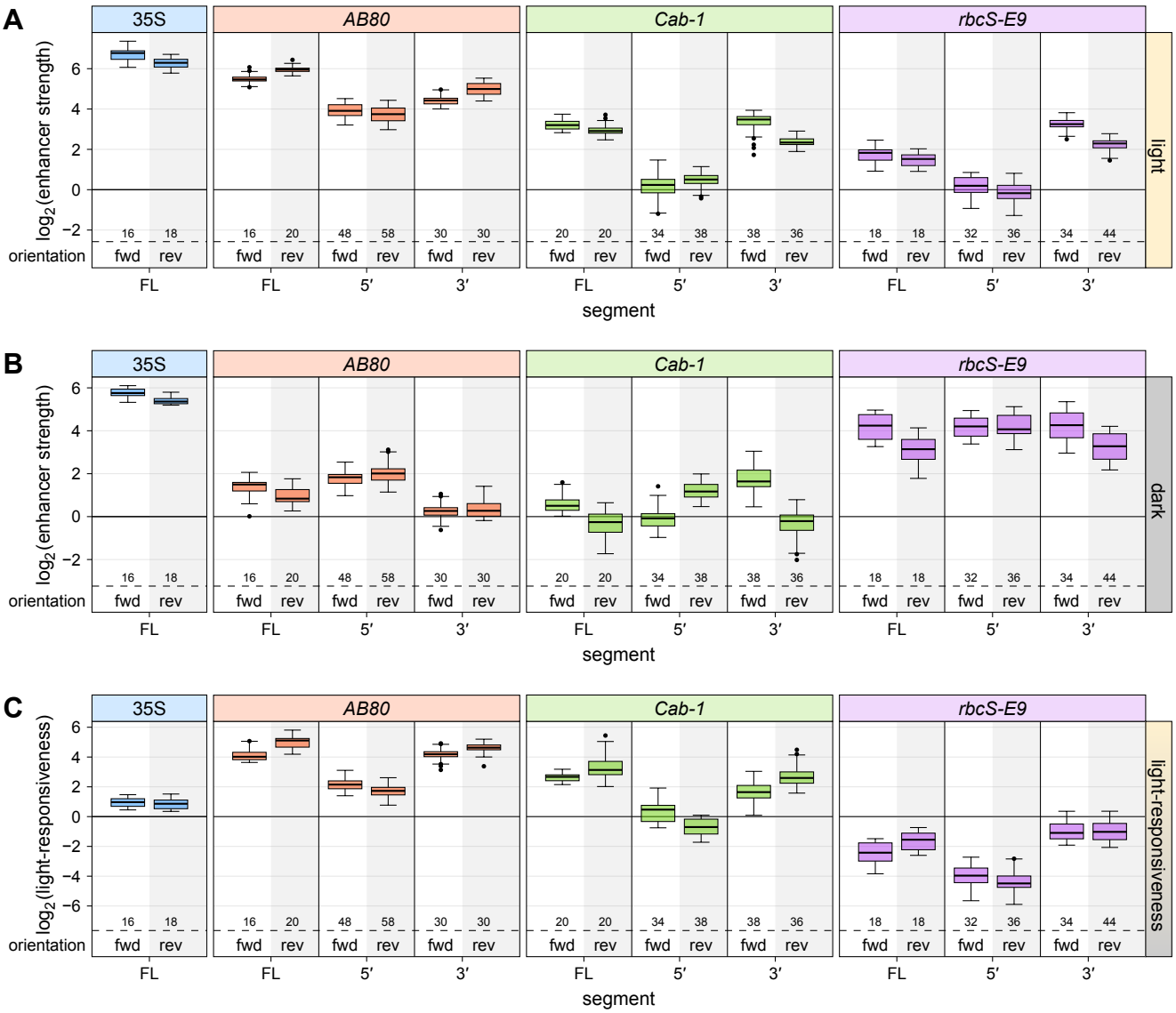
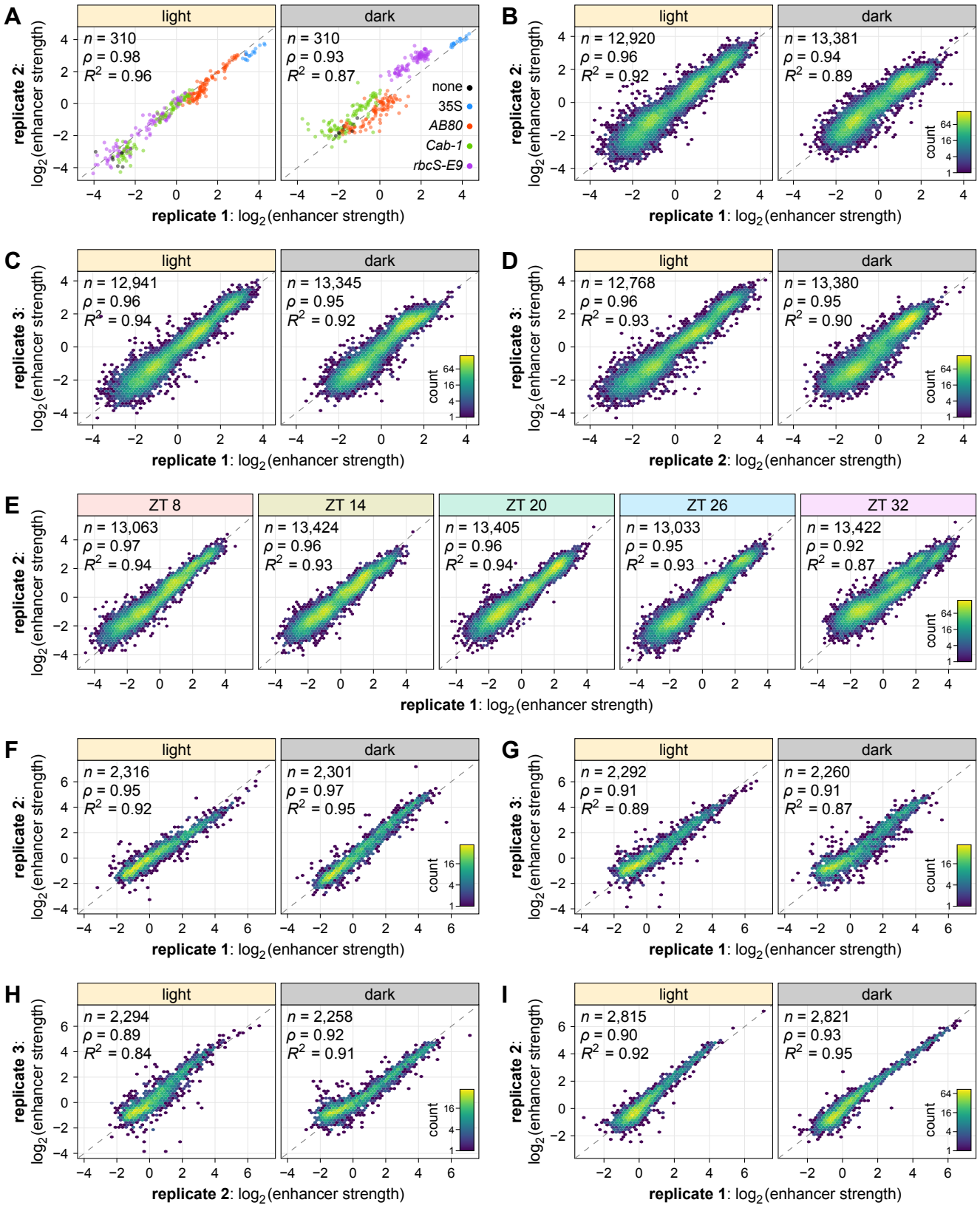


