

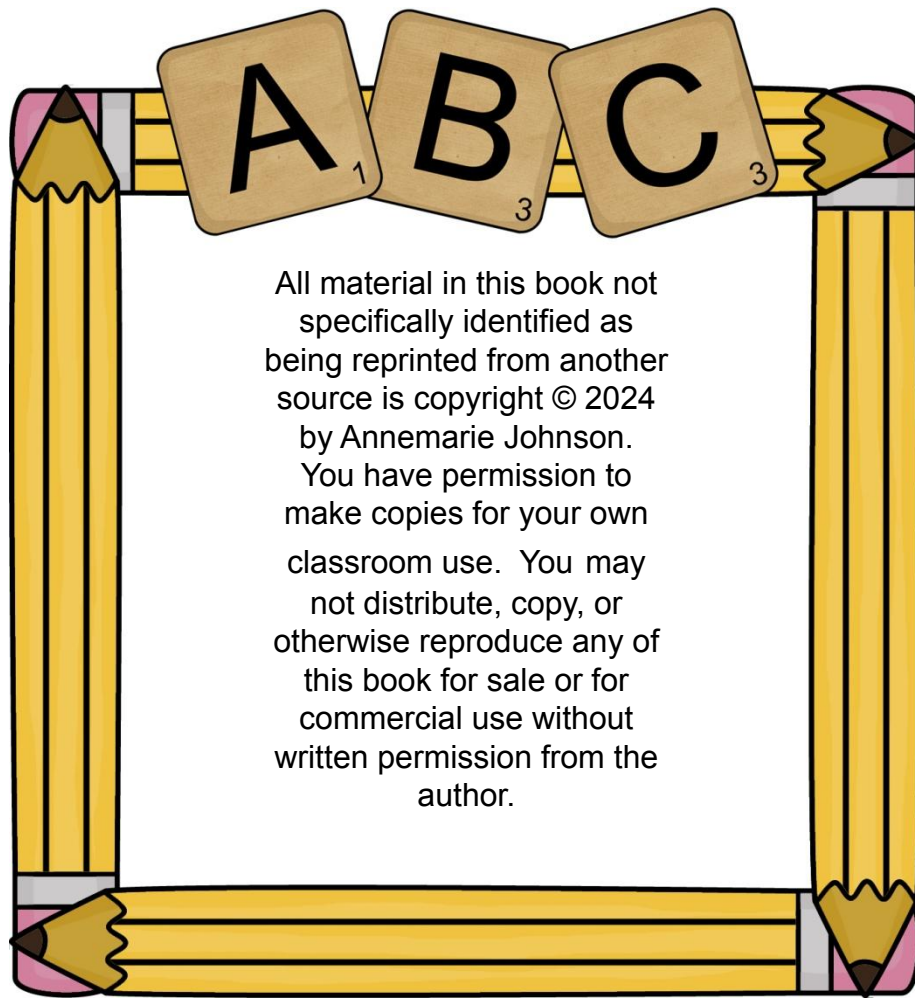
TEACHER²TEACHER^{Help}

Applying the Science of Reading

Grades K-6

by Annemarie Johnson





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Hi, I'm Annemarie!

I am so happy you are joining me on this journey today!

Here I am in my office where I spent hours preparing to bring you the most up-to-date research on how to make learning to read *as easy as possible* for our students.



My personal goal is that you leave this seminar with renewed enthusiasm for teaching reading and with your toolboxes brimming with ideas to take back to your classroom or school!

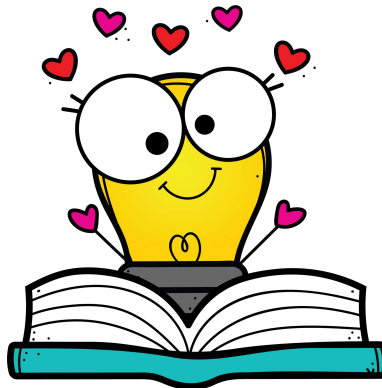
Annemarie

P.S. - If you love the ideas I share in this seminar and want to stay in touch, you can [subscribe to my newsletter](#). I promise not to spam you and only send you good stuff!

Let's get started!

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Let's Start with Some Background Information



What the Science Is and Is Not

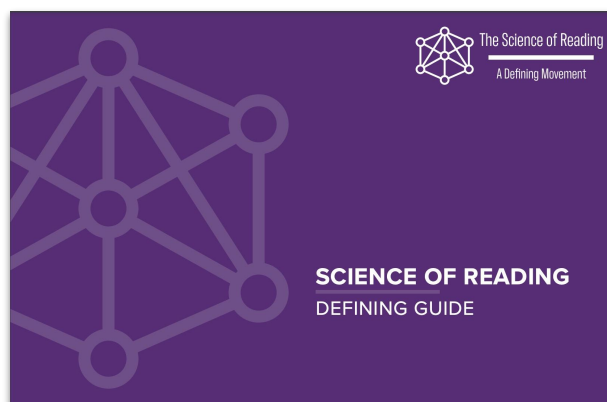
The Science of Reading is not:

- an ideology or philosophy
- a fad, trend, new idea, or pendulum swing
- a political agenda
- a one-size-fits-all approach
- a program of instruction
- a single, specific component of instruction, such as phonics

The Science of Reading is a body of research that is derived from multiple fields of study, including:

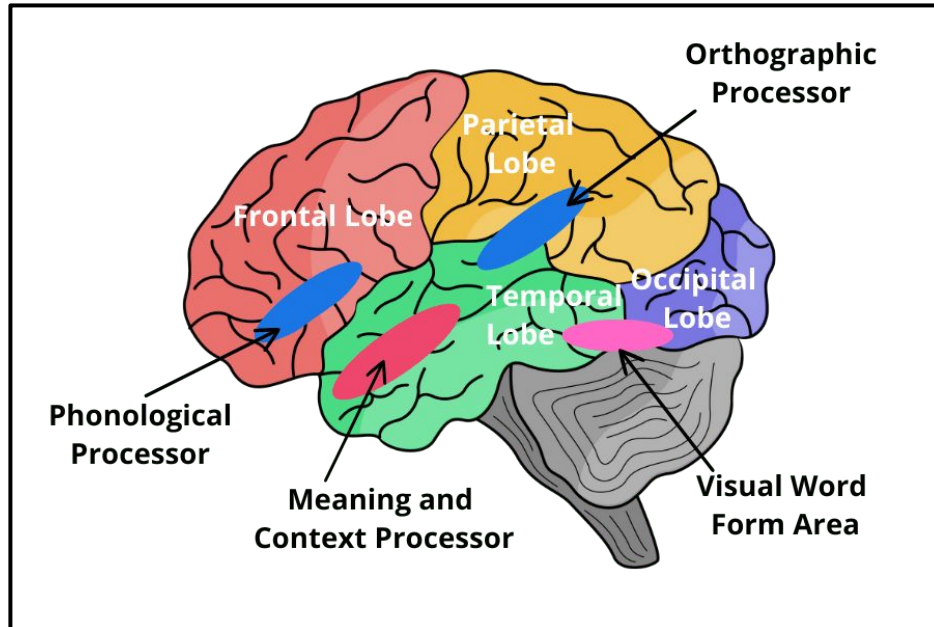
- cognitive psychology
- communication sciences
- developmental psychology
- education
- special education
- implementation science
- linguistics
- neuroscience
- school psychology

—from the [Science of Reading Defining Guide](#) by the Reading League



Reading Models

The Reading Brain's 4-Part Processing System



Phonological Processor: Helps you recognize, pronounce, and articulate sounds.

Orthographic Processor: Helps you associate sounds (phonemes) with symbols (graphemes).

Visual Word Form Area: Helps you connect words to their visual forms.

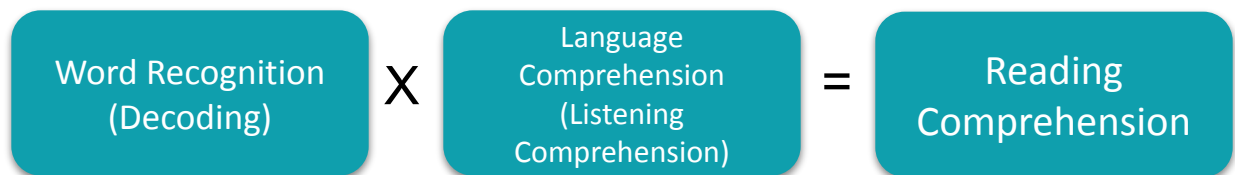
Meaning and Context Processors: Helps you figure out a word's intended meaning.

Check out this [Prezi](#) that explains the 4-Part Processing Model and this fascinating presentation called [How the Brain Learns to Read](#).

Reading Models

The end goal of all reading instruction is strong comprehension. The following two models have been used to describe the important role that both decoding (phonics) and language/listening comprehension play in developing strong comprehension skills. While *phonics* is a critical component of a strong reading instructional framework, *comprehension instruction* should not wait until children are “ready” or are reading conventionally. Reading comprehension is developed through read-aloud and oral language experiences that expose children to rich vocabulary and complex texts.

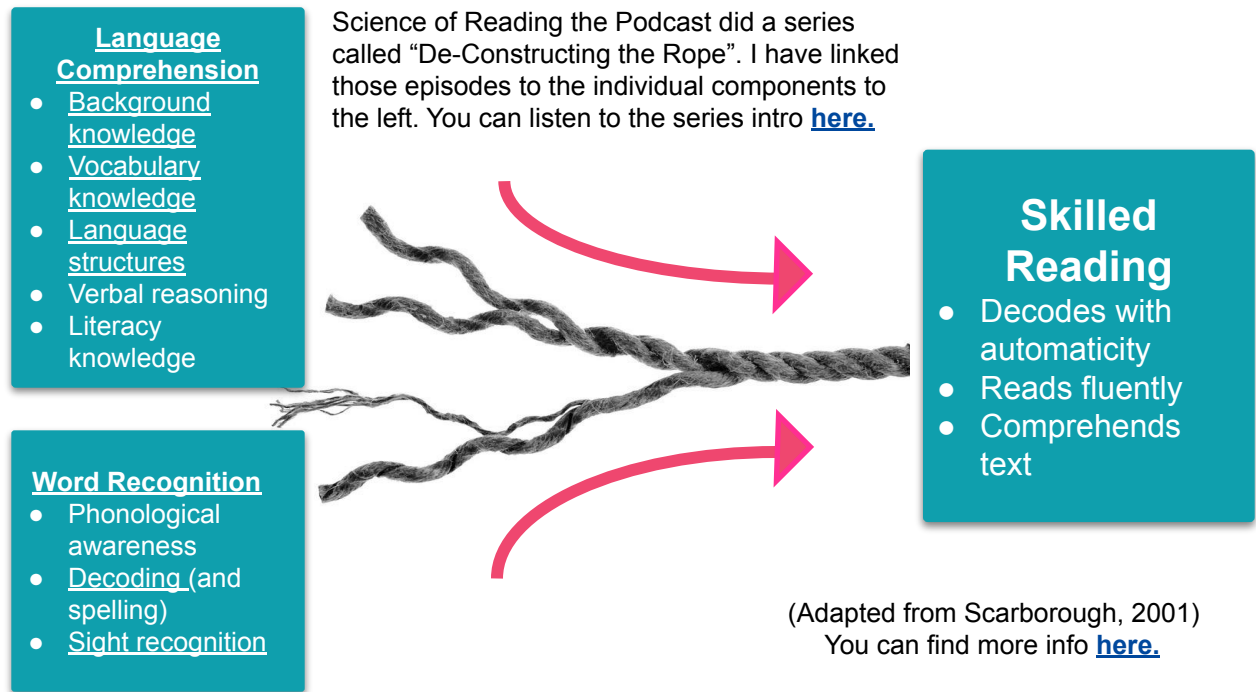
Simple View of Reading



(Adapted from [Gough & Tunmer, 1986](#))

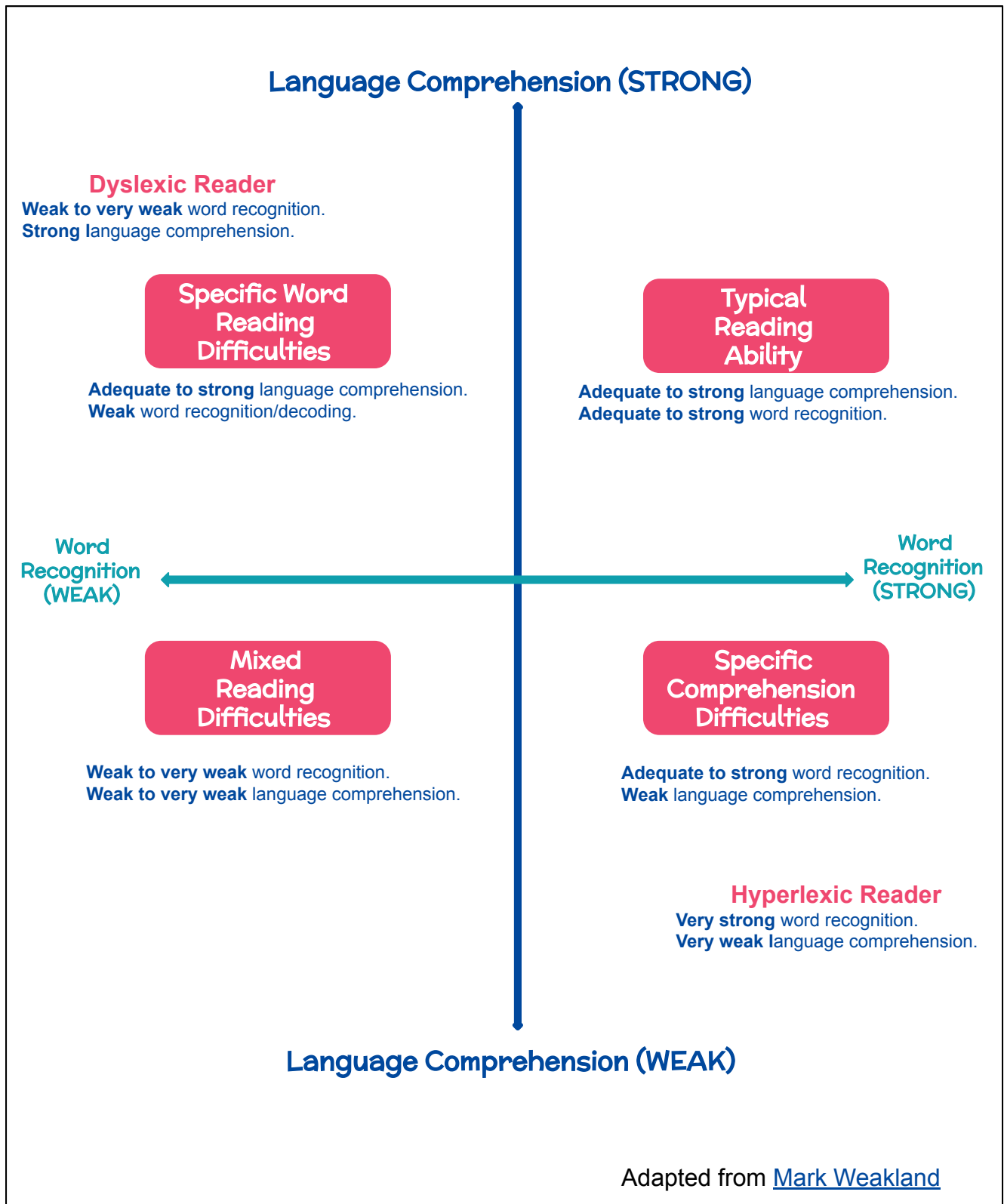
You can read more [here](#) and watch a video overview [here](#).

Scarborough's Rope



(Adapted from Scarborough, 2001)
You can find more info [here](#).

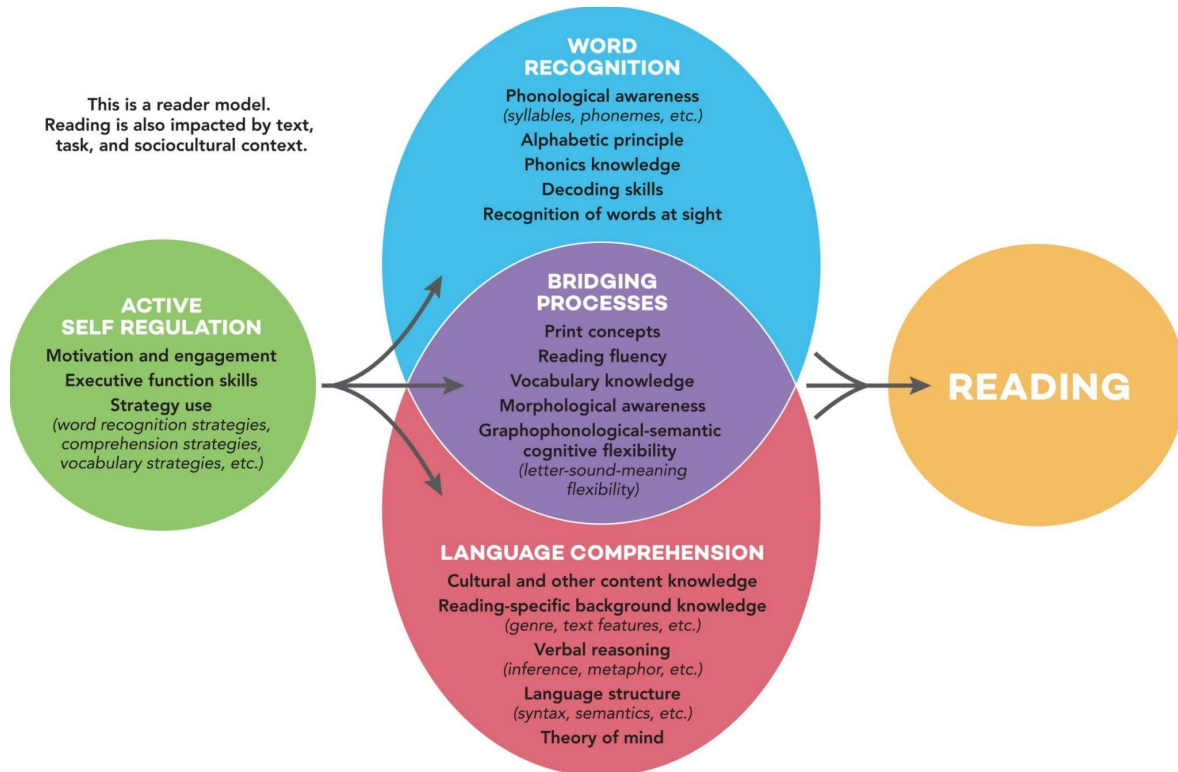
Reader Profiles



Reading Models

Active View of Reading

The research continues and as new information about how the brain learns to read develops, reader models are expanded. Nell K. Duke and Kelly B. Cartwright developed and continue to research their [Active View of Reading](#):



You can hear Nell Duke explain the Active View of Reading on this Melissa and Lori Love Literacy [podcast episode](#).

Implications for Instruction

The following elements should be included in research-aligned reading instruction, usually called a structured literacy approach:

- **Phonology:** the study of sounds in a language; skills include blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds (phonemic awareness)
- **Sound-Symbol Association (Phonics):** attaching symbols (graphemes) to sounds (phonemes); strengthened through orthographic mapping
- **Syllable Instruction:** learning basic syllable patterns that aid in decoding and encoding, including multi-syllabic words
- **Morphology:** focus on meaning units of words including prefixes, suffixes, inflected endings, Greek and Latin roots
- **Syntax:** grammar, sentence structure, and mechanics of language
- **Semantics:** understand the meaning of text

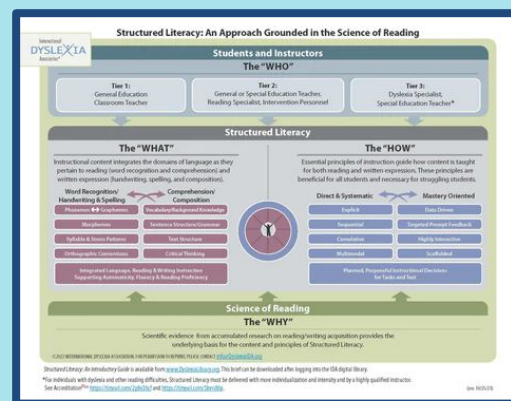
Structure literacy instruction should be:

Explicit: Directly and deliberately taught. It is not assumed that students will learn the skill on their own.

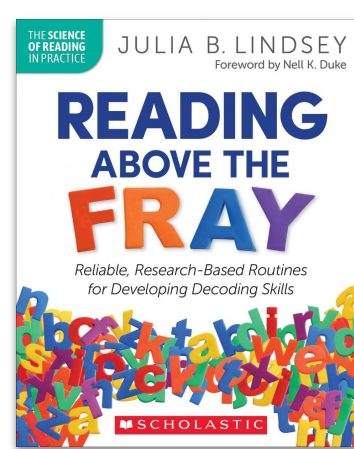
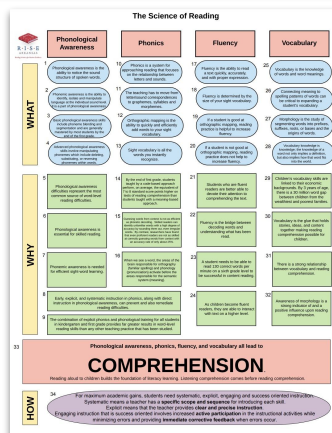
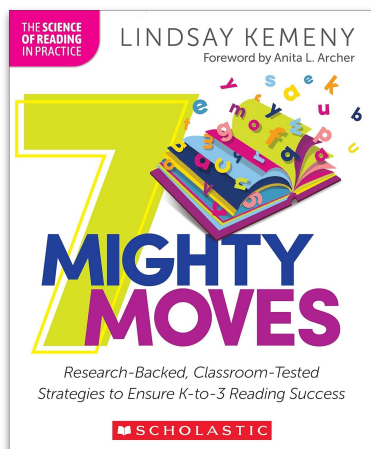
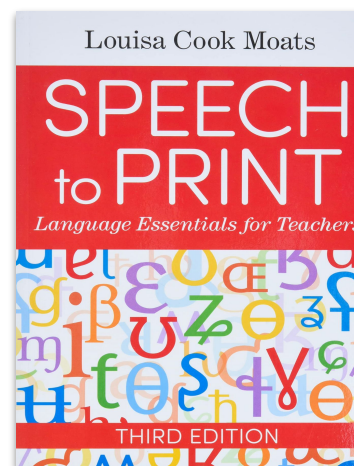
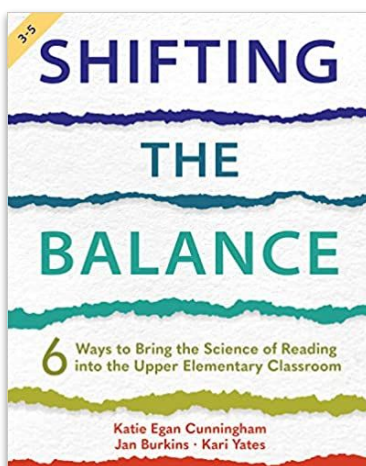
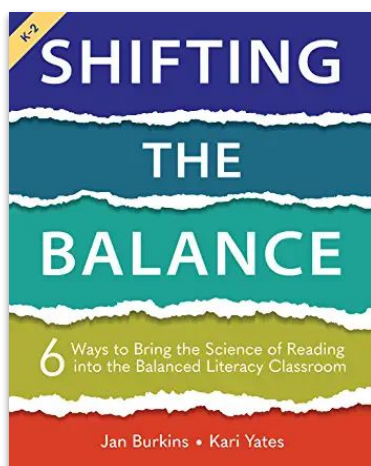
Systematic and Cumulative: Instruction is organized in a logical order along a well-defined scope and sequence. The sequence should begin with the easiest concepts and build to more complex skills.

Diagnostic: Assessments provide evidence that students have mastered skills. Instruction is differentiated to meet individual needs.

This helpful **Structured Literacy Infographic** is offered as a free download from the International Dyslexia Association.



Annemarie's Recommended Resources to Gain an Overview of the Reading Research



SoR Infographic

Podcasts:

- [Triple R Teaching](#)
- [Melissa and Lori Love Literacy](#)
- [Science of Reading The Podcast](#)
- [Literacy Talks](#)



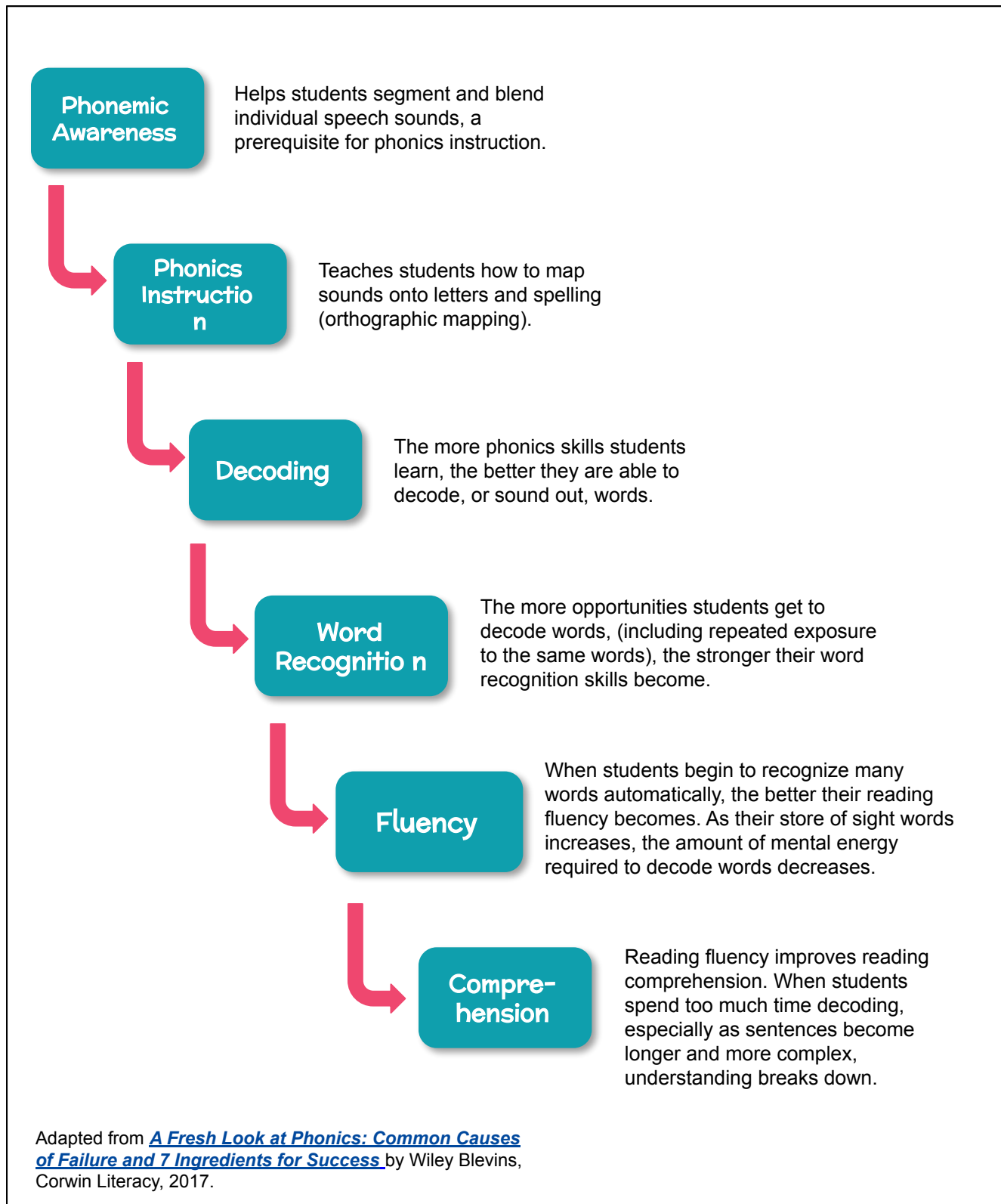
Facebook Groups:

- [The Science of Reading: What I Should Have Learned in College](#)
- [The Science of Reading - 3rd Grade and Beyond Facebook Group](#)

Assessment Tools



Phonics-Comprehension Flow Chart

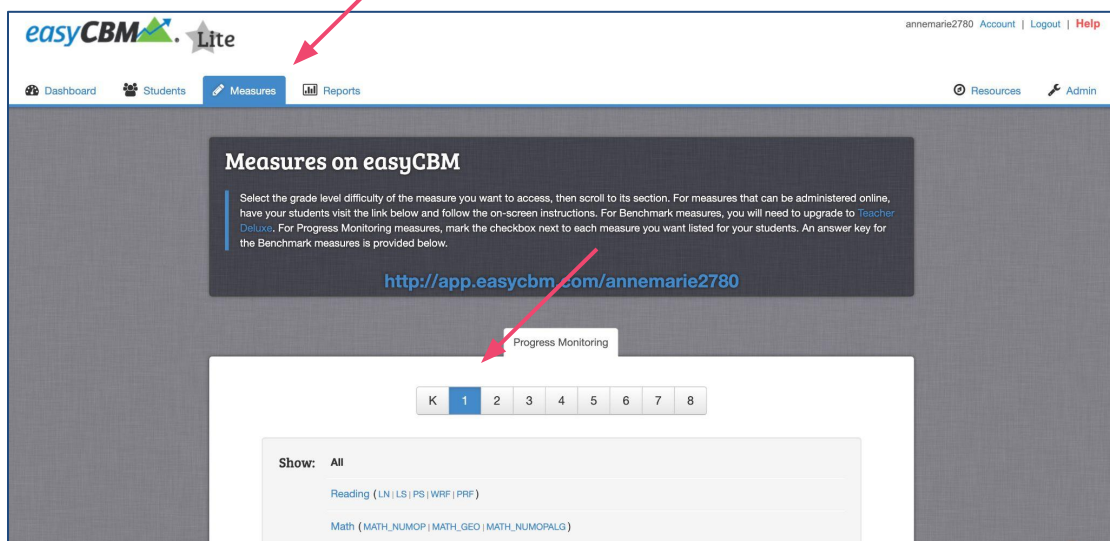


Assessing Phonological Awareness

Phonemic awareness is a bridge from sounds to symbols. Since many struggling readers have weak phonemic awareness, it's important to assess all beginning readers and older struggling readers. You can read more about the importance of this skill [here](#).

Here is a list of phonological sensitivity and phonemic awareness assessment resources:

- **Analysis of students' daily writing** - examine student writing to see if misspellings contain a grapheme (letter/s) for each phoneme (sound). Even if the child writes an incorrect letter, when they represent each sound with a letter or letters, that is an indication that the child has developed strong phonemic awareness.
- [P.A.S.T.](#) - Phonological Awareness Screening Test
- [QPAS](#) - Quick Phonological Awareness Screening
- [Measured Mom](#): Comprehensive phonological and phonemic awareness assessment.
- [Easy CBM Lite](#) - Phoneme segmenting assessment. This assessment zooms in on the phoneme segmenting skill that is critical to success in decoding and spelling. To use:
 1. Log in or create a free account.
 2. Click the "Measures" tab
 3. Click the kindergarten or grade 1 tab



Assessing Phonological Awareness

4. Scroll down to the Phoneme Segmenting section.

The screenshot shows a software interface with two tabs: 'Measures' and 'Reports'. The 'Measures' tab is active, showing a list of reading measures. The 'Reading: Letter Sounds' section is expanded, showing a list of measures from 1_1 to 1_9. Each measure has links for 'Student Copy' and 'Assessor Copy', and an 'Enter Scores' link. A red arrow points from the 'Assessor Copy' link for 'Letter Sounds 1_6' to the 'Reading: Phoneme Segmenting' section header below it. The 'Phoneme Segmenting' section also shows a list of measures from 1_1 to 1_9, each with an 'Assessor Copy' link and an 'Enter Scores' link. Below this is the 'Reading: Word Reading Fluency' section.

5. Print Assessor Copy.

Assessor Copy **Form 1-1**

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Phoneme Segmenting

Procedures

This test is administered entirely orally. Do NOT show the student this scoring sheet. There is no student copy of this test because the student is listening and responding to the words supplied by the assessor.

Directions

Say to the student: "I am going to say a word, and you will give me the sounds you hear in that word. If I say *csp*, you will say /c/ /a/ /p/. If I say *it*, you will say /i/ /t/. If I say *top*, you will say /t/ /o/ /p/. Let's try."

Note: This is a 60 second timed test.

Scoring

- Underline each phoneme the student says correctly.
- Put a slash through each phoneme the student misses.
- Students are NOT penalized for saying extra phonemes.

Item	Teacher Says	Student Says	Number Correct	Item	Teacher Says	Student Says	Number Correct
1	nurse	/n/ /ur/ /se/	___ / 3	11	strap	/s/ /t/ /r/ /a/ /p/	___ / 5
2	hire	/h/ /i/ /re/	___ / 3	12	glitch	/g/ /l/ /i/ /ch/	___ / 4
3	foul	/f/ /ou/ /l/	___ / 3	13	bold	/b/ /o/ /l/ /d/	___ / 4
4	seal	/s/ /ea/ /l/	___ / 3	14	mean	/m/ /ea/ /n/	___ / 3
5	bone	/b/ /o/ /ne/	___ / 3	15	shed	/sh/ /e/ /d/	___ / 3
6	lime	/l/ /i/ /me/	___ / 3	16	spoken	/s/ /p/ /o/ /k/ /e/ /n/	___ / 6
7	wind	/w/ /i/ /n/ /d/	___ / 4	17	draw	/d/ /r/ /aw/	___ / 3
8	loaf	/l/ /oa/ /f/	___ / 3	18	pounce	/p/ /ou/ /n/ /ce/	___ / 4
9	word	/w/ /or/ /d/	___ / 3	19	rack	/r/ /a/ /ck/	___ / 3
10	snag	/s/ /n/ /a/ /g/	___ / 4				

Correct ____ / 67

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Assessing Phonics

There are many tools available for assessing phonics skills, and different tools give us different views of the reader. It's important to know the purpose of each tool so that 1) we are gathering the information that tells us where a reader is in their phonics development and 2) we know what instruction readers need next. When we know the purpose of each assessment tool, we can gather *enough* information to guide our instruction, but not *unnecessary* information that causes us to spend too much time assessing and thereby eating into our instruction time.

When choosing assessment tools to guide instruction, here are some questions to keep in mind:

- Is this tool helping me determine where the reader is along the developmental phonics/spelling stages?
- Does this tool give me a view of the reader's decoding (phonics/reading) or encoding (spelling/writing)? (Both are important!)
- Will this tool help me see how students decode/encode in *isolation* or in the *context of reading and writing*? (Both have value).

Some useful assessments to inform instruction:

Oral Reading Fluency Assessment (ORF): The ORF assessment can be used as a screener, diagnostic assessment, or progress monitoring tool. It involves the student reading aloud an unpracticed passage of text for 1 minute. The teacher calculates the words correct per minute (WCPM) and analyzes results using benchmarked norms. You can find the most up-to-date norms [here](#) and a discussion about interpreting the results [here](#).

The ORF is a widely used and well-researched assessment tool that can be used to assess decoding and accuracy in addition to fluency rates. Read [here](#) for more details about using ORF data to guide instruction.

Decoding Inventories

A decoding inventory allows the assessor to monitor students' decoding of basic phonics features along a developmental continuum. Most decoding inventories include both real and nonsense words. Nonsense words are helpful especially with older readers who may have memorized many basic words without truly understand the phonics features. Two good decoding inventories can be found in Sharon Walpole's [Differentiating Literacy Instruction](#) and at [CORE Phonics Survey](#).

Assessing Phonics

Listening to Reading-Watching While Writing Protocol (LTR-WWWP)

Nell Duke, reading researcher from the University of Michigan, has developed an inventory called the Listening to Reading Protocol. Here is a description from her website: *"This is an informal formative assessment tool designed for use in the course of normal daily instruction or after daily instruction when reflecting on pieces of children's writing or recordings of their reading. It is not meant to replace any formal assessments you use but rather to help guide your observation/attention to particular aspects of children's reading and writing between assessment administrations, for example as an alternative to running records."* All training and implementation resources are available free on her [website](#). This assessment is a great alternative to running records and leveled reading assessments. It provides all of the information obtained through traditional running records and so much more! In addition, it's aligned with reading research.

Developmental Spelling Inventory: Developmental spelling inventories, such as the [Words Their Way DSI](#) allow us to see 1) which phonics/spelling stage a student is in and 2) which specific phonics features they have mastered, are developing, or have no knowledge of.

Nonsense Word Test: A nonsense word test allows us to zoom in on students' ability to decode words with specific phonics features. Because the words have no meaning and are presented in isolation, we can assess students' decoding without it being influenced by possible "guessing" due to context clues. You can find a free [Nonsense Word Assessment](#) from Scholastic.

Note: I like interpreting the Scholastic Nonsense Word Test or the Informal Decoding Inventory alongside the Words Their Way Developmental Spelling Inventory—one assesses encoding and the other decoding, and both show the same phonics features along the stages. Triangulating this data helps confirm mastered skills and next-step skills.

High-Frequency Word Assessment: This assessment allows us to see students' automaticity with recognizing words in isolation. Students who do poorly on this assessment will be less fluent readers, which can lead to comprehension problems. Here is a [form](#) I created to assess Dolch Words.

Dictation Sentences: Dictation is an instructional routine, but it is also a powerful assessment tool. Dictation sentences can be used to assess phonics skills, high-frequency word mastery, and even grammar and conventions skills.

