Putting the K-4 Foundational ELA Learning Progressions Into Action



A Bit About Me

BA in English & Psychology (2013) and BEd in Primary-Junior Education (2014), both from Western University

Independent Schools 2014-18: Kindergarten & Grade 2

MFA in Creative Writing from UBC (2021)

I started teaching in Richmond SD38 in January 2023. I've taught K/1 and 2/3!




INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Feel free to step out to use the washroom/get water whenever you need to!

We will take a break from 11:30 to 11:35.



The K-4 Foundational ELA Learning Progressions

Purpose: Give teachers a clear picture of what proficiency looks like at each grade level and for each skill.

“While working towards proficiency, it is normal for students to be assessed as ‘emerging’ or ‘developing’ as they continue to develop the foundational skills outlined in the Learning Progressions.”

https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/learning-pathways/k-4-foundational-learning-progressions



Three Major Areas We Will Consider

1. Oral Language
2. Writing
3. Reading



Oral Language

1. Oral Storytelling
2. Vocabulary
3. Syntax

Let’s discuss! What are you already doing in this area? What does this look like throughout the school day and week?



Oral Language - let’s share as a large group.

- listening
- show and tell

Oral Language

1. **Oral Storytelling**
2. Vocabulary
3. Syntax



Oral Storytelling: Story Workshop



video from Lauren MacLean of Teach Outdoors

Oral Storytelling: Story Workshop



Do you have a **story workshop** practice in your classroom? What is working well for you in this area? Is there anything new you'd like to try?

Let’s share as a group!



Where to find materials?

- around the house
- school/district kits
- nature

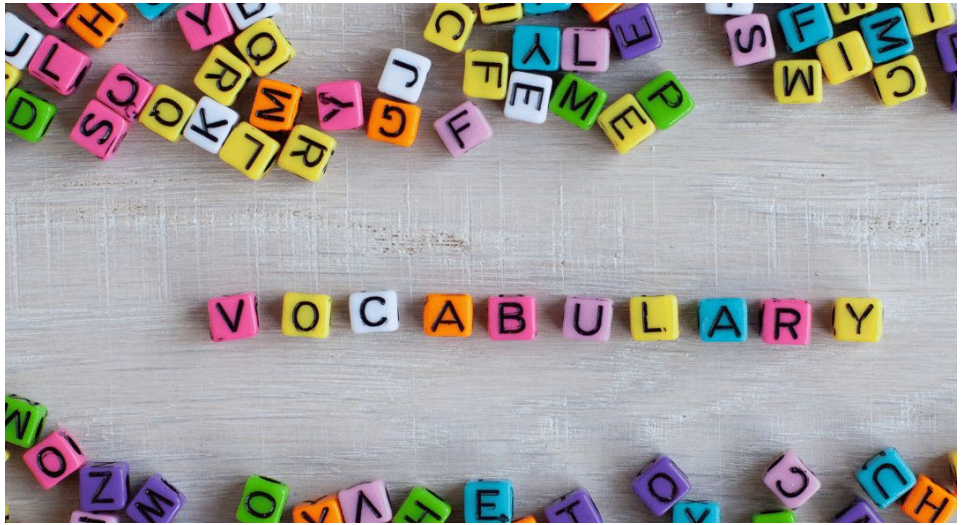
Oral Language

1. Oral Storytelling
2. **Vocabulary**
3. Syntax



Vocabulary

In BC, K-4 students are expected to use Tier 1 (basic-familiar), Tier 2 (high-frequency) and Tier 3 (content-specific) vocabulary words, acquired from independent word learning and explicit instruction, in various contexts, including other learning areas.



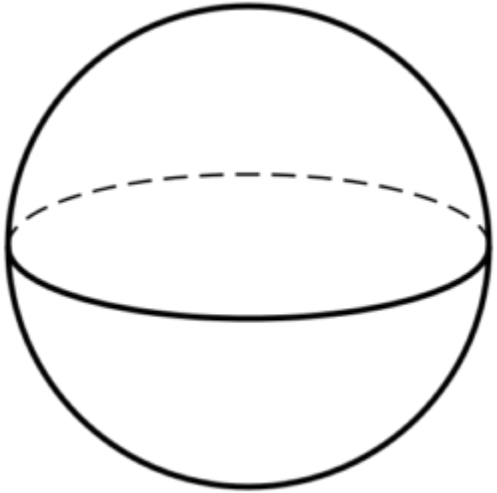
Tier 1: Day-to-Day Speech. Beginner ELL students will need instruction within this tier.



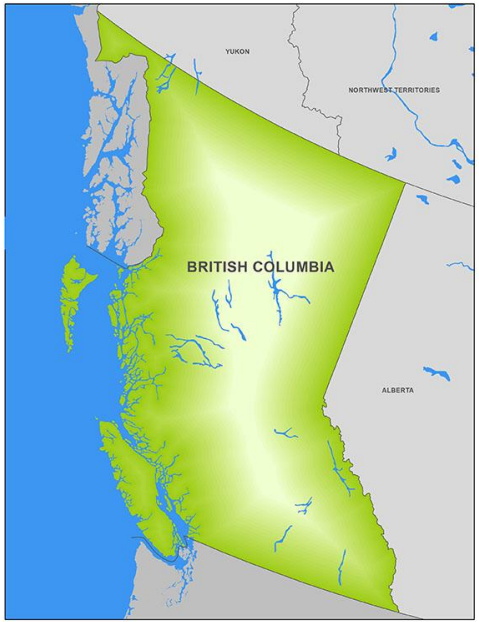




Tier 2: Content Area Vocabulary - this is the tier to focus on! This is where we will get the most “bang for our buck” instructionally.