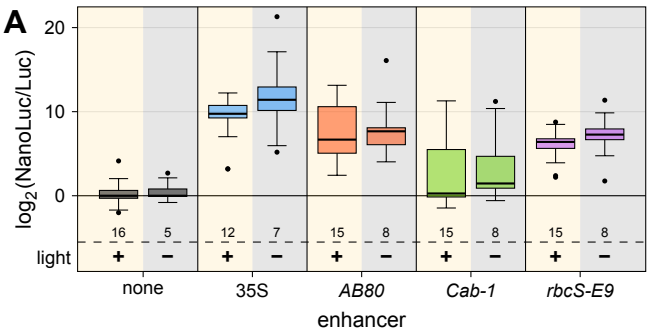
Figure 7. Enhancer fragments can be used to build condition-specific synthetic enhancers.
(A) Plot of the strength of synthetic enhancers created by randomly combining up to three fragments derived from mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers (see Figure 6A) as measured by Plant STARR-seq in the light or dark. The synthetic enhancers were grouped into four categories: inactive, $\log_2$(enhancer strength) ≤ 1 in both conditions; constitutive, similar strength in both conditions; light-activated, at least two-fold more active in the light; dark-activated, at least two-fold more active in the dark. The number (*n*) of synthetic enhancers in each category is indicated.
(B) Dual-luciferase reporter constructs (see Figure 1D) were created for 11 synthetic enhancers (syn1–11). Nanoluciferase activity was measured in at least 4 T2 plants from these lines and normalized to the activity of luciferase. The NanoLuc/Luc ratio was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer (none; $\log_2$ set to 0). Box plots are as defined in Figure 1E. **(C)** The mean NanoLuc/Luc ratio was compared to the mean enhancer strength determined by STARR-seq. A linear regression line is shown as a dashed line. Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval. The constituent fragments of the synthetic enhancers are indicated with fragments separated by a + sign. The first letter indicates the enhancer from which the fragment is derived (A, *AB80*; C, *Cab-1*; R, *rbcS-E9*) and the lowercase letters represent the fragment name.
(D) A linear model was built to predict the strength of the synthetic enhancers based on the strength of the constituent individual fragments. Hexbin plots (color represents the count of points in each hexagon) of the correlation between the model's prediction and the measured data are shown.
In **(C)** and **(D)**, Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (*n*) of synthetic enhancers are indicated.



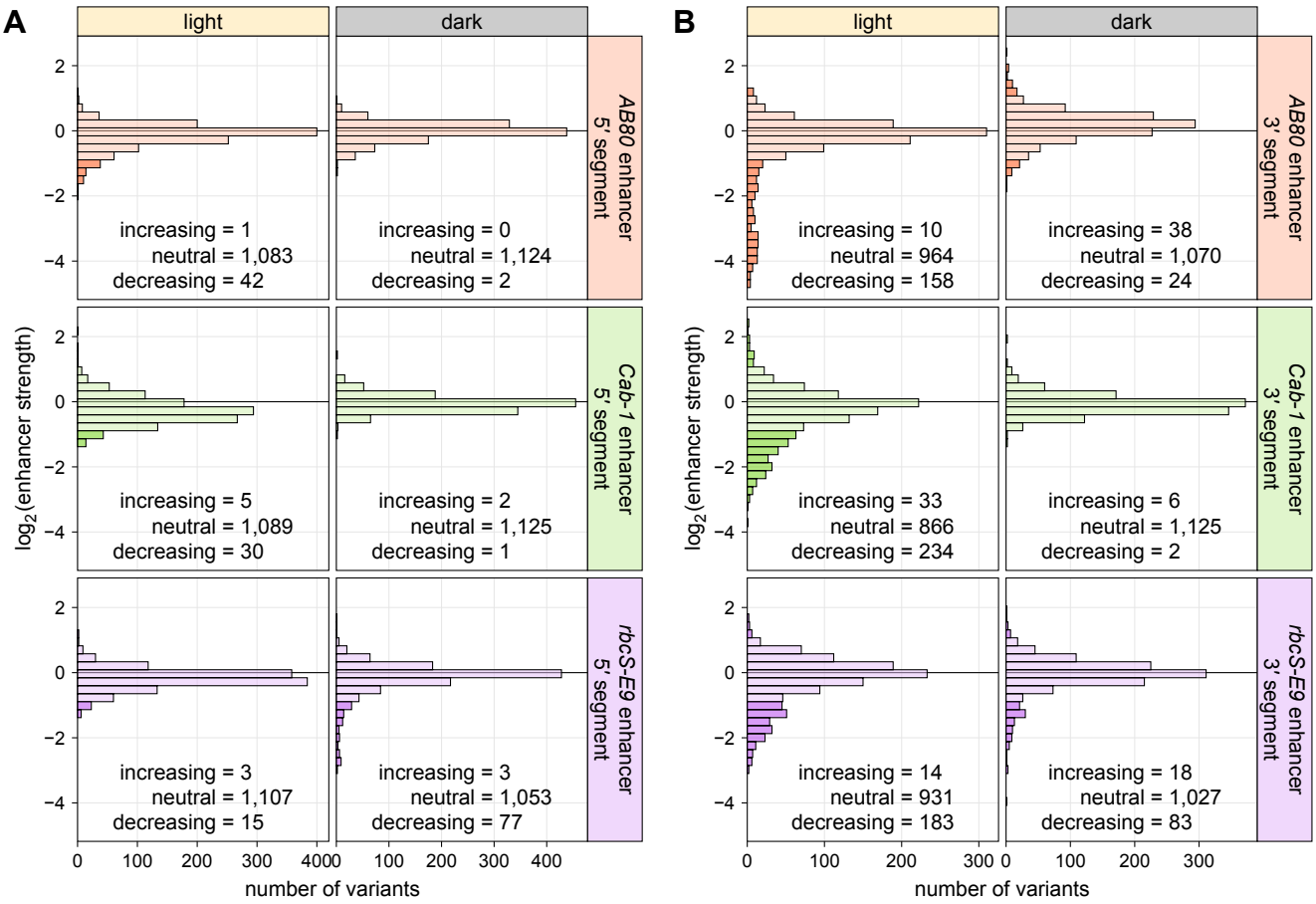
Supplemental Figure 1. Enhancer strength and light-responsiveness is orientation-independent.
(A and B) Full-length (FL) enhancers, as well as 169-bp long segments from their 5′ or 3′ end, of the *Pisum sativum AB80* and *rbcS-E9* genes and the *Triticum aestivum Cab-1* gene were cloned in the forward (fwd; data reproduced from Figure 1, B and C) or reverse (rev) orientation upstream of the 35S minimal promoter driving the expression of a barcoded GFP reporter gene. All constructs were pooled and the viral 35S enhancer was added as an internal control. The pooled enhancer library was subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves with plants grown for 2 days in normal light/dark cycles **(A)** or completely in the dark **(B)** prior to RNA extraction. Enhancer strength was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer ($\log_2$ set to 0).
(C) Light-responsiveness ($\log_2$[enhancer strength^{light}/enhancer strength^{dark}]) was determined for the indicated enhancer segments.
Box plots represent the median (center line), upper and lower quartiles (box limits), 1.5× interquartile range (whiskers), and outliers (points) for all corresponding barcodes from two replicates. Numbers at the bottom of each box plot indicate the number of barcodes in each group.