Assessing Phonics

Observation: Anytime a student is reading or writing, we can take the opportunity to observe with an assessment lens. Use the following questions as suggested observation lenses.

What does the reader *do* when they come to a word they don't know?

Some possibilities include:

- Sound the word out from left to right
- Sound out based on the word's onset (first letter, blend, or digraph) and guess the rest of the word
- Look around the page for clues from pictures
- Look at the teacher and appeal for help
- Skip the word without attempting to decode
- Substitute an incorrect but real word that makes sense in context
- Substitute a real word that does not make sense
- Substitute a nonsense word

Note: Some of these are helpful strategies; others get in the way of developing proficient reading.

What does the reader do when something doesn't make sense?

- Reread because the sentence didn't make sense
- Self-correct a word because the sentence didn't make sense
- Appeal for help
- Keep reading even if it doesn't make sense

What patterns am I noticing?

Student Writing: Examining student writing (authentic writing—not writing done for an assessment) is a powerful way to assess both phonemic awareness and mastery of phonics features. Keep in mind that application of phonics learning in *decoding* precedes application in *encoding* (spelling/writing). Therefore, examining writing gives this additional information:

- A student who spells phonics features correctly has a deeper understanding than a student who can decode but not encode.
- A student who can decode words but not spell/encode them correctly yet may just need more time to solidify those skills.
- A student who can decode words but not spell/encode them correctly yet may have a weak orthographic system. In other words they may be trying to memorize words and recognize them by sight rather than mapping letters to sounds.

Assessing Phonics

In his book [*Choosing and Using Decodable Books*](#), Wiley Blevins describes a tool he created to help teachers assess phonics knowledge application in students' writing. This tool gives teachers a way to assess the phonics features students are using with automaticity. We can assess without "giving another assessment". Simply use this form as you are examining any piece of student writing. Over time patterns will emerge and you will have powerful data to inform instruction. (See sample below).

Important:

- This form is not meant to be evaluative; in other words, you wouldn't use it to assign a "phonics grade". Rather, it is meant to be a formative assessment that can guide further instruction.
- When examining student writing, we always want to read for content first. What is the child trying to say? Is there a message? Does the writing make sense? Examining the writing for phonics transfer is just another lens that gives us one window into our students' literacy progress.

Phonics-Writing Transfer Assessment [SAMPLE]

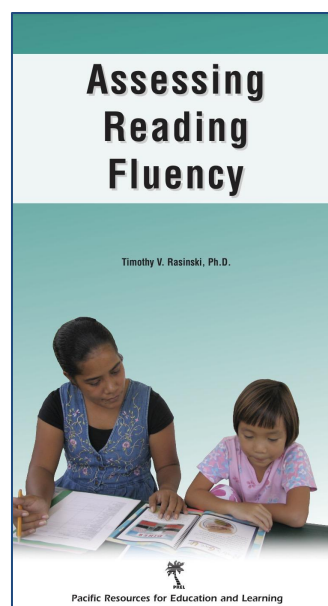
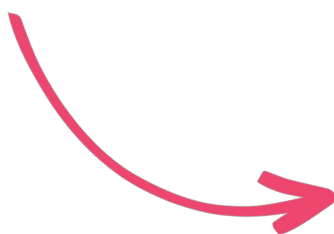
Skill	Mastery	Examples (from student writing)
Short a		
Short i		
Short o		
Short u		
Short e		

Skill	Mastery	Examples (from student writing)
/ - blends		
s - blends		
r - blends		
Digraphs <i>sh, th</i>		
Digraphs <i>ch, tch, wh</i>		

Adapted from [*Choosing and Using Decodable Texts: Practical Tips and Strategies for Enhancing Phonics Instruction*](#) by Wiley Blevins, Scholastic, 2021.

Assessing Fluency

For an extensive description of fluency assessments, I recommend [this resource](#) by fluency expert, Dr. Tim Rasinski.



Oral Reading Fluency Assessment (ORF)

The ORF assessment can be used as a screener, diagnostic assessment, or progress monitoring tool. It involves the student reading aloud an unpracticed passage of text for 1 minute. The teacher calculates the words correct per minute (WCPM) and analyzes results using benchmarked norms. You can find the most up-to-date norms [here](#) and a discussion about interpreting the results [here](#).

While the ORF is called a “fluency assessment”, its value extends beyond fluency measures. It is a widely used and well-researched tool that is used to assess decoding and accuracy in addition to fluency rates. Read [here](#) for more details about using ORF data to guide instruction. You can find free ORF and other assessments at [Easy CBM](#).

Multidimensional Fluency Scale

While the ORF is an invaluable tool, it is not sufficient to assess a reader’s fluency. Fluency, after all, is much more than a reading rate or “reading as fast as I can”, as some students think! Using a holistic rubric such as Tim Rasinski’s [Multidimensional Fluency Scale](#) or the NAEP fluency rubric on the following page, can give a more accurate picture of a student’s reading fluency and more helpful information for guiding instruction.

Assessing Fluency

Fluency Rubrics

One of the best ways to assess fluency is through informal observation. As you listen to students read orally, observe their use of punctuation, phrasing, intonation, etc. The following rubric is a useful holistic assessment tool you can use as you observe.

Rubric for Fluency Evaluation	
1	Very little fluency; all word-by-word reading with some long pauses between words; almost no recognition of syntax or phrasing (expressive interpretation); very little evidence of awareness of punctuation; perhaps a couple of two-word phrases but generally disfluent; some word groupings awkward.
2	Mostly word-by-word reading but with some two-word phrasing and even a couple of three- or four-word phrases (expressive interpretation); evidence of awareness of syntax and punctuation, although not consistently so; rereading for problem solving may be present.
3	A mixture of word-by-word reading and fluent, phrased reading (expressive interpretation); there is evidence of attention to punctuation and syntax; rereading for problem solving may be present.
4	Reads primarily in larger meaningful phrases ; fluent, phrased reading with a few word-by-word slow-downs for problem solving; expressive interpretation is evident at places throughout the reading; attention to punctuation and syntax; rereading for problem solving may be present but is generally fluent.

Adapted from the [NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Scale](#)

Phrasing Assessment

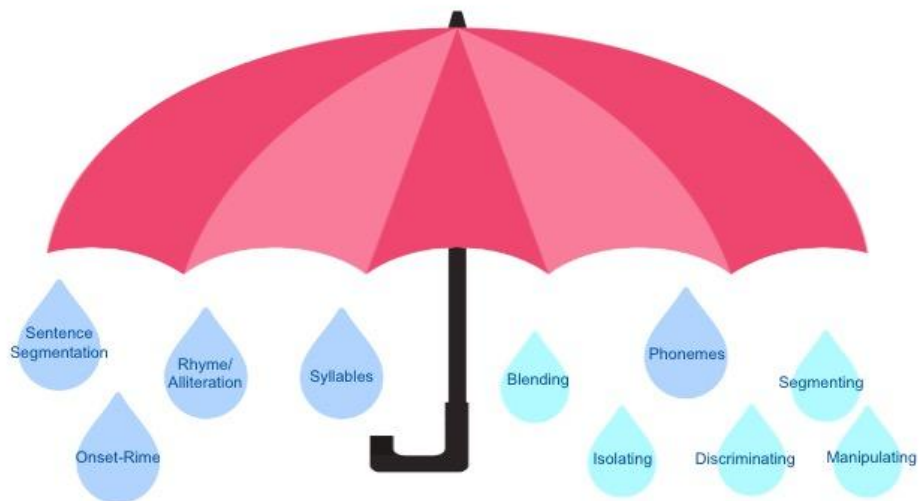
A phrasing assessment allows you to zoom in on one component of fluent reading—phrasing. Select a 100-word passage at the student's reading level and listen as they read orally. Instead of marking miscues as in a running record assessment, mark a slash between words each time the reader pauses. You may want to use a double slash for long pauses.

As the boy /walked down the path, he // heard a loud / noise. He stopped // in his tracks before/ slowly turning / around.

Analyze students' phrasing using a checklist such as this one:

Student	Two-Word Phrases	Three-Word Phrases	Reads long phrases or from punctuation to punctuation	Phrases Preserve Author's Syntax	Attends to Ending Punctuation

Phonological Awareness



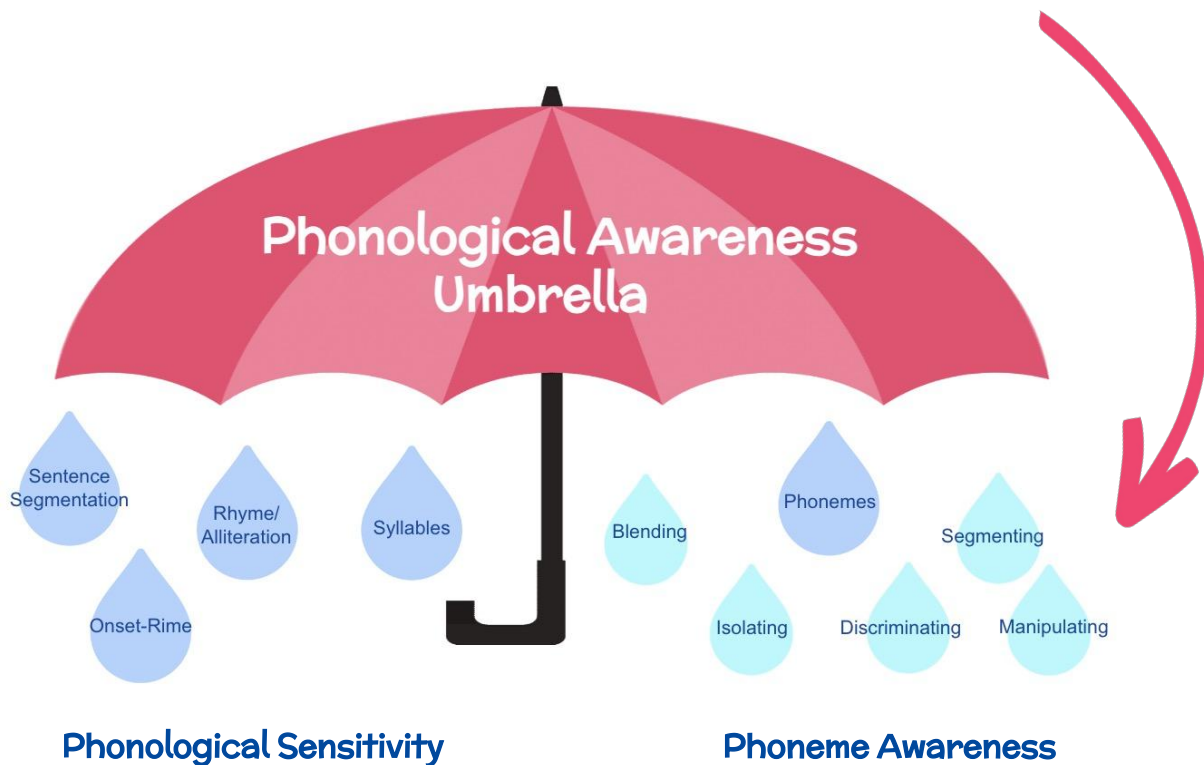
Understanding Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness, specifically phonemic awareness, is one of the best predictors of early reading success. Many, if not most readers who struggle, are missing these key foundational skills.

Phonological awareness is:

- the ability to pay conscious attention to the sounds that make up language.
- one of the best predictors of reading achievement (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; National Reading Panel, 2000).
- provides one of the building blocks for decoding.

There is a range of skills that fall under the phonological awareness umbrella, with *phonemic awareness* being the most difficult and *most critical*.



Understanding Phonological Awareness

Alphabetic Principle

This refers to the concept that written symbols (graphemes) in a language represent speech sounds (phonemes).

Alphabetic Insight

The “a-ha” moment when a learner understands the relationship between letters and sounds (the alphabetic principle).

Phonological Awareness vs. Phonemic Awareness vs. Phonics

- **Phonological awareness** is the ability to pay conscious attention to the sounds that make up a language. It is a global term that includes awareness of words within sentences, rhyming, alliteration, onsets/rimes, individual phonemes. (auditory skill)
- **Phonemic awareness** is a subcategory of phonological awareness and the most important one. (auditory skill)
- **Phonics** is the study of the relationship between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes). (auditory and visual skill)

Phonological Awareness Challenges

- We do not attend to individual sounds when we speak or listen—instead we focus on meaning
- Co-articulation
 - bark: /b/ /a/ /r/ /k/
 - tree: chree
 - dress: jress or gress

Common Mistakes

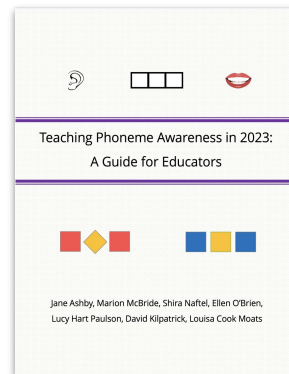
- Not starting phonemic awareness soon enough
- Not teaching explicitly or assuming kids will “just get it”
- Spending too much time on phonological awareness activities
- Interchanging the terms “letters” and “sounds” in our instructional language

Why *phonemic awareness* should not be overlooked when working with struggling readers:

- Many reading problems, including dyslexia, can be traced, at least in part, to a deficit in phonemic awareness.
- Without the ability to hear and segment individual sounds (phonemes) in words, it is impossible to match or orthographically map the correct spellings (graphemes) to these sounds.
- Efficient orthographic mapping relies on the ability to hear and segment individual sounds in words.
- Poor spelling in older children can usually be traced back to weak phonemic awareness.

Understanding Phonemic Awareness

Click [here](#) for an excellent guide on teaching phonemic awareness.



Move from Simple to Complex

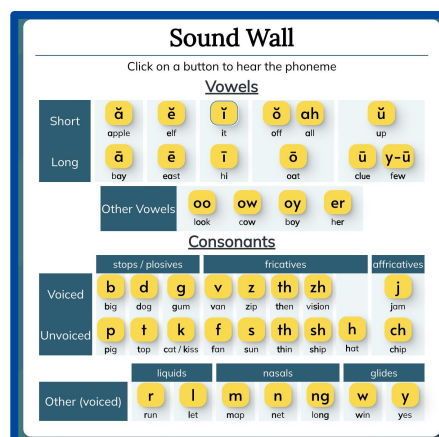
Students should segment and blend the phonemes in simple syllables first. A simple syllable has 3 phonemes (i.e.: tap, mat, pot):

/t/ /a/ /p/

Once students master simple syllables, you can add complex syllables—syllables that include 2- and 3- phoneme blends (i.e.: clasp, felt, splash):

/k/ /l/ /a/ /s/ /p/

There are 44 phonemes or sounds in the English language. Click [here](#) to hear 40 of those sounds.



Phonological Awareness Development

Rhyme

dog-fog-bog-frog

Alliteration

Peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

Sentence Segmentation

Mary sat on the red bench (six words)

Syllables

Dog-house dog-gy splat-ter

Onset-Rime

D-og, sh-ip, spl-at

Phonemes

D-o-g, s-p-l-a-t, sh-i-p, t-r-e-a-t

Easy



Hard

Laura S. Tortorelli
September, 2017

Phonological Awareness Tasks

Matching

Isolation

Blending

Segmenting

Deletion/ Substitution

Easy



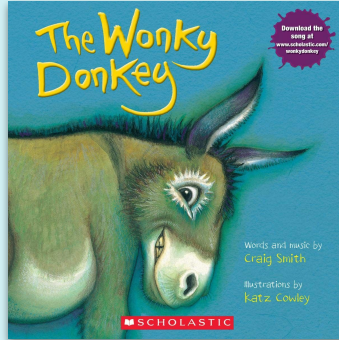
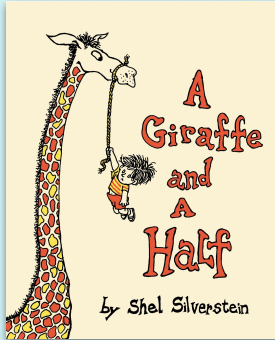
Hard

[Laura S. Tortorelli](#)
September, 2017

Phonological Awareness Methods & Routines

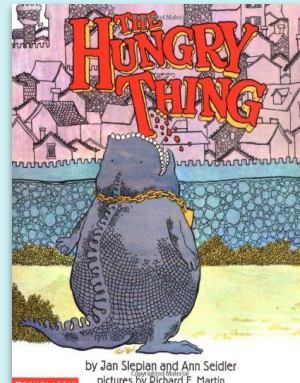
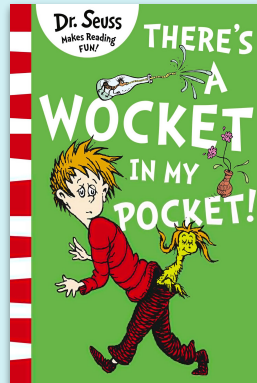
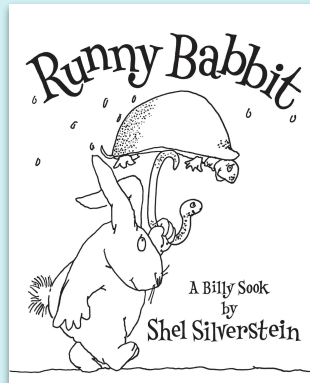
Using Read-Aloud to Build Phonological Awareness

Read-aloud is an easy way to seamlessly weave phonological awareness instruction into our day and embed it in authentic book experiences. We can especially use read-aloud to strengthen students' rhyming, alliteration, and phoneme manipulation skills. [Goodreads](#) phonological awareness shelf is an easy place to find book titles that include great phonological awareness opportunities.



[Animated Wonky Donkey](#)

Great for rhyming practice



Great for phoneme manipulation/substitution

Picture Cards

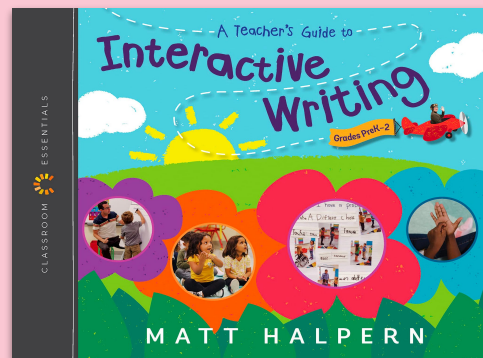
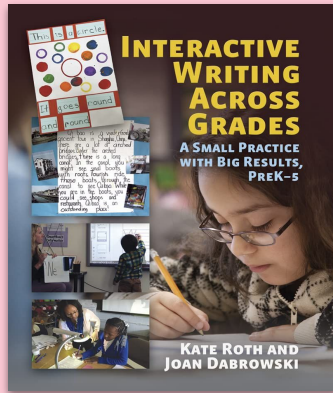
Because phonological awareness skills are auditory, not visual, we don't show students the written words during phonological awareness instruction. It is helpful to provide a visual image, however, in the form of objects or picture cards. The cards can be shown while you are pronouncing the word to help clarify meaning. They can also be used for individual and small group sorting activities. A great resource for printing picture cards is from the [Florida Center for Reading Research site](#).

Phonological Awareness Methods & Routines

Using Interactive Writing to Build Phonological Awareness

Interactive writing gives us a huge bang for the buck. In addition to scaffolding the writing process for our students, interactive writing provides a rich opportunity to build strong phonological awareness skills—especially phonemic awareness, which is the most critical skill for beginning readers. Guiding students to “place” each word on their fingers helps them understand the **concept of word** and **sentence segmentation**. Then stretching out each word into individual phonemes helps them solidify this skill. When we attach the symbols to those sounds, we are applying **phonics** and strengthening students’ **orthographic mapping**. It’s a powerhouse instructional method!

My favorite resources to support interactive writing are [Interactive Writing Across the Grades: A Small Practice with Big Results](#) by Kate Roth and Joan Dabrowski and [A Teacher’s Guide to Interactive Writing](#) by Matt Halpern.



Small Group Instruction to Support Phonological Awareness

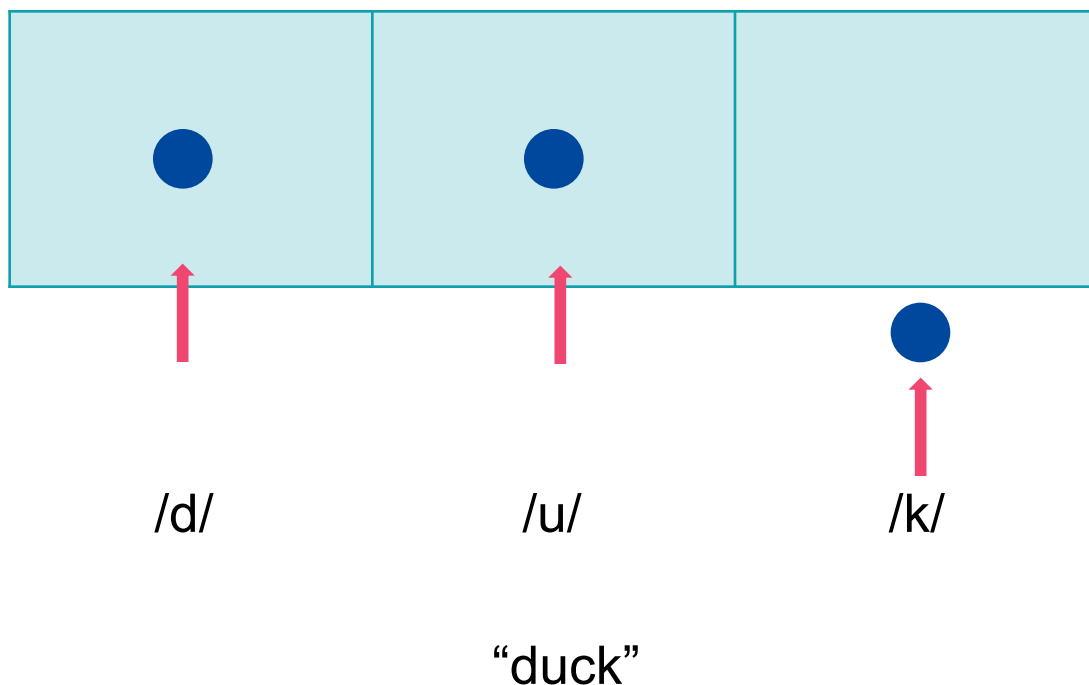
There are many ways to embed phonological awareness instruction into whole group instruction throughout the day. Some students will need more, however. Small group instruction is a great time to provide more differentiated support. I love to use the games at the [Florida Center for Reading Research](#) site during small group instruction (rather than as individual learning center activities). Check out these classroom videos for great small group ideas:

- [Rhyming and Alliteration](#)
- [Sound Sorts](#)
- [Segmenting](#)
- [Blending](#)
- [Phonemic Awareness Through Writing](#)



Phonological Awareness Methods & Routines



Elkonin Sound Boxes (Phoneme Segmenting)



Sound boxes are one of my favorite tools for strengthening students' phonemic awareness. Draw a rectangle with three boxes. Say a familiar word composed of three sounds such as *cat*, *sun*, *dog*, *pan*. It is helpful to show children pictures of these objects. (You can find free pictures in the games on the [Florida Center for Reading Research site](#).) The child says the word, stretching out the sounds. The child pushes a chip into each box as he says the sound. It is important to note that the boxes represent sounds (phonemes) not letters. The words *cake* and *duck* have four letters but only three sounds and would be segmented into three sound boxes. After children master words with three phonemes, they may progress to four-phoneme words such as *truck*, *crash*, and *nest*. Once children can push chips to represent sounds, they can push letter cards into boxes, and eventually they can write letters in the boxes as they are attempting to spell words they are writing (Elkonin, 1973; Cunningham, 2000).



Sound Box Board directions: Duplicate the following page onto cardstock. You can leave the page intact to use with 2-, 3-, and 4-phoneme words. Or you can cut them apart to focus on one at a time. Instruct students to start in the smile face box and move left to right.

 	
---	--

 		
---	--	--

 			
---	--	--	--

Phonological Awareness Methods & Routines

Guess My Secret Word (phoneme blending)

This activity focuses on the skill of blending and can be used to practice blending parts of compound words, syllables, onsets and rimes, or individual phonemes. Begin by orally pronouncing the individual word parts:

dog – house

mon – ster

c – amp

d – o – g

Invite students to *turn and tell a partner the “secret word”. Reveal the secret word by flipping over a picture of the word.

Robot Talk (phoneme segmenting)

This activity is the opposite of the previous one—it focuses on segmenting. Again, you can vary the difficulty by focusing on compound words, syllables, onsets and rimes, or individual phonemes. Consider using a robot puppet or [prop](#) for this activity. Tell students that the robot only understands “robot talk”.

Show students a picture card and invite them to *turn and tell a partner how to say the word in “robot talk”.

Eg: Show a picture of a dog and students say /d/ /o/ /g/.



Sound Switcheroo (manipulating)

This activity focuses on phoneme manipulation. Start by orally dictating two words such as “man” and “pan”. Invite students to guess which *sounds* have been switched and *turn to tell a partner. It’s important to ask “which sounds”, not “which letters”. Students should identify that the /m/ has been switched to a /p/. This activity increases in difficulty when you switch the ending sounds (fan-fat) or middle sounds (pick-pack).

***Important:** Note that students are turning and telling a partner. You will want to avoid calling on individual students in a “call and response” format. Instead, invite all students to think and solve the riddles. This allows *all* students to think and practice rather than just a few. It also becomes a powerful assessment tool for you as you listen in to students’ responses.



Free Phonological Awareness Resources

The Florida Center for Reading Research has loads of free materials that you can use to support your phonological awareness lessons. Here is a quick tutorial to help you get started:

Follow [this link](#). Click your preferred grade level.



FLORIDA CENTER FOR READING RESEARCH

HOME ABOUT NEWS PROJECTS DIVISIONS PEOPLE RESOURCE DATABASE **FCRR STUDENT CENTER ACTIVITIES** STUDENT EXPERIENCE SUPPORT SEARCH

FOR EDUCATORS FOR FAMILIES FOR LEADERS

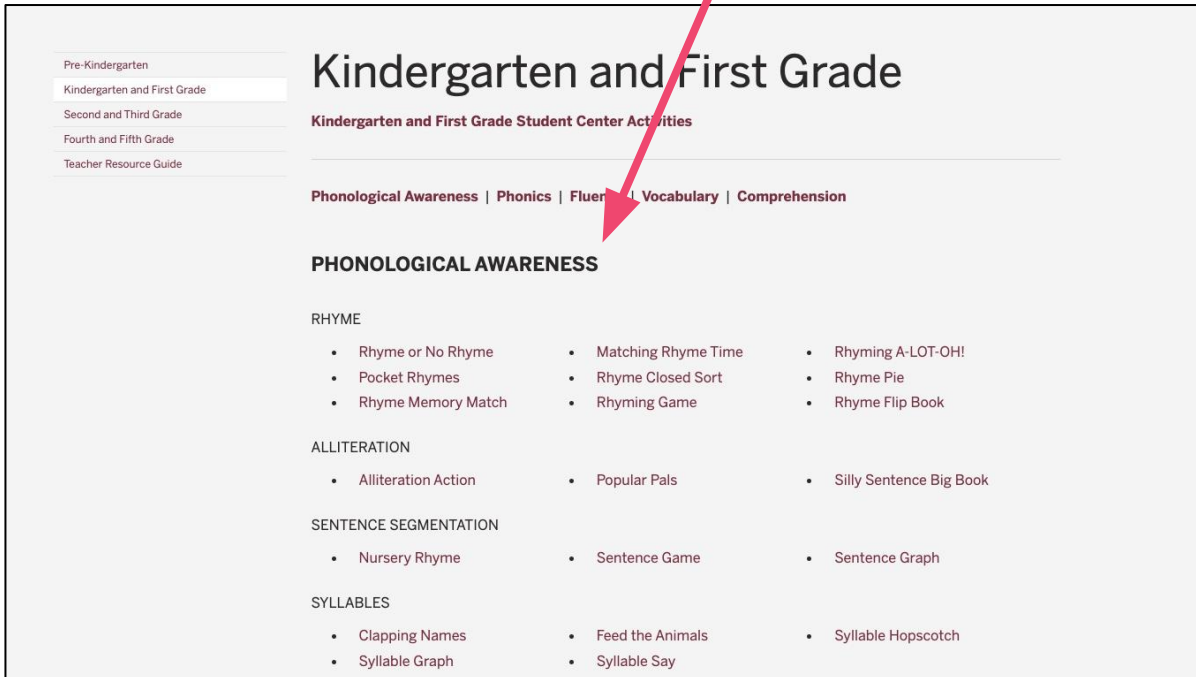
HOME / FCRR STUDENT CENTER ACTIVITIES

FCRR Student Center Activities

From 2004 to 2010, a team of researchers and teachers at FCRR collected ideas and created Student Center Activities for use in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. The activities are designed for students to practice, demonstrate, and extend their learning of what has already been taught, sometimes with teacher assistance and sometimes independently. Students can complete the activities in small groups, pairs, or individually.

Accompanying these Student Center Activities is a Teacher Resource Guide that offers important insights on differentiated instruction and how to use the Student Center materials.

This will open to the categories of activities. Phonological Awareness will be at the top:



Pre-Kindergarten
Kindergarten and First Grade
Second and Third Grade
Fourth and Fifth Grade
Teacher Resource Guide

Kindergarten and First Grade

Kindergarten and First Grade Student Center Activities

Phonological Awareness | Phonics | Fluency | Vocabulary | Comprehension

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

RHYME

- Rhyme or No Rhyme
- Pocket Rhymes
- Rhyme Memory Match
- Matching Rhyme Time
- Rhyme Closed Sort
- Rhyming Game
- Rhyming A-LOT-OH!
- Rhyme Pie
- Rhyme Flip Book

ALLITERATION

- Alliteration Action
- Popular Pals
- Silly Sentence Big Book

SENTENCE SEGMENTATION

- Nursery Rhyme
- Sentence Game
- Sentence Graph

SYLLABLES

- Clapping Names
- Feed the Animals
- Syllable Hopscotch
- Syllable Graph
- Syllable Say

Free Phonological Awareness Resources

Scroll down to find the phonological awareness skills you want to reinforce. Click the links to locate the games.

SYLLABLES

- [Clapping Names](#)
- [Syllable Graph](#)
- [Feed the Animals](#)
- [Syllable Say](#)
- [Syllable Hopscotch](#)

ONSET AND RIME

- [Quick Pick](#)
- [Guessing Game](#)
- [Rime House](#)
- [Sound Detective](#)

PHONEME MATCHING

- [One Card Out](#)
- [Pack-A-Backpack](#)
- [Sound It-Bag It](#)
- [Sound Bags](#)
- [Sound Snacker-Sound Smacker](#)
- [Phoneme Go Fish](#)
- [Final Sound Match-Up](#)
- [Sound Pictures and Picture Puzzles](#)
- [Sound Train](#)
- [Phoneme Dominoes](#)
- [Sound Pie](#)

PHONEME ISOLATING

- [See It-Sound It](#)
- [Sound Quest](#)
- [The Last Sound Is...](#)
- [Move and Tell](#)

PHONEME SEGMENTING

- [Say and Slide Phonemes](#)
- [Phoneme Hopscotch](#)
- [Phoneme Feud](#)
- [Phoneme Photos](#)
- [The Sound Game](#)
- [Phoneme Closed Sort](#)
- [Sound Spin](#)

PHONEME SEGMENTING AND BLENDING


- [Treasure Chest](#)
- [Picture Slide](#)

PHONEME MANIPULATING

- [Drop and Say](#)
- [Name Changes](#)

Free Phonological Awareness Resources


Download the game. Materials, assembly instructions, and activity directions are included on the first page of each game.




Phonological Awareness


PA. 044

Phoneme Segmenting
The Sound Game

 **Objective**
The student will segment phonemes in words.

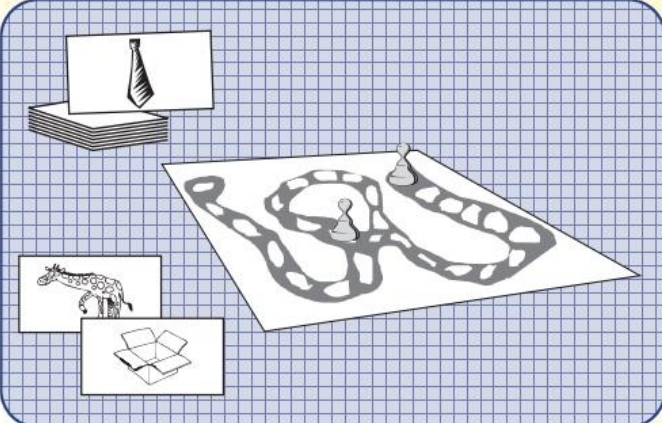
 **Materials**


- ▶ The Sound Game board
- ▶ *Copy on card stock, assemble, and laminate.*
- ▶ Two-to-five phoneme picture cards
- ▶ Game pieces (e.g., counters)

 **Activity**

Students count phonemes in words while playing a board game.

1. Place the Sound Game board and phoneme picture cards face down in a stack on a flat surface. Place game pieces at START.
2. Taking turns, students pick up a picture card, name the picture, and segment the word into phonemes (e.g., "tie, /t/ /i/").
3. Move game piece the corresponding number of spaces.
4. Continue until all students reach the END space.
5. Peer evaluation



 **Extensions and Adaptations**

- ▶ Play using other phoneme picture cards.
- ▶ Count syllables in words.

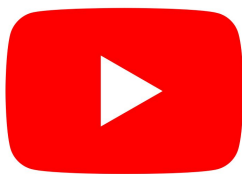
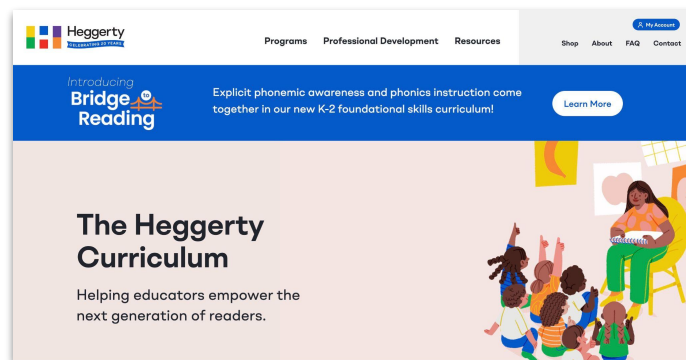
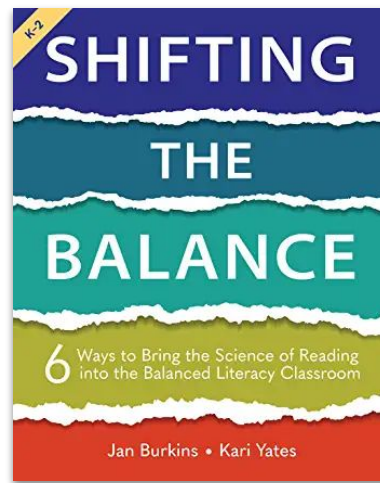
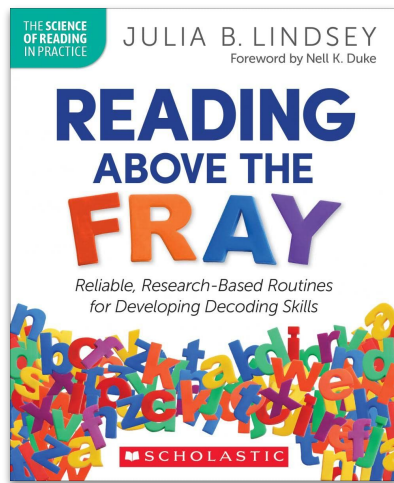
K-1 Student Center Activities: Phonological Awareness

©2005 The Florida Center for Reading Research and Florida Department of Education (Revised, 2021)

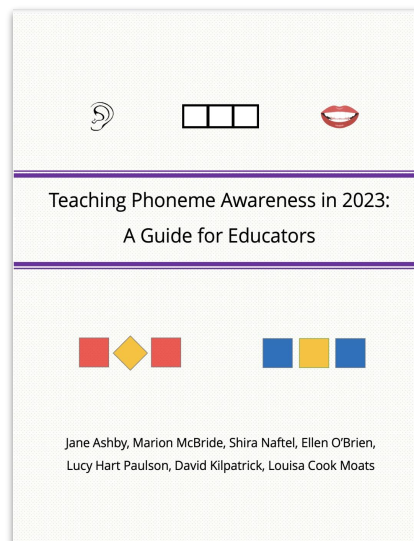
Suggested uses:

- Small group instruction
- Literacy center activities (skills must be previously taught and activity introduced)
- Mentor, tutor, parapro activity
- Use the pictures from the games for sorts or other phonological awareness activities.

Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Phonological Awareness

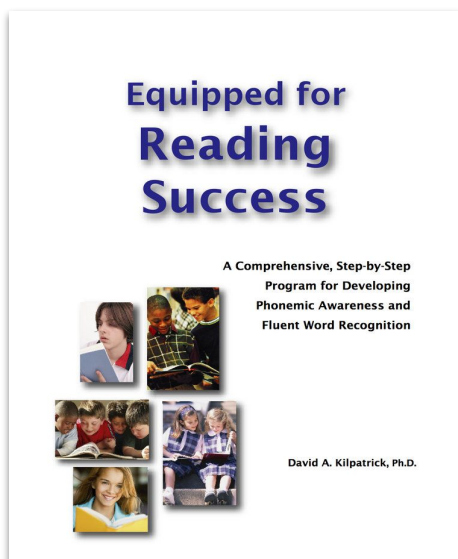


Check out this [updated research](#) on phonemic awareness with Dr. Susan Brady.



Click [here](#) for a complete free guide on teaching phonemic awareness.