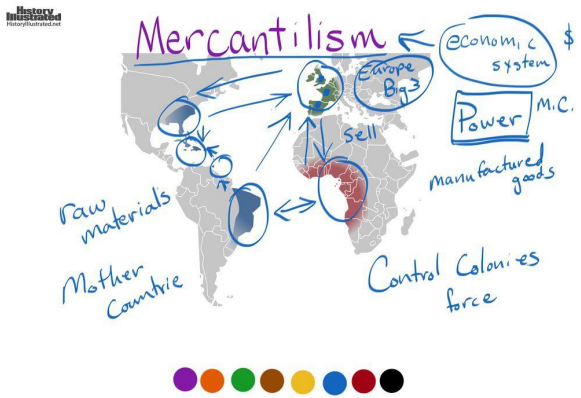


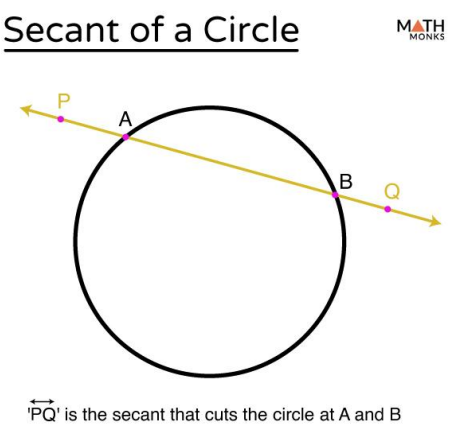




Tier 3: Advanced Vocabulary



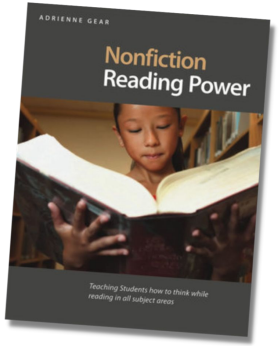


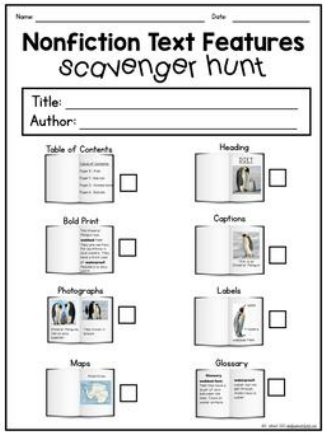


Grades 1 and 2

Understands vocabulary associated with texts (e.g., book, page, chapter, author, title, web page, website, heading, table of contents, pictures and diagrams)







Oral Language

1. Oral Storytelling
2. Vocabulary
3. **Syntax**



In British Columbia, what syntactic skills are students expected to develop?

As students progress from Kindergarten to Grade 4, they are expected to use increasingly complex sentences to communicate.



Example:

Kindergarten: She wears boots.

Grade 1: She wears boots and a jacket.

Grade 2: She wears boots and a jacket when it rains because…

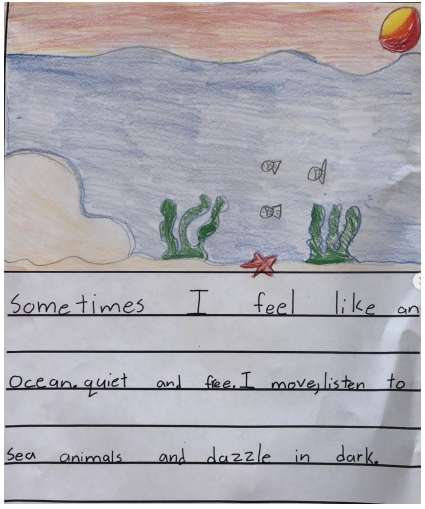
Grade 3: She wears her red boots and blue jacket when it rains because she doesn't like getting wet.

Grade 4: She wears her red boots and blue jacket when it rains even though she'd rather stay inside and read her book.

(British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2025)

A Mentor Sentence Lesson Using *Sometimes I Feel Like…*





Have students write their own “Sometimes I feel like…” sentences using the frame

Sometimes I feel like (noun - something from nature), (adjective) and (adjective). I (verb and more information).

Day 1: noun (something from nature)

Day 2: adjectives

Day 3: verb

Day 4: good copies to turn into a class book

Student-created example: Sometimes I feel like a wolf, graceful and fast. I rise and leap into the moon.

A simplified version for K/1:

Sometimes I feel like (something from nature). I (verb).

Example: Sometimes I feel like a fish. I swim.

Questions for Discussion: Syntax and Vocabulary

How could you help your students speak and write in **stronger sentences**?

What **Tier 2 vocabulary words** do your students need to know for the units you are covering right now? How could you intentionally incorporate instruction related to these words?

How could you incorporate **vocabulary related to texts**?

What's **something new you'd like to try** in the area of oral language?

Let’s share as a whole group!

- Faye Brownlie - explode the sentence - Stories are mirrors, windows, and sliding doors. - Why is it present tense? Why is “stories” plural? Are there literal mirrors, etc., or is it a metaphor?
  - making connections to picture books
- front-loading vocabulary
- using visuals
- co-creating word walls, word webs

Writing

1. Printing
2. Composition

Let’s discuss! What are you already doing in this area? What does this look like throughout the school day and week?



Writing - let’s share as a large group.

- how to motivate students?
- invented spelling
- executive functioning

Writing

1. **Printing**
2. Composition



Printing: Which skills do we work on, and when?

K-1: pencil grip; finger spaces between words

K-2: print upper and lowercase letters

3: “Cursive writing may be taught at this level, but it is not a requirement of the learning standard.”



Writing

1. Printing
2. **Composition**



Composition: What is expected at each grade level?

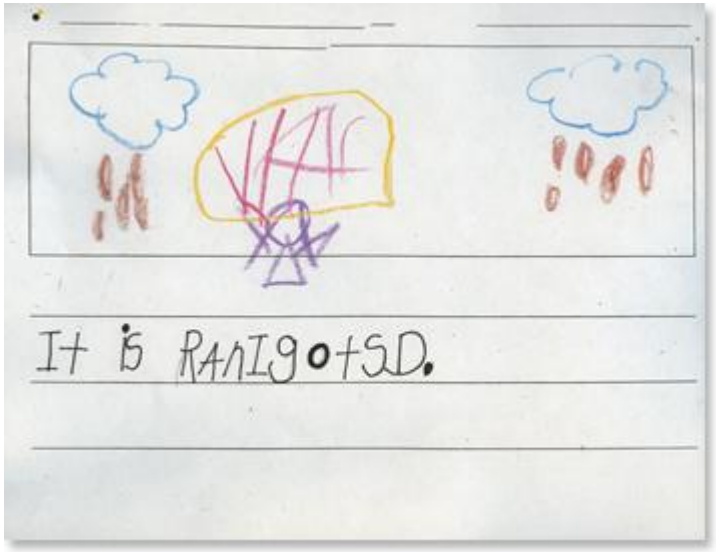


Kindergarten

Tell a story by drawing a picture or using tactile materials (e.g., clay, popsicle sticks, wooden characters)

