The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Research has made great strides in identifying critical skills that consistently relate to reading success. Based on a comprehensive review of reading research, the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) concluded the need for systematic and explicit instruction in the following five components of reading:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

Reading programs that are aligned with current reading research include systematic and explicit instruction in these five components. Systematic instruction includes the direct presentation of skills/concepts in a pre-specified sequence taught in a logical, defined order. For example:

- Skills and concepts begin with the most simple and move to the most complex
- Student objectives are clear, concise, and driven by ongoing assessment results
- Students are provided with appropriate practice opportunities which directly reflect instruction

Explicit instruction includes instructional routines that consist of teacher modeling, guided practice, supported application, and independent practice. For example:

- Teacher models and explains
- Teacher provides guided practice
  - Students practice what the teacher modeled and the teacher provides prompts and feedback
- Teacher provides supported application
  - Students apply the skill as the teacher scaffolds instruction
- Students engage in independent practice

This section provides an overview of the five components of reading. For each component, the following information is included:

- Definition
- Goal and Purpose
- Research Note(s)
- Sequence of the Student Center Activities (how the Student Center Activities support growth in each of the five components of reading)
- Teacher Tip(s)
- Resources (tools to support foundational knowledge of the reading process)

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Phonemic Awareness

Definition

Phonological Awareness is defined as one's sensitivity to, or explicit awareness of, the phonological structure of words in one's language. It is understanding the different ways that spoken language can be broken down into smaller units: sentences into words, words into syllables, syllables into phonemes (the smallest unit of sound). Phonological Awareness is considered an "umbrella" or broad term, consisting of: rhyme, alliteration, sentence segmentation, syllable blending and segmenting, onset-rime blending and segmenting, and phonemic awareness.

Phonemic Awareness (a term that falls under the "umbrella" or broader term of Phonological Awareness) consists of the ability to hear, identify, blend, segment and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words.

Phonemic Awareness is a subcomponent of Phonological Awareness. It may be helpful to think about the unit of language you are using to blend, segment, or manipulate — if you are working with a broad focus of sentences, words, or syllables it is Phonological Awareness. If you are working with the more narrow focus of individual sounds (phonemes), it is Phonemic Awareness.

Goal & Purpose

The goal of Phonemic Awareness instruction is to help students develop an awareness that words are composed of individual sounds, or phonemes, and to develop the ability to manipulate sounds in words. Phonemic Awareness is the most difficult and most important skill that falls under Phonological Awareness. Acquiring Phonemic Awareness may accelerate the reading growth of all children while at least 20-30% of students may fail to become proficient readers without it (Torgesen & Mathes, 2000).

> **RESEARCH NOTE**
>
> Research suggests that it will be quite rare to find students at fourth grade and above who have insufficient Phonemic Awareness to support explicit instruction in the alphabetic principal (or Phonics). These students will almost universally be extremely impaired in their phonemic decoding skills, and can profit from explicit and systematic Phonics instruction that is sensitive to potential difficulties with Phonemic Awareness. At this time, we do not recommend a separate assessment of Phonemic Awareness as a starting place for instructional planning for students in grades four and five. (J. K. Torgesen, personal communication, March 14, 2007)

Sequence of Student Center Activities

Although Phonemic Awareness Activities are not included in the 4-5 Project, teachers may refer to the K-1 Project (http://www.fcrr.org/activities/) or the 2-3 Project (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/studentCenterActivities23.htm) if needed.

In the K-1 Project, the Student Center Activities for Phonological Awareness are based on a progression of skill complexity in the following manner: Rhyme, Alliteration, Sentence Segmentation, Syllable, Onset and Rime, and Phonemes.

The Phonemic Awareness component of the 2-3 Student Center Activities are designed around specific Phonemic Awareness skills and are sequenced from simple to complex. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Phoneme Matching, Phoneme Isolating, Phoneme Blending, Phoneme Segmenting, Phoneme Segmenting and Blending, and Phoneme Manipulating.

> **TEACHER TIP**
>
> Phonological/Phonemic Awareness is often confused with Phonics. Remember that Phonological Awareness activities alone revolve around sound and can be done in the dark (there is no print involved)!

Phonemic Awareness Resources

Table 4 illustrates the Continuum of Phonological Awareness. These foundational skills are an important part of the reading process.

Table 4 – Continuum of Phonological Awareness Skills

Type	Description	Example (student response is inside parentheses)
Rhyme	Recognizing words that have the same ending sound	Which word does not belong: steak, mail, lake, break (mail)
	Producing words that have the same ending sound	The moose skates with a (goose).
Alliteration	Producing groups of words that begin with the same initial sound	(Molly monkey moves many mice.)
Sentence Segmentation	Segmenting sentences into spoken words	Mary sat on the red bench. (There are six words in the sentence.)
Syllables	Blending syllables to say a word	pic-nic (picnic)
	Segmenting spoken words into syllables	carpenter (car-pen-ter, 3 syllables)
Onset and Rime	Blending the initial consonant or consonant cluster (onset) and the vowel and consonant sounds spoken after it (rime)	/d/ - ish (dish)
	Segmenting the initial consonant or consonant cluster (onset) and the vowel and consonant sounds spoken after it (rime)	Shake (/sh/ - ake)
Phonemes	Blending phonemes into words	/t/ /r/ /a/ /n/ (train)
	Segmenting words into individual phonemes	mist (/m/ /i/ /s/ /t/)
	Manipulating phonemes in spoken words	If you change the /b/ in big to /d/, what word do you have? (dig)

Note: Letters put in slashes (/ /) represent the sound the letter makes.