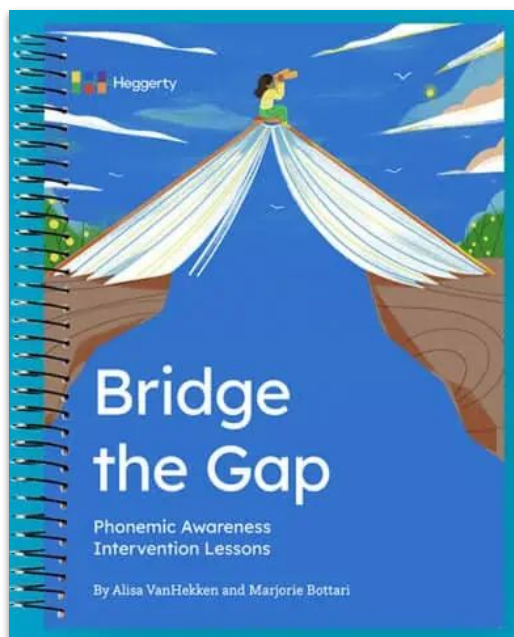
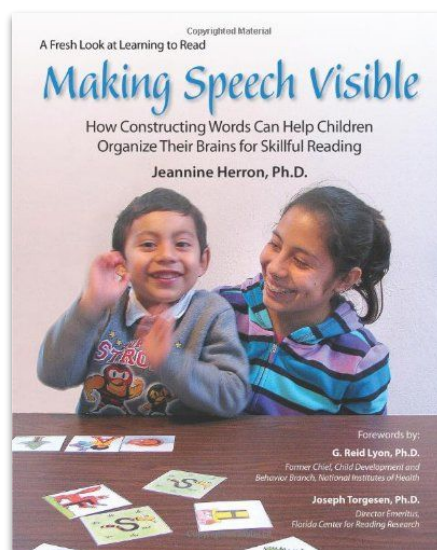
Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Phonological Awareness



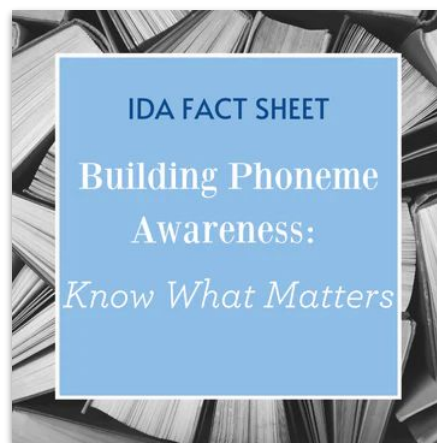
This book is filled with “one-minute activities” beginning on p. 127.



How to Help Older Students Build Phonemic Awareness Skills



Phonemic awareness intervention lessons by Heggerty



Handwriting



Handwriting

As educators of young children, we may all have different opinions about the necessity or importance of formal handwriting instruction.

But what does the *research* say about handwriting?

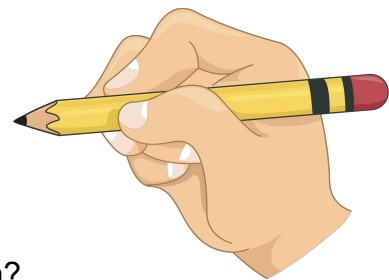
You may be either surprised or relieved to learn that there is a strong body of research that supports formal handwriting instruction in the primary grades.

Why does handwriting matter?

- Proper handwriting improves the overall quantity and quality of students' writing composition.
- Poor or inefficient handwriting clogs students' working memory, preventing them from focusing on the actual writing process (generating ideas, planning, drafting, and revising).
- Just like fluent decoding allows for more cognitive space in the brain for reading comprehension, fluent handwriting allows for more cognitive space for thinking about the *content* of writing
- While poor handwriting does not correlate with intelligence, students are often judged (albeit subconsciously) by the reader. Illegible writing may receive lower scores than neatly written papers or the reader may attribute the poor handwriting to lower intelligence.
- There is compelling evidence that handwriting instruction positively affects reading skills.

While the research is strong that primary students should receive formal handwriting instruction, you might have still have questions such as:

- How much time should I devote to handwriting instruction?
- What is the best order to teach the letters?
- Should I teach manuscript, cursive or both?
- If I teach both, when should they be introduced?
- What about D'Nealian?
- Does pencil grip matter? How do I teach it?
- What about lefties?
- What is the ideal writing fluency rate?
- How important is legibility and proper letter formation?
- Do I need a handwriting program?
- Are there research-based handwriting programs?



See the following page for resources that answer these questions!

Handwriting

Reading researcher Steve Graham and colleagues have conducted considerable research to help answer all of these questions and more.

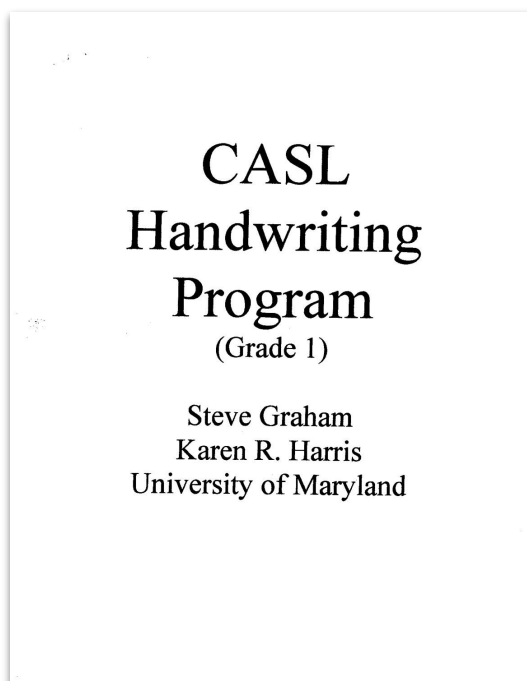
You can read all of his tips and suggestions in this article:

[Want to Improve Children's Writing? Don't Neglect Their Handwriting](#)

by Steve Graham

And even better than that, Graham and colleagues created a complete handwriting program that aligns with their research and they offer it for free here:

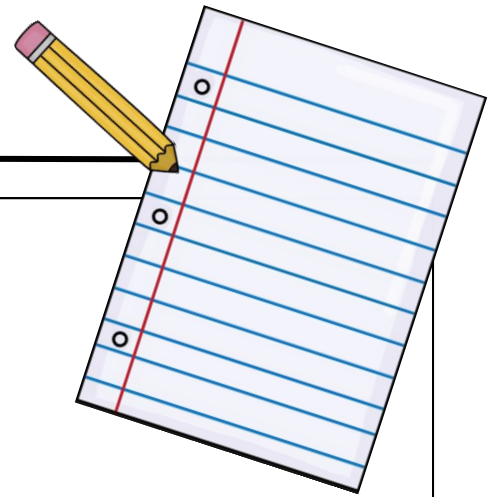
[CASL Handwriting Program](#)



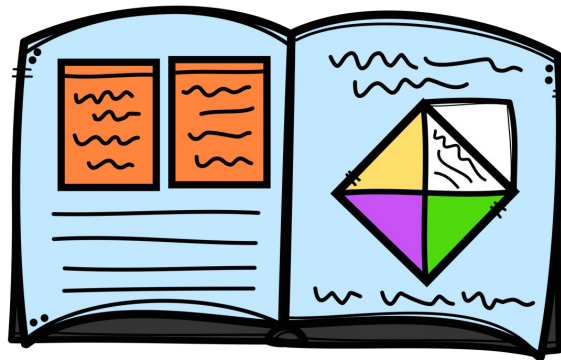
I also highly recommend this article: [Handwriting in a Modern World: Why It Matters & What To Do About It](#) by William Van Cleave.

And just for fun, this one: [Scribble, Scribble, Eh, Mr. Toad?](#)

Notes



Print Concepts



Concepts of Print

While not useful on their own, concepts of print are important foundational skills for emerging readers. Research has shown that early knowledge of print concepts is highly predictive of later reading success.

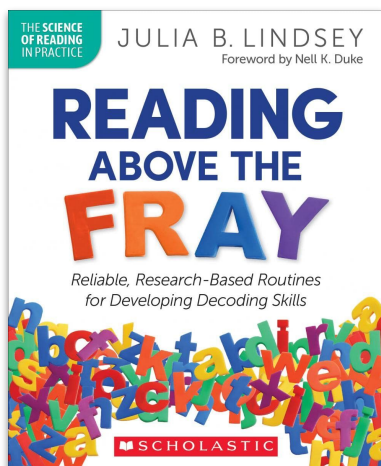
Print concepts can be divided into 4 categories:

1. **Print Meaning:** noticing environmental print; understanding that print holds meaning.
2. **Text Organization:** identifying a book's front and back covers, title, author, understanding directionality.
3. **Sentence Organization:** understanding punctuation, letter and word spacing, capitalization.
4. **Letter and Word Knowledge:** alphabet knowledge, one-to-one correspondence.

Assessment:

Assessment of print concepts can be conducted informally as you interact with children around books. You can also use a [Concept of Print Assessment](#) like this one from Reading Rockets.

The student POINTS to:	Score	Comments
1. the front of the book		
2. the back of the book		
3. the title		
4. the text		
5. where to begin reading the story		
6. the direction in which to read (left to right)		
7. where to go next at the end of the line		
8. words one-to-one as teacher reads one page (voice-graph matches)		
9. the first word on the page		
10. the last word on the page		
The student FRAMES:		
11. one word/two words		
12. the first letter in a word		
13. the last letter in a word		
14. one letter/two letters		
15. The student points to and names any three letters on the page ()		
The student points to OR frames:		
16. a capital letter		
17. a small letter		
18. a period (.)		
19. a question mark (?)		
20. an exclamation mark (!)		
21. quotation marks (" ")		
22. a comma (,)		
TOTAL Number Correct: /22 Possible		



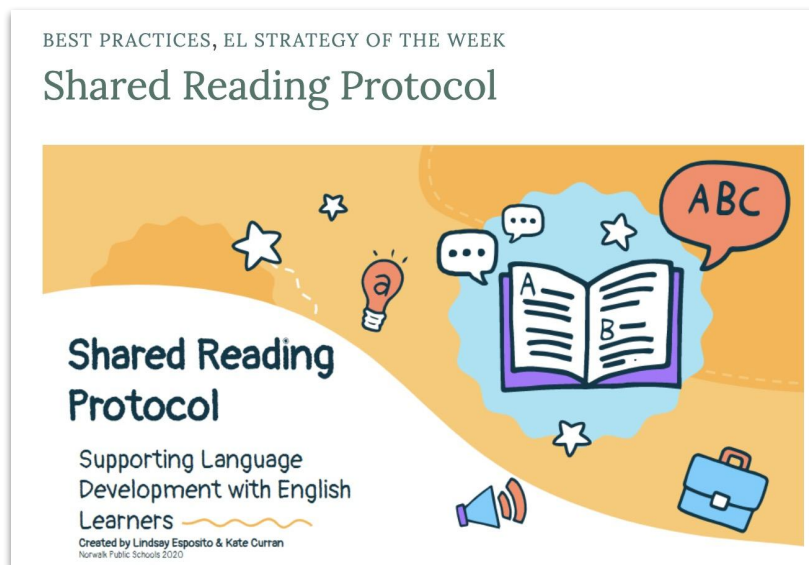
For a more comprehensive discussion about concepts of print, including the difference between traditional and digital print concepts, I highly recommend Chapter 2 of Julia Lindsey's book [Reading Above the Fray](#).

The Reading Forum provides [Chapter 2 as a sample](#).

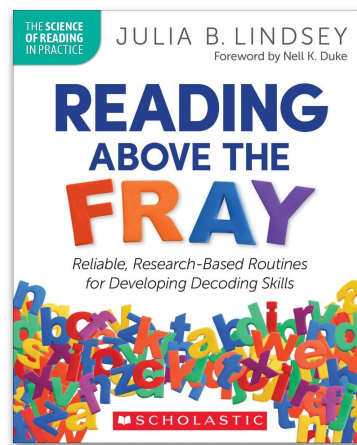
Shared Reading

Shared reading is an effective and engaging routine for providing direct instruction on print concepts. In just 10-15 minutes a day, you can teach all concept-of-print skills and so much more! Most shared reading protocols consist of a 3-day to 5-day routine. Revisiting the book allows us to provide a different skill focus each day. We can cover everything from print concepts like one-to-one match to word study to fluency and comprehension.

You can find a detailed 5-day Shared Reading Protocol at [InstructionEL Coaching and Teaching](#). This routine provides an added bonus of ways to support English Learners through shared reading. Scroll down to the bottom of the web page to download a free copy:



Julia Lindsay provides a digital download of her **Three-Read Shared Reading Protocol** in her book *Reading Above the Fray*.



Alphabet Knowledge Q & A

Alphabet knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of later achievement in reading (NELP, 2008). While this fact has been settled by the science, many questions remain, mostly because there have not been enough definitive studies...yet. But the research that has been conducted has found a lot of correlational evidence—enough to make some strong recommendations. What *is* clear, however, is that letters and sounds need to be explicitly taught. I have summarized some of this research here by addressing some common questions about letter learning.

Why teach the alphabet?

- Letter naming is one of the best predictors of later reading success.
- Learning letter names helps a child learn letter sounds.
- It helps students develop their understanding of the alphabetic principle.
- Orthographic processing begins with accurate letter identification.

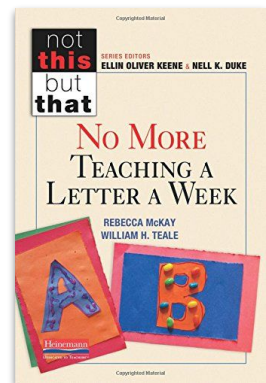


Should I teach letters or sounds first?

The most current studies ([Piasta and Wagner, 2010](#)) indicate that it is likely best to teach both letter names and sounds at the same time. In addition, it is likely best to teach students how to form the letter while learning its name and sound. ([Pritchard et al., 2021](#))

How quickly should the letters be taught?

Students should be introduced to a new letter name every 1-2 days. Gone are the days that we can spend an entire week on one letter. Check out [this resource](#) for more information on why “letter-of-the-week” curriculum should be eliminated.



Should I teach uppercase or lowercase first? Or both together?

The research isn't clear—it seems to depend more on the purpose and age of the child. The first part of this Triple R Teaching [podcast episode](#) addresses the considerations. You can read the first few paragraphs of the podcast transcription.

Alphabet Knowledge Q & A

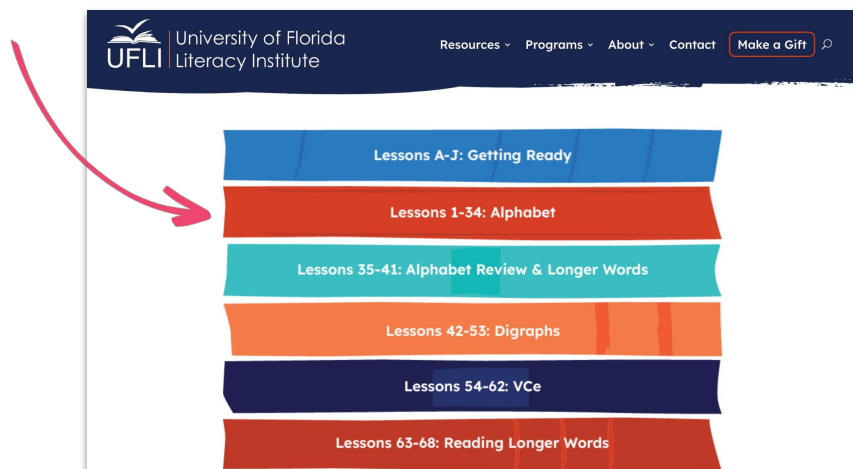
What is the best order to teach the letters?

There is not one perfect, recommended sequence. Different programs teach the letters in different orders. For some *suggested* orders, you can check out these resources:

Podcast episode: [What Order Should We Teach the Letters of the Alphabet?](#)

Podcast episode: [What Research Says About Alphabet Instruction](#)

UFLI Curriculum: This is a free open source curriculum. Click [here](#) to open the toolbox pictured below. You can also look at their scope and sequence [here](#).



Does it matter what alphabet chart I use?

It might surprise you to learn that it actually does matter! See the following page for some alphabet chart guidelines.



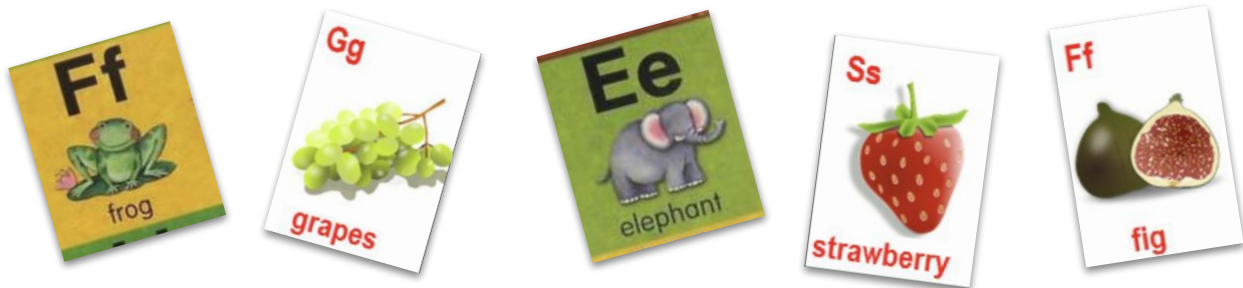
If you want to take a much deeper dive into the research about alphabet instruction, you can check out these resources:

- Webinar: [Promising New evidence for Improving Alphabet Instruction Discourse](#) by Robert Meyer
- Research: [Learning Letters: Evidence and Questions from a Science-of-Reading Perspective](#) by Theresa A. Roberts
- Website: [Alphabet Learning and Instruction](#)
- Article: [Letter Names Can Cause Confusion...](#) by Duke & Block

Alphabet Charts

There are many alphabet charts available, but choosing one is not as simple as finding one that is aesthetically pleasing to the eye! Here are a few guidelines for choosing high-quality, research-supported alphabet charts.

- Use manuscript type for letter shape and formation. Avoid busy or cute fonts.
- Use clear pictures as anchors/key words for letters.
- The key words should be easy to depict and known to the children (this will vary depending on children's background knowledge and environment.)
- Include two key words for the letters a, e, i, o, u, g, and c.
- Avoid alphabet key words that begin with a blend. It's too difficult for children to separate the sounds in blends.
- Avoid words that start with a letter name. For example, "E is for elephant".



Using the guidelines above, can you spot what's wrong with these key words?

An interesting finding from alphabet instruction research:

- [Embedded Pictograph Mnemonics](#) (EPM) can improve students' letter learning memory and reduce the number of repetitions needed for them to learn letters and sounds.



Letter/Sound Routines

Another interesting finding from alphabet instruction research:

Decontextualized instruction works better than instruction embedded in texts. The best alphabet instruction focuses on pairing the letter names, sounds, and formation in a straightforward way. This may seem counterintuitive, but the [research](#) found that children are more engaged and motivated to learn during decontextualized alphabet instruction.

Explicit Teaching with a Simple Routine

Establish a routine for teaching letters and stick to this consistent routine. [Here](#) is one example. (Note: this link includes a basic routine and also extension activities).

Basic Alphabet Knowledge Small Group

As prescribed by alphabet instruction research, we should teach letters quickly to the entire class during Tier 1 instruction. There will be some students who need more repetition, which can be given during small group instruction. In Sharon Walpole's book *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction*, she includes a simple small group routine. You can watch a demo lesson [here](#). Some things to notice when you watch:

- The lesson is fast-paced.
- The teacher provides multiple ways for students to practice.
- The materials are reusable—easy prep.
- Students are actively engaged—there are no worksheets.
- Concepts about print practice is embedded.

Explicit Instruction Through Intervention

[Here](#) is a free, *comprehensive* alphabet instruction curriculum developed by researchers at The Ohio State University. Each lesson is written to follow a gradual release of responsibility model. The lessons are presented in alphabetical order. When using it for intervention, lessons should be selected based on students' assessed needs.

Picture Sound Sorts

Picture sound sorts are great ways to help students understand the alphabetic principle—that letters represent sounds. Here are two free resources to help you create sound sort activities:

- [Beginning Sound Picture Sorts](#)
- [Alphabet Picture Cards](#)

Sound Walls

While more research needs to be conducted to determine the effectiveness of sound walls it may be helpful to include articulation and sound walls with your alphabet instruction. You can learn more about sound walls [here](#) and [here](#). Here is a [Sound Wall Starter Kit](#).

Letter/Sound Routines

Virtual Alphabet Arc



This [interactive tool](#) gives students repetitive practice identifying letters and putting them in order.

Florida Center for Reading Research Games

There are lots of [downloadable games](#) that can be used in small groups and literacy centers. See the Phonological Awareness section of the handbook for step-by-step instructions for using these games.

PHONICS

LETTER RECOGNITION

- Alphabet Borders
- Clip-A-Letter
- Poetry Pen
- Venn Diagram Letter Name Sort
- Letter Cards
- Sorting Letters
- Alphabet Memory Game
- Lettercriter
- Alphabet Arc
- Pasta Names
- Alphabet Tiles Name Sort

LETTER-SOUND CORRESPONDENCE

- Brown Bag It
- Words Around Us Memory Game
- Letter-Sound Train
- Medial Phoneme Spin
- Photo Chart
- Letter-Sound Dominoes
- Letter-Sound Pyramid
- Letter-Sound Mobile
- Where's That Sound?
- Letter-Sound Place Mats
- Letter Bag
- Letter-Sound Folder Sort
- Letter-Sound Bingo
- Letter-Sound Match

Letter-Sound Routines

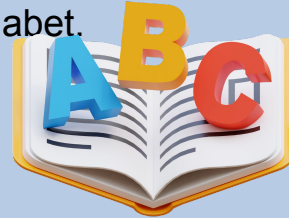
Sing the Alphabet

In addition to the traditional alphabet song, you can also use [Dr. Jean's Alphardy Song](#)



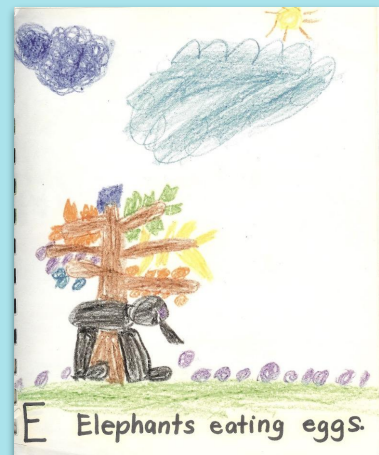
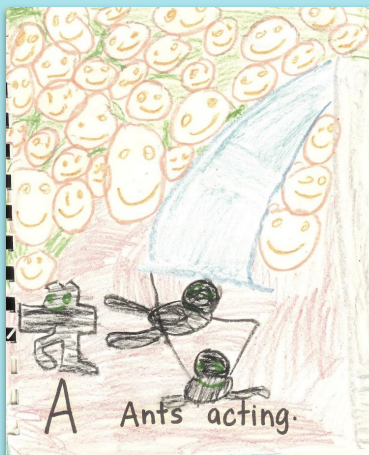
Read Aloud Alphabet Books

Check out this [book list](#) that features titles for every letter of the alphabet.

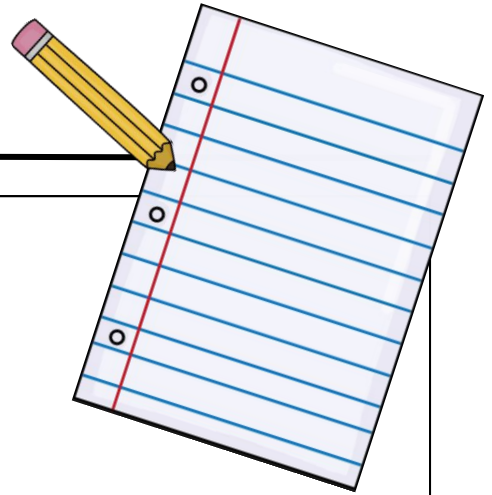


Write Class Alphabet Books

In addition to reading aloud alphabet books, another powerful routine is to use shared or interactive writing to write your own with your students. Each day, choose 2 or 3 letters of the alphabet to review. Guide students in orally composing alliterative sentences for each letter of the alphabet. Transcribe to individual pages and distribute for each child to illustrate a page. Bind into a class alphabet book.



Notes

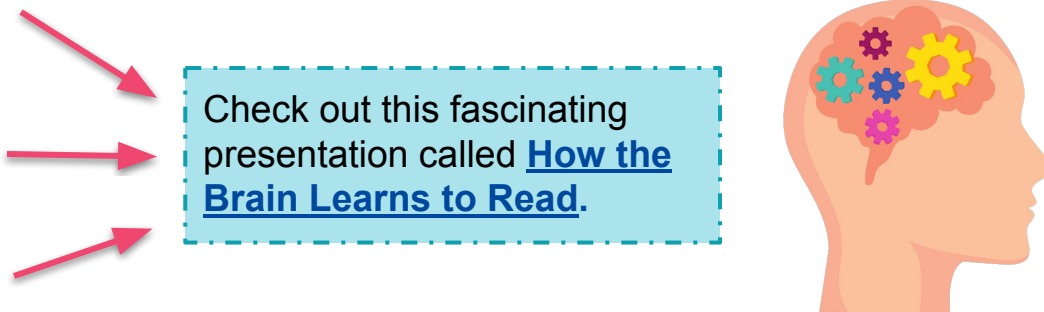


Decoding and Word Recognition



Phonics, Decoding, & the Brain Research

We have exciting brain research from functional MRIs that allows us to study the reading process like never before. We can now take an “inside-out” rather than “outside-in” view of what happens inside our brains as we read.



Findings from the Brain Research

- A study by Stanford revealed that “beginning readers who focus on letter-sound relationship, or phonics, instead of trying to learn whole words, increase activity in the area of their brains best wired for reading.” ([Wong, 2015](#))
- Skilled readers look at and recognize every letter in a word for retrieval.
- We process and comprehend oral and written language in the same way. The only difference with written language is the added step of decoding the word so we can “hear” it.
- English is more predictable than we used to think. 84%-87% of English words follow common and consistent sound-spelling patterns. Of the remaining, only 3% are highly unpredictable ([Bryson, 1990](#))

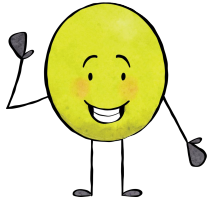
Implications from the Research

- Readers need [systematic, explicit](#) phonics instruction. (Learning to read is not a natural process like learning to talk).
- New words should be taught using a speech to print approach—matching sounds (phonemes) to written symbols (graphemes) in order to strengthen orthographic mapping in the brain.
- A speech-to-print (rather than print-to-speech) method strengthens reader’s orthographic mapping skills.
- Oral language development through read-alouds and teaching into talk is a critical component of learning to read.

Phonics Instruction

Key Ingredients for Phonics Success

[\(Blevins, 2019\)](#)



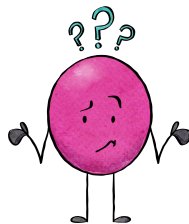
1. A Knowledgeable and Effective Teacher
2. Readiness Skills
3. Scope and Sequences
4. Blending
5. Dictation
6. Word Awareness Activities
7. High-Frequency Words
8. Reading Connected Text

10 Common Causes of Phonics Instruction Failure

[\(Blevins, 2019\)](#)

1. Inadequate or nonexistent review and repetition
2. Lack of application to real reading and writing experiences
3. Inappropriate reading materials to practice skills
4. Ineffective use of the gradual release model
5. Too much time lost during transitions
6. Limited teacher knowledge of research-based phonics routines and linguistics
7. Inappropriate pacing of lessons
8. No comprehensive or cumulative mastery assessment tools
9. Transitioning to multisyllabic words too late
10. Overdoing it (especially isolated skill word)

Click [here](#) for a free masterclass taught by Wiley Blevins.
He addresses the 10 common causes of phonics instruction failure.



Scope and Sequence

Reading researcher Linnea Ehri described the developmental word recognition phases through which readers progress.

1. **Pre-Alphabetic:** Children have not acquired the alphabetic principle (the understanding that letters represent sounds).
2. **Early or Partial Alphabetic:** Children discover that letters correspond to sounds.
3. **Later or Full Alphabetic:** Readers attend to every letter in words. They map sounds to symbols and segment symbols into sounds.
4. **Consolidated Alphabetic:** Readers use chunks, rather than individual phonemes, to decode. Phonograms or multi-letter patterns are recognized with automaticity.
5. **Automatic:** Word recognition is quick and effortless. Most previously encountered words have become sight words.

You can find a more detailed but concise overview of Ehri's Phases at [UFLI](https://www.ufl.edu/ufli/).

Knowledge of these phases can help guide our instructional decision-making when we ask questions like:

- What can the reader do? What does the reader know?
- What does the reader need to know or do in the next phase on the continuum?

We can also use this information to determine a research-based scope and sequence or to evaluate our school's scope and sequence. There is no one correct sequence for phonics instruction, but here are a few samples of research-aligned sequences:





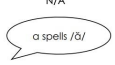



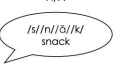
- [UFLI](https://www.ufl.edu/ufli/) (University of Florida Literacy Institute)
- S & S posted on [Reading Rockets](https://www.readingrockets.org/)
- [The Measured Mom](https://www.measuredmom.com/)
- [Mrs. Winter's Bliss](https://www.mrswinterbliss.com/)

K-2 classrooms should use these scopes and sequences for Tier 1 instruction. Upper grade teachers should use them to help diagnose where a struggling reader may need additional support and intervention.



Phonics Lesson Routine

Here is a handy visual of a research-based routine for K-2 Tier 1, whole group phonics lessons or upper grade small group intervention lessons from [UFLI](#):

<div>  Lesson Planning & Implementation Support </div>			
Day 1		See pages 23-29 of the UFLI Foundations Teacher Manual	
Step	Teacher Materials	Student Materials	Preparation and Instructional Notes
Step 1: Phonemic Awareness (approx. 2 min)	Lesson Plan 	N/A 	Blending: Teacher segments, or breaks apart, word into individual phonemes (/sh//o//p/). Students chorally blend the phonemes to form a word (shop). Warm up for decoding (reading). Segmenting: Teacher orally presents a word (shin). Students repeat word and chorally segment into individual phonemes (/sh//i//n/). Warm up for encoding (spelling).
Step 2: Visual Drill (approx. 3 min)	Lesson Slides 	N/A 	Begin by reviewing/modeling procedure. Teacher presents selected grapheme. Students respond by saying the name of the letter or letter combination followed by its sound ("a spells /a/"). Reinforces grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
Step 3: Auditory Drill (approx. 5 min)	N/A 	Whiteboard/marker or paper/pencil 	Begin by reviewing/modeling procedure. Teacher says sound (/a/). Students form the letter or letter combination while saying the sound ("a spells /a/"). Reinforces grapheme-phoneme correspondences. Teacher should model blendable sounds .
Step 4: Blending Drill (approx. 5 min)		N/A 	Begin by reviewing/modeling procedure. Teacher presents words with previously taught concepts using the word chain provided. Students read words chorally. Prepare the Blending Board app in advance. A Blending Board Tutorial is available.

Page 1 pictured. Click this [link](#) for the full document.

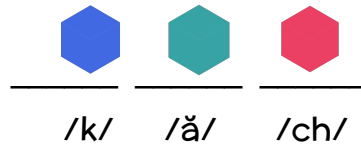
To access UFLI's full open-source program or to order the accompanying teacher's manual, click [here](#).



On the pages that follow you will find additional routines that can be used to provide extra practice and to assist in planning individual and small group phonics intervention and enrichment lessons.

Orthographic Mapping Routine

1. Teachers says a whole word: “catch”
2. Teacher uses the word in a sentence/describes the word.
3. Together, teacher and student tap/draw sound lines/push chips for each sound.



4. Student writes the letter(s) that matches the sound.

c a tch

5. Students blend the sounds altogether to produce the whole word.

Note: If the child writes in incorrect grapheme, provide immediate correction:

c a ch
 tch

Note: The English language consists for 44 phonemes and at least 250 ways to spell them. Most phonemes can be spelled in multiple ways. For example, /ă/ can be spelled: a, a_e, ai, ay, ea, ey, e, ei, au, et, eigh. Download a free phoneme chart [here](#) and check out more information [here](#).

Orthographic Mapping Routine

Orthographic mapping of multisyllabic words:



1. Teachers says a whole word: “capture”
2. Teacher uses the word in a sentence/describes the word.
3. Together, teacher and student clap/pound each syllable.
4. Student makes a line for each syllable.

5. Taking one syllable at a time, teacher and student tap and map each sound.



6. Student writes the letter(s) that matches the sound.

 c a p _____

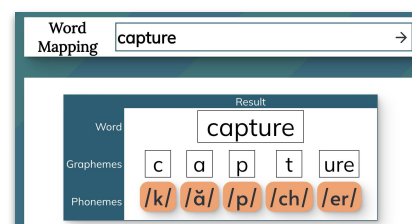
7. Teacher and student repeat in the next syllable.

 c a p t ure

 c a p t ure

8. Students blend the sounds altogether to produce the whole word.

[Here](#) is a great online tool that will help you accurately identify the phonemes and graphemes. Just type the word and the site will automatically map it for you!



Syllable Types

A syllable is a unit of pronunciation that contains one vowel sound. It can be a word or word part. Focusing on high-utility syllable patterns like those listed below helps students consolidate their decoding skills and move toward automatic word recognition, increased reading fluency, and the capacity for improved comprehension. Learning to decode single syllables is an important building block for decoding multisyllabic words. When students are confronted with multisyllabic words, they can use their syllable knowledge to break long words into manageable chunks.

Just like learning the most frequent words in the English language can lead to more fluent reading, learning the most common non-word syllables can help students decode multisyllabic words more fluently. Here is a list of the 102 most common [non-word syllables](#).

You can read more about syllables types [here](#). You can also click the links below for more info and teaching routines for each type.

Closed

The syllable ends in a consonant. The vowel sound is generally short.

cat - cost - flick

Open

The syllable ends in a vowel. The vowel sound is generally long.

me - be - so
be-come ti-ger

CVCe

The syllable ends in a consonant and silent "e". The vowel is generally long.

came - bike - hope

Vowel Teams

The syllable contains two adjacent medial vowels. The vowel sound is long.

sleep - mail - boat

Vowel Diphthongs

The syllable contains two adjacent vowels. The special vowel sound is neither short or long. Eg:

oi/oy - ou/ow -
au/aw - oo/ew

Vowel + R

The syllable ends in a vowel + "r". Often called r-controlled vowels.

far - fir - fern-
for - fur

Consonant + le

The syllable ends in a consonant + le.

ta-ble - bun-dle

Final Stable

A combination of letters that makes a unique but consistent sound chunk.

-tion -sion
-ture -cious

Schwa

The most common vowel sound in English! It is found in unstressed syllables in multisyllabic words.

/ə/

Syllable Types

A fun way to help students remember the syllable types is to use candy bars as key words. Click [here](#) for a sample chart. Two possible activities:

1. Have students sort words into the candy bar categories.
2. Encourage students to find other candies that follow the syllable types.



Closed



Open



Magic e



Vowel team



Vowel diphthong



R-controlled

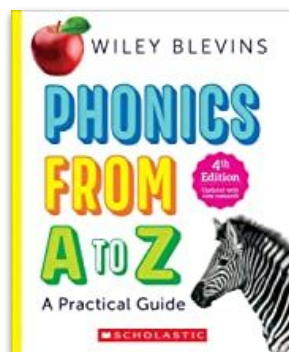


Consonant + le



Schwa

Wiley Blevins has great resources for supporting instruction with syllable types.



How important is it to teach syllable types?

Not everyone agrees about the usefulness and necessity of teaching syllable types. Check out this [blog post](#) by Anna Geiger at The Measured Mom for an interesting discussion, some considerations, and links to additional resources.

Silent “e” Patterns

We all know the “Magic e” rule - when a word contains a consonant - vowel - consonant e, the silent “e” makes the first vowel long. But did you know that there are 9 main reasons that a word might have a silent e at the end? In her book [*Uncovering the Logic of English*](#), Denise Eide describes these reasons:

CVCe

Silent e makes the vowel long.

cake - home

English words can't end in i-u-v-j

love - adjective
blue - argue

Soft c & g

choice - force - voice

change - barge -
orange

Every syllable needs a vowel.

ta-ble bicy-cle
a-cre cen-tre

To keep singular words from looking like plurals

house - mouse
purse - purchase

To make the word look bigger

awe
are
owe

To make a voiced TH

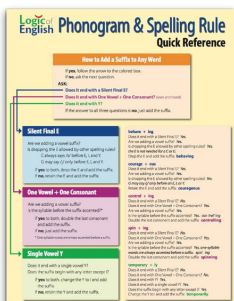
breath ⇒ breathe
cloth ⇒ clothe
bath ⇒ bathe
teeth ⇒ teethe

Add an “e” to clarify meaning.

or ⇒ ore
teas ⇒ tease
hears ⇒ hearse

Unseen reason

giraffe - where
done - were
come - some

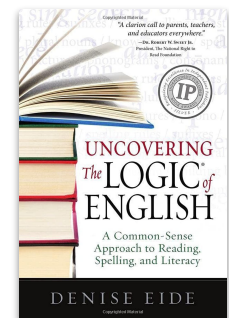


If you find these rules interesting, check out these resources for more!