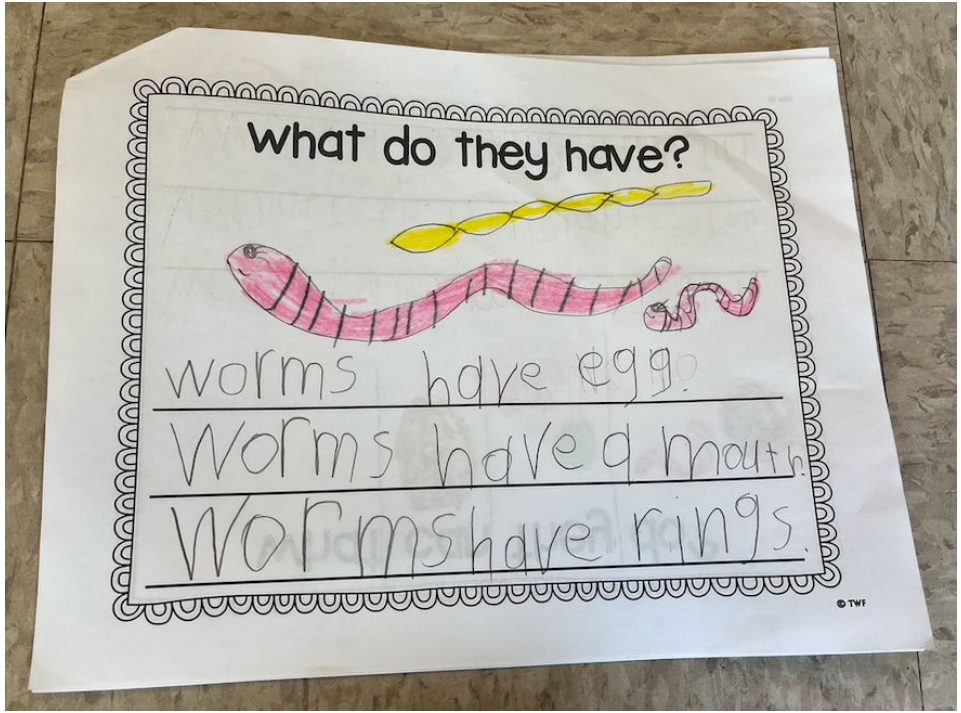
Write 1-2 sentences to describe a picture they have drawn, including taught and high frequency words (e.g., “I can see the cats. The slug is on dad”) as well as invented spelling for new or multisyllabic words (e.g., “I had a sepovr wif Kate. We stad up lat.” = “I had a sleepover with Kate. We stayed up late.”)





Grade 1

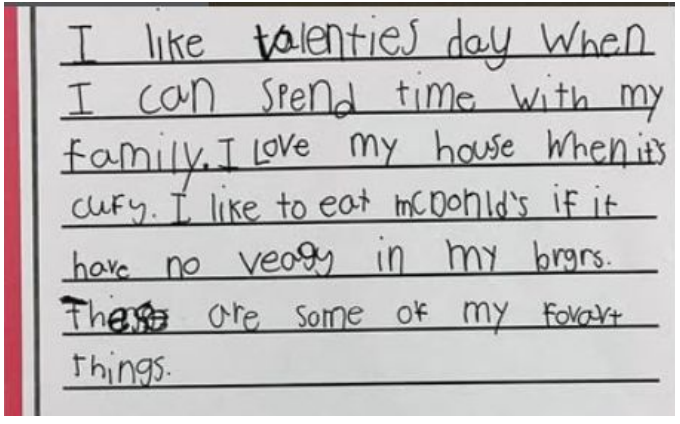
Writes a few sentences (2-3+) to express thoughts and/or ideas with some detail

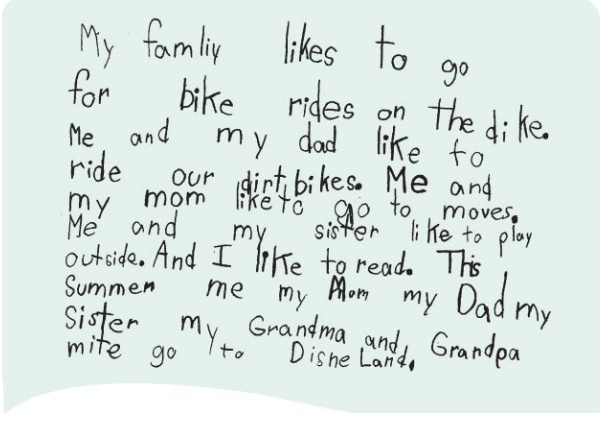


template from Teaching Without Frills

Grade 2

Writes short text of several related sentences (4-5+) with some relevant details or examples


I like valenties day When I can spend time with my family. I Love my house when its cufy. I like to eat mcDonld's if it have no veogy in my brgrs. Thes are some of my fovort things.

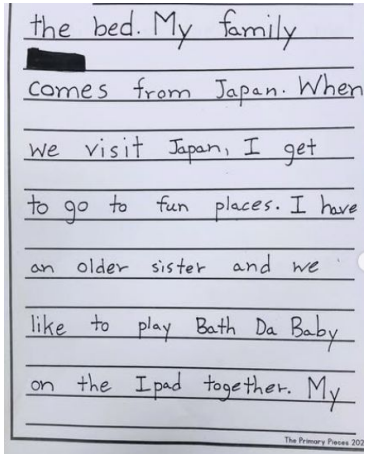

My famliy likes to go for bike rides on the dike. Me and my dad like to ride our dirt bikes. Me and my mom like to go to moves. Me and my sister like to play outside. And I like to read. This Summem me my Mom my Dad my Sister my Grandma and Grandpa mite go to Dishe Land.



Grade 3

Organize text with multiple (6-8+) sentences with some explanations, details or examples







Grade 4

Begins arranging sentences into paragraphs with a topic sentence, and supporting details

Example: 3 **TOPIC SENTENCE**
SUPPORTING DETAILS
CLOSING SENTENCE

- Cats are good pets. You don't have to take a cat for a walk every day like a dog. You do not have to wash cats because they know how to clean themselves. If you want to go on vacation, you can leave some food and water for your cat and it will be okay. A cat can sleep on your bed and keep you warm at night. I think these things make cats good pets.

A few writing projects to try!



Lunar New Year

Students used the frame **I am like the _____ because _____. Once, (example).**

This connects to the Positive Personal Identity Core Competency: *I can describe different aspects of my identity. I can identify my individual characteristics and explain what interests me.*

Discussing the personality traits associated with each Zodiac sign is also a good opportunity for vocabulary building.





I am like the tiger because I am brave because Once I went to the dentist hospital and to get a shot.