A
light
dark
n = 310
ρ = 0.98
R2 = 0.96
n = 310
ρ = 0.93
R2 = 0.87
none
35S
AB80
Cab-1
rbcS-E9
replicate 2: log2(enhancer strength)
replicate 1: log2(enhancer strength)
B
light
dark
n = 12,920
ρ = 0.96
R2 = 0.92
n = 13,381
ρ = 0.94
R2 = 0.89
count
C
light
dark
n = 12,941
ρ = 0.96
R2 = 0.94
n = 13,345
ρ = 0.95
R2 = 0.92
replicate 3: log2(enhancer strength)
D
light
dark
n = 12,768
ρ = 0.96
R2 = 0.93
n = 13,380
ρ = 0.95
R2 = 0.90
replicate 2: log2(enhancer strength)
E
ZT 8
ZT 14
ZT 20
ZT 26
ZT 32
n = 13,063
ρ = 0.97
R2 = 0.94
n = 13,424
ρ = 0.96
R2 = 0.93
n = 13,405
ρ = 0.96
R2 = 0.94
n = 13,033
ρ = 0.95
R2 = 0.93
n = 13,422
ρ = 0.92
R2 = 0.87
F
light
dark
n = 2,316
ρ = 0.95
R2 = 0.92
n = 2,301
ρ = 0.97
R2 = 0.95
G
light
dark
n = 2,292
ρ = 0.91
R2 = 0.89
n = 2,260
ρ = 0.91
R2 = 0.87
H
light
dark
n = 2,294
ρ = 0.89
R2 = 0.84
n = 2,258
ρ = 0.92
R2 = 0.91
I
light
dark
n = 2,815
ρ = 0.90
R2 = 0.92
n = 2,821
ρ = 0.93
R2 = 0.95

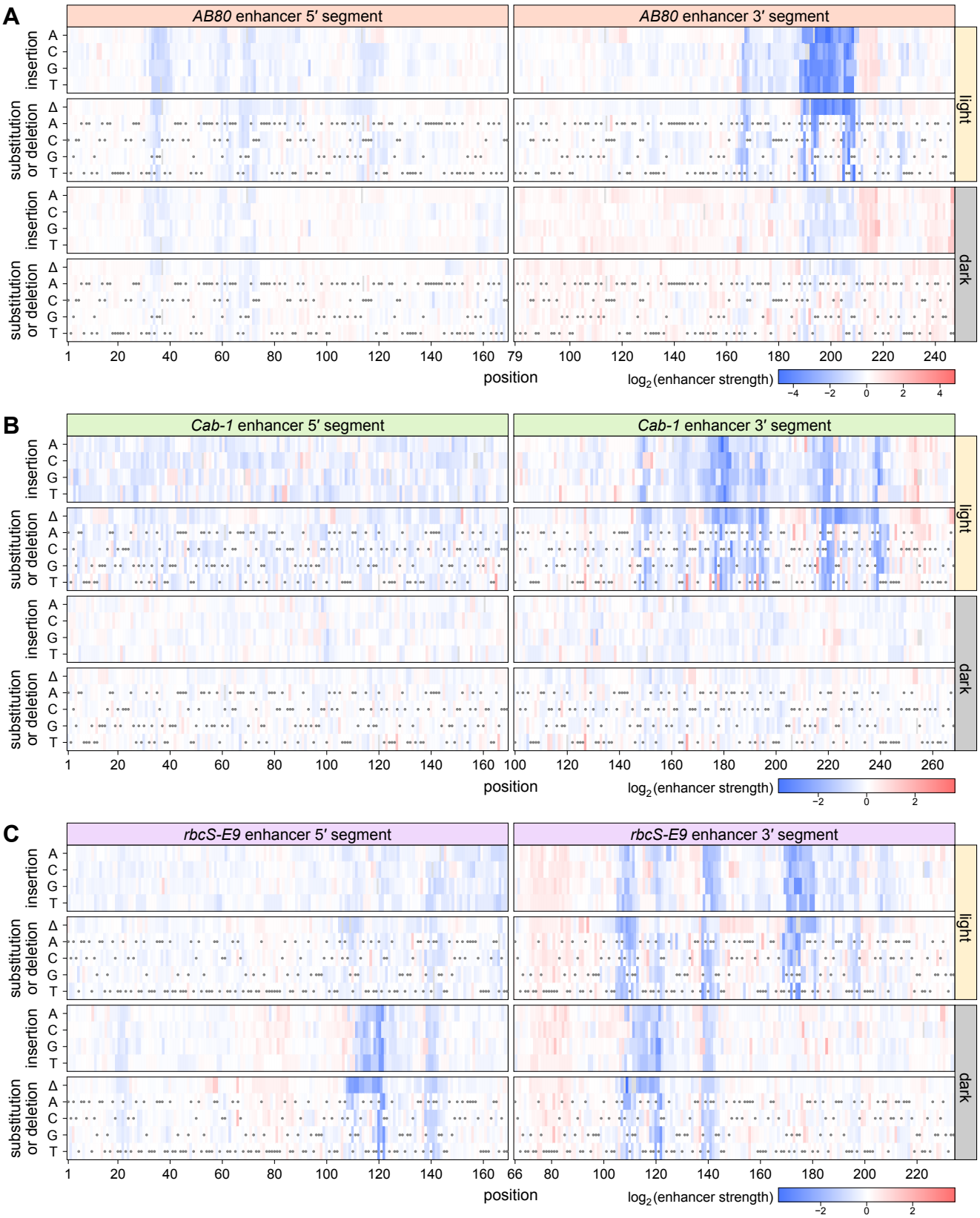
Supplemental Figure 2. Plant STARR-seq yields highly reproducible results.
(A–I) Correlation between biological replicates of Plant STARR-seq for the enhancer library used in Figure 1 and Supplemental Figure 1 **(A)**, the single-nucleotide enhancer variants library used in Figures 2–4 and Supplemental Figures 4–13 **(B–E)**, the synthetic enhancer library used in Figures 6 and 7 and Supplemental Figures 13–15 **(F–H)**, and the combined double-deletion and synthetic enhancer valdiation library used in Figure 5 and Supplemental Figure 13 **(I)** performed under the indicated condition or at the indicated time points.
Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer variants or enhancer fragment combinations are indicated. The color in the hexbin plots in **(B–I)** represents the count of points in each hexagon.