[Phonogram & Spelling Rule Quick Reference](#)

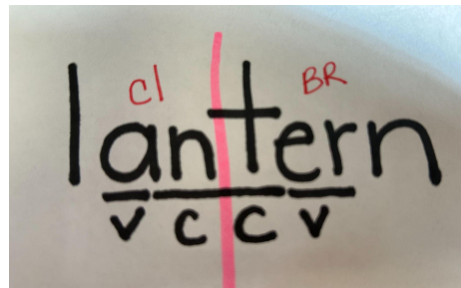
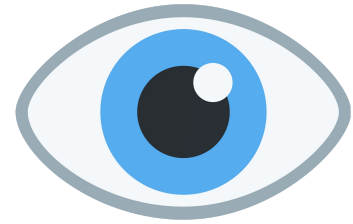
[Uncovering the Logic of English](#)

You also can find a video explanation of silent e rules called [Magnificent E](#) at this site.



Syllabication Routine

1. Show students the word: "lantern"
2. Underline the vowels and label them with a "V" (underline "a" and "er")
3. Draw a bridge to connect the vowels (draw a line from the "a" and "er" to make a bridge)



4. Label the consonants on the bridge (put the letter "C" under the "n" and "t")
5. Look at the syllable pattern (VCCV) and use the pattern to decide where the divide (divide between VC/CV)
6. Label the syllable types (lan: closed; tern: r-controlled)
7. Read each syllable using the syllable type as a guide and put the syllables together to read the whole word: "lantern"

Syllable Patterns Reference Sheet	
Syllable Division Patterns: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. VC/CV2. V/CV3. VC/V4. V/V	Syllable Type Code: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Closed Cl2. Open O3. Magic E ME4. Vowel Team VT5. Bossy R BR6. Consonant-le C-le

Watch [this video](#) of reading expert [Linda Farrell](#) helping a student decode multisyllabic words using a syllabication routine.

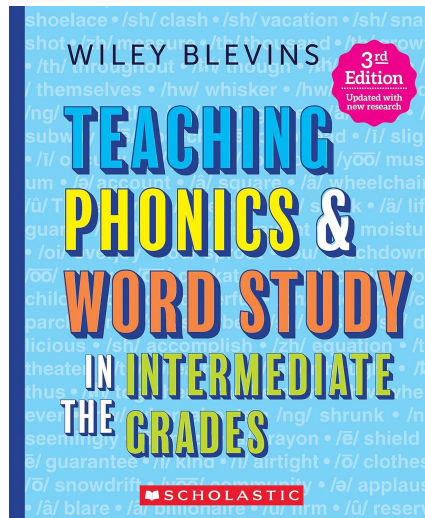
Multisyllabic Words

Once students are equipped with basic phonics skills, can decode basic syllable types, and are introduced to the most frequently used morphemes, they can combine this knowledge to read big words using this strategy from Wiley Blevins:

Decoding Big Words Strategy

1. Look for the word parts (prefixes) at the beginning of the word.
2. Look for the word parts (suffixes) at the end of the word.
3. In the base word, look for familiar spelling patterns. Think about the syllable-spelling patterns you have learned.
4. Sound out and blend together the word parts.
5. Say the word parts fast. Adjust your pronunciation as needed. Ask yourself: "Is it a real word?" "Does it make sense in the sentence?"

You can find this strategy and LOADS of other free ideas from Wiley Blevins [here](#). These are excerpts from his [complete book](#):



Click here for a [Detached Syllable](#) slideshow that you can use to provide syllable blending practice with multisyllabic words.

Multisyllabic Words

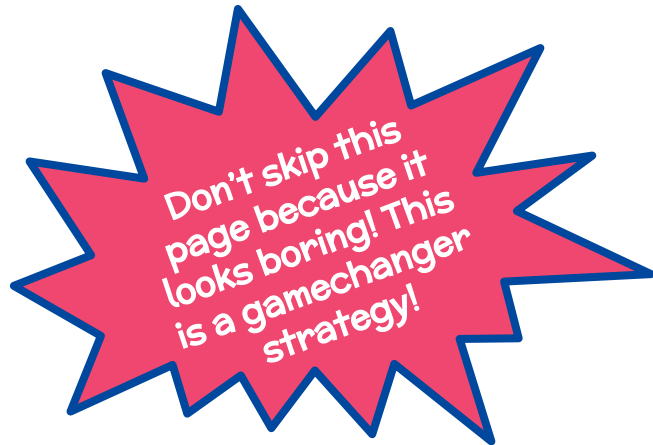
If you are looking for an upper grade reading intervention program for multisyllabic words, check out this comprehensive, open source resource:



You can download a complete teacher's manual and student materials [here](#).



Set for Variability (Cognitive Flexibility)



When a student is beginning to read, it is a watershed moment when they discover the “alphabetic principle” – the understanding that sounds are represented by letters. Toward the beginning of their literacy journeys, readers learn the most common and consistent sound-symbol relationships.

For example, “s” represents the /s/ sound as in “sun” and “ch” represents the /ch/ sound as in “church”.

But what happens when they encounter words like “was” in which the letter “s” does *not* represent /s/ or “school” where “ch” does not represent /ch/?

In the past we might have said something like, “That’s a rule breaker” or “That’s an irregular spelling” and “You’ll just have to memorize this one”.

We now know that the English language, while complex, is more logical than we once believed. For example, in English the letter “s” actually represents two sounds: /s/ and /z/. The letters “ch” represent three sounds: /ch/ (chum), /k/ (school), and /sh/ (machine).

That’s where “set for variability” comes in. According to [Marnie Ginsberg](#) from [Reading Simplified](#), set for variability is a skill that a reader uses to transform a pronunciation error into the correctly decoded form. I believe this is another watershed moment in a reader’s journey.

Here’s how it works:

Let’s look at what happens when a reader reads this sentence: “She was dōne with her work.” This reader followed these two important steps:

1. Sound out each letter or group of letters.
2. Blend the individual sounds.

Set for Variability (Cognitive Flexibility)

Set for variability involves a **third step**: flexing the vowel sound /ō/ to the vowel sound /ū/ to make the word make sense in the sentence. I have worked with many struggling readers who can sound out the most common sound for a spelling and blend the sounds together. What they are missing is step 3. **I believe that explicitly teaching this concept can be a gamechanger for many students.**

This requires two things. One is quick and fairly easy. The other takes a bit of time but is so worth it!

1. Teach students what set for variability is. You will want to rename it to something like “flip the sound”. Some prompts you can use when students correctly sound out a symbol but mispronounce it for that word:
 - What else could you try?
 - What other sound could that be?
 - Try /ā/ (if they pronounced a short a).
 - Try flipping the sound from short to long (or vice versa).
2. In order for students to be able to flip a sound from the most common to a less common sound/symbol correspondence, they will need to be introduced to these spellings. And if you were never taught this way, this may be new learning for you, too!

Here are a few to get you started:

s ⇒ /s/ sun /z/ was, has

ch ⇒ /ch/ church /k/ school, choir /sh/ machine, parachute

ea ⇒ /ē/ read /ā/ great /ě/ bread /ə/ ocean

ey ⇒ /ā/ they, survey /ē/ key, monkey

y ⇒ /ī/ sky /ē/ happy /y/ yarn /ī/ gym, myth

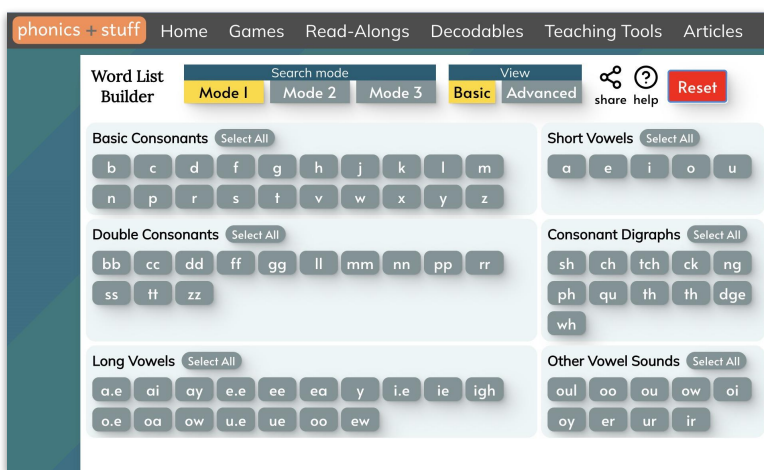
For a complete list of sound-symbol correspondences, download [this chart](#).



Want to hear more about set for variability? Check out [this podcast](#) at The Measured Mom.

Word Building

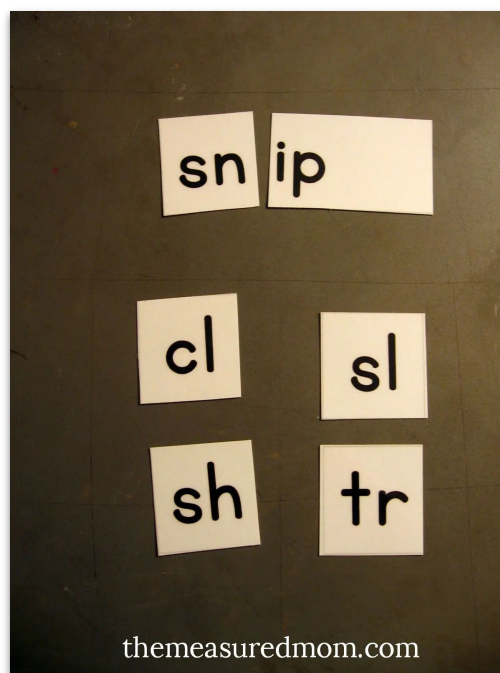
Word building is one of the best exploration exercises to increase students' word awareness. Students are given a set of letter cards and asked to create a series of words in a specified sequence. Usually, students are asked to change one letter in a word to create a new word. Word building strengthens students' blending and orthographic mapping skills. It is a high-leverage routine that involves a lot of cognitive work. Click [here](#) for 30 free word building sets.



Check out this interactive virtual [word builder tool](#).

For more advanced word building activities, consider using onsets and rimes instead of just individual letter tiles. This has all the benefits of traditional word building, but it facilitates the consolidation phase of a reader's journey—they begin to recognize blends, digraphs, and rimes (word families) as entire chunks which aids in automaticity and fluency.

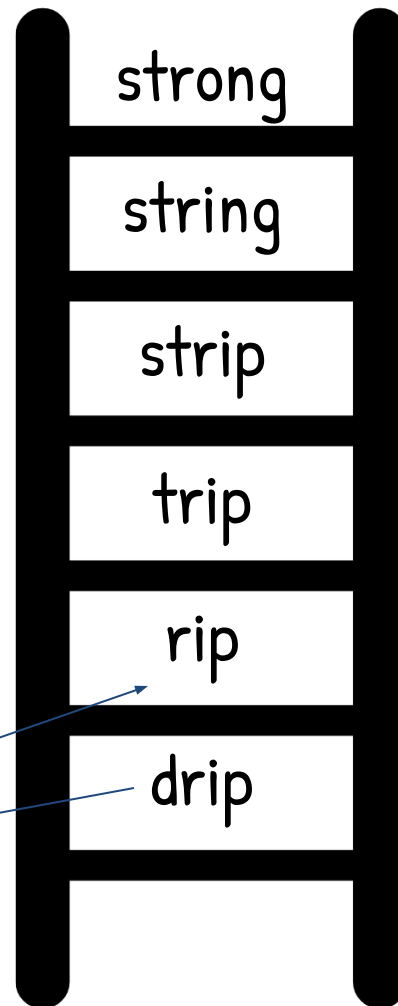
Check out [this post](#) from The Measured Mom for more word building ideas and free letter, onset, and rime tiles.



Word Ladders or Word Chains

Word ladders are a variation of word building. With word ladders the element of vocabulary is added. For example, you might start with the word “drip” on the bottom rung of the ladder. You might prompt students with this definition: *“The next word we will build means ‘to tear’, like tear a piece of paper.”* Students would then build the word ‘rip’. Continue to give meaning clues and directions to add, delete, or substitute sounds until the ladder is filled. Click [here](#) for free word ladder templates. Tim Rasinski has an entire book [Daily Word Ladders](#).

To tear a piece of paper.
Remove one letter.



Word Chain Builder Build Chain! share help Reset

Basic Advanced

Number of Sounds
2 3 4 5 6+

Basic Consonants Select All
b c d f g h j k
l m n p r s t v
w x y z

Double Consonants Select All
bb cc dd ff gg ll mm nn
pp rr ss tt zz

Long Vowels Select All
a.e ai ay e.e ee ea y i.e
ie igh o.e oa ow u.e ue oo
ew

Short Vowels Select All
a e i o u

Consonant Digraphs Select All
sh ch tch ck ng ph qu
th th dge wh

Other Vowel Sounds Select All
oul oo ou ow oi oy er
ur ir

Check out this interactive virtual [word chain builder tool](#).

Word Sorts

Word sorts are another powerful thinking routine to draw students' attention to common spelling patterns and consolidate their orthographic knowledge.

Word Sort Directions:

1. Select a concept to study and a set of words that fit that concept.

Concept: adding the inflected ending -ing to base words.

2. Provide students with a set of words, each printed on individual cards. Read the words with the students to make sure they know all of the words.

camping, jumping, playing, jogging, sleeping, snapping, hugging, showing, hoping, boxing, making, brushing, draining, feeding, planting, wishing, mixing, eating, boating, meeting, taxing

3. Students sort the words into categories.

CVC	CVCC	CVVC	CVCe	CVV	Other
jogging snapping hugging	camping jumping brushing planting wishing	sleeping draining feeding eating boating meeting	hoping making	playing showing	boxing mixing taxing

4. Check, discuss, and reflect. The most important part of these sorts is the reflection and conversation that follows. Use the following questions to guide these important conversations:
 - "What do you notice about these words?"
 - "Do you know other words with these spellings?"
 - "What generalizations can we make about these words that will help us read and spell other words?"

Example reflections: We noticed that when a base word has a short vowel followed by 2 consonants, we just need to add -ing. When the base word is a long vowel with the CVCe pattern, we need to drop the "e" before adding -ing. When a short vowel word ends in one consonant, we have to double the consonant before adding -ing, unless it ends with an "x".

There are different types of word sorts, but three of the most common include *open*, *closed*, and *timed* sorts.

- **Open:** Distribute the word cards and invite students to sort into categories of their choice. Invite them to name the categories they chose and the rationale behind these categories. Open sorts are great tools to assess prior knowledge about the phonics or word study generalization/s being studied
- **Closed:** With closed sorts, the teacher defines the categories and students sort accordingly.
- **Timed:** Timed sorts have a game-like feel and are motivating to students. In addition, they help students consolidate phonics patterns and more quickly recognize phonics patterns in larger chunks, making decoding more efficient and automatic. Timed sorts should only be used *after* a concept has been introduced and studied.

Dictation

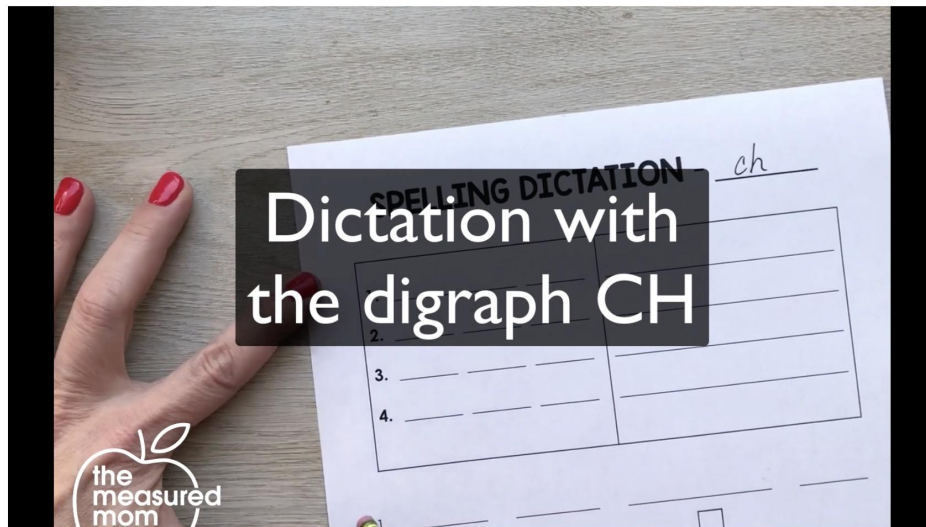
Dictation is a powerful routine that gives students practice applying their phonics/spelling knowledge in context. In addition, writing by hand reinforces and strengthens orthographic mapping skills (matching sounds with written symbols).

Here is a simple rinse-and-repeat routine:

1. Select 3-5 words from a phonics lesson.
2. Create 1-2 sentences that include these words.
3. Provide white boards or dictation paper for students.
4. Say the first word, segment the word into individual phonemes, and direct students to write the word, sound-by-sound (rather than letter-by-letter).
5. Repeat with remaining words.
6. Dictate a short sentence that includes the targeted words. Direct students to repeat the sentence and write it.
7. Provide prompts as needed:
 - What goes at the beginning of a sentence?
 - Don't forget your ending punctuation.
 - Remember to say each *sound* as you write.
8. Display the correct sentence and direct students to self-correct errors.

Here's a great [video demonstration](#) lesson:

A sample dictation lesson for the digraph CH



Phonogram Families

Phonograms, often called ‘rimes’, ‘chunks’, or ‘word families’, are important because when they are studied as consolidated chunks, they are very consistent and reliable. They also give readers a big bang for the buck—about 500 easy-to-read, high-frequency words can be derived from only 37 phonograms, and they are the building blocks of many more multisyllabic words.

What are onsets and rimes?

An onset is the consonant(s) before the vowel(s) in a syllable:

/m/ in *mind*

/str/ in *street*

Not all syllables have an onset (it).

A rime is the first vowel in a syllable and whatever follows:

/ind/ in *mind*

/eet/ in *street*

All syllables have a rime.

37 common rimes:

-ack	-at	-ight	-op
-all	-ate	-ill	-ore
-ain	-aw	-in	-or
-ake	-ay	-ine	-uck
-ale	-eat	-ing	-ug
-ame	-ell	-ink	-ump
-an	-est	-ip	-unk
-ank	-ice	-it	
-ap	-ick	-ock	
-ash	-ide	-oke	

Check out my [YouTube videos](#) describing engaging activities you can do with these phonograms. You can find printable word family cards on the following pages.

back	sack
hack	tack
lack	black
pack	clack
quack	crack
rack	knack

bail	nail
fail	pail
hail	snail
jail	rail
mail	sail
trail	tail

main	brain
pain	chain
rain	drain
vain	gain
chain	grain
sprain	plain

bake	rake
cake	take
fake	wake
lake	brake
make	shake
quake	flake

bale	tale
dale	scale
gale	shale
male	stale
pale	whale
sale	

came	same
dame	tame
fame	blame
game	flame
lame	frame
name	shame

an

ran

ban

tan

can

van

fan

bran

man

clan

pan

plan

bank

tank

thank

yank

shrank

blank

lank

clank

rank

crank

sank

drank

cap

sap

gap

tap

lap

yap

map

chap

nap

clap

rap

flap

ash

hash

bash

lash

cash

mash

crash

rash

dash

sash

gash

flash

at

mat

bat

pat

cat

rat

fat

sat

gnat

brat

hat

chat

ate

rate

date

crate

fate

grate

gate

plate

hate

skate

late

state

caw	saw
gnaw	claw
jaw	draw
law	flaw
paw	slaw
raw	straw

bay	pay
day	ray
hay	say
jay	way
may	clay
nay	play

beat	seat
feat	bleat
heat	cheat
meat	cleat
neat	treat
peat	wheat

bell	tell
cell	well
dell	yell
dwell	shell
fell	smell
sell	spell

best	zest
quest	test
guest	rest
nest	pest
pest	west
crest	chest

dice	vice
ice	price
lice	slice
mice	spice
nice	thrice
rice	twice

kick	wick
lick	brick
pick	chick
quick	click
sick	flick
tick	slick

bide	bride
hide	chide
ride	glide
side	slide
tide	stride
wide	snide

knight	tight
light	flight
might	fright
night	slight
right	bright
sight	plight

bill	kill
dill	mill
fill	pill
gill	sill
hill	will
ill	skill

bin	win
din	sin
twin	chin
fin	grin
kin	shin
pin	skin

dine	vine
fine	wine
line	shine
mine	shrine
nine	swine
pine	whine

bing
ding
king
ping
ring
sing

wing
zing
bring
cling
fling
sling

kink
link
mink
rink
wink
blink

brink
clink
drink
stink
shrink
think

dip
hip
nip
lip
rip
tip

sip
skip
slip
grip
trip
flip

pit
quit
twit
grit
skit
spit

bit
fit
hit
kit
knit
lit

dock
hock
knock
lock
mock
rock

tock
sock
block
clock
crock
stock

joke
poke
woke
yoke
broke
choke

smoke
spoke
stoke
stroke

bop
cop
hop
mop
pop
sop

top
chop
crop
drop
slop
stop

bore
core
fore
gore
more
pore

tore
wore
shore
score
shore
snore

cot
dot
got
hot
jot
knot

lot
not
pot
rot
shot
trot

buck
duck
luck
muck
puck
suck

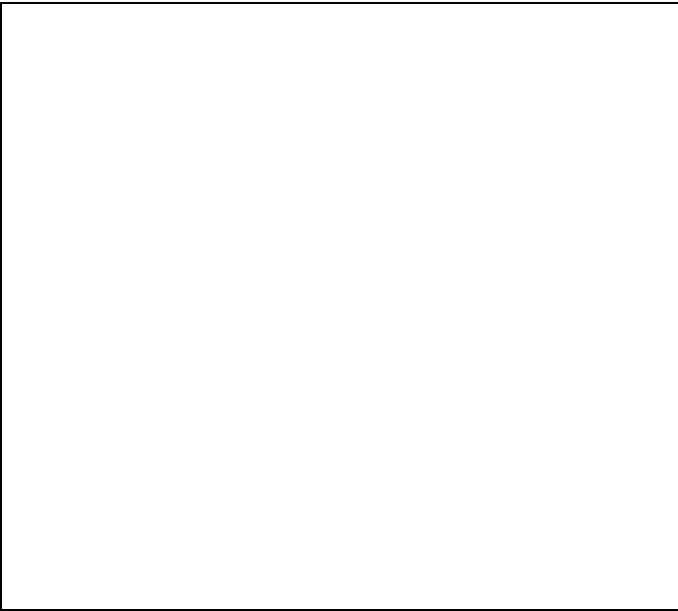
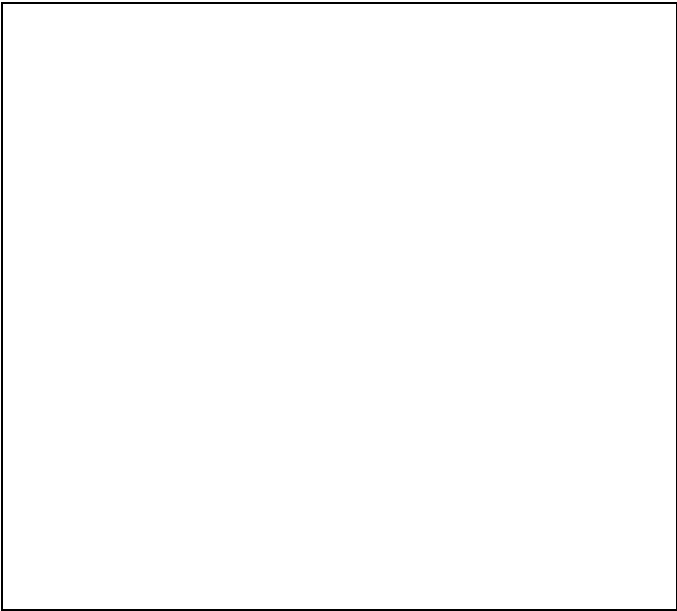
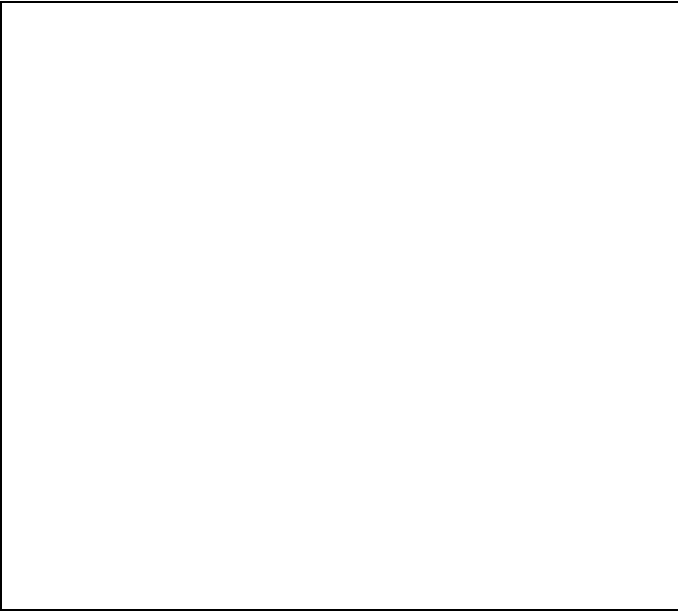
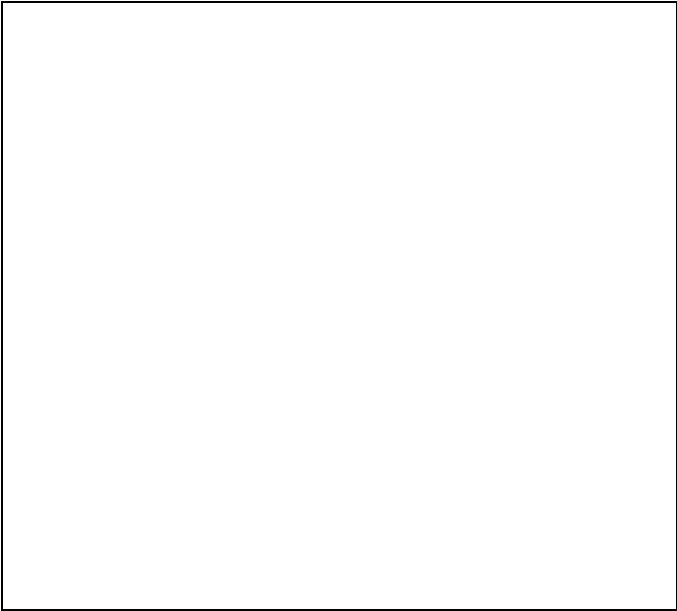
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truck

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dug
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jug
lug
mug

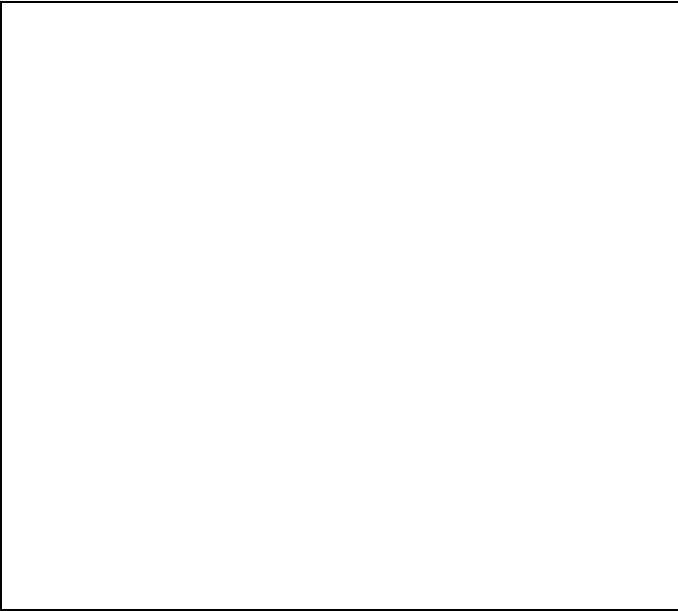
pug
rug
tug
chug
drug
smug

bump
dump
hump
jump
lump
pump

chump
clump
frump
grump
plump
slump



bunk	chunk
dunk	flunk
funk	plunk
hunk	trunk
junk	stunk
sunk	shrunk



Phonogram Families

Reading/Writing Rhymes

(Cunningham, 2000) For this activity you will need to make an “onset deck” from 3x5 index cards or duplicate the cards on the next three pages. These cards will contain 50 beginning letters or letter combinations. Make one card for each of the following:

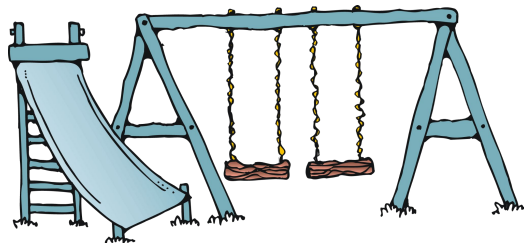
- Single consonants: b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w y z
- Digraphs (two letters, one sound): sh ch wh th
- Other two-letter, one-sound combinations: ph wr kn qu
- Blends (beginning letters blended together, sometimes called clusters): bl br cl cr dr fl fr gr pl pr sc scr sk sl sm sn sp spr st str sw tr

Distribute these cards to your students (individuals or partners). Choose a familiar word chunk and write it 10-12 times on the board or under a document camera. Invite students who think they can make a word with their onset card to place it by the chunk and pronounce it. If it is a real word, add it to the list. Words that rhyme but have a different spelling are added to a separate part of the list with an asterisk. After all of the onset cards are used, challenge students to think of longer words that contain that word chunk and add those to the list. Next, as a shared writing or partner writing activity, have students write a sentence, paragraph, or short story containing as many words as possible.

Chunk: “ay”

<u>R</u> ay	<u>d</u> ay	<u>s</u> tay	<u>g</u> ray	*weigh
<u>M</u> ay	<u>p</u> lay	<u>b</u> ay	<u>p</u> ay	

“One day Ray and May went out to play in the bay.
They stayed and stayed until Saturday.”



b

c

d

f

g

h

j

k

l

m

n

p

q

r

s

t

v

w

x

y

z

bl

br

cl

cr

dr

fl

fr

gr

pl

pr

sc

scr

sk

sl

sm

sn

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spr

st

str

sw

tr

sh

ch

wh

th

ph

wr

kn

qu

Decodable “Aligned” Texts

What are decodable texts?

Decodable texts are texts that are controlled based on phonics skills that have been taught up to a point in a scope and sequence. The emphasis is on a new target skill, and the majority of the words can be sounded out using the sound-symbol relationships students have previously learned.

Why should we use them?

The research base for using decodable texts is extremely strong. In a study conducted in two New York City public schools in 1999-2000, Wiley Blevins discovered that children using decodable texts gained an average of one year of growth during one half of a school year (some gained as much as two years' growth). The decodable text group increased from 28% on-level mastery in September to 72% on-level mastery in February. In comparison, the trade-literature control group moved from 40% in September to 54% in February. You can read more about this study [here](#).

Characteristics of High-Quality Decodable Texts

1. **They are comprehensible.**
The goal of all reading experiences is comprehension. Reading for the sake of decoding words is never the end goal. While decodable texts include controlled vocabulary to scaffold young readers, that controlled vocabulary should not impede meaning. They should include natural-sounding sentences and words that are part of children's everyday vocabulary.
2. **They are instructive.**
The words should be based primarily on sound spellings that have been previously taught. Decodable texts give readers the opportunity to *practice* phonics skills in continuous text but do not replace explicit instruction of these skills.
3. **They are engaging.**
Engagement is everything! In order to gain automaticity with decoding and word recognition and to develop reading fluency (which frees the brain to focus on comprehension), children will need to revisit texts repeatedly. For this reason, the texts *must* be engaging enough for children to want to interact with them again and again. The books should also be interesting enough to both talk about and write about.

Decodable “Aligned” Texts

Common Weaknesses Among Decodable Texts

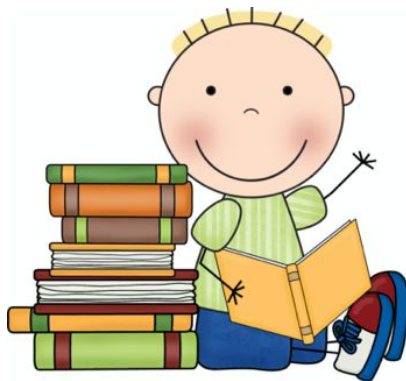
While decodable texts are powerful teaching tools, it is important to be selective when choosing them. Avoid texts that use:

1. Low-utility words to try to squeeze in more words with the target skill
2. Non-standard English sentence structures
3. Nonsensical sentences or tongue twisters
4. Too many easy referents or pronouns instead of specific concrete words, making the meaning difficult to figure out
5. Too simple language to explain scientific concepts due to phonics constraints
6. Odd names to get more decodable words in the story

One of the most important issues to be wary of is texts that avoid using the word “the”. “The” is the most common word in the English language. Because it has an irregular spelling, some publishers reduce the number of times this word is used in order to increase the “decodability percentage”. In doing so, the texts result in awkward sentence structures that don’t sound like natural English.

Please note: Research has never supported the need for a decodability requirement. Nonsensical sentence structures impede meaning and do not support readers.

From Choosing and Using Decodable Texts: Practical Tips and Strategies for Enhancing Phonics Instruction by Wiley Blevins



Using Decodable Texts in Small Groups

I highly recommend *Choosing and Using Decodable Texts: Practical Tips and Strategies for Enhancing Phonics Instruction* by Wiley Blevins. This book is chock-full of practical teaching routines including a Decodable Text Lesson Planner and sample lessons that follow this format:

Before Reading

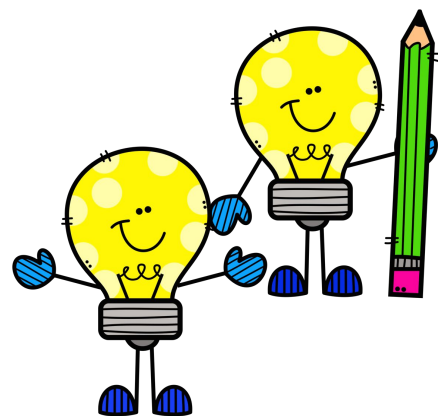
1. Introduce new phonics skills
2. Model blending words
3. Introduce new high-frequency words (read/spell/write/extend)

During Reading

1. Preview and Predict
2. First Read (choose level of support: echo read, choral read, individual whisper read)
3. Check Comprehension
4. Second Read (develop fluency)
5. Retell and Write

After Reading Routines Menu

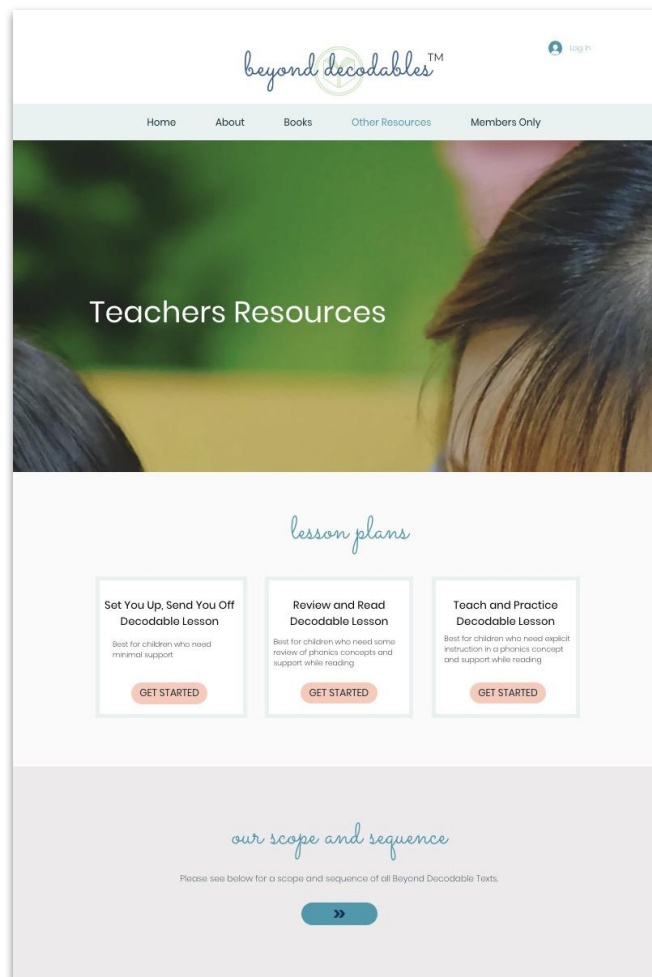
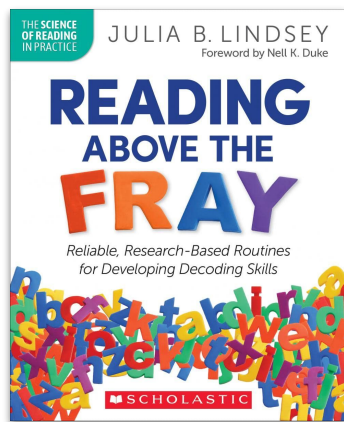
1. Word-Building
2. Word Ladders
3. Dictation
4. Word Sorts
5. Fluency Building



Resources to Support Decodable Book Lessons

In collaboration with the Boston Public Schools, Julia Lindsey has conducted extensive research around the use of decodable texts for early reading instruction. Her research has resulted in two phenomenal resources. One is her book [Reading Above the Fray](#), which I *highly* recommend.

The other resource is her website called [Beyond Decodables](#) where she provides free access to many teacher-created decodables, a scope and sequence, and lesson supports.



For an extensive list of decodable book publishers check out the [UFLI Foundations Decodable Text Guide](#).

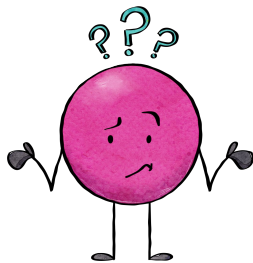
Brain-Friendly Tips for Teaching Sight Words

Did you know that...