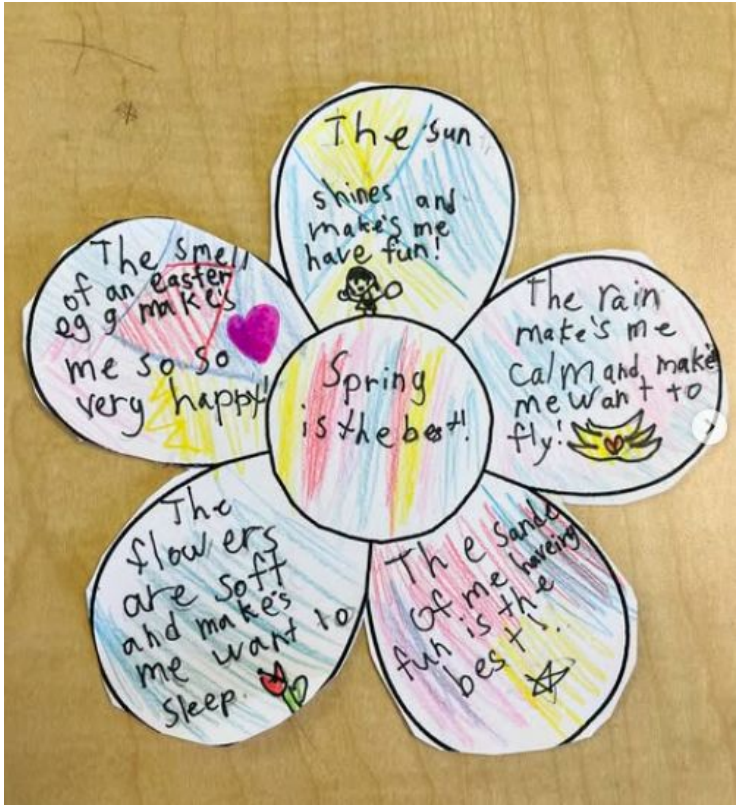


I am like the rabbit because I am artistic. Once I made my first painting at school. My family loved it.

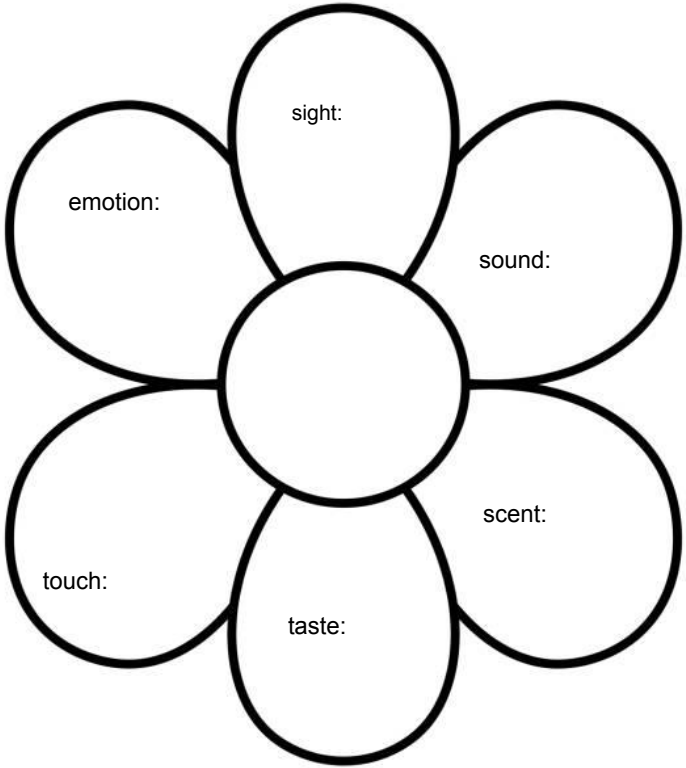


I am like the dragon. I am smart because I did alot of math and I got them all right.

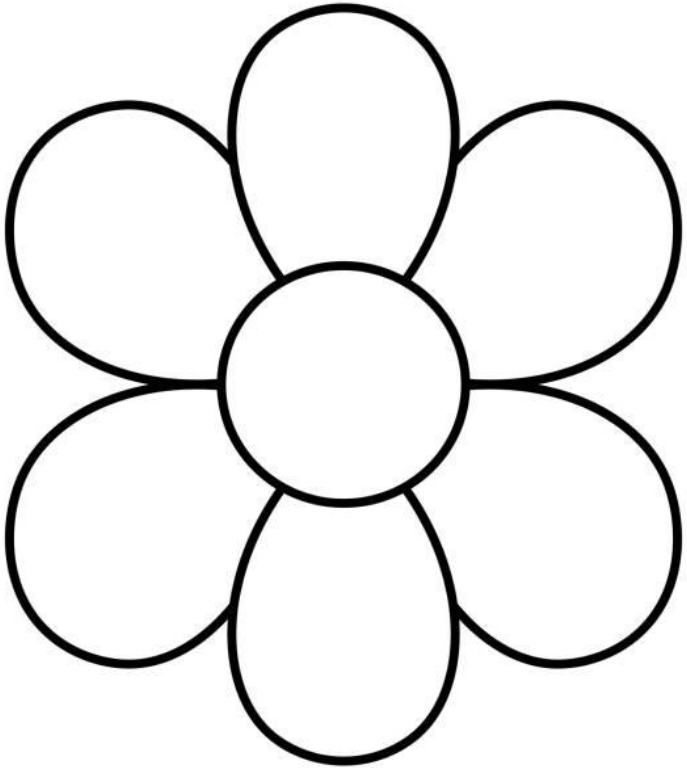
Six Senses of Spring Writing



Day 1: Brainstorm 6 senses images



Day 2: Write in pencil. Check in with the teacher after writing.