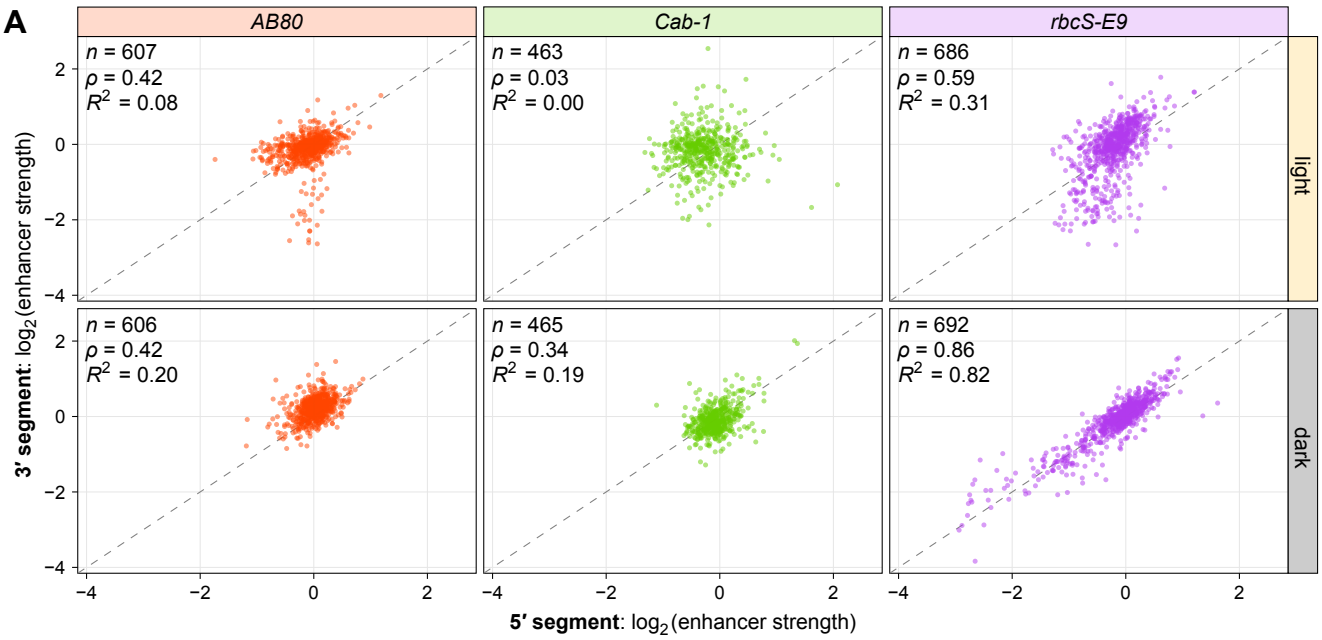
Supplemental Figure 3. The dual-luciferase assay cannot detect light-responsive enhancer activity.
(A) Transgenic *Arabidopsis* lines were generated with constructs harboring a constitutively expressed luciferase (Luc) gene and a nanoluciferase (NanoLuc) gene under control of a 35S minimal promoter coupled to the 35S enhancer or the 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, or *rbcS-E9* enhancers (see Figure 1D). Nanoluciferase activity was measured in 3–5 T2 plants from these lines and normalized to the activity of luciferase. Plants were either grown in normal light/dark cycles (+ light; data reproduced from Figure 1E) or shifted to complete darkness (− light) for 4 days prior to sample collection. The NanoLuc/Luc ratio was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer (none; $\log_2$ set to 0). Box plots represent the median (center line), upper and lower quartiles (box limits), 1.5× interquartile range (whiskers), and outliers (points) for all corresponding plant lines from two (− light) or three (+ light) independent replicates. Numbers at the bottom of each box plot indicate the number of samples in each group.



Supplemental Figure 4. Few single-nucleotide mutations have a strong effect on enhancer strength.
(A and B) All possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ **(A)** and 3′ **(B)** segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0). Variants were grouped into three categories: increasing, $\log_2$(enhancer strength) > 1; neutral, $\log_2$(enhancer strength) between −1 and 1; decreasing, $\log_2$(enhancer strength) < −1. The number of variants in each category is indicated. Neutral variants are shown in a lighter color than increasing and decreasing variants in the histograms.

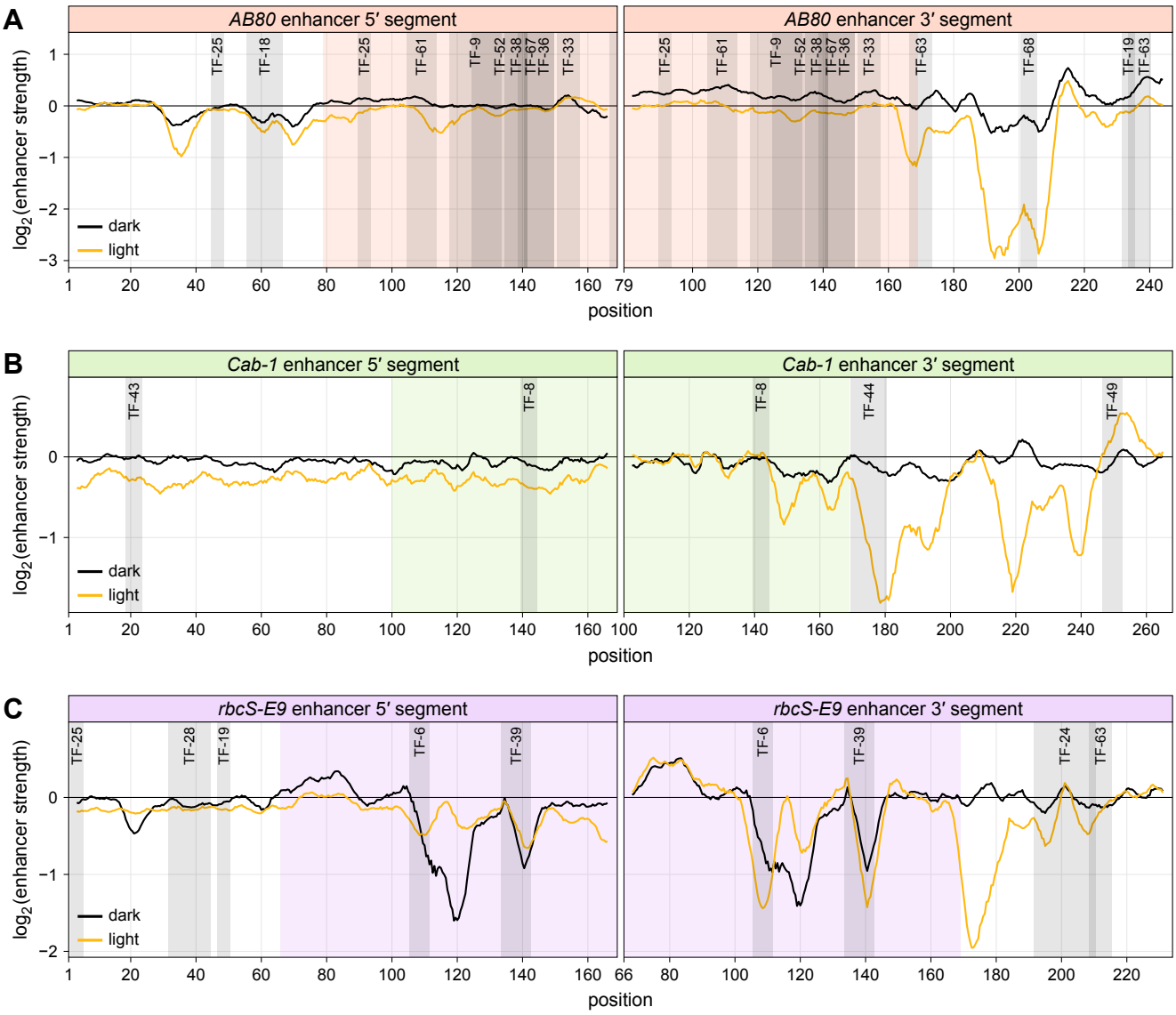

A
AB80 enhancer 5′ segment
AB80 enhancer 3′ segment
insertion
substitution or deletion
light
dark
position
log2(enhancer strength)
B
Cab-1 enhancer 5′ segment
Cab-1 enhancer 3′ segment
C
rbcS-E9 enhancer 5′ segment
rbcS-E9 enhancer 3′ segment

Supplemental Figure 5. Saturation mutagenesis reveals mutation-sensitive patches in plant enhancers.
(A–C) All possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80* **(A)**, *Cab-1* **(B)**, and *rbcS-E9* **(C)** enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0) and plotted as a heatmap. Missing values are shown in light gray and wild-type variants are marked with a gray dot.