- there are 109 words that comprise 50% of the words in children's texts?
- 13 of those words make up 25% of children's texts?
- when equipped with the first 109 words and some basic phonics knowledge, children can read 90% of single-syllable words they encounter?

Sight words are not the same as high-frequency words. Sight words are any words that a reader can read automatically. High-frequency words are those that occur a great deal across all texts. (Download the 109 Power Words [here](#)).

Eventually all (most) words become "sight words"



BUT....

We shouldn't teach them by sight.

In other words:

NO memorization of sight words.

Why Teaching High-Frequency Words by Sight is a Problem

- The human memory is limited to about 2,000 individual symbols.
- We need to master 40,000-200,000 words.
- Many functionally illiterate adults know between 1,000-2,000 sight words.
- Brain imaging technology shows that skilled readers use the auditory processing region of the brain, while struggling readers do not.

We now know...

- Sight words should be taught like other words.
- Sight words should be sounded out from left to right.
- Most sight words can be at least partially sounded out.
- Rather than memorization, we should be using orthographic mapping.
(sounds⇒symbols)

Practices to Avoid When Teaching Sight Words

- Using flashcards to *learn* sight words
- Telling students or parents that these words need to be memorized
- Writing rainbow words
- Drawing shapes around words
- Writing the words multiple times
- Exposing students to the words in shared reading and hoping they will get them through repetition
- Chanting the spellings of words
- Posting sight words on an alphabetic word wall

High-Frequency Word Routine

1. **Say the word and activate meaning.**

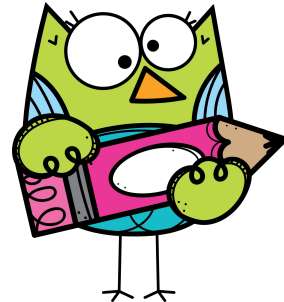
"Today we are going to learn the word 'they'. Listen as I use this word in a sentence: I saw my brothers. They were waving at me."

2. **Say the sounds in the word.**

"What are the sounds that we hear in the word 'they'? Say the word. How many sounds do you hear?"

Draw lines or boxes to represent the sounds:

 /th/ /ā/
th ey



3. **Match the sounds to the spelling of the word.**

"Watch as I write the letters that represent the sounds /th/ /ā/ ."

th ey

4. **Analyze the spelling.**

"What part of this word is easy? What part is tricky? What surprised you? What will help you remember? 'Th' is easy, but 'ey' is tricky. Usually we spell long a at the end of word with 'ay'. But there are some words in English that have this tricky spelling 'ey'. Let's draw a star on top of this part to remind us that this part is tricky." [Note: Other English words that have an "ey" long ā spelling include: obey, survey, purvey, hey, whey, convey, prey]

5. **Practice writing and reading.**

"Let's write this word on our white boards." Remind students to say the sounds, draw a line for each sound, then write the spellings on white boards. Have students hold up their boards and give immediate feedback and corrections.

6. **Connect to authentic reading and writing.**

Provide practice reading and writing high-frequency words during shared reading, interactive writing experiences, and dictation sentences.

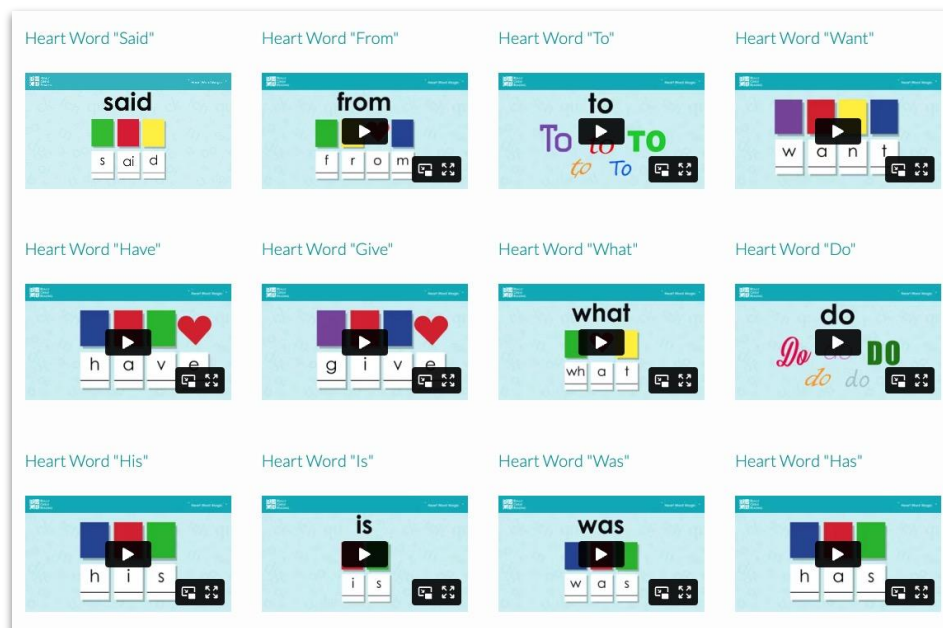
High-Frequency Word Resources



Download a free [Phonic High-Frequency Word Chart](#).

DECODABLE HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS															
VC & CVC*								DIGRAPHS				BLENDS		-NG, -NK	
am	can	has	is	ran	ten	much	then	ch	sh	th	ck	an	ck	nk	nk
an	cut	him	it	red	up	pick	then	ch	sh	th	ck	an	ck	nk	nk
at	did	his	let	run	us	sh	sh	ch	sh	th	ck	an	ck	nk	nk
at	get	hot	not	st	well	sh	sh	ch	sh	th	ck	an	ck	nk	nk
big	got	if	off	sk	well	sh	sh	ch	sh	th	ck	an	ck	nk	nk
but	had	in	on	sk	well	sh	sh	ch	sh	th	ck	an	ck	nk	nk
IND. OLD, OST								OPEN SYLLABLES				CVCVC		VCVC VOWEL TEAMS	
find	cold	most	be	me	my	ate	ame	ade	ake	ake	ake	can	can	green	light
kind	old	od	be	me	my	ate	ame	ade	ake	ake	ake	can	can	green	light
R-CONTROLLED VOWELS								DIPHTHONGS*				CONSONANT-LE		MULTI-SYLLABLE	
far	hurt	more	brown	found	house	about	after	away	before	going	seven	under	upon	yellow	yellow
for	more	or	down	house	our	about	after	away	before	going	seven	under	upon	yellow	yellow
for	more	or	down	house	our	about	after	away	before	going	seven	under	upon	yellow	yellow
for	more	or	down	house	our	about	after	away	before	going	seven	under	upon	yellow	yellow
for	more	or	down	house	our	about	after	away	before	going	seven	under	upon	yellow	yellow

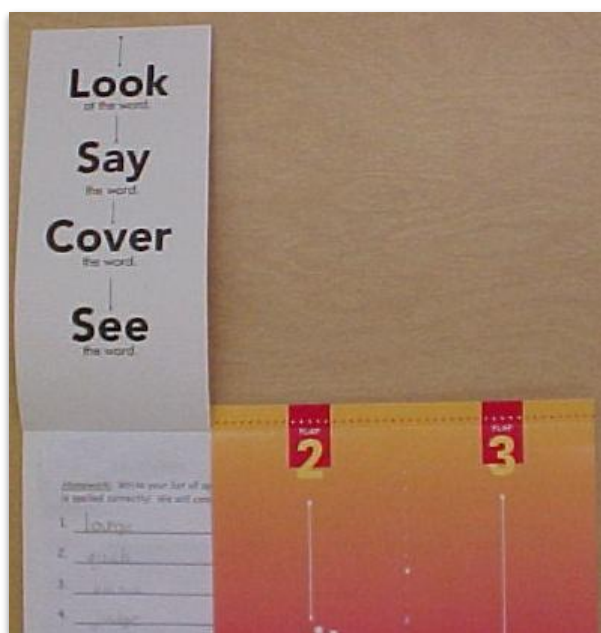
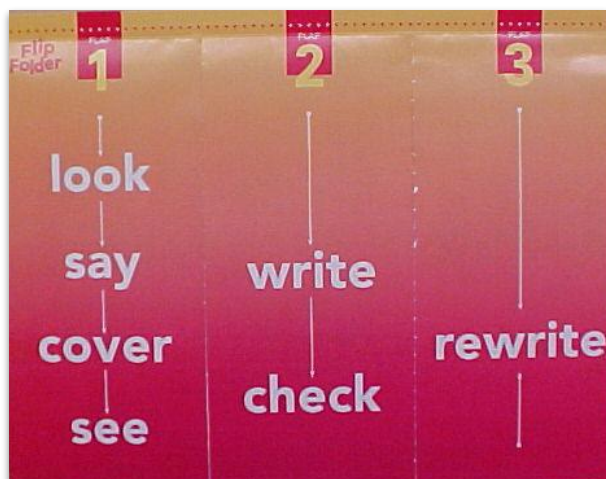
Anna Geiger offers a list of [decodable high-frequency words](#) organized by phonics patterns.



Check out these quick [video tutorials](#) for the tricky high-frequency words.

Look-Say-Cover Study Technique

Once you have taught tricky high-frequency words through orthographic mapping, some students may still struggle to spell them accurately and need more practice. Writing words “ten times each” is not an effective way to study spelling words. For an alternate and effective study technique, try Richard Gentry’s Look-Say-Cover Flip Folder.



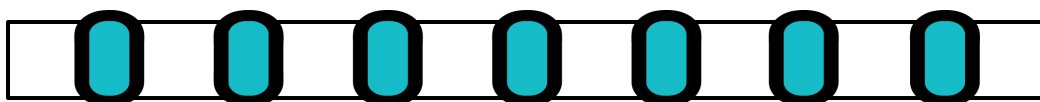
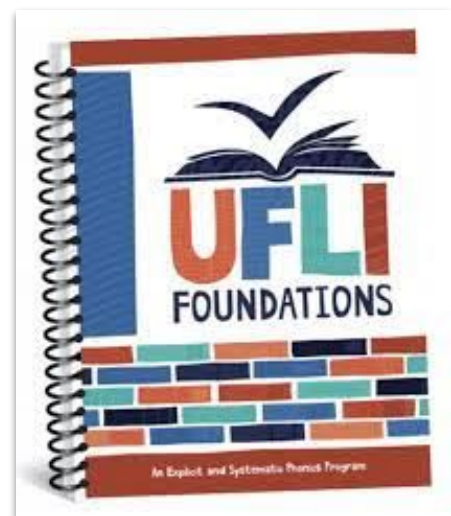
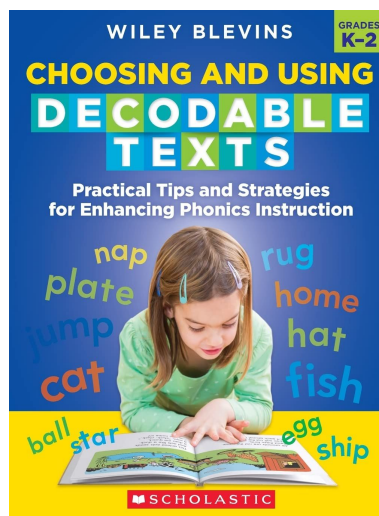
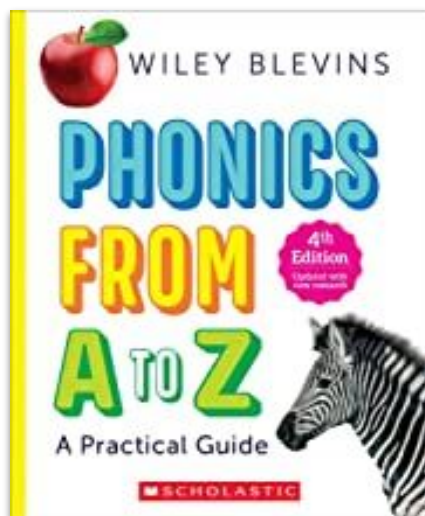
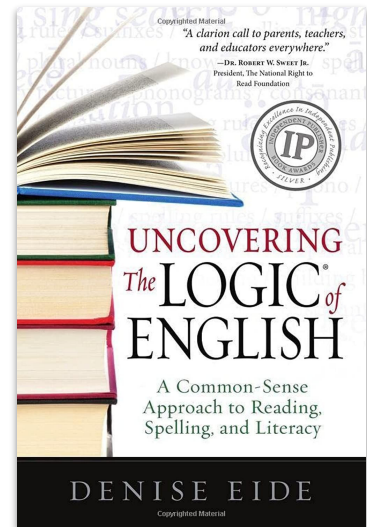
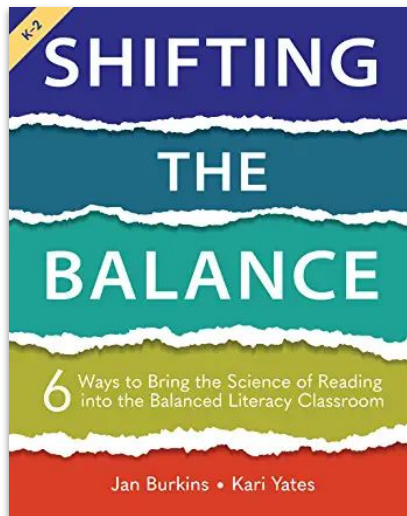
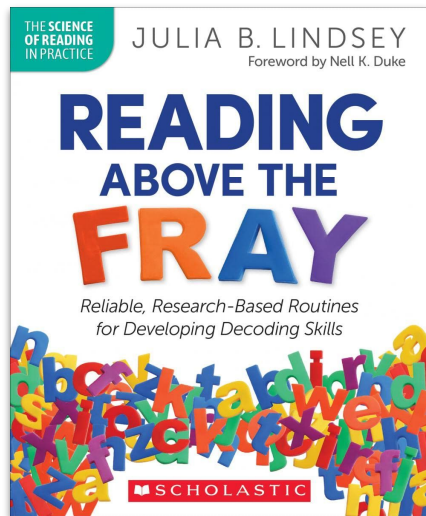
You can find directions for creating [Spelling Study Flip Folders here](#). On the following page you will find a reproducible form to put inside the folder.

Look – Say – Cover

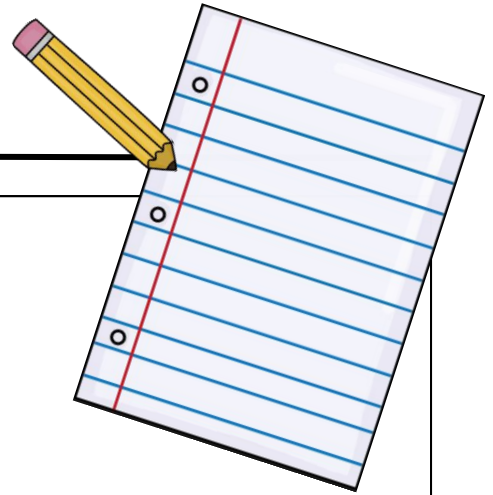
Homework: Write your list of spelling words in the first column of this sheet only. Be sure that every word is spelled correctly! We will complete the rest of this spelling study activity in class on Thursday.

1.	<hr/>	<hr/>
2.	<hr/>	<hr/>
3.	<hr/>	<hr/>
4.	<hr/>	<hr/>
5.	<hr/>	<hr/>
6.	<hr/>	<hr/>
7.	<hr/>	<hr/>
8.	<hr/>	<hr/>

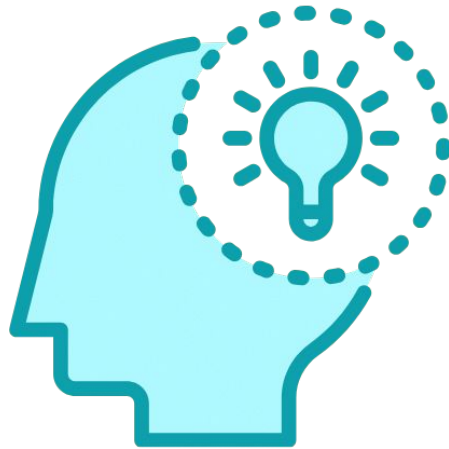
Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Phonics & Morphology



Notes

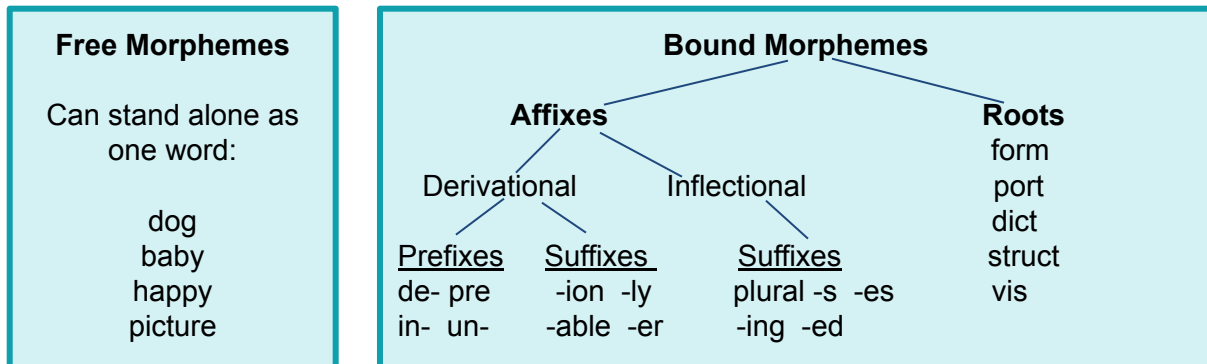


Morphology: **Studying Units of Meaning**



Morphology

Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning in the English language. There are two main types of morphemes: free and bound.



While morphemes can be taught as “chunks”, they differ from syllable chunks or phonogram family chunks. Studying syllable types and phonogram families help students become more proficient at sounding out words. Studying and analyzing morpheme chunks goes beyond decoding and helps students with the meanings of words and strengthens their vocabulary.

Morphology is often the focus of word study lessons in grade 3 and up. It’s important to note that we can and should begin some foundational morphology work as early as kindergarten. These concepts include:

- inflectional morphemes: -s, -es, -ing, -ed
- two-syllable compound words: hotdog, doghouse
- common prefixes: un-, pre-, re-
- common suffixes: -er, -est (comparison); -er, -or (person who); -ful (full of)

In the upper grades morphology lessons should include the study of Greek and Latin roots and additional affixes.

Morphological awareness is considered a “bridging skill”. Knowledge of affixes and roots certainly helps the reader decode words (word recognition), but it also helps determine a word’s meaning (language comprehension). Once students can use morphology to both decode words and unlock the meanings of the individual morphemes, they can use these skills to learn new vocabulary independently. See the independent word learning strategies in the vocabulary section of the handbook for instructional routines.

Morphology

Morpheme matrices are powerful advanced word study tools that can assist readers with decoding and encoding multisyllabic words, unlocking the meanings of unknown words, and adding new vocabulary to their mental lexicons.

This is the structure of a morpheme matrix:

common prefixes	Latin root simple meaning free or bound	most common inflectional suffixes
less common prefixes		most common derivational suffixes

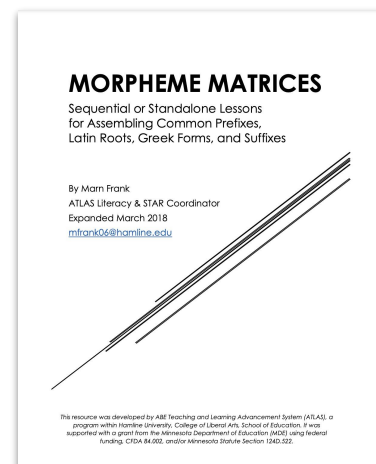
A sample matrix for the Latin root **-rupt**:

dis inter	rupt to break or burst bound	s ed ing
e (out)		er tion ible ive

Students use the matrix to construct new words in the “rupt” network of words and then write a few sentences including the words.. Examples might include: *disrupt, interrupt, erupt, disrupts, disrupted, disrupting, disrupter, disruption, disruptive, interrupts, interrupted, interrupting, interrupter, interruption, interruptible, interruptive, erupts, erupted, erupting, eruption, eruptible, eruptive*

Check out [this resource](#) for lesson directions and 25 ready-use-matrices.

Click [here](#) to access a mini matrix-maker.



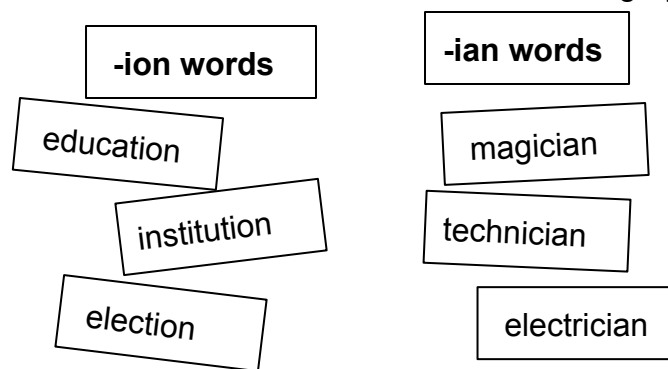
Morphology

Affix Sorting

Word sorts are powerful tools for helping students notice patterns and internalize generalizations about a phonics or spelling pattern. An affix sort can also help students better understand the meaning and spelling of words containing that affix. Sorting routines are more effective than rote memorization of rules.

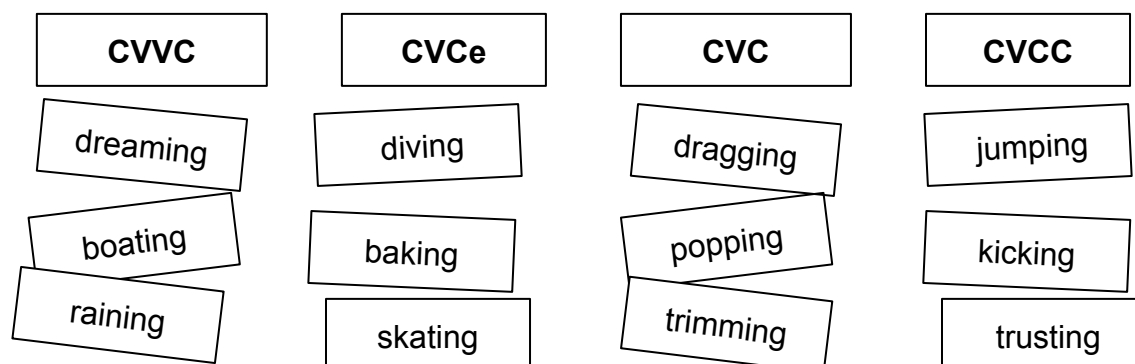
For example, if you want to help students understand how the suffixes *-ian* and *-ion* give clues to a word's meaning, you could ask them to do a closed sort with the following words: education, magician, technician, institution, electrician, election

Ask them to sort into an *-ion* or *-ian* category:



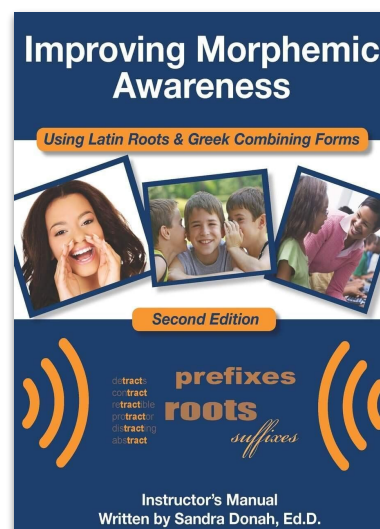
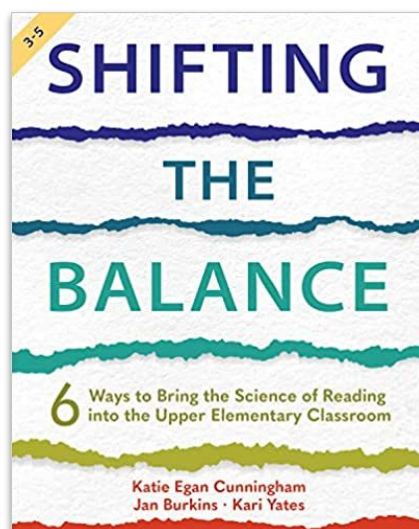
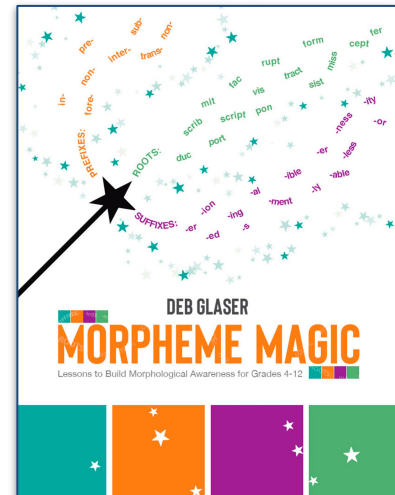
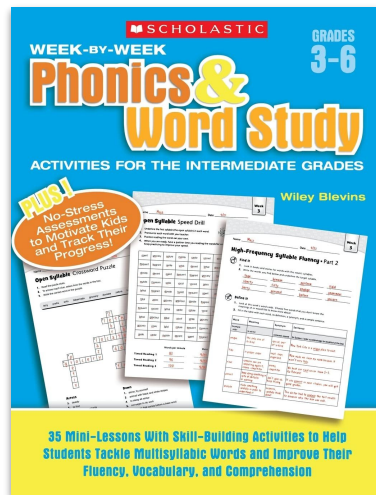
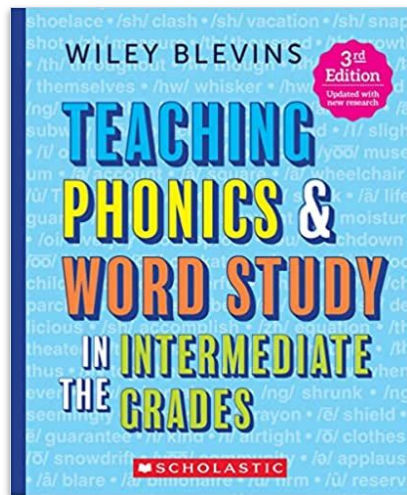
What do you notice? [*-ion* is used for abstract nouns and *-ian* is used for people].

Here is another example using the inflected ending *-ing*. Give students a set of word cards ending in *-ing*. Ask them to sort into their own categories (open sort). Then guide them to sort into categories according to the pattern of the base word (CVVC, CVCe, CVC, CVCC). Then guide them further to notice the rules for adding *-ing*.

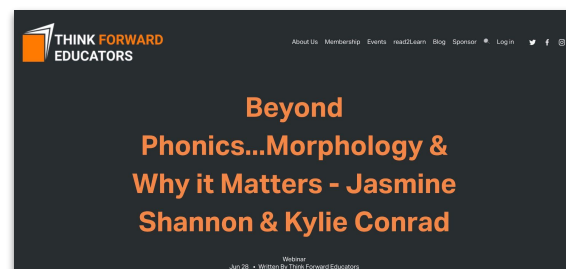


What do you notice? [For CVVC words, we just add *-ing*. For CVCe words, we drop the *e* and add *-ing*. For CVC words, we double the consonant and add *-ing*. For CVCC words, we just add *-ing*].

Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Morphology

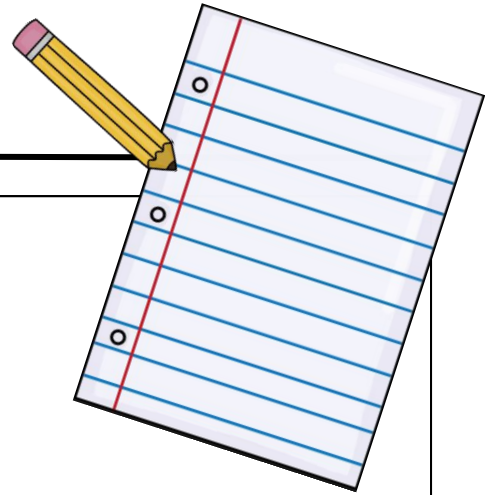


You can find lots of free morphology and other word study tools at [Can Do Kids Academy](https://www.candokidsacademy.com).



Free [morphology webinar](#) at Think Forward Educators.

Notes



Fluency: A Bridge to Comprehension



Fluency Background

What is fluency?

Fluency is the ability to read easily and smoothly with accuracy, expression, phrasing, and intonation. It is an important bridge between decoding and comprehension.

Does fluency matter?

YES! Slow, disfluent reading is linked with poor comprehension. This leads students to read less, which in turn results in their making slower progress in reading than more fluent readers their age. More fluent readers focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. This allows them to focus more on comprehension. Less fluent readers must focus their attention primarily on decoding individual words. This leaves them with little attention left for comprehending text. As a result, comprehension suffers.

How is fluent reading developed?

Fluency is developed through:

- modeling
- assisted reading
- repeated reading

The goal in fluency instruction is not fast reading, but rather, fluent and meaning-filled reading.



Fluency Methods & Routines

Model the 3 P's of Fluency

When reading aloud, call your students' attention to the fluent, expressive manner in which you are reading. Encourage them to "mimic" this in their own oral reading. Modeling the reading of easy books for enjoyment is also a way to encourage older struggling readers to read easy books. Be sure to focus on all aspects of fluency—**p**acing, **p**hrasing, and **p**rosody—not just reading quickly.

Compare Two Books (Defining Fluency Anchor Lesson)

Cover two copies of the same book with construction paper. Label the books "Book One" and "Book Two." Read aloud a section from Book One in a monotone voice. Read a different passage from Book Two with fluency and expression. Ask students which book they liked better. Make a T-chart to compare what you did with your voice that made them like Book Two better.

Then label the chart "What fluency is NOT" and "What fluency IS". Uncover the two books to show that they are the same and that what you do with your voice really does matter.

Daily Self-Selected Reading (AKA Wide Reading)

Children who engage in regular self-selected reading read significantly more than children who don't. The amount of reading children do is one of the biggest variables in their word fluency. Encouraging children to read widely, both at home and school, will have a positive impact on their reading.

Poetry Routine

Poetry is one of the best sources of text for building sight vocabulary and fluency. Its length, rhyme, rhythm, and repetitiveness lend itself well to reading with expression. Because it is fun, children are motivated to read more, which in turn helps them become more fluent. Consider having students keep a poetry notebook of all of the poems read throughout the year. You might also include popular songs—in addition to being useful for building fluency, they are also highly motivating, great for community-building, and a great source of vocabulary. You might also include songs that teach and reinforce phonics skills. ([*The Big Book of Phonics Fun*](#), Carson-D

great source for these songs). Here are two sources for finding children's poems online:

- [A Child's Garden of Verses](#)
- [Children's Poetry Archive](#)

My friend and children's author [Amy Ludwig VanDerwater](#) offers amazing poetry resources at [The Poem Farm](#). I highly recommend checking out her site for loads of inspiration!



Fluency Methods & Routines

Punctuation as Road Signs

Select a book and harvest sentences with special print (italics, bold) and punctuation marks. Write the sentences on sentence strips. Point out the text clues and have students chorally read each sentence, paying attention to the “road signs” to read the text the way the author intended. After modeling on a shared text, have students continue to practice in their independent just-right texts. The [*Elephant and Piggie Series*](#), while usually used with primary students, are also great texts to use with older students because they have so many print features and punctuation marks to practice and they are humorous for readers of all ages!

Reading in Phrases

Type a list of short phrases and display them in a pocket chart or projected on a screen/monitor. Show one phrase at a time and have students chorally read, emphasizing reading in phrases rather than word-by-word.

Reading with Emotion

Help students realize that reading with various emotions can change the meaning of a text. Have students practice reading in a “sad” voice, a “happy” voice, etc. A variation of this is to have a student read with a certain voice and ask the class to guess the emotion.

Readers Theater

Readers Theater is a text or part of a text transformed into a script. It does not rely on costumes or props and the lines are read, not memorized. Students read their parts and use their voices to express the meaning of the text. Students read, rehearse, and perform for an audience, making this a natural, authentic way to promote repeated reading of a text. Students don’t even realize they are rereading because they are so involved in the “play.” You can find loads of free Readers Theater scripts [here](#).

Buddy Reading

Partnering with a classroom of a different grade is my favorite way to conduct buddy reading. For example, a first-grade and fourth-grade classroom are paired together. Each first-grader is paired with a fourth-grade buddy. Once a week, half of the first grade goes to the fourth-grade classroom and vice versa. Keep a basket of books reserved for buddy reading time. The following are great titles for this basket because they are written in two parts or two voices:

- [*I Read to You, You Read to Me*](#) series
- [*We Both Read*](#) series
- [*I Am the Dog, I Am the Cat*](#) by Donald Hall
- [*Hey, Little Ant!*](#) by Phillip Hoose



Assisted Reading

Choral Reading

Choral reading provides a highly motivating way to get children to read orally and fluently. It is also an efficient way to maximize the number of oral reading opportunities per child.

Choral Reading Variations

There are many variations of choral reading that can add spice to your fluency lessons. Some of these include echo reading, line-a-child, antiphonal reading (assign sections to various groups), and choral singing.

Audio Recordings

Have students practice reading an easy text and then allow them to “perform” into an audio recorder. Have them listen to their recording and give themselves feedback on their own fluency and re-record to revise if they want.

Audiobooks

Audiobooks provide great models of fluent reading for students. For students who struggle, audiobooks can also give them access to grade level texts that they may not be able to read independently yet.



Read-Read Back-Read Again

This is a great routine to use in a one-on-one tutoring/intervention session and follows these steps:

1. The routine begins with the student reading aloud a paragraph or short section of text. The teacher listens and provides corrective feedback and prompting, focusing on accuracy and decoding. The teacher clarifies the meaning of unknown words.
2. The teacher reads the same passage aloud, emphasizing fluent reading.
3. The students rereads the passage, aiming for more fluent reading the second time.
4. Repeat with additional sections of text.

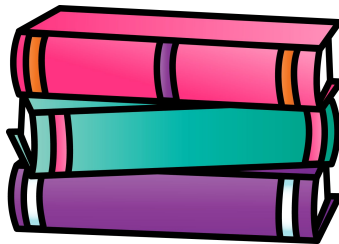


Fluency Development Lesson

This strategy was designed for children experiencing difficulty in achieving even initial stages of fluent reading, but it works well as a whole group activity. Even the most fluent and proficient readers love it. I use this strategy with poems from our poetry notebooks. A typical Fluency Development Lesson looks like this:

1. The teacher passes out copies of the text to each student.
2. The teacher reads the text to the class while students follow along silently with their own copies. This step can be repeated several times.
3. The teacher discusses the content of the text as well as the quality of her reading of it with the class.
4. The entire class, along with the teacher, reads the text chorally several times. The teacher creates variety by having students read in antiphonal and echo styles.
5. The class divides into pairs. Each pair finds a quiet spot, and one student practices reading the text to his partner several times. The partner's job is to follow along in the text, provide help when needed, and give positive feedback to the reader. After the first three readings, the roles are switched. The partner becomes the reader and reads the text three times as well.
6. Students regroup, and the teacher asks for volunteers to perform the text. Individuals, pairs, and small groups perform the reading for the class. The teacher may make arrangements for students to perform the text for the school principal, secretary, custodian, or other teachers and classes. The performing students are lavished with praise.
7. Students are instructed to take the passage home and read it to their parents and other relatives. Parents are asked to listen to their child read as many times as they would like and to praise their child's efforts.

Reprinted with permission, *Holistic Reading Strategies: Teaching Children Who Find Reading Difficult* by [Timothy Rasinski](#) and Nancy Padak, Merrill, 1996, pp. 80-81.



Annemarie's Weekly Routine

Monday: Introduce a new poem using Tim Rasinski's Fluency Development Lesson routine described on the previous page. Annemarie's tips:

- Assign fluency partners that students keep for a grading period or at least a month.
- Consider distributing the entire poetry notebook to students at the beginning of the year to save time during the lesson. If you find new favorite poems during the year, these can be added to the end of the notebook.
- During a morning soft-start or during literacy centers, students illustrate the poem in their notebooks.

Tuesday: Revisit yesterday's poem, reading chorally a couple of times. Use the poem for a word study focus. Word study tips:

- Do a scavenger hunt through the poems, inviting students to highlight words that: "have a short vowel pattern", "are compound words", "double the consonant before adding -ing", etc.
- Do some vocabulary study: Find a word that: "is a synonym of ____"; "is an antonym of ____"; "means ____", etc.
- Pull a high-frequency sight word from the poem and orthographically map it (see "High-Frequency Word Routine" in the Decoding section of the handbook).

Wednesday: Introduce a new poem. Repeat the Monday routine.

Thursday: Repeat the Tuesday routine with the new poem.

Friday: If it's a truncated week, you can skip this day. If it's a full week, Friday can be used as a catch-up day if you had to skip a day earlier in the week or it can be used to revisit old poems. Fun ways to revisit old poems:

- **Poem request:** Pull popsicle sticks and invite the student to request a poem. The class turns to that poem and reads chorally.
- **Act out a poem:** Select a poem that lends itself well to acting out. Students can act out as a class or in partnerships. Alternatively, divide students into small groups to select a poem and practice acting it out. Then students come together to act out the poem while the rest of the class chorally reads it.
- **Recite a poem:** The goal of the poetry notebooks is to build reading fluency, which means students must *look at* and read all of the words. But after a time, students will probably memorize many of the poems. You might use Friday to pull sticks and invite interested students to recite a favorite poem.

At the end of Friday's session, students take their poetry notebooks home and invite "lucky listeners" to listen to them read their poems. Listeners sign their names on the Lucky Listener form in the back of the notebooks. See next page for reproducible.