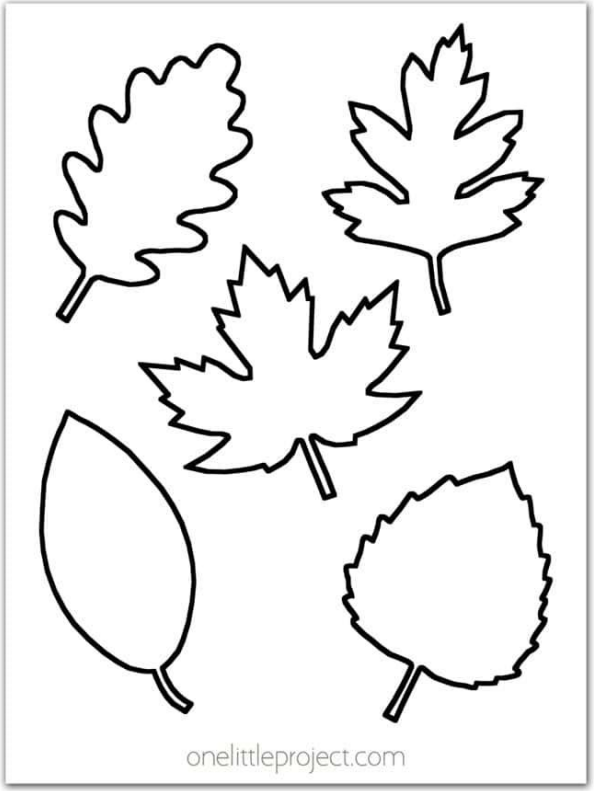
Day 3: Fineline, color, and cut

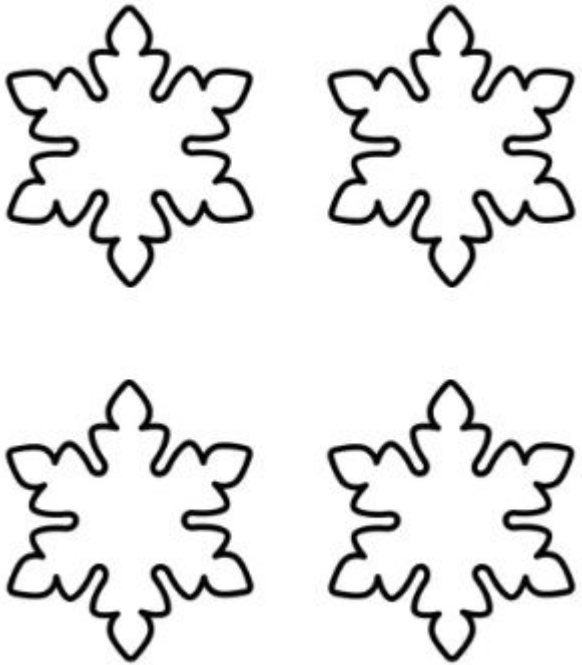


The K/1 (or beginner ELL) version

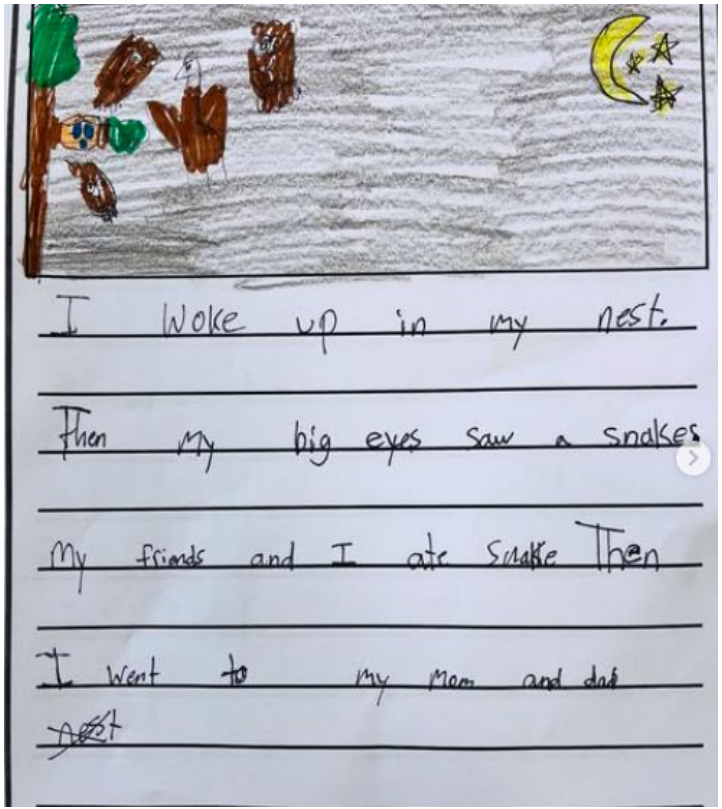


Six Senses of Fall/Winter





A Day/Night in the Life of an Animal



I woke up in my nest.

Then my big eyes saw a snakes

My friends and I ate Snake Then

I went to my Mom and dad

nest.

nest. They were in trouble.

We fought an eagle and

it fall down. and my

Parents and I were safe

I went home. Then

I Slept.

Day 1: Planning

My Night as an Owl

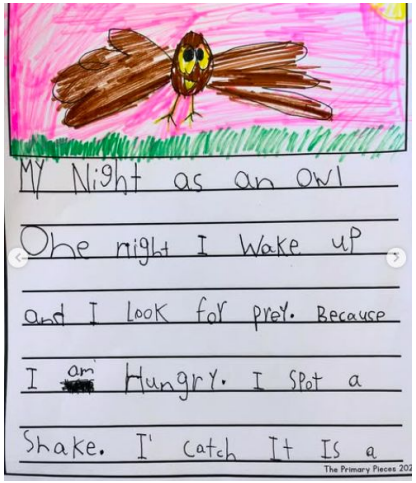
Beginning	Middle	End

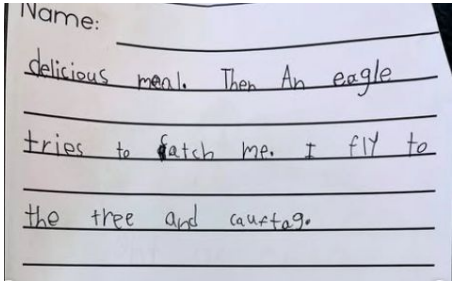
Remember to include information about the owl's…

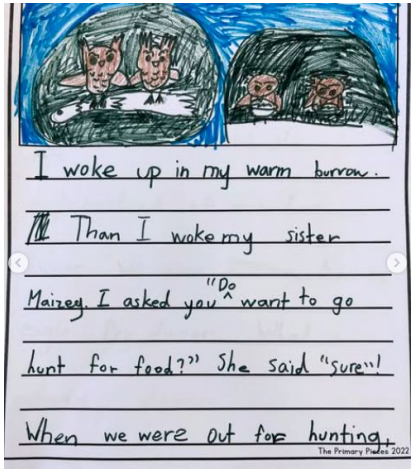
- ☐ diet
- ☐ ways of surviving
- ☐ predators
- ☐ physical characteristics
- ☐ habitat

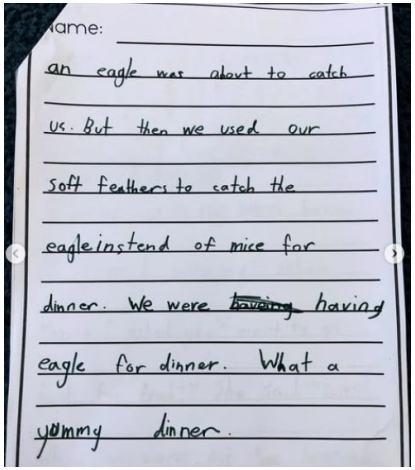
Day 2: Students draft in notebooks and check in with the teacher.

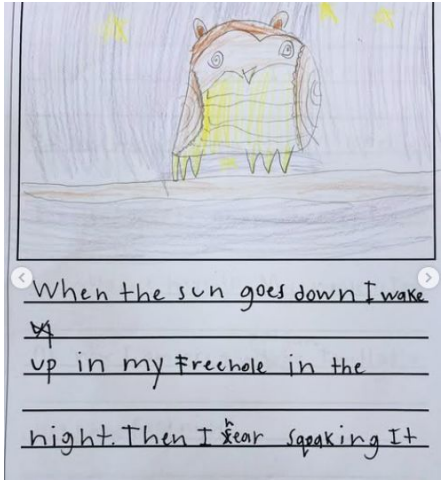
Day 3 (optional): Students write good copies.