Supplemental Figure 6. Effects of mutations in the overlap region of the 5′ and 3′ enhancer segments are more similar in the dark.

(A) All possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco plants grown in normal light/dark cycles (light) or completely in the dark (dark) for two days prior to RNA extraction. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0). For mutations located in the overlap region between the two segments (positions 79–169 in *AB80*, positions 100–169 in *Cab-1*, and positions 66–169 in *rbcS-E9*), the normalized enhancer strength measured in the context of the 5′ segment (x axis) is compared against the normalized enhancer strength measured in the context of the 3′ segment (y axis). Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer variants are indicated.



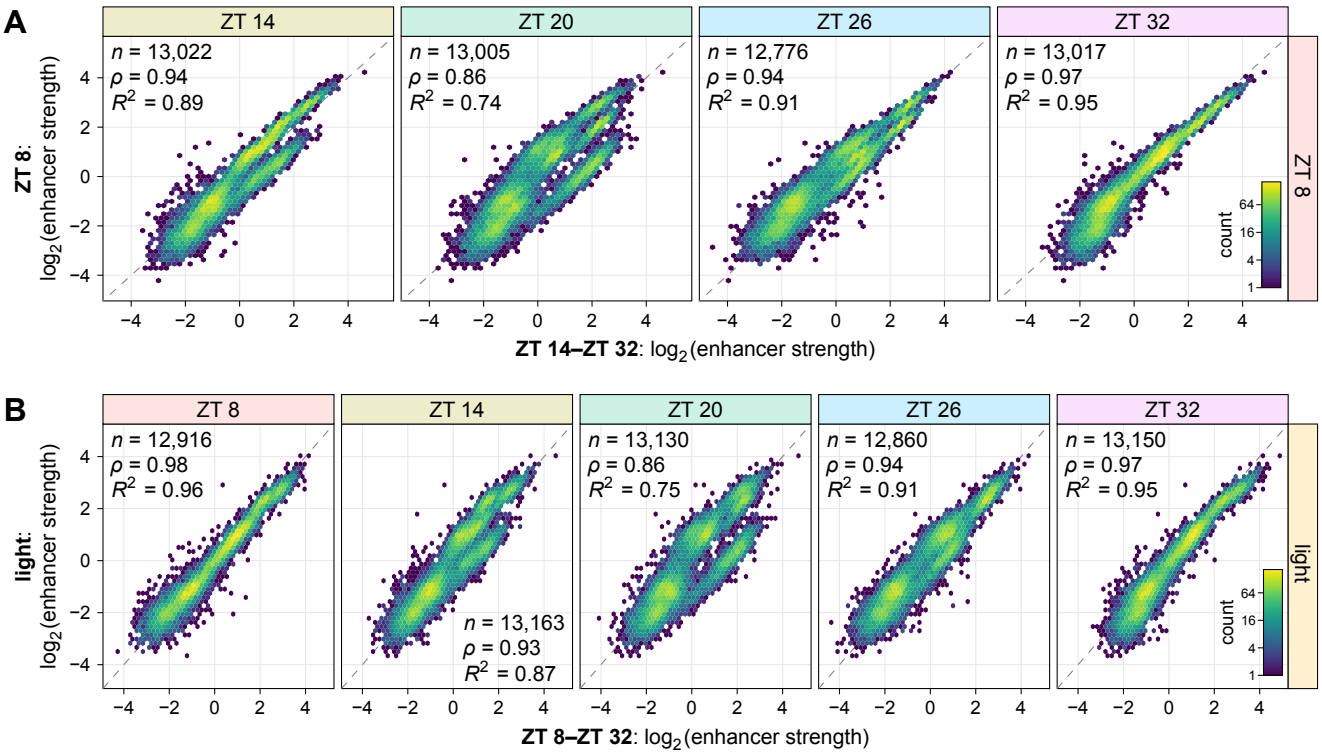
D

ID	family	consensus	ID	family	consensus
TF-6	bHLH/BES1/bZIP/Trihelix	CACGTG	TF-38	NF-YB/C2H2/G2-like	TTGAAAA
TF-8	Dof/C3H	AAAAG	TF-39	HD-ZIP/YABBY	TAATCATTA
TF-9	ZF-HD/HD-ZIP	ATATTdrnnnnnwwwT	TF-43	E2F/DP	GCGCC
TF-18	C2H2/GRAS	AAAGACAAAAm	TF-44	Trihelix	TAACCATGTTr
TF-19	GATA	GATC	TF-49	M-type MADS	TCACCA
TF-24	GATA/MIKC MADS	CATCATCATCATCATCATC	TF-52	B3	AGAAAnwnnnAAGAAAn
TF-25	C2H2	CACT	TF-61	C2H2	rAAACAGAG
TF-28	CPP	TTTAATTTTrAww	TF-63	NF-YB	TCCATCA
TF-33	RAV	TmTGTTG	TF-67	B3	AAAAAAAAAAA
TF-36	HD-ZIP/YABBY	ATAATAATw	TF-68	Nin-like	CAGCA

Supplemental Figure 7. Mutation-sensitive regions contain few strong matches to known transcription factor binding motifs.

(A–C) The wild-type sequences of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80* **(A)**, *Cab-1* **(B)**, and *rbcS-E9* **(C)** enhancers were scanned for significant matches to known transcription factor binding motifs. Hits are shown as gray areas overlaid on the mutational sensitivity plots reproduced from Figure 2. The ID of the matching transcription factor motif is indicated.

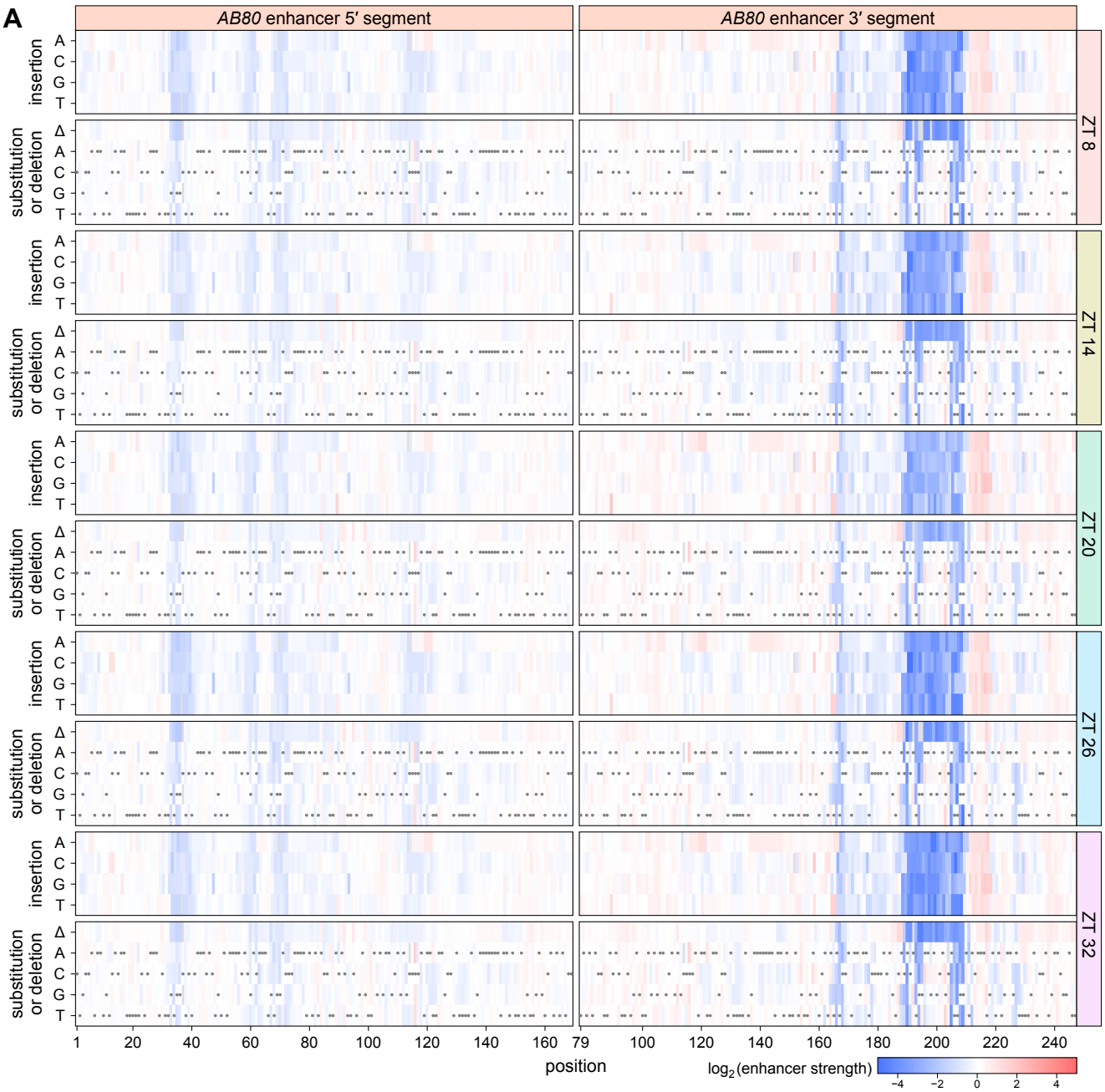
(D) For each transcription factor motif ID, the table lists the families of transcription factors that can bind to it and the consensus binding site sequence. Ambiguous nucleotides in the consensus sequence are shown as lowercase and correspond to: n = A, C, G, or T; d = A, G, or T; r = A or G; w = A or T; m = A or C.