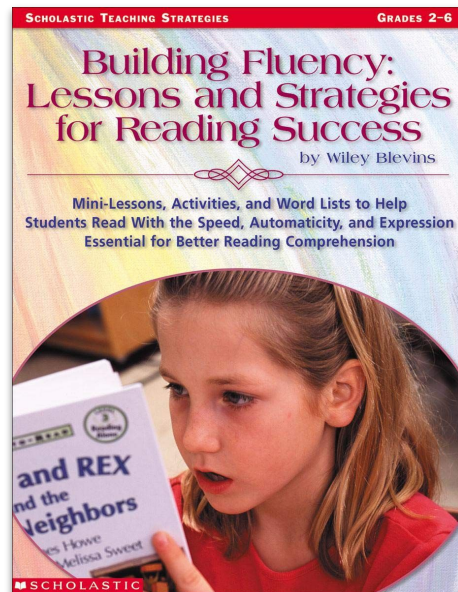
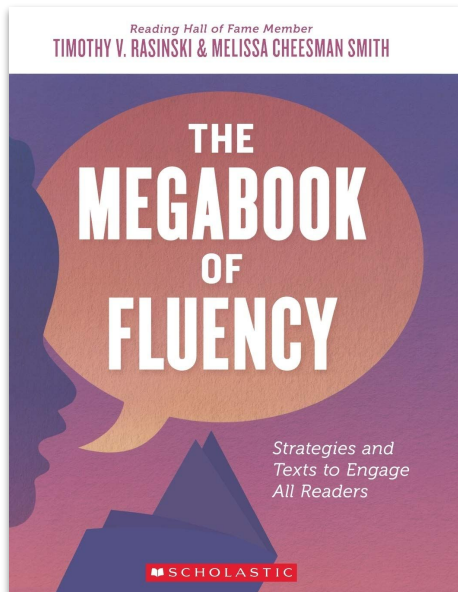
Name _____

Lucky Listener Log

Choose a Lucky Listener to read some of your poems to. This may be a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, babysitter, friend, etc.! Record the date and have your listener sign his/her name to your log.

Date	Listener's Name	Date	Listener's Name

Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Fluency



DR. CHASE YOUNG

HOME RTSCRIPTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PODCASTS BOOKS ARTICLES INTERVENTION



Alphabetical Listing of Readers Theater Scripts with Number of Parts

A Christmas Story: Flagpole Scene (4)

New Year's Resolutions (8)

A Christmas Story: Shoot Your Eye Out Scene (5)

Nia and the New Free Library (12)

A Cookie for Santa (5)

Night of the Blizzard (10)

A Little Excitement (6)

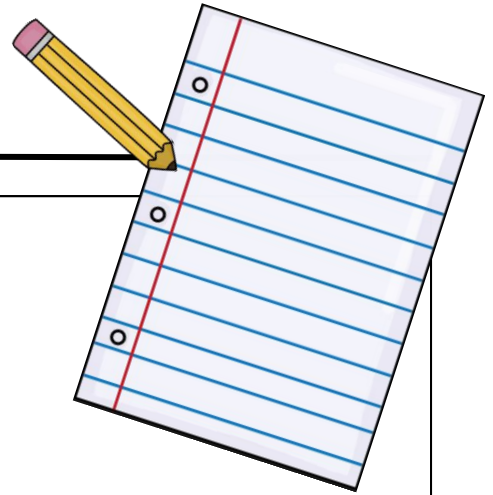
No Bath Tonight (4)

ABC Animals (13)

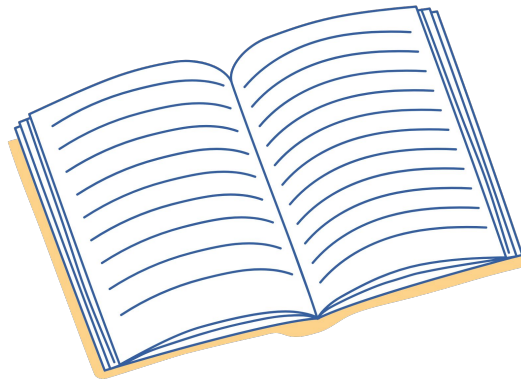
Nory Ryan's Song (3)

[Free Readers Theater Scripts and more!](#)

Notes



Language Comprehension



Language Comprehension

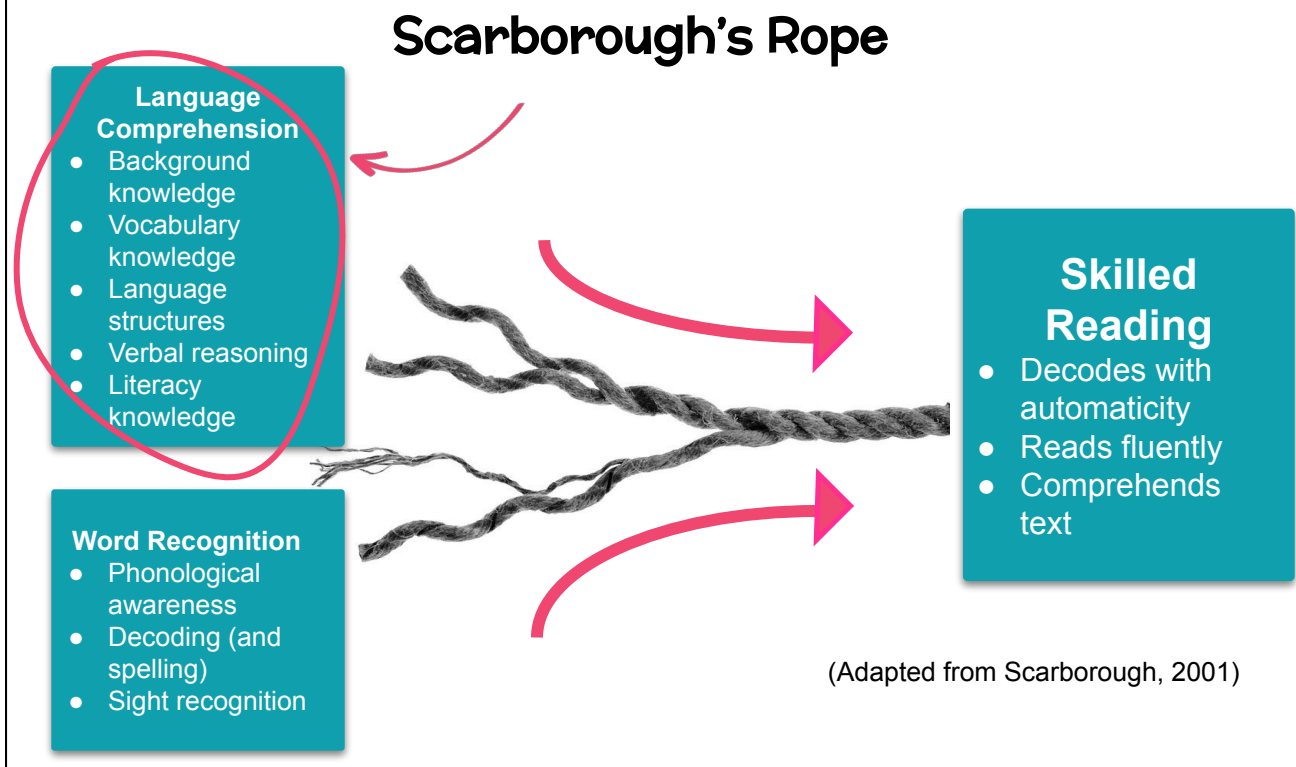
Everything we do in our reading instruction is ultimately to help students construct meaning out of text.

The million dollar question is, what is the best way to teach comprehension? The answer is complex and a comprehensive solution is beyond the scope of what we can accomplish in a one-day seminar. But we will at least scratch the surface!

While the research around the decoding/word recognition strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope is well-established, and a clear instructional path has been laid out, the same is not true for the Language Comprehension strands of the Rope. A few reasons for this include:

- Research is still being conducted and there is still much to learn.
- Comprehension, unlike decoding, is an unconstrained skill—there will never be a day that readers “arrive” at everything they want to know.
- Comprehension is dependent in part on the reader's background knowledge—this is a factor that is partially out of the control of classroom teachers.
- Comprehension is multi-faceted and requires a multi-faceted approach

Here is an excellent article on the key findings from current research and recommendations surrounding comprehension instruction: [The Science of Reading Comprehension Instruction](#) by Nell K. Duke, Alessandra E. Ward, P. David Pearson



Teaching with Complex Text

One of the directives of the Common Core (2010) was to teach students to read increasingly complex texts to better ensure college and career readiness. More than a decade later, we are still struggling with this task and it often seems to be an elusive goal.

A few words about complex texts:

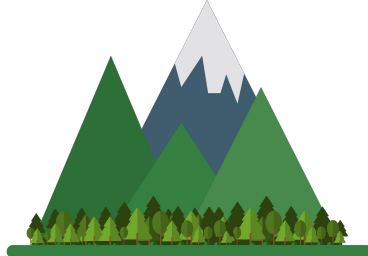
- For beginning readers, the goal is mastery of foundational skills, especially decoding and word recognition. We can and should expose these readers to complex texts through read-aloud, but most direct instruction should be conducted in books which allow students to practice what they are learning about *decoding*. The complexity of the text increases in terms of the decoding work the reader is required to do: **short vowel words** ⇒ **words with digraphs and blends** ⇒ **long vowel words**...
- Once a reader has reached a decoding threshold (you can use an [Informal Decoding Inventory](#) to determine this), the focus shifts to supporting students in navigating more complex text.
- Supporting students through leveled text, sometimes called guided reading levels, has not been shown by research to be the most effective way to teach comprehension.
- Analysis of reading achievement tests has uncovered that there is no difference in performance on different reading skill questions (ie: main idea, inference, etc.). Poorer readers score lower on all skill questions and proficient readers score higher on all of them, regardless of the text level. This has led researchers to conclude that the students who can read more complex text can answer any type of question. They further conclude that focusing more time on specific types of questions is not the answer to increasing achievement. Instead, we should focus on helping students read complex text independently.

To learn more about this background information, I recommend Tim Shanahan's explanation in [this webinar](#).





Translating this research into practice can be challenging. On the next page, I describe four typical responses to supporting students with complex text and an analogy that I adapted from a *Shanahan on Literacy* [podcast episode](#).

Teaching with Complex Texts

Teaching students to read complex texts is like teaching them to climb a mountain.



4 Ways We Address Complex Texts

	What We Try	What This Is Like	What Happens
1.	The text is too hard, so we give students an easier text.	Students climb a hill instead of a mountain. 	They never catch up to reading grade-level, complex text.
2.	The text is too hard, so we read it aloud to students, <i>exposing</i> them to complex text.	Students watch us while we climb the mountain. 	They are exposed to complex text orally and gain some benefits, but they can't navigate complex text on their own.
3.	The content area text is too hard, so we synthesize it and teach the content in a PowerPoint-style way.	Students watch a show about climbing a mountain. 	They learn about the content we have synthesized for them, but they never actually read the text independently.
4.	We ignore the challenging text dilemma by assigning students to read it anyway without support or accommodations.	They climb the mountain all by themselves whether or not they have the skills and stamina. It's unattainable for most. 	The students who are capable of doing it alone can navigate the text. Those who are incapable don't attempt or abandon the task.

Teaching with Complex Texts

How can we avoid the mistakes on the previous page?

Be a sherpa instead!



Sherpas are mountaineering professionals famous for guiding climbers up the most challenging peaks in the world.

We can:

1. Prepare our students for the challenging task.
2. Provide the tools and equipment they need.
3. Guide them and stay on the path with them to ensure their success.
4. Encourage them along the way.

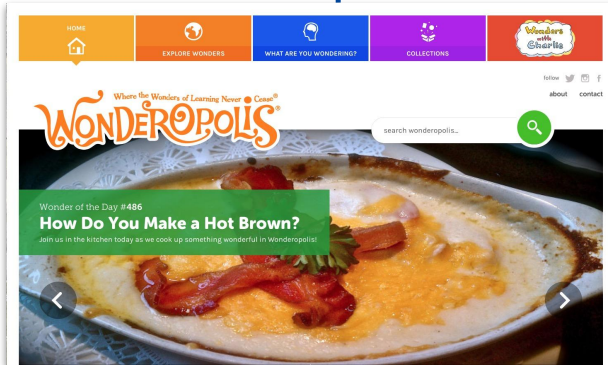
As reading sherpas, our job is to guide students up the mountain, but *they* must make the climb.

Freddy Hiebert shares some practical ways to tackle complex texts in her article [7 Actions That Teachers Can Take Right Now: Text Complexity](#) and Dianna Townsend shares her tips in the webinar [Scaffolding Texts: Supporting all Learners to Build Literacy Skills in the Content Area Classroom](#).

On the pages that follow, you will find suggested strategies and instructional routines to support comprehension through a multi-faceted approach.

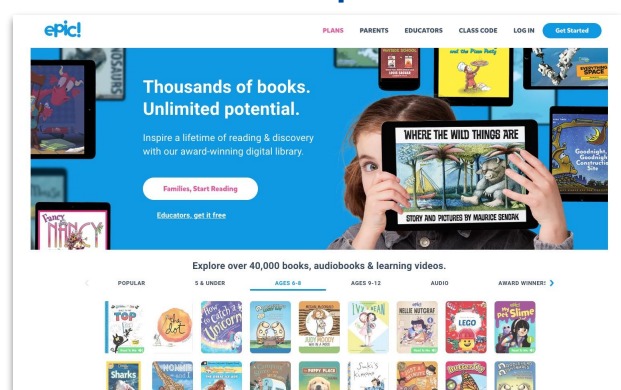
Resources for Building Background Knowledge

Wonderopolis



A searchable database of photos, videos, and articles about high-interest topics

Get Epic



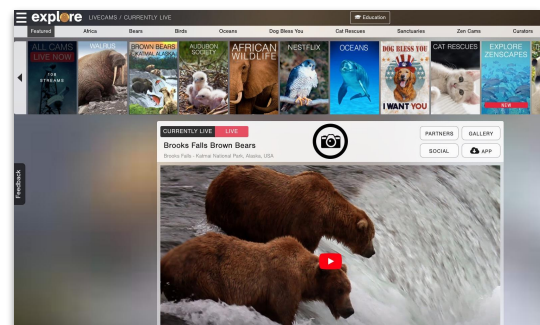
Free for educators. Searchable collections of books and videos.

National Geographic for Kids



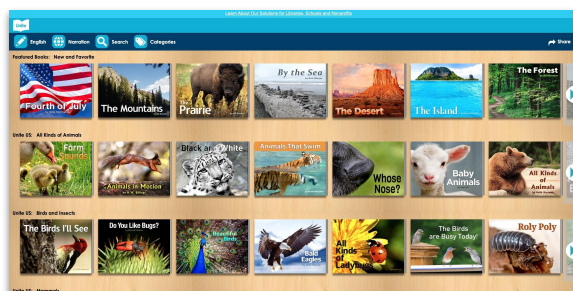
A searchable encyclopedia for kids. Includes photos, videos, and more

Explore



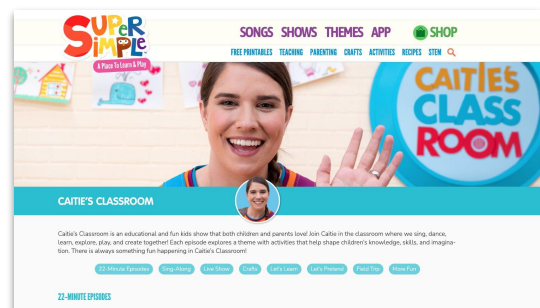
A collections of live webcam videos of various habitats and animals

Unite for Literacy



Online books in English and Spanish about a variety of topics

SuperSimple Catie's Classroom



Virtual field trips

Routines for Building Background Knowledge & Oral Language

A strong phonics program in the primary grades will support students' ability to comprehend independently as they grow as readers. However, without attention to language comprehension, we put a cap on students' abilities to comprehend complex text in later grades. If we focus on building background knowledge (through read-alouds and science/social studies lessons) and oral language comprehension (including vocabulary development), we can give students a strong base.

Wordless Picture Books

Wordless picture books are a great way to encourage students to practice their oral language skills and develop a "sense of story". Because the author has already created a storyline, students are supported in telling the story in their own words using the pictures.

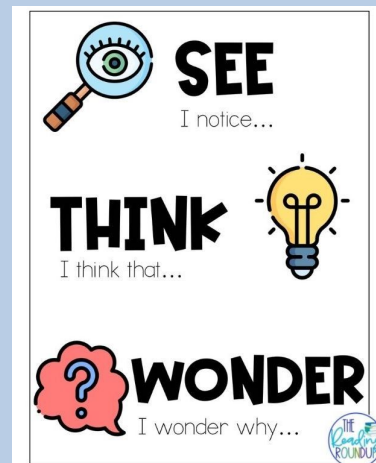
This a great activity for:

- Morning soft starts
- Literacy centers
- Small group reading with a focus on language comprehension

You can coach students to expand on their language, descriptions, and vocabulary during small group sessions. Here is a [great list](#) of wordless picture books to get you started.

See-Think-Wonder

This is a great strategy for building oral language, capturing children's curiosity, and building background knowledge. Here are some [great resources](#) and ideas for incorporating this engaging instructional routine.

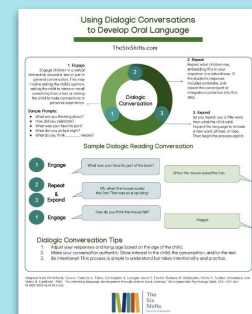


Dialogic Conversations

Dialogic conversation involves 3 steps.

- 1) Teacher engages the student with a prompt or question.
- 2) Student responds.
- 3) Teacher repeat what the child said expands.
- 1) Start all over with a new prompt.

Go to [The Six Shifts](#) website for a free download that includes examples and step-by-step instruction.



Building Background Knowledge

Curate Text Sets

Text sets are a great way to build background knowledge. When building text sets, you will want to be intentional about including **very easy to more complex texts** on a topic. You might include a picture book with great illustrations, text features, and vocabulary to build a base of knowledge. Books like Jerry Pallotta's alphabet book series are great, as are Gail Gibbons' nonfiction books. You will want to include **multiple genres**: poetry, narrative nonfiction, expository nonfiction, etc. You can find a wealth of information about building your own text sets or accessing pre-made text sets [here](#).

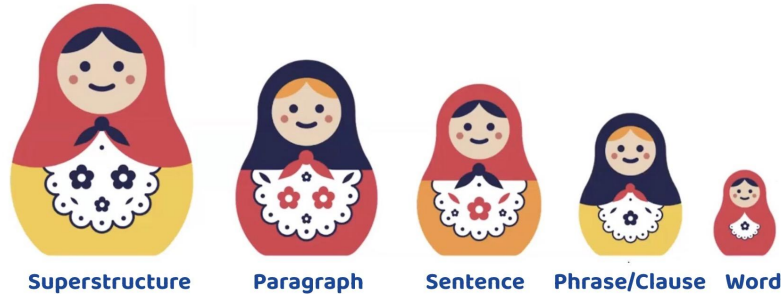


9 Ways to Seamlessly Incorporate Text Sets into Your Teaching

1. Read aloud a nonfiction book in a content area text set.
2. Choose an excerpt of another book to display under the document camera for a close reading or shared reading experience.
3. Put extra copies of the read-aloud or shared text in the classroom library for independent reading and re-reading.
4. Have students work in small research groups to study.
5. Use a poem as a shared reading text to practice fluency.
6. Have students work in small groups with different poems, practice, and perform as Readers Theatre.
7. Show a video clip to preteach unit vocabulary, stopping to clarify or teach words more explicitly.
8. Give each student a copy of a text and guide them through close reading and annotation.
9. Read a chapter from a fictional novel daily.

Language Structure

Language structure is written syntax, sentence structure, and text structure. Understanding how sentences are formed and how they convey meaning is critical to our ability to comprehend while we read.



Knowledge of language structures helps students improve their written language, but grammar and language structure instruction is often overlooked as a vehicle for improving reading comprehension.

Consider this: even if a reader can decode and understand the meaning of every word in a text, the overall meaning may remain elusive, simply because the reader has not been explicitly taught how to navigate the complex sentence structure.

In the past, traditional grammar instruction often focused on identifying parts of speech or parts of sentences. Activities often included diagramming sentences or in subsequent years on “daily oral language” exercises.

Decades of research indicate that isolated grammar instruction does not improve writing.

This research has led others to conclude that teaching grammar is a waste of time and make students hate writing.

The late William Van Cleave suggests a third perspective: **grammar/syntax instruction can be both effective and engaging!**

Here is a series of succinct but very informative webinars that Van Cleave presented on the why and how of syntax, sentence structure, and grammar instruction:

- [Framing the Discussion](#)
- [What the Research Says](#)
- [Parts of Speech](#)



There are more Van Cleave videos sprinkled throughout the next several pages.

Syntax and Sentence Structure

Syntax is the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses in a specific order. Changing the order of even one word can significantly change the meaning of a sentence. Each language is governed by its own syntactical structure or framework.

Parts of Speech

Students need some basic knowledge of these 8 parts of speech, but the introduction should be brief and straightforward:

1. nouns
2. pronouns
3. adjectives
4. verbs
5. adverbs
6. conjunctions
7. articles
8. prepositions

The focus of **parts of speech** instruction should be on the word's *job* in the sentence.

Instead of asking, "What kind of word is this?", we should ask, "What is this word's job in the sentence?"

Van Cleave recommends a routine called **I.E.C.C.**

1. **Identify:** label the parts of speech and their jobs in a pre-existing sentence
2. **Expand:** expand bare bones sentences into more sophisticated ones
3. **Combine:** combine basic sentences into sophisticated ones
4. **Create:** move to application—students create their own sentences in their own writing.

You can view a sample I.E.C.C. lesson in action in Van Cleave's webinar [Syntax: A Model Assignment](#) and you can see a sample activity on p. 13 of [this packet](#).

NOUN

ADV

VERB

ADJ

Sentence Combining

In a 2005 study Saddler and Graham compared traditional grammar instruction with sentence combining instruction. They found significantly better results for sentence combining. Read more [here](#).

Example:

Before combining: The dog was brown. The dog was furry. The dog was shivering under the park bench.

After combining: The brown, furry dog was shivering under the park bench.

Check out this video to see three ways to teach [sentence combining](#).

Syntax and Sentence Structure

Sentence Expansion

Like sentence combining, sentence expansion helps students craft more sophisticated sentences. Start with a bare bones sentence such as:

The dog was shivering.

Provide some sentence expansion building blocks such as:

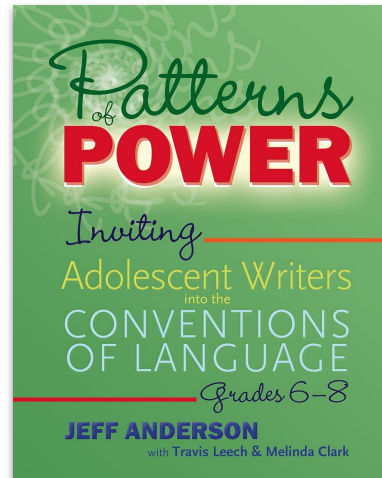
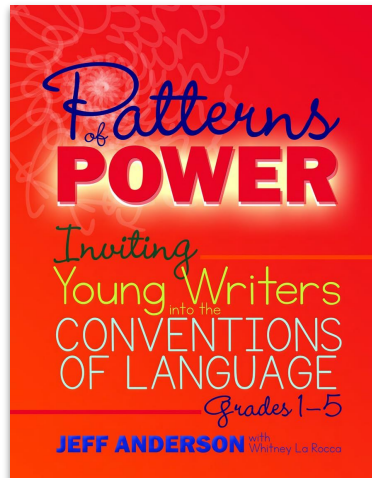
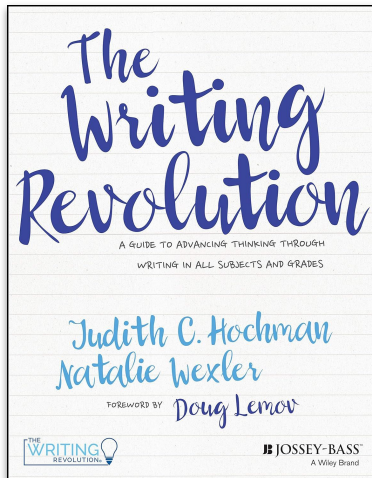
- how many?
- what kind?
- where?
- how?
- why?

An expanded sentence might look like this:

The skinny dog was shivering under the park bench. OR

The brown dog was shivering and whimpering while hiding under the park bench.

These are great resources for lessons and routines that include sentence level instruction:



Syntax and Sentence Structure

How Ideas Are Tied Together

Grammar exercises like these can improve students' writing, but the potential for improving *reading comprehension* lies within instruction at the phrase and clause level within sentences. Helping students understand the relationships between ideas within sentences helps them unlock deeper meanings. This begins with some basic sentence-phrase-cause understandings.

Sentence: a group of words that contains a subject and a predicate

Sentence Types:

- statement
- command
- question
- exclamation

Phrase: a group of words without a subject, predicate, or both

Types of Phrases:

- Noun phrase
- Gerund phrase
- Verb phrase
- Prepositional phrase
- Adjective phrase

Clause: a group of words that does have a subject and predicate

Types of Clauses:

- Dependent
- Independent

Sentence Structures:

- simple: one independent clause
- compound: two independent clauses joined by a [coordinating conjunction](#)
- complex: an independent clause and dependent clause joined by a [subordinating conjunction](#)

Watch William Van Cleave explain:

- [sentences and clauses](#)
- [complex sentences and adjective clauses](#)
- [activities for defining sentence structure](#)
- [the link between syntax and reading comprehension](#)

Syntax and Sentence Structure

Cohesive Devices (Syntax and Sentence Comprehension)

An under-addressed factor that influences comprehension is the complexity of sentences. Much of this work can be done in writing and grammar lessons through research-supported instructional routines like [sentence-combining](#). A full understanding of syntax and sentence comprehension is beyond the scope of this one-day seminar. But I want to bring to your attention a couple of ways that we can support students during reading.

Anaphors take their meaning from another part of the sentence. They connect sentences without the use of repetition. Teach these concepts to students and then ask them to name what is being referred to in the context of reading texts with these complex sentence structures. Don't assume that students will make these connections automatically.

Pronoun Referents	The author uses a pronoun to refer to a word found before or after in the text.	Aaron and Zorell were best friends. <u>They</u> played together every day.
Synonymous Words and Phrases	The author replaces a word or group of words in the text.	The African lion has all the features you would find in one of the world's deadliest animals. <u>These powerful predators</u> are skillful stalkers that can take down prey ten times their size.
Ellipsis	The author omits one or more words.	Jackson waded in the water. Celia did, too. [Celia <u>walked in the water</u> , too.]

Connectives signal logical relationships between parts of sentences. They cue special types of relationships between events. When teaching various text structures, be sure to introduce the connective words typically associated with that text structure. Teach students to notice these words as "signal words" that the author uses to alert the reader. Find a more complete list of connective categories and examples [here](#) and a list signal words associated with various text structures [here](#).

Additive	and, in addition, furthermore
Temporal	before, after, as, while, during
Causal	because, as a result, consequently, so
Contrast	instead, but, alternatively, although, even though
Conditionality	unless, if, if...then

Text Structure

Every text genre is organized around one or more text structures. Each text has a superstructure, and many texts, especially expository texts, have multiple substructures.

Understanding how a text is structured helps our brains hold onto information and determine the main ideas and author's purpose. In other words, the structures become a framework for unlocking the meaning of a text.

Text structure instruction should consist of helping students develop these frameworks for thinking rather than requiring students to merely name and identify the structure/s.

Mapping Text Structure

Graphic organizers are powerful tools that provide a physical representation of how ideas in the text are organized and can be a place for new learning to be stored and for relationships between ideas to be explored. They can also be used to guide students' note taking which can be helpful when synthesizing information to share with others through speaking and writing.

Don't Forget Connectives

Connectives, as described on the previous page, signal logical relationships within and between sentences. They are also words that give clues about the text's structure! For example, if the text uses the word *however*, that is a clue that the author is about to make a comparison.

Orienting to the Text

Research indicates that many students, especially those who struggle, dive right into a text without first previewing and orienting, even though orienting to the text can dramatically boost comprehension. Modeling and explicitly teaching this skill is of utmost importance for our struggling readers. We can use a series of questions to guide students to notice the overall text structure before reading. Some question prompts include:

- What kind of text is this?
- Is it a story (narrative) or a teaching (expository) text?
- If it's a story, is it narrative fiction or narrative nonfiction?
- If it is expository nonfiction, how is it organized? Does it have chapters or sections?
- Any text features?
- What do I think I will learn from this text? (expository nonfiction text)
- What do I think the story will be about? (narrative text)

Text Structure

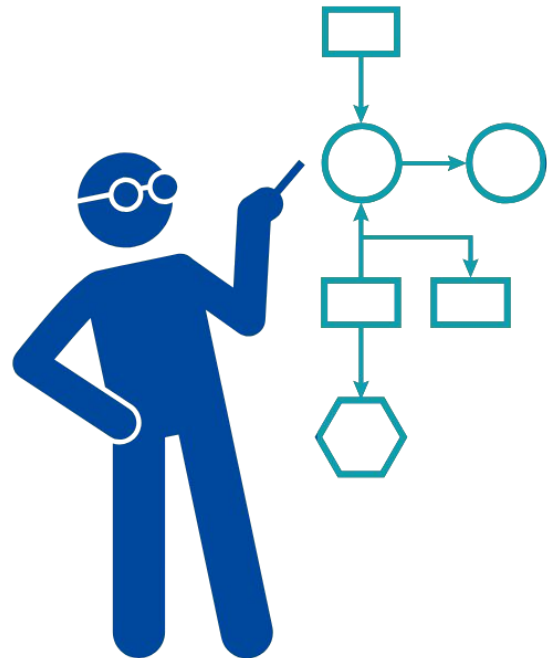
Text Structure Strategy (TSS) is an instructional routine designed to improve reading comprehension by integrating text structure instruction into ELA, science, and social studies lessons. Some highlights of this routine include:

1. Selecting important ideas to have students focus on using text structure as a guide
2. Writing main ideas using text structure scaffolds such as
 - a. Comparison: ____ and ____ were compared on ____, ____, and ____.
 - b. Cause and Effect: The cause is ____ and the effect is ____.
3. Generating inferences using text structures
4. Monitoring comprehension using the text structures

You can learn much more about this routine at Reading Rockets in the article [Implementing the Text Structure Strategy in Your Classroom](#). This article includes the 40+ year research that supports TSS, a lesson planning template, videos, and graphic organizer posters.

Another set of great resources for teaching text structure can be found at Cult of Pedagogy. Jennifer Gonzalez's blogpost [When We All Teach Text Structures, Everyone Wins](#) provides a quick video tutorial on teaching text structures and this handy chart that you can download for free.

Structure	Description	Examples	Signal Words
Sequence	Information or arguments are constructed in a chain, so that the writer can lay out steps in a process, series of events, or a hierarchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipes • Directions in a manual for using an appliance • A timeline for product development • Steps to follow in a workplace process 	First, next, last, another, then, finally, before, preceding, following, additionally.
Comparison/Contrast	Describes similarities or differences between objects, places or events, and the similar or different qualities are linked back and forth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports pre-game stories about two opposing teams • News articles explaining candidates' positions on issues • Descriptions of multiple health insurance options • Advertisements for work-related tools or products 	like, similar to, unlike, in contrast, whereas, while, although, different from, as opposed to, instead of, however, as well as, either/or.
Description	Explains a topic, often in considerable detail. Often the text is broken into sections, each with a main idea and details that elaborate on it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheets about products for sale, such as a car, an appliance, a house, etc. • Articles on things to do at a vacation destination • Sections of an employee manual that discuss workplace policies 	for example, in particular, for instance, to illustrate, such as, most important, another.
Cause/Effect	Focused on an event or occurrence, the writer names the event/occurrence and then tells the effects it has (on other events, on people, etc.) or the writer names the event/occurrence and then tells what caused it to happen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An editorial discussing the possible consequences of implementing a policy • A troubleshooting guide for the office copy machine that outlines possible causes of malfunctions • Warning labels naming possible side effects of using a product 	therefore, as a result, lead(s) to, because of, in order to, for these reasons, thus, if-then, may be due to.
Problem/Solution	Presents a problem and several possible solutions. The author may also describe the pros and cons of each solution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An newspaper editorial outlining a current difficulty, proposing some solutions and advocating for one of them • A workplace memo stating why a certain rule has been put in place • A political speech proposing a remedy for a troubling situation 	the problem is, the difficulty is, it is possible to, if-then, one challenge is, therefore.



She also offers a graphic organizer [resource bundle](#) in her TPT store.

Comprehension through Interactive Read-Aloud

Turn-and-Talk

Turn-and-talk is an effective technique to use during whole class lessons or read-alouds. It allows all students' voices to be heard and gives students an opportunity to process their thinking out loud, clarify areas of confusion, strengthen their ideas through partner input, and receive immediate feedback from their partners. The turn-and-talk also provides an intermediate step to prepare them for more sophisticated conversations during book club discussions.

The turn-and talk gives *children* an opportunity to:

- Process their thinking out loud
- Rehearse their ideas with partner feedback
- Strengthen their ideas through partner input
- Change their idea based on ideas and/ or evidence they had not considered
- Clarify areas of confusion
- Put their thinking into English or access vocabulary with partner support

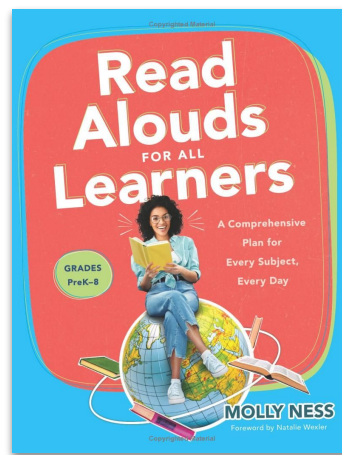
The turn-and-talk gives the *teacher* an opportunity to assess:

- Level of individual comprehension
- Strategies children are using
- Holes in children's understanding

...and to mine small conversations for big ideas that will serve as a springboard for whole class conversation.

From [Comprehension Through Conversation: The Power of Purposeful Talk in the Reading Workshop](#) by Maria Nichols, Heinemann, 2006.

Interested in learning more about using read alouds to teach comprehension?
Check out this resource.



Comprehension through Interactive Read-Aloud

Why **TALK** about books?

- All learning involves conversation.
- Conversation is a basis for critical thinking.
- Used as a connection to cognitive strategies, conversation fosters comprehension acquisition.
- Without conversation, we are limited to our own insights.
- Conversation is the comprehension connection!



Additional ways to make read-aloud more interactive:

- **Stop and jot:** Stop and write in a reader's notebook or on a sticky note in response to a teacher prompt.
- **Stop and Sketch:** Stop and sketch what you visualize in one part of the book.
- **Stop and Act:** With a partner, dramatize a scene that was just read, or your prediction of what will come.
- **Think Aloud:** The teacher models his thinking aloud to give the students an image of the kind of thinking one person has in a particular part of the book.

From *Teaching Reading in Small Groups* by Jennifer Serravallo, Heinemann, 2010.

Read-Aloud Notebooks

Read-aloud notebooks provide a place for students to jot down their thinking at key stopping points. It allows students to think more deeply about a text and to prepare for conversations about books. The notebooks can also be used by teachers to assess students' thinking strategies.

"Conversations become the out-loud practice for what happens in the students' heads as they read in the future."

"Conversation: The Comprehension Connection." The Reading Teacher.
Ketch, A. 2005

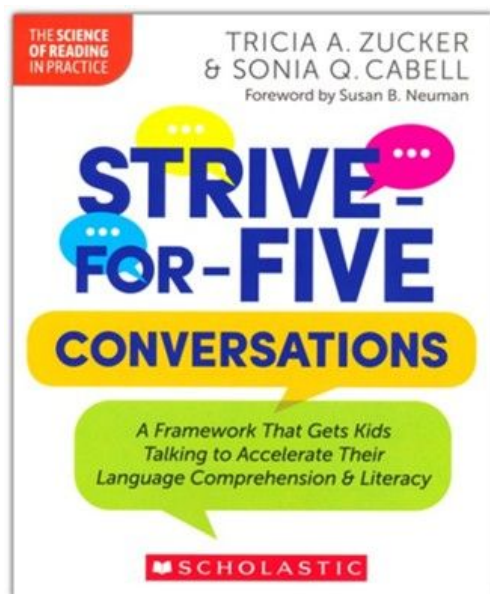
Comprehension Through Talk

Encourage students to *develop* or *grow* their ideas, not *report* on ideas. One way to scaffold this is to give them some thinking and talking prompts. These prompts should be temporary scaffolds to promote natural conversation.

Readers Grow Big Ideas When They Read

These starter phrases can help students begin to talk about their big ideas:

- This reminds me of...
- I notice that...
- I wonder why...
- This surprises me because...
- This makes me think of another book because...
- One thing I pictured...
- I like the part in which...(or I didn't like)...
- I wonder what would have happened if...
- I didn't understand...
- It wasn't fair when...
- My idea changed when...



“By giving our students practice in talking with others, we give them frames for thinking on their own.”

--Lev Vygotsky

“Teaching students to talk well about a book teaches them to think well about a book.”

--Lucy Calkins

Talking Prompts

Strategy Prompts That Enlarge on Others' Ideas:

- I agree with what you are saying because...
- What you just said matches what was in my mind because...
- Why did you say that? Can you show me how you got that idea?
- Could you say more?
- Could you give an example?
- I'm not sure I understand what you are saying. Could you say it in another way?
- I hear what you are saying but I see it differently...