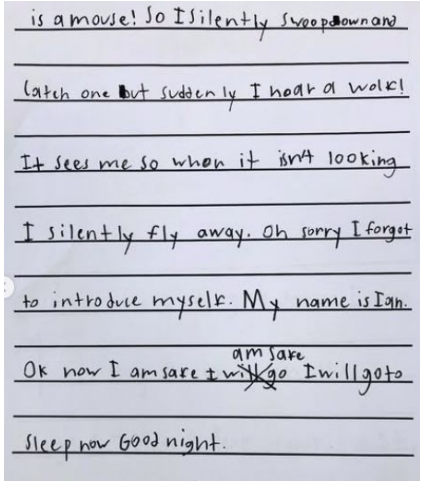












Writing: Let’s Reflect

What would you like to try in the coming months in terms of writing instruction? Discuss with the teachers near you.



Writing: Let’s share as a group

Let’s take a break!



Reading

1. phonemic awareness
2. phonics
3. morphology
4. spelling
5. fluency
6. comprehension

Let’s discuss! What are you already doing in this area? What does this look like throughout the school day and week?



Reading - let’s share as a large group.

Reading

1. **phonemic awareness**
2. phonics
3. morphology
4. spelling
5. fluency
6. comprehension

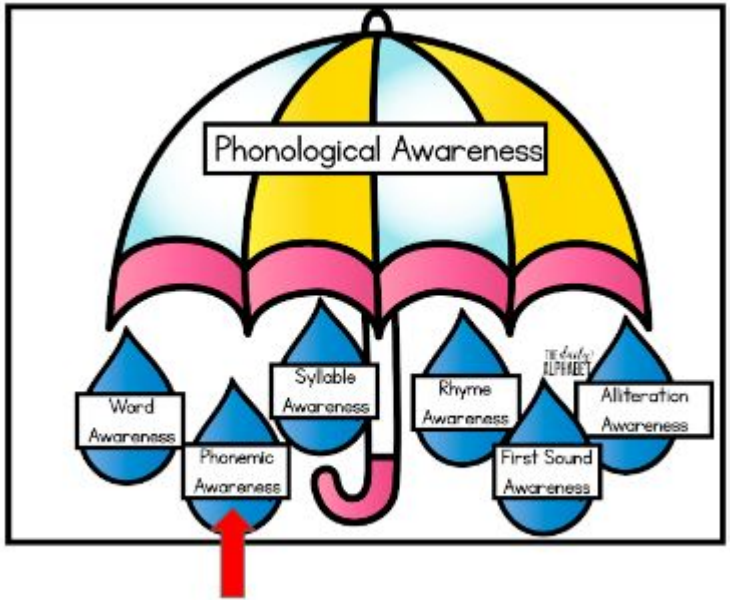


Phonemic Awareness: What is it and why does it matter?

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and work with sounds in SPOKEN language.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify, blend, segment, delete, and otherwise manipulate PHONEMES: the smallest units of speech.

Difficulty with phonemic awareness is the MOST common cause of reading difficulty, so preemptively and proactively strengthening students' phonemic awareness skills is one of the BEST things we can do to help our students become strong readers!



Phonemic Awareness: What is expected in BC?

This is listed as a K/1 skill. It is important not only for students who are in K/1, but also for older students who are still reading at K/1 level.

In Kindergarten, students are expected to:

- identify the first and last sound in a word (e.g., “dog” starts with d and ends with g)
- blend three phonemes to make a word (e.g. teacher says “p, i, g”, student says “pig”)
- segment CVC words (e.g., teacher says “hat”, student says “h, a, t”)

In Grade 1, students are expected to:

- blend four to five sounds (e.g., teacher says “s, n, a, ck”, student says “snack”)
- segment four to five sounds (e.g., teacher says “jump”, student says “j, u, m, p”).



Reading

1. phonemic awareness
2. **phonics**
3. morphology
4. spelling
5. fluency
6. comprehension



Phonics

Phonics is the study of the relationships between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters).



Examples of phonics skills at each grade level

Kindergarten: letter names and sounds; CVC words (cat, dog, fun); begin to use digraphs (sh, ch, th, etc.)

Grade 1: magic e (l**a**k**e**, m**i**l**e**, n**o**t**e**); r-controlled vowels (h**er**, st**ar**, f**ork**); vowel teams (b**oi**l, cl**ou**d)

Grade 2: trigraphs (di**tch**, do**dge**); silent letters (**k**night, **w**rist); two syllable words (e.g., jogging, summer)

Grade 3: vowel teams (v**ei**n, **eight**, n**igh**t); read words with three or more syllables (vacation, beautiful, independent); break long words into parts (constructed)



Let’s explore some phonics resources!



Jolly Phonics





Tara West



Unit 2 - CVC

CVC 3-in-1 Fluency Checks – Decodable Phonics...



Unit 2 - CVC

CVC Alphabet Arc with Picture Cards – Science...

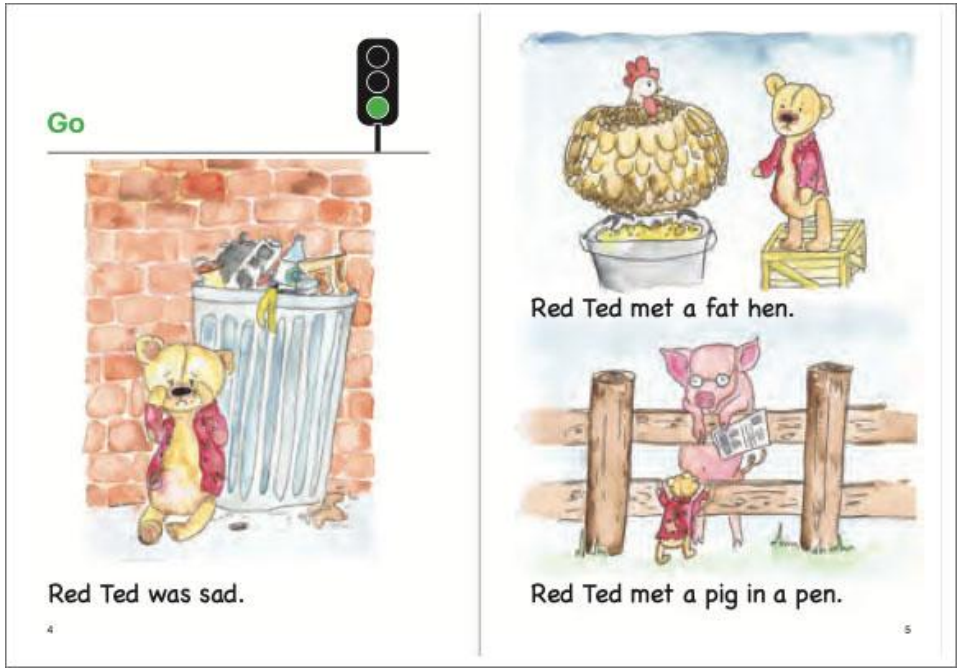


Unit 2 - CVC

CVC Assessment Free Printable Cut and Paste...