Supplemental Figure 8. Strong correlation between Plant STARR-seq samples obtained 24 hours apart from each other.

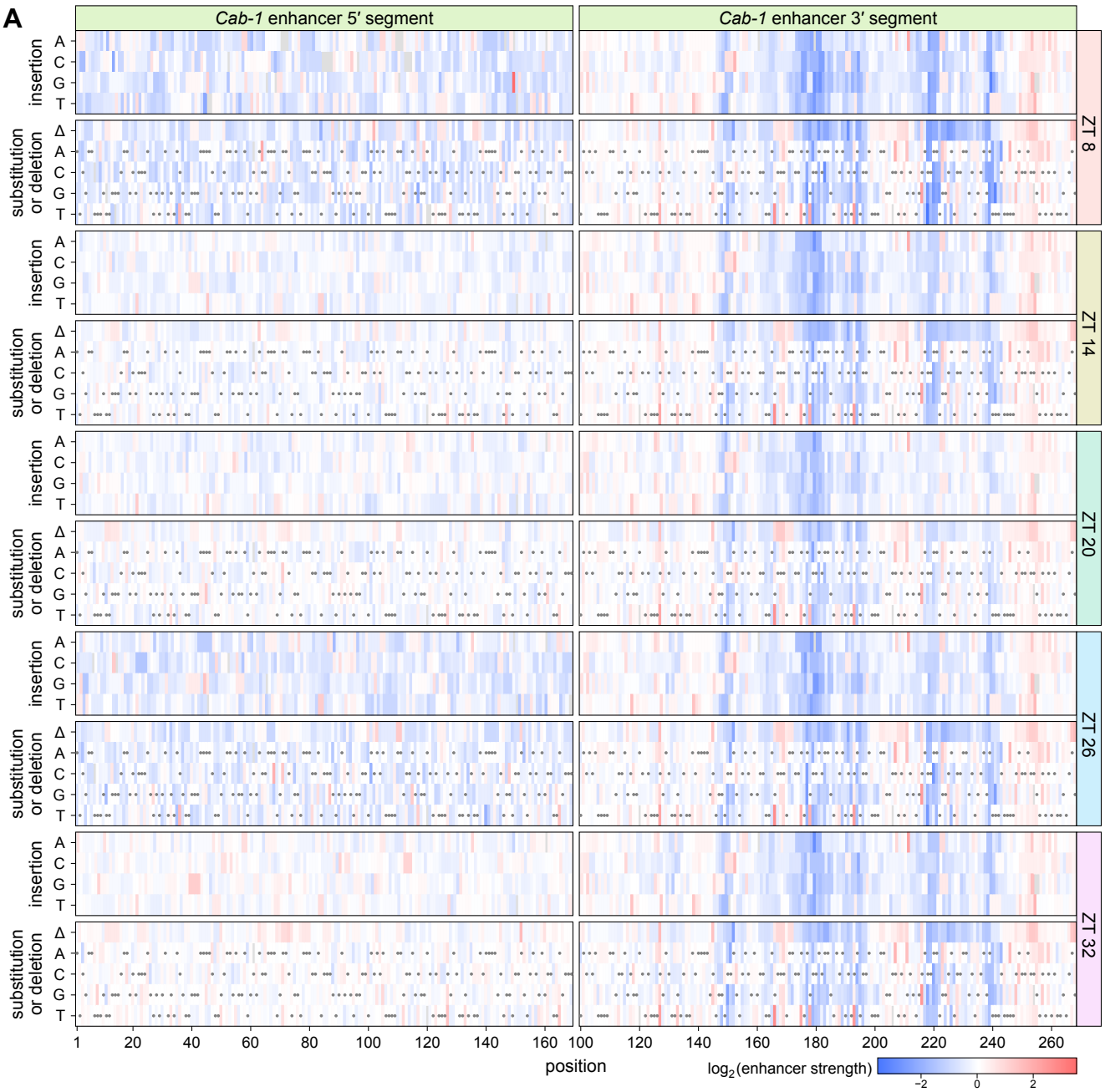
(A) All possible single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves. On the morning of the third day after transformation (ZT 0), the plants were shifted to constant light. Leaves were harvested for RNA extraction starting at mid-day (ZT 8) and in 6 hour intervals (ZT 14, 20, 26, and 32) afterwards. Hexbin plots (color represents the count of points in each hexagon) of the correlation between samples obtained at the indicated time points are shown. Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer variants are indicated.

(B) Hexbin plots of the correlation between the samples from the time course experiment described above compared to the same library tested in normal light/dark cycles (light) as described in Figure 2. The "light" samples were harvested at ZT 8.