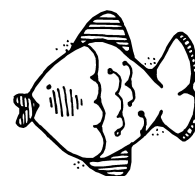
Strategies That Help Piggyback on Each Others' Ideas:

- I'd like to add on to what ____ said.
- I have an example of what you just said.
- Another thing that goes with that is...
- I see a connection between what you said and what we were talking about earlier.
- So, are you saying...?
- I agree with the part about...because...
- Going back to what you said...
- If what you said is true, isn't it also true that...?
- Is one example of that the part on page ____ when...?
- That's true, but...

"Reading and writing float on a sea of talk."
--James Britton

Strategies That Keep Readers Grounded in the Text:

- Show me what you mean.
- What makes you say that?
- What were you reading when you thought of that?
- Will you find the part of the book that makes you say that?
- Is one example of what you are saying on page ____?
- Can we look at the book together and see what it says?
- I'm not sure I agree, because on page ____ it says...



From *The Art of Teaching Reading* by Lucy Calkins, Heinemann, 2001.

Before Reading Routines

Here is a menu of just a few research-supported routines to support a multi-faceted approach to comprehension instruction before, during, and after reading a text.

Take a Sneak Peek (Preview, Predict NF Text, Set a Purpose)

Previewing and thinking about how a text might go *prior* to reading it helps support the reader in understanding the overall meaning of the text and in determining main ideas. Teach students to skim over nonfiction text before reading, keeping the following questions in mind:

- What kind of text is this? (narrative, expository, hybrid)
- What parts do I notice in this text? (headings, subheadings, text features)
- What do I think this text will *mostly* be about?
- What do I already know about this topic?

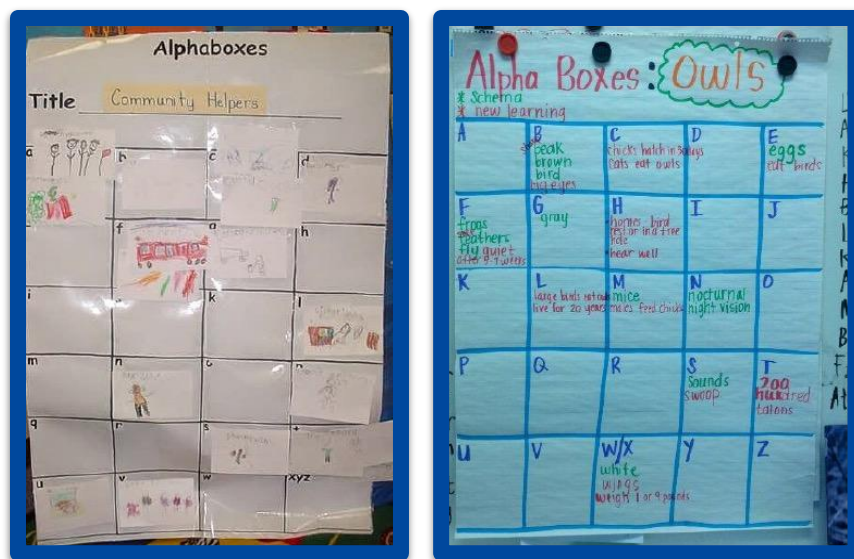
Alphaboxes (Activate Prior Knowledge)

Prior knowledge is everything a reader brings to a text before reading it. Prior knowledge is like velcro—it's a place for new learning to stick. An engaging way to activate prior knowledge is with Linda Hoyt's Alphaboxes.

How to use: Prepare a chart with a box for every letter of the alphabet. Introduce the book you will be reading or topic you will be studying.

Invite students to brainstorm words or phrases they think they might find or learn about in the text. Organize them according to the alphabet letters.

Revisit the chart during and after reading the text or studying the topic to add more to the chart. This is a great knowledge-building routine.



Before Reading Routines

Front Load Meaning (Building Background Knowledge)

Activating prior knowledge is important, but it's not enough! We must also build *new* background knowledge to support and ensure comprehension. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- preview the text
- do a book introduction
- read aloud the first chapter or section
- show a book trailer
- provide background about a historical event or time period through images or video clips

Pre-Teach Vocabulary (Vocabulary & Background Knowledge)

Research has clearly established the link between vocabulary and higher comprehension levels. See the Vocabulary section of the handbook for vocabulary routines, in particular, “Increasing Vocabulary Through Explicit Teaching” for guidelines on selecting which words to pre-teach and a simple instructional routine for introducing the new words.

Word Sort Activity (Vocabulary & Background Knowledge)

You can also find this activity in the Vocabulary section. This is a great way both to build some background knowledge and also assess prior knowledge. Classification is a natural way that our brains associate information. The focus of this activity is on word relationship, not basic definitions.

List-Group-Label (Activate Prior Knowledge)

This routine is similar to the word sort activity but with one change—instead of providing students with *word cards* to sort, provide them with *blank cards* or sticky notes. Invite them to work with a partner or small group to generate a **list** of words that they think will appear in the text they are about to read.

Generating words helps them activate their background knowledge about a topic and gives you an opportunity to assess prior knowledge.

Next have them **group** the words into categories. And finally, have them **label** each category. These steps encourage them to think critically and more deeply about the ideas, to notice and build relationships between the ideas, and actively organize their thinking.

You can learn more about the [List-Group-Label](#) routine and see a video lesson at Reading Rockets.

Before Reading Routines

Anticipation Guides (Activate Prior Knowledge)

Prior knowledge is everything a reader brings to a text before reading it. Prior knowledge is like velcro—it's a place for new learning to stick. One of my favorite ways to activate prior knowledge is with anticipation guides.

How to use: Prepare 5-10 statements about a topic or text you will be studying. Some statements should be true and some false. After each statement include the words "agree" and "disagree". You might also want to leave some blank lines for students to rewrite the false statements after reading the text. You can find some great anticipation guide resources [here](#), including [downloadable templates](#) and a video of teacher using an anticipation guide with her students.

Name _____	
Anticipation Guide Astronomy: "Earth, Moon, and Sun" pp. 24-34	
	Circle one:
1. There are two high tides and two low tides every day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree

2. Earth completes 365 revolutions in one year.	Agree Disagree

3. The Earth's spinning on its axis is called its orbit.	Agree Disagree

4. The force of gravity between two objects depends on the masses of the objects and the distance between them.	Agree Disagree

5. Features on the moon's surface include craters, highlands, rivers, and maria.	Agree Disagree

6. The earth has seasons because its axis is tilted as it moves around the sun.	Agree Disagree

7. The moon's orbit around Earth has the shape of an oval	Agree Disagree

8. When the sun's shadow hits the Earth or the moon, an eclipse occurs.	Agree Disagree

9. The far side of the moon only faces the Earth during the summer.	Agree Disagree

10. A solar eclipse occurs when Earth is directly between the moon and the sun.	Agree Disagree

During Reading Routines

Stop for Red Flags (Self-Monitoring Comprehension)

Good readers use metacognitive strategies and monitor themselves as they read. Struggling readers may not self-monitor automatically. You can teach students to notice warning signs that comprehension is breaking down. Some of these red flags include:

- The voice inside my head isn't interacting with the text.
- The camera inside my head shuts off.
- My mind begins to wander.
- I can't remember what I just read.
- I re-encountered a character and can't remember who it is.



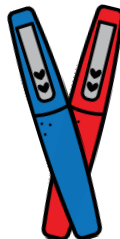
When these red flags go up, the best thing to do is go back and reread!

Ask Inference Questions

According to Sharon Walpole in *Differentiated Literacy Instruction in Grades 4-5*, most questions that we ask students during interactive read-aloud, shared reading, and small group reading should be inferential level questions. Answering inferential questions often requires students to use multiple pieces of information or combine text-based evidence with prior knowledge. Starting your questions with *how* or *why* will generally keep your questions at the inferential level.

Confirm or Adjust Predictions

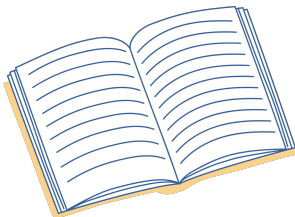
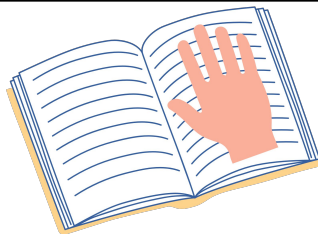


We often have our students make predictions *before* reading. Proficient readers don't stop at predicting—they also pause while reading to confirm predictions that were correct or adjust and make new predictions when the original predictions were partially or completely incorrect. This is an excellent strategy for staying engaged while reading. To model this, record student predictions on chart paper during a read-aloud. Stop periodically to ask if their predictions are correct. If so, mark a "C" for "confirm" beside the prediction. If not, mark an "A" for "adjust" and invite students to generate a new prediction based on new clues.



During Reading Routines

Read-Cover-Remember-Retell (Summarizing, Self-monitoring)

This [evidence-based strategy](#) developed by Linda Hoyt gives students clear, concrete steps for slowing down, reading actively, and monitoring for comprehension. Teach students to stop after every paragraph or short section and think about what was most important in what they just read. At each pause students should paraphrase what they just read to a partner. Pausing to summarize after smaller chunks will aid students in synthesizing the *whole* text when they reach the end. At the end of the text, prompt students to look back over the text and ask, “What is the *whole* article about? What is the author trying to teach me about this topic?”

Read-Cover-Remember-Retell	
READ only as much as your hand can cover.	
COVER up the part of the text you just read.	
REMEMBER to think about what you just read.	
RETELL what you just read to a partner.	

During Reading Routines

(...and before &

after)

RAN Charts (Read and Analyze)

RAN charts are a great way to activate prior knowledge and build *new* schema during a unit of study or from beginning to end of a book. Remember, prior knowledge is like velcro. When we activate prior knowledge first, we provide a place to hook new knowledge. We have to be intentional, however; simply reading a book and studying a concept with students isn't enough to ensure that new knowledge has been built. A tool like the RAN chart provides many knowledge building benefits:

- keeps students actively thinking
- helps them confirm what they thought they knew
- reminds them to adjust their thinking when their prior knowledge was incorrect
- deepens prior knowledge
- provides a place for them to hook new knowledge onto the old
- the interactive nature of the sticky notes keeps learning engaging and facilitates revised thinking



After Reading

Anticipation Guide Follow-Ups

If you use an anticipation guide to activate prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading (see the “Before Reading” routines), be sure to have students revisit them after reading. Encourage them to reflect on how their thinking has changed and ask them to provide justification for their true statements and reasons why false statements are incorrect.

Say Something

Struggling readers often read the words on the page without attending to the meaning of the text. Reading is an active process, not a passive one. The Say Something strategy encourages students to stop and think while reading. Students work in groups of 2-3. They read a section of text and then stop to “say something” about what they just read. It is important to model this strategy before sending students off to try it in small groups. It is also helpful to give students a scaffold of sample response types such as comments, predictions, questions, connections, inferences, etc.

Do Something

If we want students to demonstrate comprehension of a text or to extend their learning, what we don’t want to do after reading is assign a worksheet! There are so many engaging ways for students to interact with text after reading. I highly recommend this Cult of pedagogy blog post called [To Learn, Students Need to DO Something](#). I recommend reading the whole post but when you scroll to the bottom Jennifer Gonzalez lists and explains 9 alternatives to worksheets as post-reading activities.

Summary Strategy (Summarizing)

Summarizing is a critical synthesis skill and one that does not come easily to many struggling readers. It’s important to teach students that summarizing isn’t what you do *after* reading. We summarize *while* reading as we accumulate ideas across the text and revise our thinking as we read on. Here is a sample summary strategy that uses post-it notes to help students hold onto the text as they read a chapter book:

1. Preview post-it inside front cover
2. Episodes: post-it for each episode --who is in the episode and what happened?
3. Problem-Solution: Mark a “P” and “S” on the “what happened” post-its.
4. Ending: post-it inside back cover.

Moral or life lesson: post-it inside back cover

It Says - I Say - And So (Inferring)

This is a great strategy for helping students answer questions that go beyond the text or aren’t explicitly stated in the text. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of this strategy from Kylene Beer’s book *When Kids Can’t Read*.

After Reading

Become the Teacher

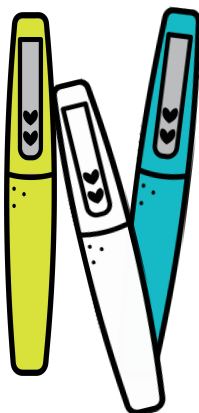
We all learn material more deeply when we have to teach it to someone else. We also read material differently and more closely when we know we will be teaching others. To give students a purpose for close reading, frequently have them teach the information they are reading to a partner.

Talk in Response to Reading

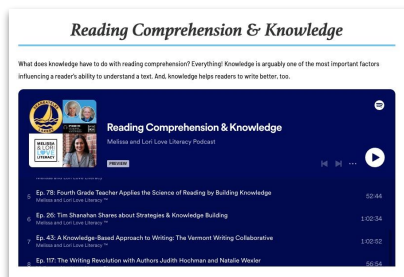
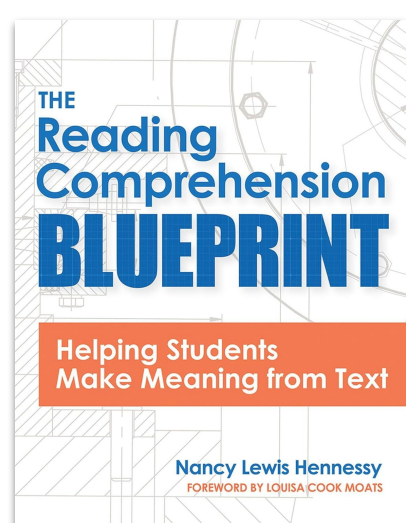
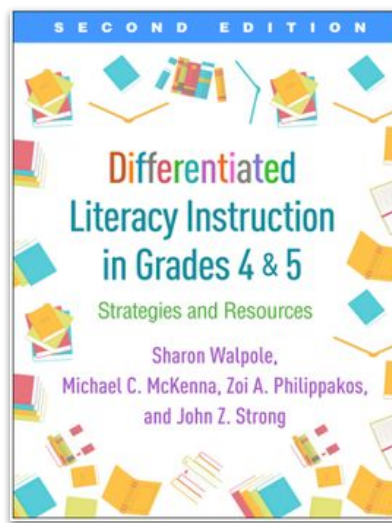
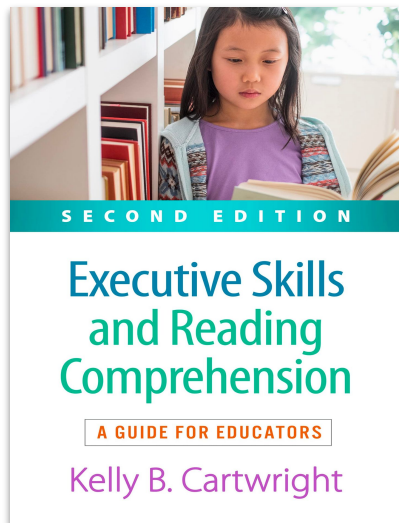
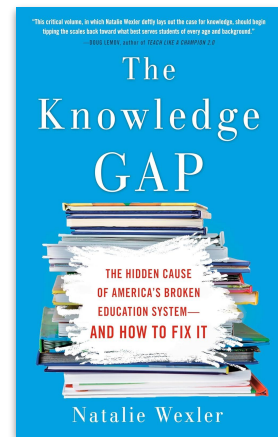
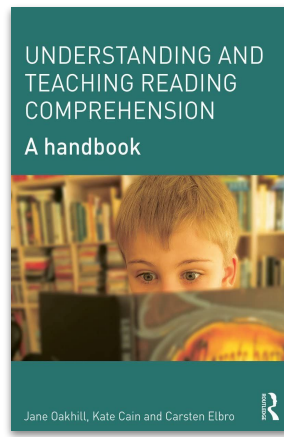
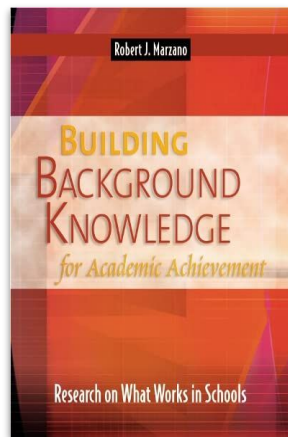
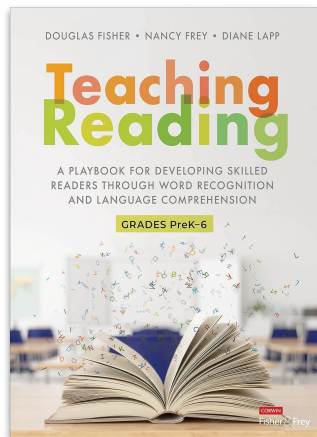
Conversation is one of the most powerful ways to grow comprehension. As Ann Ketch states in [Conversation: The Comprehension Connection](#), “Conversation is a basis for critical thinking. It is the thread that ties together cognitive strategies and provides students with the practice that becomes the foundation for reading, writing, and thinking.” On the following four pages, you will find tips and routines for bolstering talk to deepen your students’ comprehension.

Writing to Organize Thinking

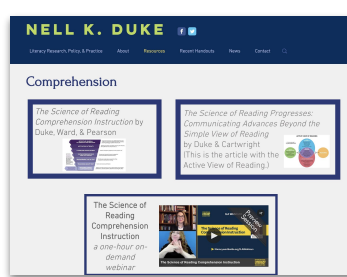
In the same way that talk deepens our thinking, so does writing. Reader’s Notebooks are a great place for students to document their thinking. Aimee Buckner’s [Notebook Connections: Strategies for the Reader’s Notebook](#) is filled with lesson ideas and assessment tips. Graphic organizers can also help students organize their thinking in writing. This packet of Scholastic Red [graphic organizers](#) includes organizers for 8 of the more important thinking skills readers use as they read.



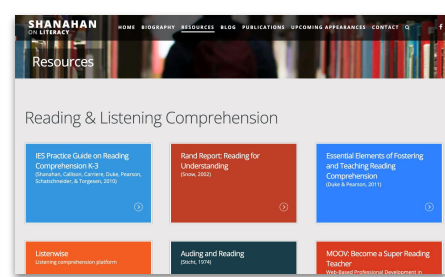
Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Comprehension



[Comprehension Podcast Episodes](#)

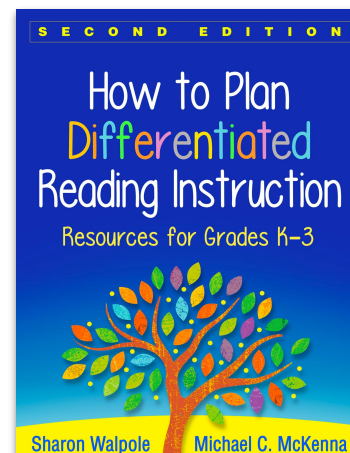
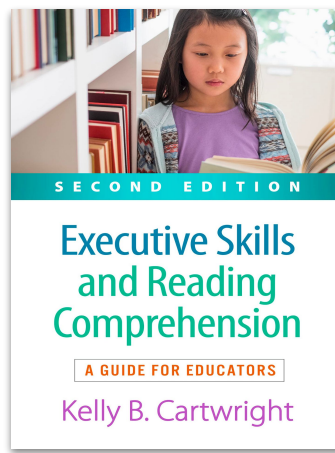
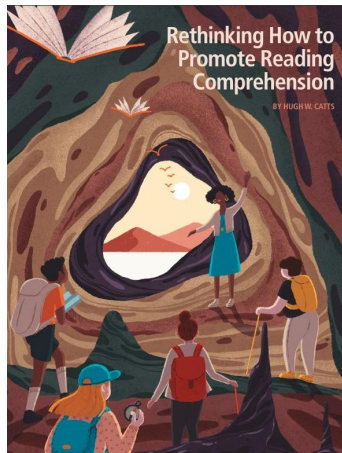
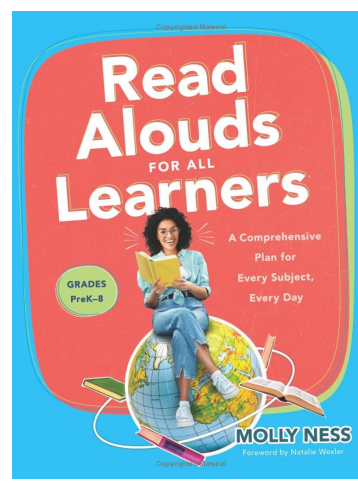
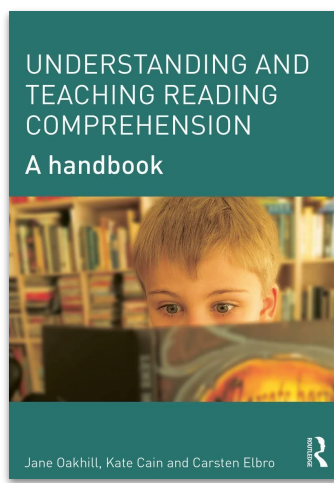
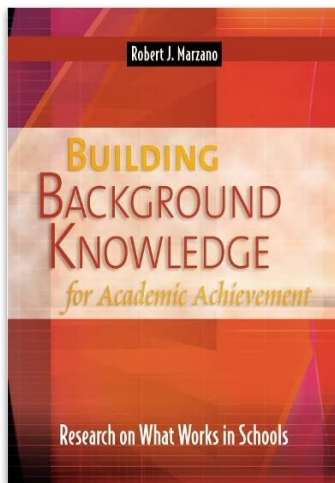


[Nell Duke's Comprehension Resources](#)

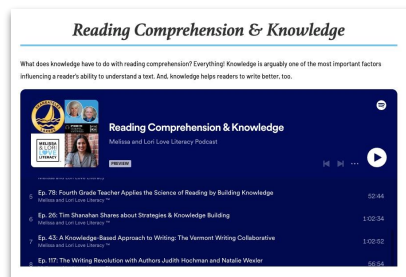


[Shanahan on Literacy](#)

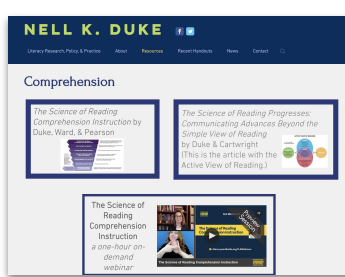
Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Comprehension



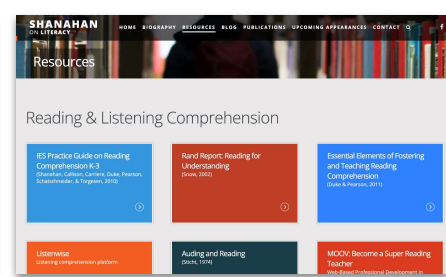
[Link to article by Hugh Catts](#)



[Comprehension Podcast Episodes](#)

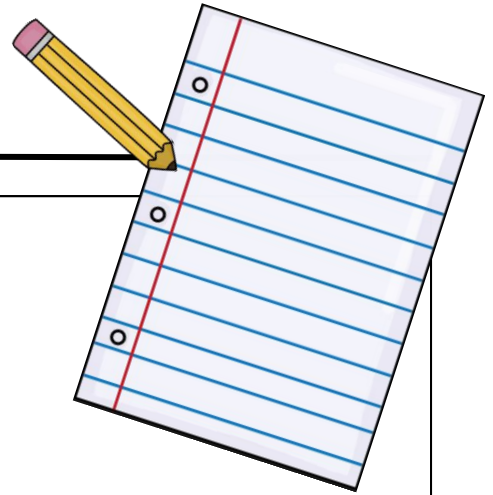


[Nell Duke's Comprehension Resources](#)

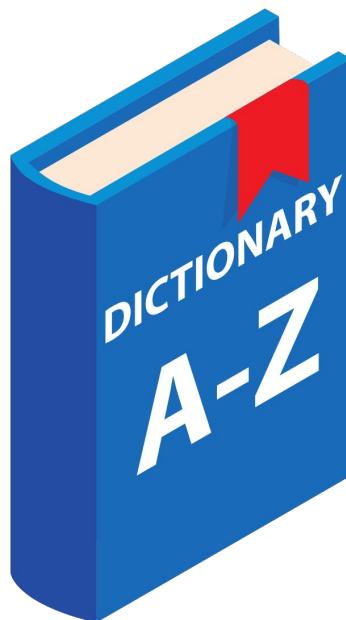


[Shanahan on Literacy](#)

Notes



Vocabulary Development



Vocabulary Instruction

Background

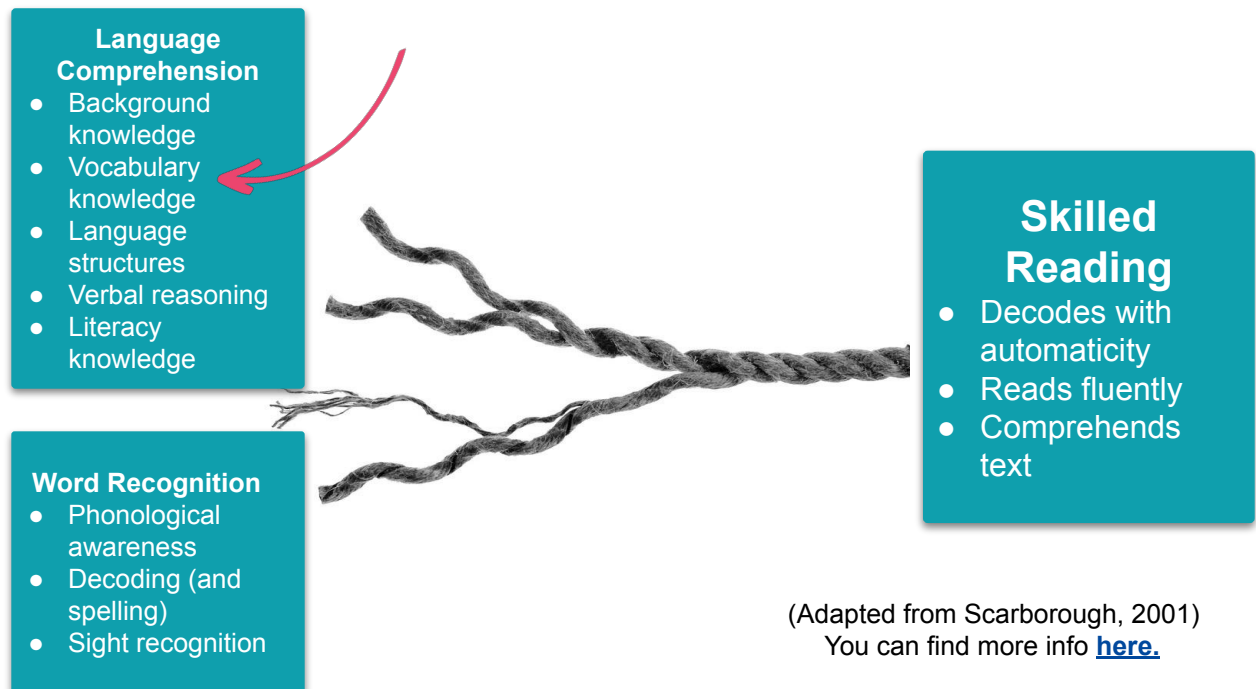
Why Focus on Vocabulary Instruction?

- Without vocabulary knowledge, comprehension suffers.
- Knowledge of vocabulary has long been recognized as one of the most important correlates to reading comprehension. Knowledge of individual word meanings accounts for as much as 50-60% of the variance in reading comprehension. ([Adlof & Perfetti](#))
- Vocabulary is an enabling power. Vocabulary measures are often used to estimate a students' verbal intelligence.
- Word knowledge is an essential tool to “do school” and to “do reading.”
- Vocabulary knowledge is intimately connected to academic achievement in all areas.

“Vocabulary knowledge IS knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world.”

—[Steven Stahl](#)

Scarborough's Reading Rope



Vocabulary Instruction

Background

2 Types of Vocabulary Usage

	Receptive (Recognition) Vocabulary	Expressive (Productive) Vocabulary
Speech	Listening vocabulary	Speaking vocabulary
Print	Reading vocabulary	Writing vocabulary

Our depth of knowledge is determined by how we use words in speaking and writing.

What does it mean to know a word?

Learners move from:

not knowing a word



acquaintance with the word



deep, rich, flexible knowledge of the word

Levels of Understanding

- **Breadth:** the size of an individual's mental lexicon
- **Depth:** the richness of word knowledge about known words
- **Fluency:** the rate at which the individual gains access to the meaning of a word

Tiered Framework for Selecting Vocabulary Words

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Words used in everyday speech → Students with a limited vocabulary, especially ELs will need support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → General academic words → Words found more often in written texts across all disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Domain-specific words → Words found more often in texts written within a specific discipline or content areas

Effective Vocabulary

Instruction

In my literature review of effective, research-based vocabulary instruction, I discovered the following:

- Some principles rose to the surface and appeared in the writings of all/most vocabulary experts.
- Some principles were addressed by some experts and not others, but had significant research findings and seemed important to include.
- Vocabulary is multi-faceted and some researchers focus on a particular aspect more than others (i.e.: morphology; networks of words; direct instruction; etc.), but that doesn't mean that they negate each other.
- Some principles were labeled differently or "packaged" differently but referred to similar concepts.

In the list that follows, I have attempted to synthesize vocabulary instruction principles that come up again and again. If something is not included in my list, that does *not* mean it doesn't have a research base.

On the previous page, I included recommended resources from which these essential understandings were distilled.

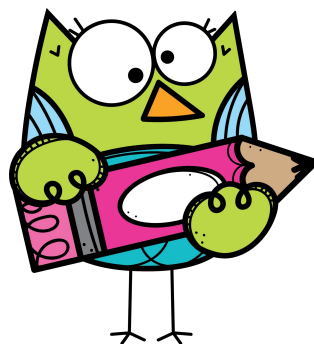
Some Essential Understandings About How We Learn Words

1. We should not rely on only one method for vocabulary learning—we need a multi-pronged approach.
2. Learners need direct, explicit instruction of some vocabulary.
3. The focus of direct instruction should be on high-frequency, high-utility Tier 2 words (academic vocabulary). These words can be curated from a text (literature or content area) or from a vocabulary curricular resource. Tier 1 words are generally already part of a child's mental lexicon (unless the child is an English learner, in which case they will need more instruction with Tier 1 words. Tier 3 words are essential for understanding a content area topic, but will only need a brief definition in context, as needed).
4. We learn words through both direct *and* incidental instruction. Incidental instruction isn't random, however. Both direct and incidental instruction should be intentional. Think "incidental-on-purpose".
5. There are three main ways that incidental word-learning occurs: listening to others, being read to, and reading independently.
6. Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary are important. At least 12 exposures to a word over time and in various contexts (oral and written) are needed to gain adequate knowledge of a word's meaning.

Effective Vocabulary Instruction

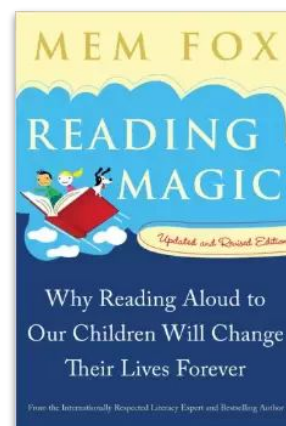
7. *Using* words, rather than repetitive drill or memorization, is a more effective way to gain deep understanding of the word.
8. Our level of understanding of a word is determined by the breadth, depth, and fluency of our word knowledge.
9. We need to have a reason to learn new words. Engagement matters.
10. It is more effective to teach vocabulary as networks or families of words rather than lists of words. Words are concepts related to other words and can have multiple uses, which means that our knowledge of words can deepen through these word connections.
11. We can't teach students every word they need to know, so an important component of vocabulary instruction is to develop *independent* word learning strategies through explicit instruction.
12. Word consciousness or word awareness is an important component of effective vocabulary instruction.
13. Reading volume is important in terms of long-term and independent vocabulary development.
14. Morphology instruction is a key component of word recognition instruction and also vocabulary development. One of the primary ways that word family networks are stored in our memories is by their morphological relationships.
15. Assessing vocabulary learning is difficult because vocabulary is an unconstrained skill and because there is a general lack of standardized tools that target vocabulary. Assessment attempts should match the goal of instruction.

On the pages that follow, I have included a handful of instructional routines which reflect each of the principles listed above. They are organized around categories of vocabulary instruction.



Increasing Vocabulary Through Read-Aloud

In her book *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever*, Mem Fox describes the power of using read-aloud to grow children's vocabulary. Citing research from [Hayes and Ahrens](#), she explains that there are about 10,000 words that we use in everyday conversations (Tier 1 words). Beyond the 10,000 are rare words (Tier 2 and 3). Reading aloud a children's book exposes students to more rare words per 1,000 than they will meet in conversation. In addition, they will be exposed to "book language" that isn't found in oral conversations.



Number of Rare Words Met Per Thousand	
An adult speaking to a 10-year-old child	11.7
An adult speaking to an adult	17.3
A children's book	30.9
Newspaper	68.3
Scientific paper	128

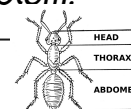
There are 2 ways to teach vocabulary through read-alouds:

1. **Unplanned or Incidental-on-Purpose Teaching:** As you are reading aloud, you may notice a word that your students may not be familiar with or a student asks, "What does that mean?" Don't let that opportunity to do some quick vocabulary teaching pass by. While the words aren't planned ahead, you can be prepared with 4 simple techniques. See the cheat sheet on the next page.
2. **Planned Direct Instruction:** Use each read-aloud as an opportunity to do some direct instruction with a handful for Tier 2 words. Use the steps on p. 130 for Increasing Vocabulary Through Explicit Teaching.

Increasing Vocabulary Through Read-Aloud

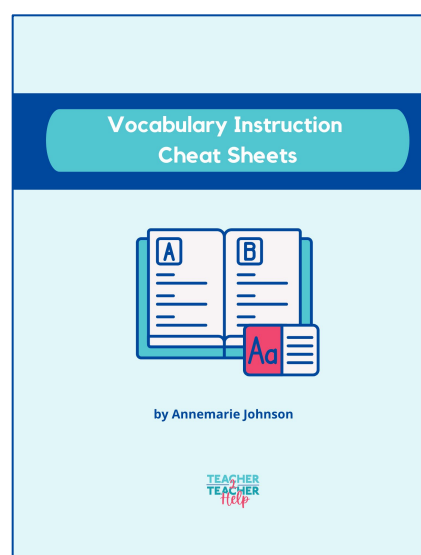
Incidental-on-Purpose Vocabulary Through Read-Aloud

Method	Example word	Sounds like...
Provide a quick, kid- friendly definition and example	"famished" from <i>James and the Giant Peach</i>	" 'Famished' is when someone is really, really hungry. You might feel famished at lunch time if you skip breakfast."
Give a quick synonym for the word	"dilemma" from <i>Donovan's Word Jar</i>	" 'Dilemma' is a fancy word or synonym for 'problem'. " Donovan had a dilemma or a problem."
Point to a picture or pull up an online image	"thorax" from a book about insects	"This is the insect's 'thorax' or middle body part."
Act out or demonstrate	"swooped" <i>Owl Babies</i>	" 'Swooped' looks like this." Demonstrate swooping like a bird with your arms extended like a bird. "Let's see you act out 'swooping' ".



Tip: You can leverage the incidental read-aloud vocabulary words by incorporating them into a word awareness routine. See Word Collections on the Word Awareness/ Word Consciousness page in the handbook.

Vocabulary Instruction Cheat Sheets **[FREE DOWNLOAD]** when you sign up for my [Teacher2Teacher Help e-mail newsletter](#).



Increasing Vocabulary Through Explicit Teaching

The research is clear that children should not be left on their own to acquire vocabulary knowledge—an important component of vocabulary instruction involves direct, explicit instruction. But with so many words to choose from, how do we prioritize which to teach explicitly?

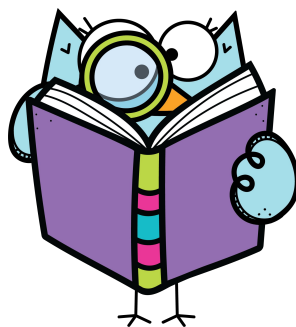
Guidelines for Selecting Words

While you will never find a comprehensive list of words you *must* teach your students, there are some guidelines to assist in word selection:

1. Select words from a text that are **critical to understanding the overall meaning** of that text and cannot be figured out through context clues.
2. Focus on explicitly teaching **Tier 2 words** (academic vocabulary). Children will encounter Tier 1 words through everyday exposure. They will learn Tier 3 words when studying or working in specific domains or isolated content area topics. Tier 2 words appear frequently across all content areas, are often more abstract words, and are linked to overall comprehension. The creators of TextProject offer this list of [Tier 2 academic words](#). This list is part of a larger list of 4,000 Word Families.
3. Prioritize words that are **higher frequency and higher utility**.
4. Select 5-15 words to teach *explicitly* each week.

Simple Instructional Routine for Introducing New Words

Once you have selected the target words, you can follow the simple routine on the following page. The third column lists the word learning component involved in each step. For a great explanation of the 4-part processing model for word recognition, check out this [Prezi](#).