Decodable Readers

Decodable text is composed of phonics patterns students have learned. These books are ideal for students reading at K/1 LEVEL, regardless of their actual grade.



Decodable Readers

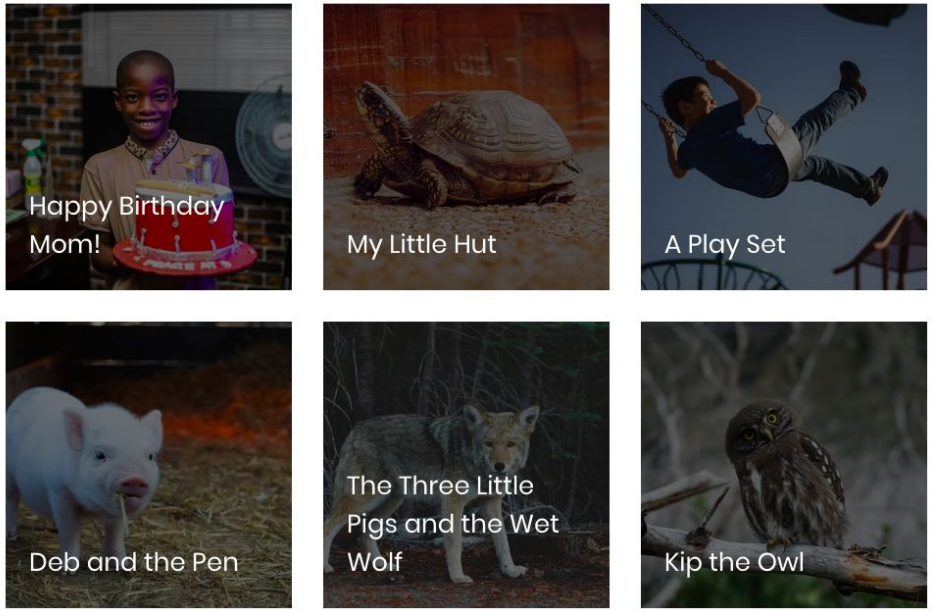
[Reach All Readers]





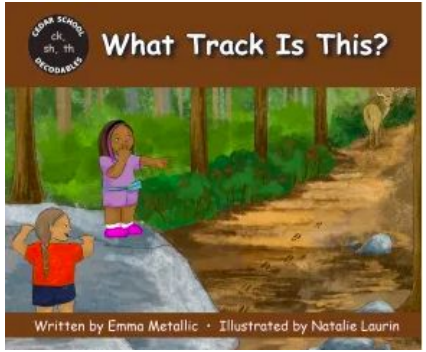
Decodable Readers

Beyond Decodables

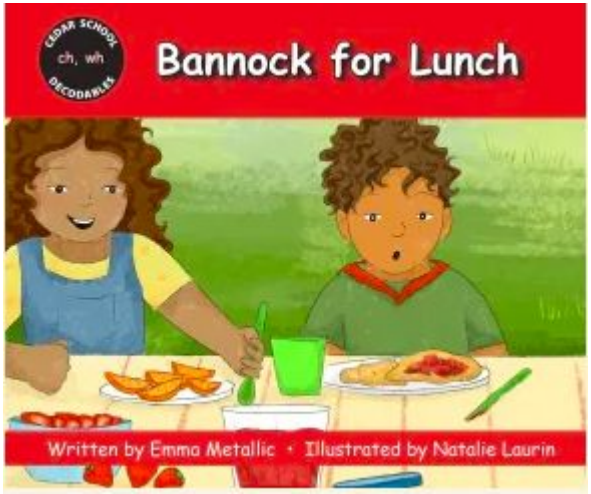


Decodable Readers

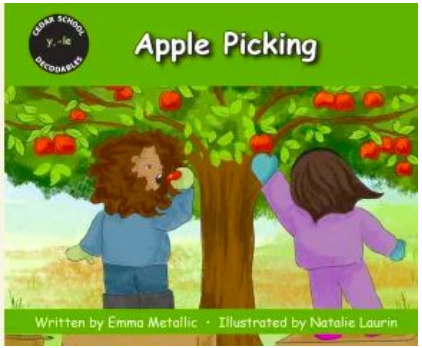
Cedar School













Reading

1. phonemic awareness
2. phonics
3. **morphology**
4. spelling
5. fluency
6. comprehension



Morphology

Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning in a word.

Examples of morphological skills:

Kindergarten: use plural endings for nouns (hat**s**)

Grade 1: understand inflectional suffixes: jump, jump**s**, jump**ing**, jump**ed**

Grade 2: understand possessive endings (cat**'s** means something belongs to the cat)

Grade 3: Decode and understand unfamiliar words by breaking them down into morphological parts (unhappiness)

Grade 4: Understand how affixes can modify meaning (**im**possible)

A couple tips for teaching morphology

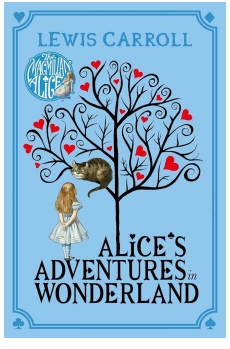
Build in morphology concepts during your **shared and modelled writing** lessons. Example:

Grade 2: "*I threw my dog's ball.* See this little mark that I wrote in the word 'dog's'? That's called an apostrophe. It shows that the ball belongs to my dog."



Find opportunities to teach morphology during **read-alouds**.

For example, while reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to your Grade 4 class, you could say, "'*Why, I've sometimes believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast*.' Does anyone know what the word 'impossible' means? That's right, it means *not* possible. The prefix 'im' means 'not'."