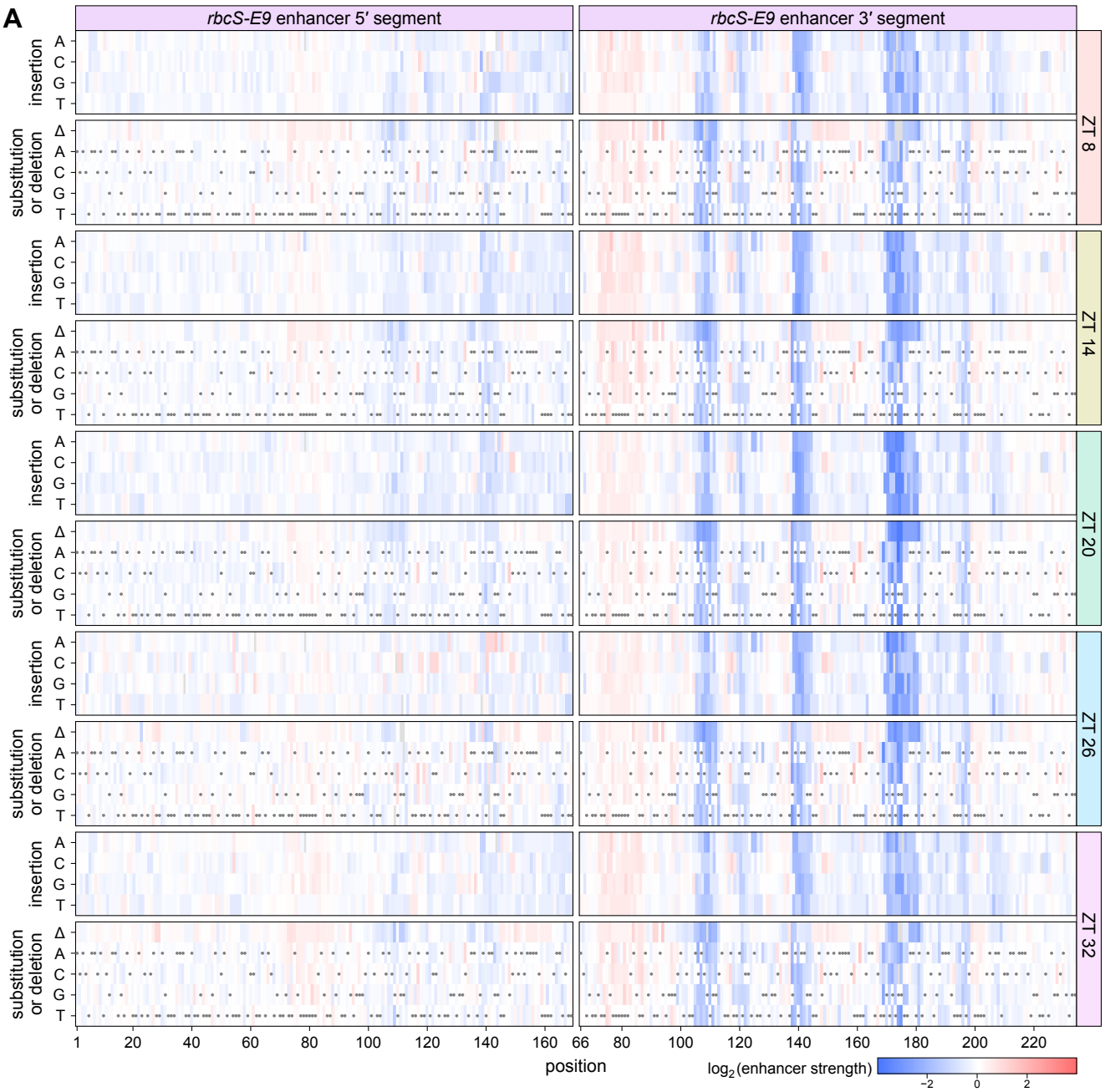
Supplemental Figure 9. Saturation mutagenesis maps of the *AB80* enhancer do not change much over time in constant light.

(A) All possible single-nucleotide variants of the *AB80* enhancer were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves. On the morning of the third day after transformation (ZT 0), the plants were shifted to constant light. Leaves were harvested for RNA extraction starting at mid-day (ZT 8) and in 6 hour intervals (ZT 14, 20, 26, and 32) afterwards. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0) and plotted as a heatmap. Missing values are shown in light gray and wild-type variants are marked with a gray dot.



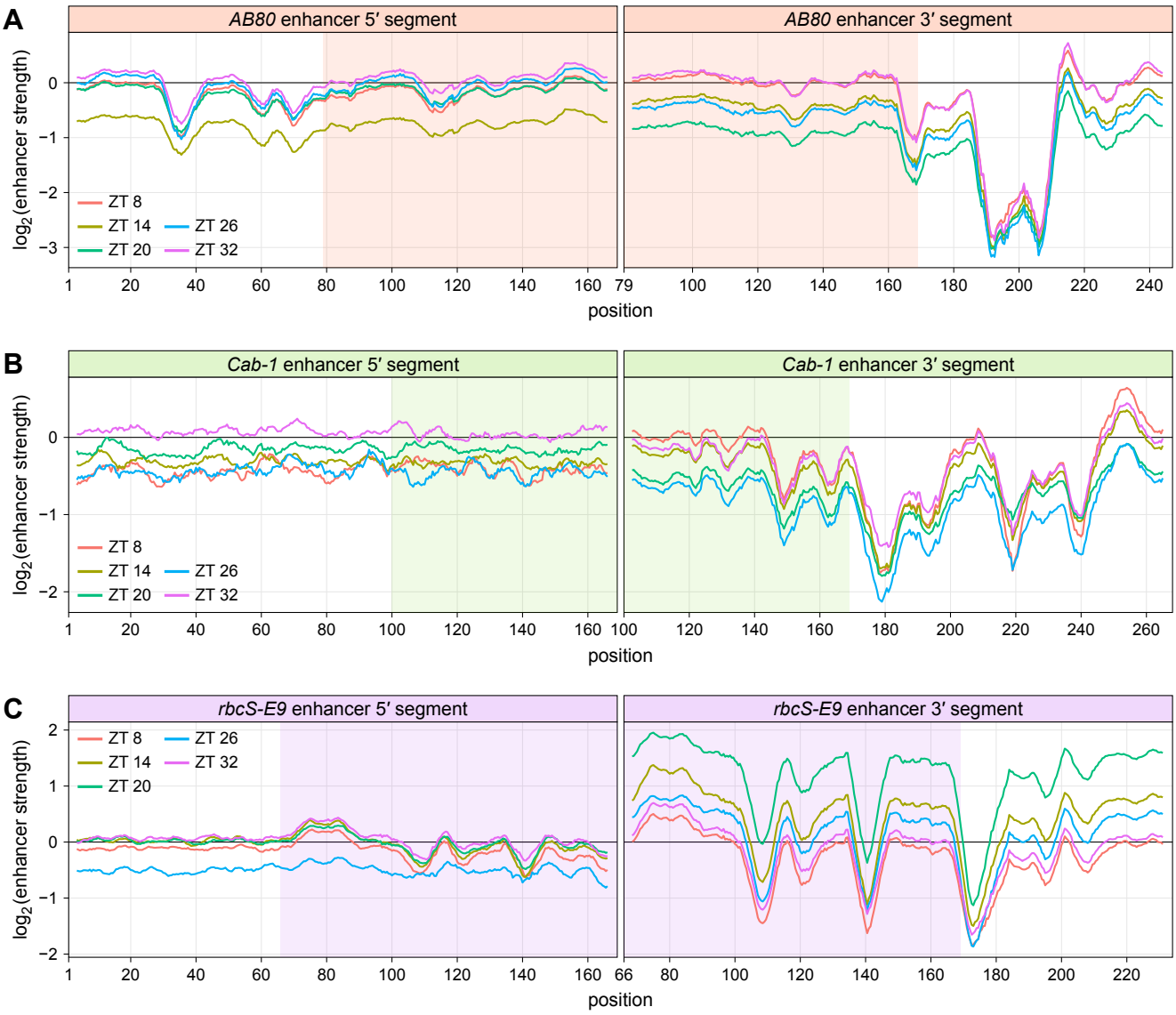
Supplemental Figure 10. Saturation mutagenesis maps of the *Cab-1* enhancer do not change much over time in constant light.

(A) The *Cab-1* enhancer was subjected to the same experiment as the *AB80* enhancer in Supplemental Figure 9.