Increasing Vocabulary Through Explicit Teaching

Simple Instructional Routine for Introducing New Words

	Step	What It Sounds Like	Word Learning Component
1.	Pronounce the target word and discuss the structure or ask questions about the linguistic structure.	<i>"The word is imposter. This word has 3 syllables: im- pos-ter. (closed - closed - r-controlled)." (For older or advanced students: The prefix 'im-' means not; the Latin root 'pos' mean to put ; and the suffix '-er' means a person who.)"</i>	phonology morphology syntax
2.	Ask students to repeat.	<i>"Repeat the word imposter."</i>	phonology
3.	Explain the meaning in everyday language.	<i>"An imposter is a person who pretends to be someone else."</i>	semantics definitional
4.	Provide examples from context and other situations. Ask students for examples.	<i>"We thought he was a famous actor but he was an imposter."</i>	contextual
5.	Say, spell, and write the word and ask students to do the same.	<i>"Let's say and write the word imposter, thinking about each syllable and each sound in the syllables."</i>	orthography

(adapted from [The Reading Comprehension Blueprint](#))

After introducing students to the target words, the vocabulary learning has only begun! You might want to have students add the words to a [vocabulary journal](#). You will also want to plan ways for students to *use* the words in order to increase their [depth](#) and fluency with the word. There are lots of ideas in this handbook to get you started.

Remember: Students don't "own" a word until they can use it in speaking and writing!

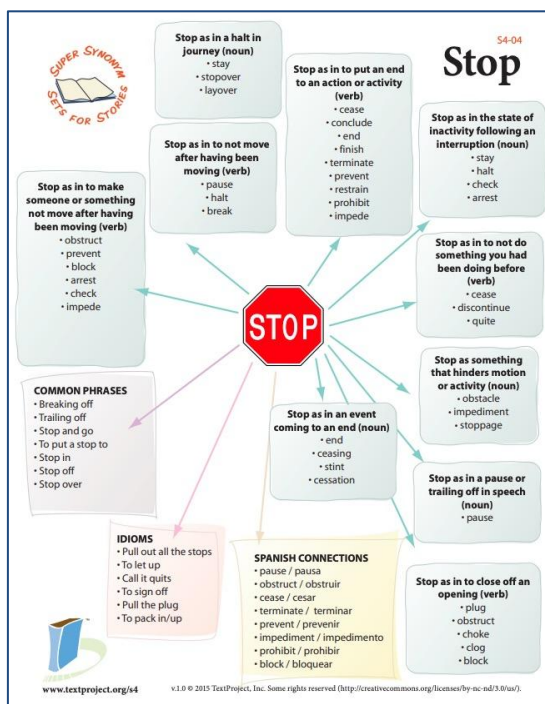
Increasing Vocabulary Through Networks of Words

The instructional routine described on the previous page is a good first step for explicitly teaching new vocabulary. Deeper understanding of words will need to be supported through more in-depth study. According to vocabulary expert Freddy Hiebert, we should avoid the practice of teaching vocabulary through word lists because students have trouble learning and retaining lists of unconnected words. Instead, she recommends teaching [word in networks](#) to help students form connections among words and deepen their understanding.

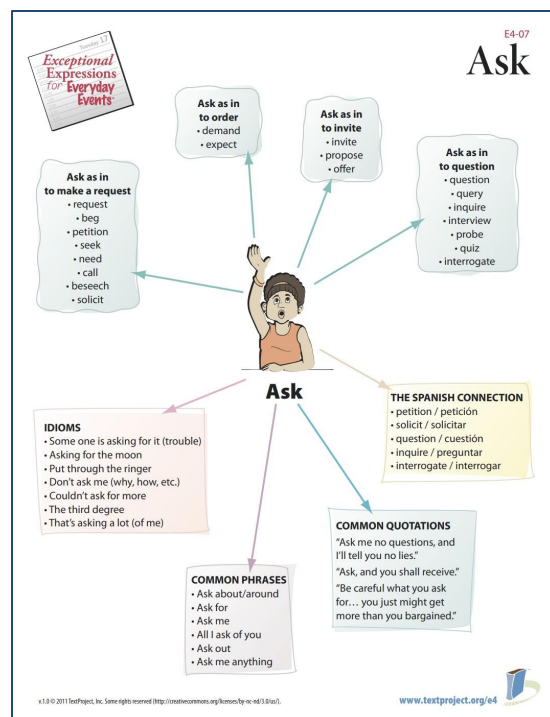
For each word that we introduce to students, we can expose them to an entire network that is related in some way. They might be related morphologically, conceptually, through shades of meaning, structurally, etc. Freddy is CEO of [TextProject](#) which has an amazing wealth of free resources to support vocabulary instruction through word networks for academic language, literary vocabulary, and content area vocabulary.

I encourage you to explore all of her amazing resources. There are too many to list here but I want to highlight two of them:

Super Synonym Sets for Stories



Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events



Increasing Vocabulary Through Networks of Words

Semantic Gradients or Shades of Meaning

Semantic gradients connect synonyms along a progression.

1. Select a word: happy
2. Guide students to generate a list of synonyms: glad, thrilled, delighted, ecstatic, joyful
3. Invite students to talk with a partner to arrange the words along a gradient, perhaps from least intense to most intense:



happy \Rightarrow glad \Rightarrow joyful \Rightarrow thrilled \Rightarrow delighted \Rightarrow ecstatic

Variation:

1. Select a neutral word and then two words that are polar opposites:
said: whispered < == > shouted.
2. List 4-5 synonyms for each.
3. Arrange along a continuum.



Frayer Model/Semantic Maps

Semantic maps are graphic organizers that help students gain deeper understanding of words. You can find 15 downloadable Frayer Model templates [here](#).

Definition	Word	Picture
Synonyms/Examples		Antonyms/Non-Examples
Sentence		

Increasing Vocabulary Through Word Awareness and Word Consciousness

It is impossible for us to teach our students every word they need to know. An important way to increase vocabulary *breadth* (the size of an individual's mental lexicon) is to create a culture of curiosity and playfulness around words.

Word Curiosity Through Children's Books

There are many children's books that include storylines with characters who love words or are curious about them. Here is a [great list](#) of 21 titles to get you started.



Word Collections

After reading aloud some of the books above, invite your students to become word collectors by searching for interesting or unknown words in their independent reading, while watching TV, or eavesdropping on conversations. Then create a public space to collect the words. Here is an example of one from one of my classrooms:



Increasing Vocabulary Through Word Awareness and Word Consciousness

Promote Use of the Word Collections

Once your class has a word collection started, invite students to start *using* the words in their speaking and writing. You can add some gamification to this process by:

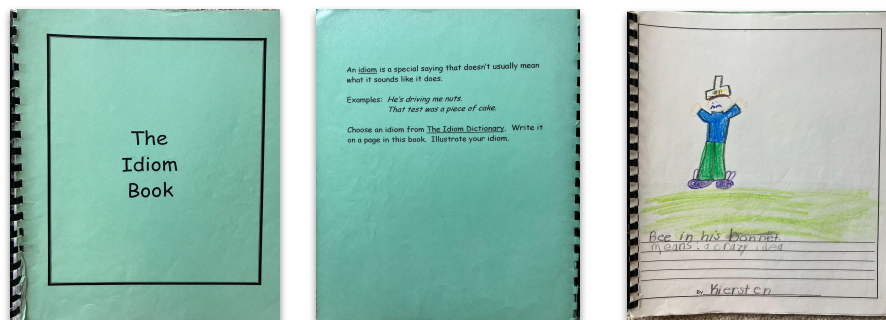
- adding a tally mark to the word every time someone uses it in context
- inviting the student who used the word to write their name on a small sticky note and stick it near the word
- allowing the student who used the word to ring a deli bell
- adding a marble to a jar every time a student uses a word



Word Play and Figurative Language

Word play is an important and fun way to foster word consciousness. Introduce your students to categories of words such as mondegreens, palindromes, anagrams and more and let them run with it. Check out [16 Types of Word Play](#) to get you started. Encourage students to use word play in their writing just like professional writers do.

Idioms are a subcategory of figurative language that pose particular challenges for students, especially English learners, because idioms must be translated as whole phrases, not word-by-word. Idioms can't be memorized, either; they must be encountered and learned through exposure in conversation and texts. One way that I heightened my students' awareness of idioms was by keeping the [Scholastic Idiom Dictionary](#) beside my read-aloud chair. When we encountered an idiomatic expression, we would stop and have a student look up that phrase and read its meaning and history. We also created our own class idiom dictionary:



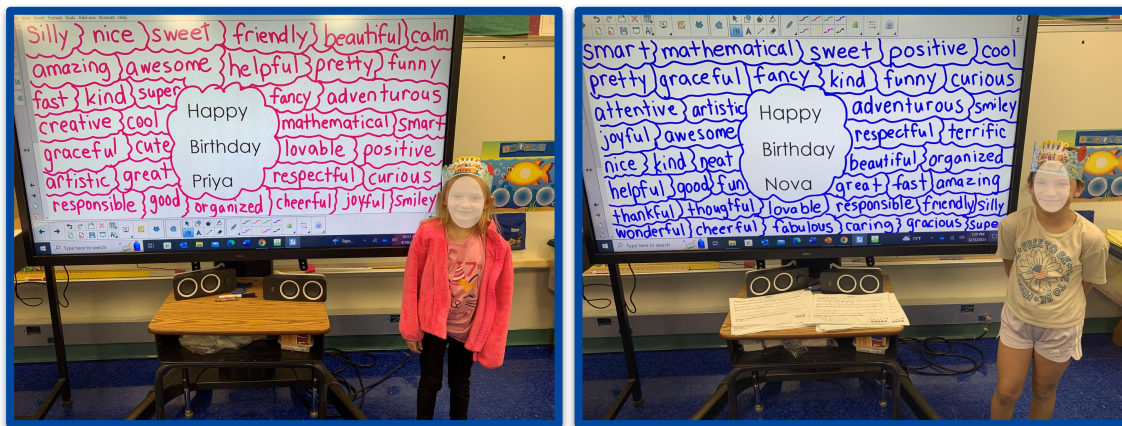
If your students love the Amelia Bedelia books, a fun way to study idioms is to hold an Amelia Bedelia talent show—students create “costumes” that illustrate some idioms. For example, they might hold an umbrella with cats and dogs hanging from it for “It’s raining cats and dogs.” The more idioms they add to their costumes, the better!

Increasing Vocabulary Through Classroom Talk

Leveling Up Language During Everyday Moments

We can use precise, descriptive language during routine moments of the day. This takes no extra minutes out of the school day, but with an “incidental-on-purpose” approach, we can embed a significant amount of rich vocabulary. Here are two examples:

1. **Birthday Words:** On a child’s birthday, invite students to list adjectives to describe the birthday child. At first, the adjectives will be rudimentary words like *happy* or *nice*. You can use these words to expand students’ vocabulary to include synonyms of those words (happy/content; smart/intelligent; curious/inquisitive). Over time, students will begin to “own” the more sophisticated words. After the board is filled, save the file or take a photo and print onto a poster for the child to take home.



Idea & photo credit: K. Kloss, grade 1 teacher

2. **Re-Word the Rudimentary:** Find opportunities during routine moments throughout the school day to use more precise and sophisticated language. Example:
Typical: “We are so hungry. It’s a good thing we’re on our way to the lunchroom.”
Enriched: “We are so famished. It’s a good thing it’s time to venture down to the cafeteria for sustenance.”

Authentically Assessing Vocabulary Learning

Assessing vocabulary can be difficult—the true measure of a student’s vocabulary isn’t just whether they have memorized a list of words and definitions. True vocabulary knowledge is more dependent on how well students can use words in their speaking and writing (expressive vocabulary) or to comprehend words in their reading and listening (receptive vocabulary). In addition, vocabulary is an unconstrained skill—we learn words incrementally and we are never finished learning words. Therefore, we should think more about vocabulary in terms of growth, not proficiency.

Below are formative assessment ideas for observing students’ vocabulary use in context.

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)

The VKS is an informal self-assessment that can be used as a pretest and to measure gains in word knowledge before and after a content area unit of study. Students are given a list of words and asked to score themselves on a 5-point scale:

1. I’ve never seen this word.
2. I’ve seen it, but don’t know it.
3. I’ve seen this word before and think it means ____.
4. I know this word. It means ____.
5. I know this word well. I can use it in a sentence. _____.

Here is an adaptation of the VKS described in Nancy Hennessey’s *The Reading Comprehension Blueprint*:

Word	Stranger Word This word is new to me.	Acquaintance Word I have seen or heard this word before.	BFF Word I know this word really well and can use it in context.

You can read more about the VKS and other vocabulary assessments [here](#).

Authentically Assessing Vocabulary Learning

Word Sorts

Select a list of content area vocabulary words and type them on word cards or a Jamboard. Have students work in partnerships or small groups to do an open sort of the words into categories of their choosing. There are no right or wrong answers. As students work together they will discuss the words and justify their category and word connection choices. As they work, you can walk around, listening in and assessing their knowledge of the concepts. This is also a great opportunity for students to activate their schema before a unit of study. You can get more mileage out of the sort by taking a picture of each group's sort and then asking them to re-sort in the middle of a unit and again at the end of a unit to determine if their thinking has grown or changed.

Talk-a-Mile-a-Minute

This is a great vocabulary game that can be used as a way to get students using words in context and also as an assessment tool. It's played like the game Catch Phrase. It's a quick and super high energy activity that your students will want to do again and again.

Here is a [quick video explanation](#) of how to use and conduct this activity. Here is a [slide template](#) for creating your own. Duplicate the slide deck, then add your own words and categories. Put the slide deck into present mode when use with students.

Question or Prompt Activities

Like Talk-a-Mile-a-Minute, the following activities are quick and can be used for both deepening vocabulary knowledge and also assessing it. Below are a few categories of prompts with examples. Use these as a springboard to create your own categories. To use as an instructional routine, announce a prompt and give students some think time. Then have them do one of the following: turn and tell a partner, write the answer on a white board and hold it up, write it on an exit ticket. Be sure to have students explain the reason for their answer.

Type of Prompt	What It Sounds Like
Give a reason	Why might someone feel famished?
Relationships	How are these words related? underground, concealed
Describe a time when...	Describe a time when you were benevolent.
Applause, Applause	Clap how much you would like to be described as: inquisitive, incorrigible, etc.
Would you rather...	Would you rather be immortal or invincible?

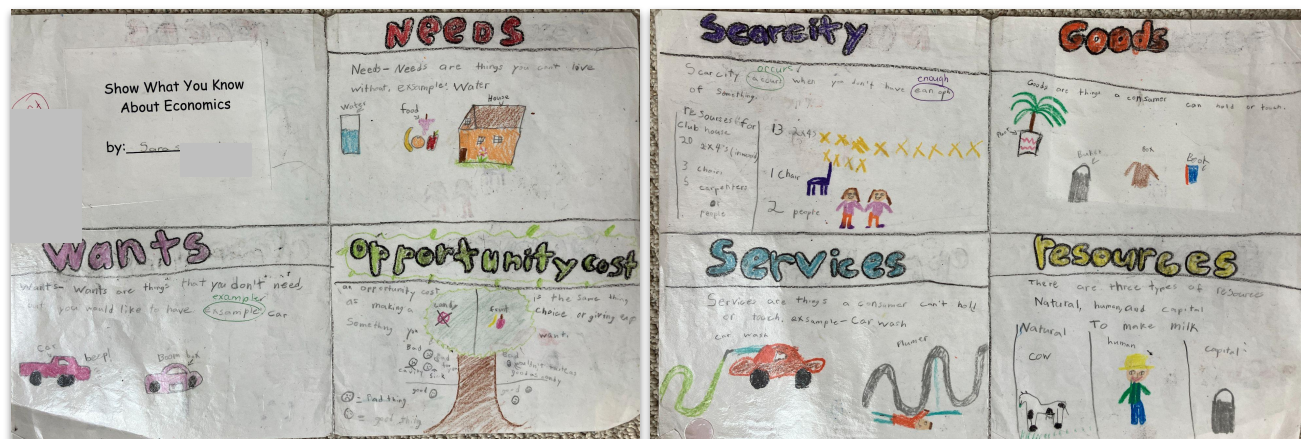
Authentically Assessing Vocabulary Learning

Show What You Know

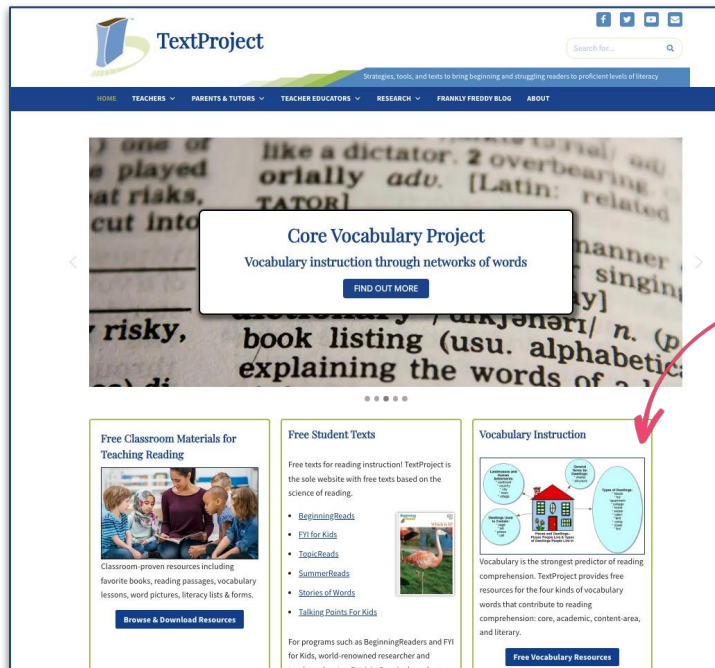
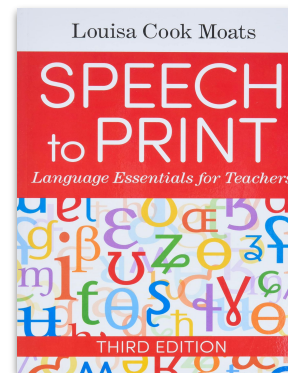
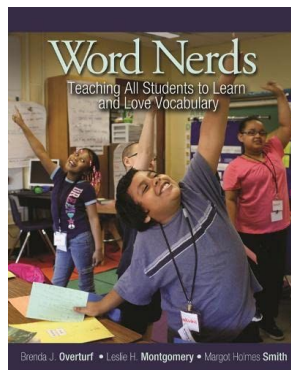
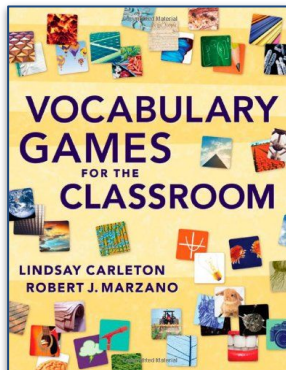
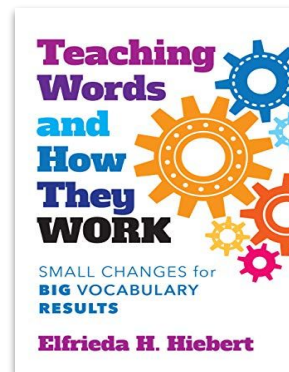
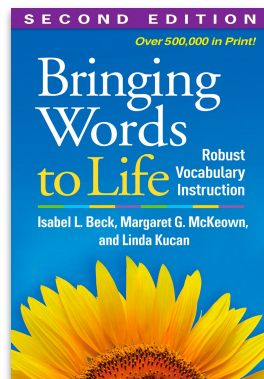
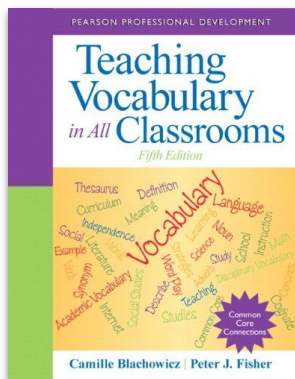
Show What You Know is an open-ended content area assessment that I developed to assess students' understanding of key concepts at the end of a science/social studies unit. At the end of a unit, we brainstorm and create a list of any words or concepts that students feel are important. Here is a sample from a weather unit:



Then students fold a 12" x 18" piece of paper into 4-6 sections. The first section is labeled "Show What You Know About _____". Students then choose and add a word or concept to each box. Then they demonstrate their knowledge of the concept using words, labels, diagrams or other nonlinguistic representations.



Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Vocabulary

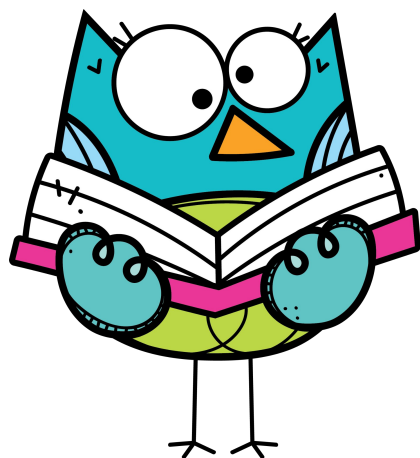


I highly recommend the website [TextProject](https://www.textproject.org/), developed by vocabulary expert Elfrieda Heibert. There are loads of free resources to support vocabulary instruction.

Research Guides:

- [A Focus on Vocabulary](#)
- [The Core Vocabulary: The Foundation of Proficient Comprehension](#)
- [A Review of Research on Vocabulary Instruction](#)

Engagement and Motivation

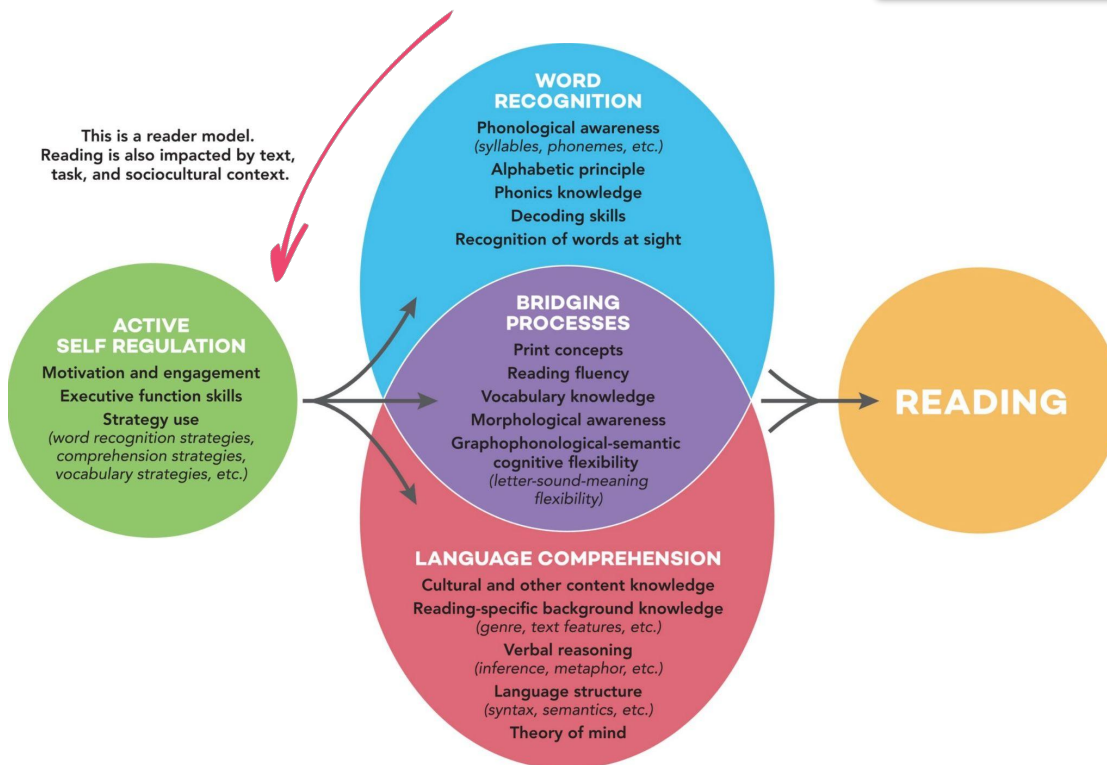
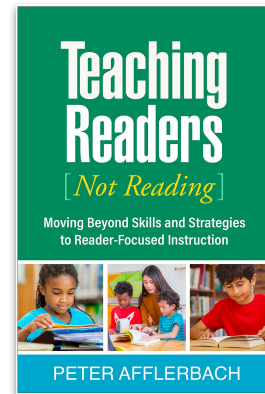


Where Engagement and Motivation Fit In

In recent years, Science of Reading research has ushered in a heightened interest in providing students with high-quality phonics and comprehension instruction. This is going to make a difference in the quality of reading instruction in our classrooms! It's important to remember, however, that we aren't just teaching reading—we are teaching readers.

Peter Afflerbach reminds us in *Teaching Readers, Not Reading* that cognition is but one factor in reading achievement and that there are additional factors that influence students' literacy learning that are also supported by reading research. These factors include metacognition, motivation, engagement, self-efficacy, and more.

Nell Duke and Kelly Cartwright also included these research-based topics in their [Active View of Reading](#).



As we work to align our practices with the reading research, let's not forget the importance of creating a community of engaged and motivated readers. I hope the assessments and instructional routines on the following pages will help you do just that!

Reading Interview/Interest Inventory

Name _____ Date _____

To the teacher: This tool is meant to be used as an oral interview to build relationships with your readers, and NOT a form that students complete independently. Use the questions as conversation starters--no need to ask every question. Be conversational!

1. Do you like to read?

___ yes ___ no ___ sometimes

2. Do you like someone to read to you?

___ yes ___ no ___ sometimes

3. Do you like to read to yourself at home?

___ yes ___ no ___ sometimes

4. How much time do you spend reading?

5. What are some books you have read recently?

6. Do you have a library card? _____. If so, how often do you use it?

7. What kinds of books do you like to read? (check ✓ as many as you want)

___ animal

___ scary stories

___ funny

___ make-believe

___ science

___ fairy tales

___ mysteries

___ about people

___ books that

___ series

___ poetry

tell how to

___ sports

___ riddles/jokes

make things

___ other: _____

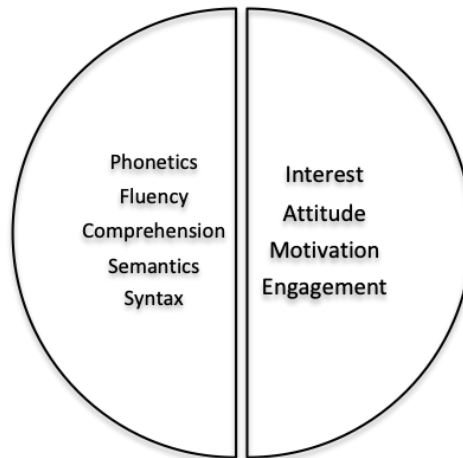
8. Who is your favorite author?
9. What is your favorite book?
10. What helps you choose a book to read?
11. Who are your favorite entertainers, singers, actors, etc.?
12. Do you have any hobbies?
13. What are your favorite television shows?
14. How much time do you spend watching TV and playing video games each day?
15. When you are reading and come to something you don't know, what do you do?

Do you ever do anything else?

16. Who is a good reader you know?
17. What makes _____ a good reader?
18. Do you think you are a good reader?
19. What would you like to do better as a reader?
20. If you knew someone who was having trouble reading, how would you help that person?

Engagement Strategies

I love [Steven Layne's](#) infographic on what a **Complete Reader** looks like. If we focus only on the mechanics of reading, we will produce readers who *can* read but may not *want* to read.



Tap into Interest, Passion, and Choice



Watch video [here](#).

Research is clear that when readers have choices, their motivation and engagement increase. And when readers are engaged, they read more. A good place to start when trying to guide students toward good book choices is to get to know them through tools such as interest inventories, reading interviews, and parent surveys. You can download my “Connecting with Students Toolkit” at my blog post [Simple Ways to Connect with Students](#).

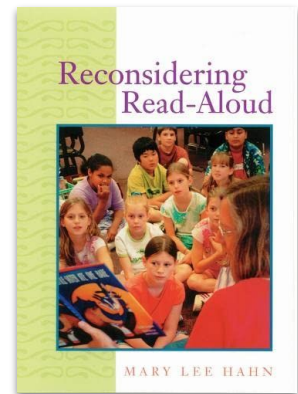
Home Run Books

A “home run book” as explained by [Jim Trelease](#) is *that* book that made us fall in love with reading. I believe that one of our most important jobs as reading teachers is to help *especially* our struggling readers find their own home run books. We can do this through book recommendations, intentional read-aloud, reading rituals, and connecting with students to tap into interests as described above. Here is an [interesting article](#) on a research study conducted on the effects of home run books. Check out my YouTube video where I describe my [home run book story](#).



Read-Aloud Rituals

I first learned about read-aloud rituals from Mary Lee Hahn in [*Reconsidering Read-Aloud*](#). Hahn says, “Rituals build community by providing a common set of experiences.” Read-aloud rituals induct students into a community of readers in our classrooms. When students feel that they are part of a community, engagement goes up and volume of reading increases. Increases in volume of reading have been linked to [higher reading achievement](#). You can see examples of my favorite [reading rituals](#) on my blog or see examples and explanations on my [YouTube channel](#). Feel free to adopt or adapt mine or better yet, create some rituals of your own! Your students will love them.



Choose-a-Book

Each morning display two picture books on plate stands. As students arrive, they place a unifix cube in front of the book they would like to hear read aloud.



During Morning Meeting read aloud the book that received the most votes. Add a new book for tomorrow’s “choose-a-book”. Books may be selected based on author, theme, or genre. Two weeks is a sufficient amount of time to spend on an author or theme.



Watch video [here](#).

Read-Aloud Rituals

Ritual for Introducing New Authors

Each time you read from a new author, display a book or poster labeled with the author's name. Refer to the display often during book discussions throughout the year.



Read-Aloud Gallery

After each chapter book read-aloud, draw a name out of a bag and have that child create a 12" x 18" illustration of a favorite part of the book. Hang the picture along with a sentence strip with the title and author in chronological order around the classroom. Have the remaining students make a 9" x 12" picture of their favorite part and put them all into a spiral bound class book. The wall display makes a great reference tool when referring to books, comparing books and characters, making connections, etc. The titles and authors are instantly available for class discussions. ([Hahn, 2002](#))



Watch video [here](#).

Book Lover's Notebook

Photocopy the front and back covers of each new chapter book read-aloud and distribute copies to students. Have students make predictions, share any known information about the author, etc. Have students place the copies in a "Book Lover's Notebook". At the end of the read-aloud, look back at these copies to recall the first predictions and have students reflect on how their thinking changed over the course of the read-aloud. Like the Read-Aloud Gallery, the Book Lover's Notebook provides a handy reference tool for comparing and discussing books throughout the year. ([Hahn, 2002](#))

Read-Aloud Rituals

Birthday Read-Aloud

Refer to the read-aloud gallery when it is a child's birthday and allow the birthday child to select a favorite or memorable excerpt from a previous read-aloud book to revisit as a class. ([Hahn, 2002](#))

Birthday Bag

Fill a birthday gift bag with picture books that include the word "birthday" in the title. (i.e.: *Clifford's Birthday*, *Arthur's Birthday*, etc.) Used library book sales are a great place to find these. On a child's birthday, invite the birthday child to select a book from the bag for that day's read-aloud. The book goes back in the bag after the child's birthday and may be selected at a future date by another birthday child.



Watch video [here](#).

Trading Cards

Kids love to collect things! Why not play off of that love and connect collections with books. I thought of this idea after reading about [Mary Lee Hahn's](#) "Book Lover's Notebook" and "Read-Aloud Gallery". After finishing a chapter book read-aloud, give each student a trading card-sized image of the book's front cover. The cards could be slid into trading card page protectors or hole-punched and added to a loose-leaf ring. Click [here](#) for directions to make your own and to see ideas for using them.



Watch video [here](#).



Read-Aloud Rituals

Vote on a Read-Aloud

Use this ritual the week before starting a new chapter book read-aloud. Each day for 5 days read aloud the first chapter from 5 different books. At the end of the week have the class vote on the next read-aloud which begins the following Monday. Benefits of this ritual:

- It builds community by creating a book buzz as students try to sway their classmates to vote for their favorite book.
- It provides a sense of agency and gives students choice, which research shows is linked to reading motivation.
- It introduces students to an additional 4 books that they may choose to read on their own!



Watch video [here](#).

Poetry Pause

Set aside time for a designated student to read aloud a poem. Students should practice before presenting and explain why the poem was selected. Read more [here](#).



Read-Aloud Rituals

Reading Slumber Party

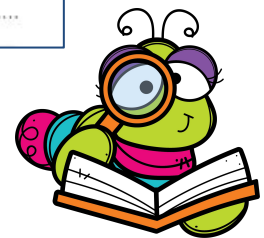
Want to combine independent reading, read-aloud, and a class reward? This ritual works best when you can devote at least an entire afternoon to it. It can be used to:

- celebrate the end of testing week
- ease into a holiday break
- spotlight March is Reading month

How it works:

1. To prepare, make a list of reading activities and write each on a slip of paper. Here are a few suggestions:

.....
Listen to your teacher read a book.
.....
Time for a guest reader.
.....
Pick a fairy tale to read.
.....
Read with a partner.
.....
Poetry break. Take turns reciting poetry from your poetry notebook.
.....
Time for a Reader's Theater break.
.....
Eat a special snack.
.....
Draw a picture of the main character in your book and tell about him/her.
.....

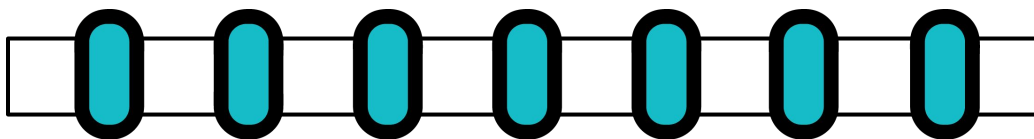
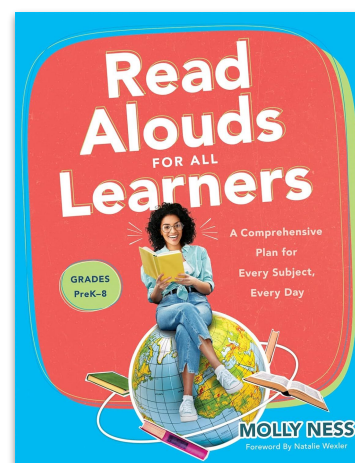
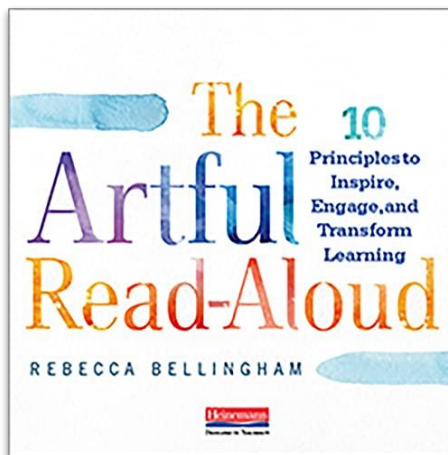
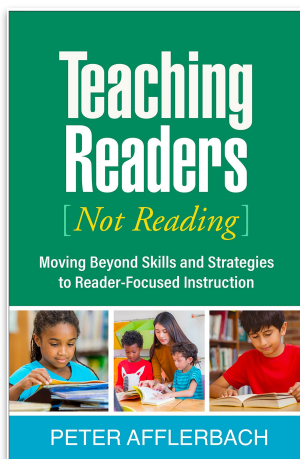
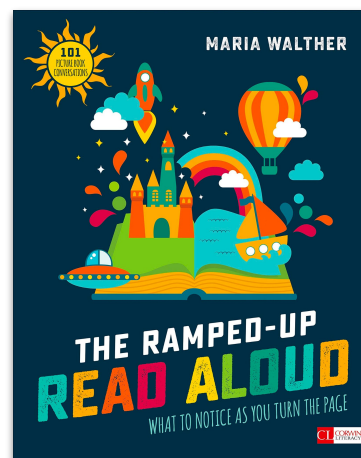
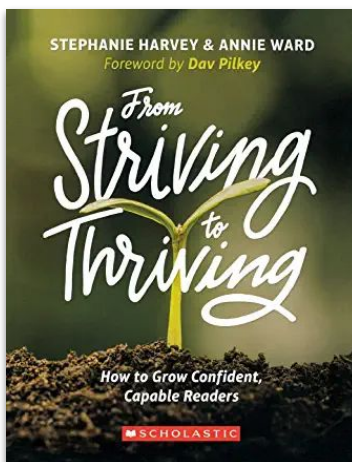
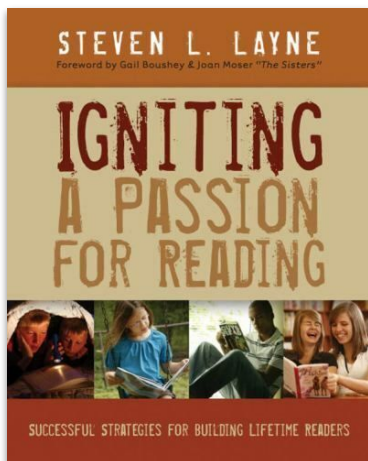


Read-Aloud Rituals

2. Place each strip inside a balloon and blow it up. Tack the balloons around the classroom.
3. Allow students to bring in favorite pillows, blankets, stuffed animals and of course, reading material and tell them that they will be reading all afternoon.
4. At the start of the slumber party, students begin reading silently. Set a timer to go off strategically throughout the afternoon/day.
5. When the timer rings, have a student pop the balloon and read the strip.
6. Have the class complete the activity on the strip and then resume silent reading.



Annemarie's Recommended Resources for Supporting Motivation and Engagement



Additional Resources & Support

Stay connected by subscribing to [Annemarie's newsletter:](#)



If you have questions/comments after today's seminar,
feel free to contact Annemarie

Email: ajohnson@Teacher2TeacherHelp.com

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Notes