Reading

1. phonemic awareness
2. phonics
3. morphology
4. **spelling**
5. fluency
6. comprehension



Spelling

Examples of spelling skills at each grade level:

Kindergarten: their name; simple CV and CVC words (e.g., his, is, fun); sound out words in writing by putting the first and last sounds (eg., “fr” for “flower”)

Grade 1: CVC words (cat, dog, run); consonant blends (skip, jump, clamp); magic e (lake, tone, file)

Grade 2: Spell most words correctly in their writing

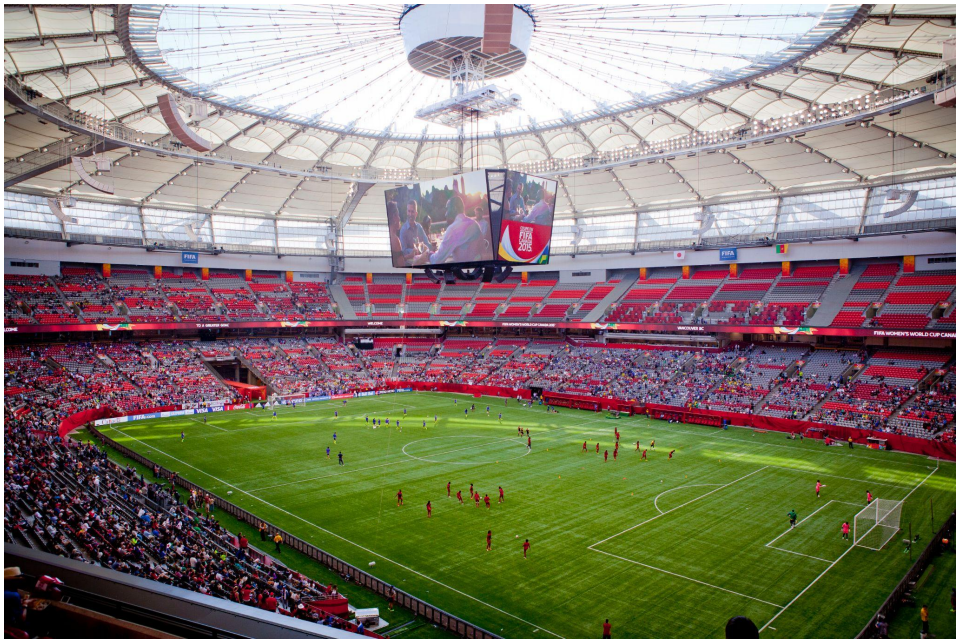
Grade 3: Spell most words correctly in their writing; chunk out longer words (beautiful, because) to sound them out

Grade 4: Spell more advanced words correctly, e.g., irregular plurals (calves), longer words (definition)

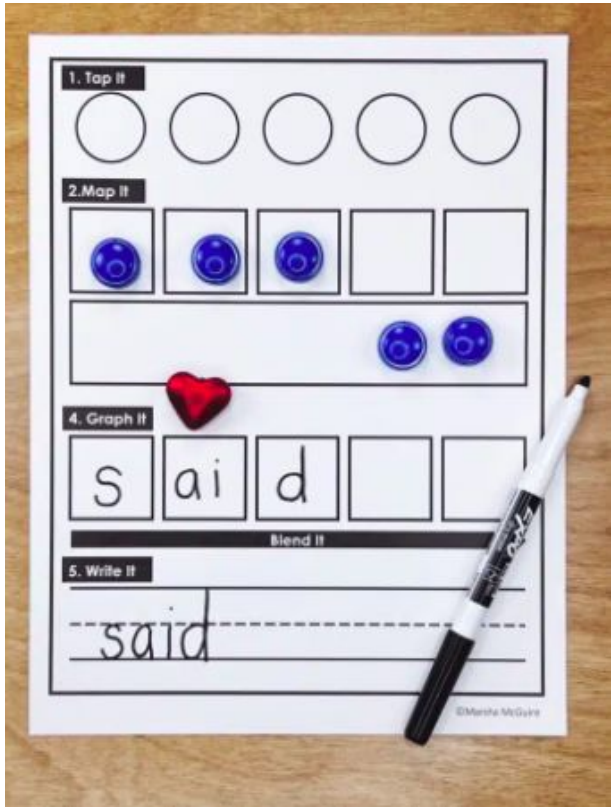


Memorization is not effective.

Trying to memorize all of the words that a student will need to know how to read and spell is like trying to remember the phone number of every person in BC Place. Our brains just don’t have that capacity.



The most effective way to teach spelling is to connect SOUNDS to the letters that represent them (orthographic mapping).



Reading

1. phonemic awareness
2. phonics
3. morphology
4. spelling
5. **fluency**
6. comprehension



Fluency

“Fluency focuses on a student’s ability to read with accuracy, pace and expression to support comprehension. Emphasis should be on accuracy, with pace and expression developing as students gain automaticity.”

What types of sentences should students be able to read fluently?

Kindergarten: We run to the log.

Grade 1: A bat lives in a cave and sleeps in the day.

Grade 2: A thick fur coat keeps bears warm in cold weather.

Grade 3: Surviving takes a lot of effort, but hummingbirds do not give up.

Grade 4: Plastic bags floating in the water can look like jellyfish to hungry sea turtles.

Ways to build fluency

Have students **echo read**. This is particularly helpful for texts that are above their instructional level. For example, as part of a Science lesson, you might read a passage about states of matter aloud while students follow along on their own copy with their eyes and fingers. The second time, they can read in chorus with you. Then, you might have some brave students who will volunteer to read the passage a third time individually!

Reader's Theater! Students LOVE reader's theatre. It feels like a break from "work"; little do they know it's building up their reading skills! You can find lots of great free scripts online!

Make sure to consider students' reading level. You may wish to pair up high and low readers or group students according to reading ability and have them work with simple or more complex texts.

Reading

1. phonemic awareness
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6. **comprehension**



Comprehension

The K-4 Foundational ELA Learning Progressions focus on these skills:

- Identifying the **author's message**: from "understands that print carries meaning" in K to identifying themes in Grade 4
- Making **predictions** (K-3)
- **Summarizing**: from "answers who, what, when, where, and how questions about a simple story" in K to using the main idea and supporting details to summarize an informational text in Grade 4
- **Questioning:** from "formulates simple questions" in K to using questions to shift perspective in Grade 4
- **Connecting**: personal connections in K/1; text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections in Grades 2-4
- Grades 3-4: **inferring**; analyzing **characters**

Comprehension

Some advice I'll give for this area of reading instruction is to steer clear of over-relying on simple comprehension questions ("What did Tim see at the park?") based on isolated passages of text. Your comprehension lessons are an opportunity to help your students make meaningful connections and ask deep-thinking questions. You DON'T need to focus your comprehension instruction solely on texts written at your students' independent or even instructional reading level. Comprehension instruction in Primary can be based on books you've read aloud to the class; there are so many beautiful, meaningful, engaging picture books out there that will connect to many areas of your curriculum.



Reading: Let’s Reflect

Which of these areas would you like to focus on more? What new strategies or instructional routines could you try in that area?

1. phonemic awareness
2. phonics
3. morphology
4. spelling
5. fluency
6. comprehension



Reading - let’s share as a large group.

- reader’s theatre - buddies
- sound wall

OVERALL, what stuck with you today? What's your next step as a literacy teacher?

- Jolly Phonics
- resources
- pen pals



Thank you for attending this presentation!

Let's stay in touch!

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