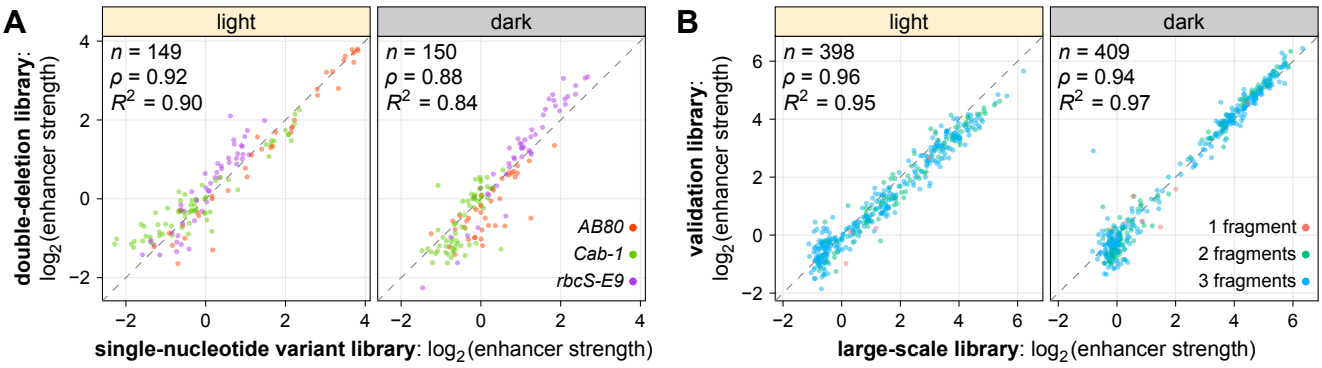
Supplemental Figure 11. Saturation mutagenesis maps of the *rbcS-E9* enhancer do not change much over time in constant light.

(A) The *rbcS-E9* enhancer was subjected to the same experiment as the *AB80* enhancer in Supplemental Figure 9.

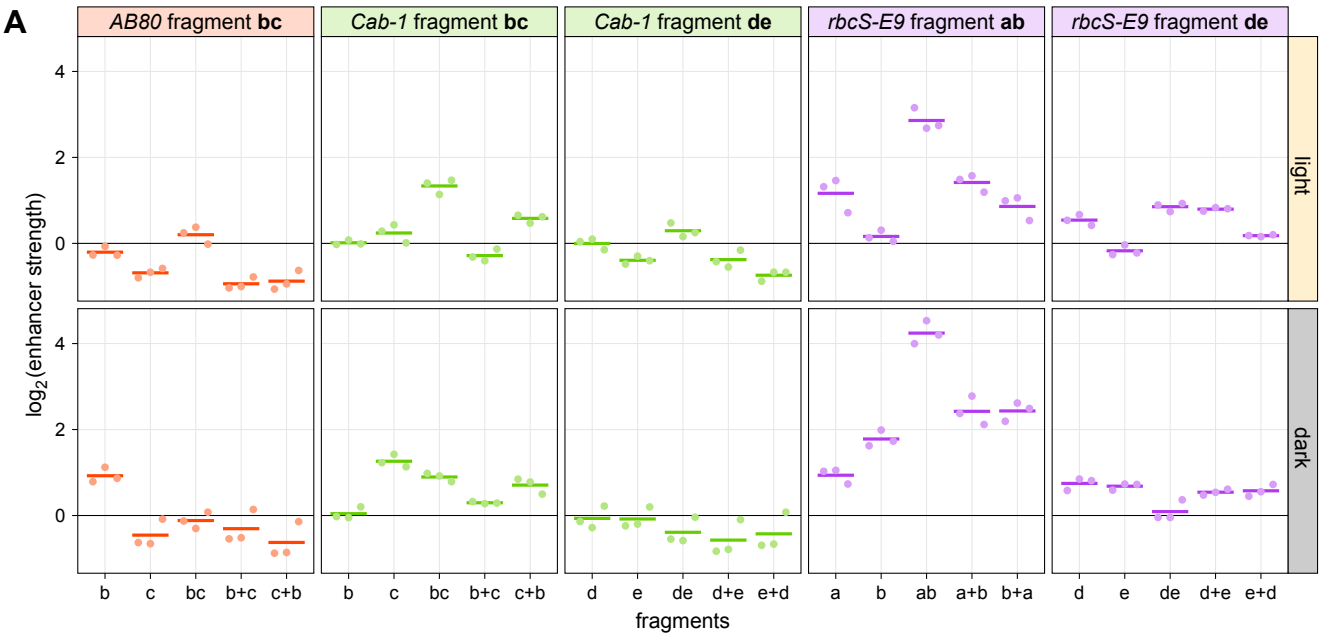


Supplemental Figure 12. Mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers are conserved over time in constant light.

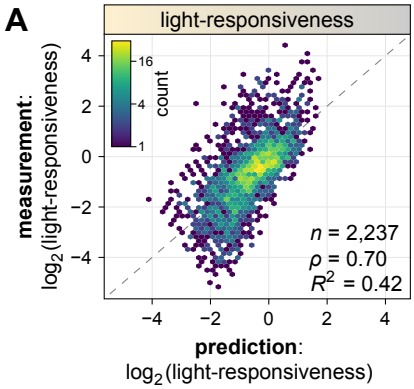
(A–C) All possible single-nucleotide substitution, deletion, and insertion variants of the 5′ and 3′ segments of the *AB80* **(A)**, *Cab-1* **(B)**, and *rbcS-E9* **(C)** enhancers were subjected to Plant STARR-seq in tobacco leaves. On the morning of the third day after transformation (ZT 0), the plants were shifted to constant light. Leaves were harvested for RNA extraction starting at mid-day (ZT 8) and in 6 hour intervals (ZT 14, 20, 26, and 32) afterwards. Enhancer strength was normalized to the wild-type variant ($\log_2$ set to 0). A sliding average (window size = 6 bp) of the mean enhancer strength for all variants at a given position is shown. The shaded area indicates the region where the 5′ and 3′ segments overlap.



Supplemental Figure 13. Plant STARR-seq experiments are reproducible across libraries.
(A) Correlation between the enhancer strength of single-nucleotide deletion variants of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers present in the comprehensive single-nucleotide enhancer variants library (described in Figure 2) and in a second, independent library with single- and double-deletion enhancer variants (described in Figure 5).
(B) Correlation between the strength of synthetic enhancers created by combining fragments of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers as measured in the large-scale library (described in Figure 6) and in a second, smaller validation library. Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer variants are indicated.



Supplemental Figure 14. Correct spacing between mutation-sensitive regions is required for full activity.
(A) Plots of the strength in the indicated condition of enhancer fragments or fragment combinations (separated by a + sign and shown in the order in which they appear in the construct) in three replicates (points) and the mean strength (lines). Enhancer strength was normalized to a control construct without an enhancer ($\log_2$ set to 0). Some plots are reproduced from Figure 6, D and E.



Supplemental Figure 15. A linear model can predict the light-responsiveness of synthetic enhancers.
(A) A linear model was built to predict the light-responsiveness of synthetic enhancers created by randomly combining up to three fragments derived from mutation-sensitive regions of the *AB80*, *Cab-1*, and *rbcS-E9* enhancers (see Figure 6A) based on the light-responsiveness of the constituent individual fragments. A hexbin plot (color represents the count of points in each hexagon) of the correlation between the model's prediction and the measured data is shown. Pearson's R^2, Spearman's ρ, and number (n) of enhancer fragment combinations are indicated.