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Phonics

Definition

Phonics is the study of the relationship between graphemes (letters) and the phonemes (sounds) they represent; it is also used to describe reading instruction that teaches these relationships (often referred to as sound-symbol correspondences).

Goal & Purpose

The goal of Phonics instruction is to help students use sound-symbol correspondences to read and write words. Systematic and explicit Phonics instruction significantly improves word recognition, spelling, and comprehension. This is particularly beneficial for students who are having difficulty learning to read and who are at risk for developing future reading problems. Phonics instruction helps students learn the alphabetic principle (the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken words). This helps students read familiar words with accuracy and decode unknown words. This process proves true for regular (e.g., mat) and irregular (e.g., phone) words. Once students are able to read words quickly, their reading becomes more fluent, and they can spend more cognitive energy on comprehension, and less on decoding words.

> ### RESEARCH NOTE
>
> While many students in grades four and above are proficient at reading single syllable words (e.g., split, grand, more), they encounter an increasing amount of multisyllabic words (e.g., pretend, sufficient, multiple) in text which are potentially more challenging (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2003). If students lack strategies to decode multisyllabic words, it is important for them to learn how to decode these words in units rather than letter by letter (Henry, 2003). At this level, instruction in word analysis and word recognition is often termed advanced word study (Curtis, 2004). Research demonstrates that older students who struggle with reading at the word level benefit from instruction in word study (Wexler, Edmonds, & Vaughn, in press). Students who have difficulty decoding words should be provided instruction in word study, or Advanced Phonics, regardless of their grade.

Sequence of Student Center Activities

The Advanced Phonics section of the 4-5 Student Center Activities offers advanced word analysis activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific Advanced Phonics skills and are sequenced from simple to complex. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Variant Correspondences (various spelling patterns for one sound), Syllable Patterns, and Morpheme Structures (see below). Results from on-going assessment and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Variant Correspondences

Students practice identifying variant correspondences in words and producing words containing variant correspondences.

Syllable Patterns

Students practice segmenting syllables into words, identifying syllable types, and producing words using syllables.

Morpheme Structures

Students practice identifying and producing words with base words, inflections, prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

> ### TEACHER TIP
>
> Remind or teach students to be flexible when they decode multisyllabic words. If a word sounds incorrect when reading or pronouncing it, model how to be flexible with different sounds. For example, a student may pronounce the word "fragment" with /j/ (instead of /g/) first, then tries pronouncing the word with /g/ and recognizes it. For more details, please refer to the Activity called Word Way in the Advanced Phonics section of the Activities (AP.022).

Phonics Resources

Although these resources are not intended to be comprehensive, they do include those elements found in the Student Center Activities. Tables 5, 6, and 7 illustrate sounds, the various ways to spell those sounds, and examples of words that utilize these spellings. These foundational skills are an important part of the reading process.

Table 5 – Consonant Sound Spellings

Sound	Spelling	Example	Sound	Spelling	Example
/b/	b bb	big bubble	/kw/	q	queen
/ch/	ch tch t	chip match future	/r/	r wr rr rh	rat write carry rhino
/d/	d ed dd	did turned rudder	/s/	s ss c ce se sc	sip glass civil voice house science
/f/	f ff ph gh lf	fat stuff phone tough calf	/t/	t tt bt pt ed	tab mitt debt pterodactyl sipped
/g/	g gg gh	tag giggle ghost	/v/	v ve	van nerve
/h/	h wh	hot whole	/ks/	x	fox
/j/	j g ge dge	jet giraffe barge fudge	/z/	z zz s se ze x	zip buzz is choose snooze xylophone
/k/	k c ck ch	kite cat duck chord	/th/	th	thing this
/l/	l ll le	lip full sample	/sh/	sh s ss ch sc	shell sure misson chef conscience
/m/	m mm mb mn	man slimmer numb autumn	/hw/	wh	wheel
/n/	n nn kn gn pn	no winner know gnat pneumonia	/ŋ/ /w/	ng w	sing water
/p/	p pp	hip happy	/y/	y	yellow

Note: A consonant digraph consists of two consecutive consonants that make one sound (e.g., th, sh, wh).

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Table 6 – Vowel Sound Spellings

Sound	Spelling	Example	Sound	Spelling	Example
/a/	a	cat	/ū/	u_e	mule
/ā/	a_e	ape		u	pupil
	ai	rain		ew	few
	ay	say	/o͝o/	oo	cook
	ea	steak		oul	would
	ey	they		u	put
	eigh	eight	/oo/	oo	boot
	a	paper		ue	blue
	ei	vein		ew	new
	aigh	straight		u	super
/e/	e	bed		ui	suit
	ea	bread		u_e	flute
	ai	said		ou	soup
	ie	friend		oe	shoe
/ē/	ee	meet		o	do
	ea	seat	/aw/	aw	lawn
	ie	chief		au	fraud
	y	funny		al	walk
	e	she		ough	fought
	i_e	petite		augh	taught
	i	variation	/ow/	ow	cow
	ei	receive		ou	out
	e_e	eve		ough	drought
	ey	key	/oy/	oy	boy
/i/	i	in		oi	soil
	y	myth	/er/	er	faster
/ī/	i_e	kite		ur	turn
	ie	cried		ir	girl
	eigh	height		or	work
	igh	sigh		ear	learn
	y	my		ar	dollar
	uy	buy		yr	syrup
	i	bicycle	/or/	or	for
/o/	o	hot		oar	board
/ō/	o_e	note		ore	store
	oa	boat		our	course
	oe	toe	/ar/	ar	car
	o	most		ear	heart
	ow	grow			
	ough	though			
	ou	soul			
/u/	u	tub			
	ou	touch			

Note: A vowel digraph consists of two consecutive vowels that make one sound (e.g., ea, ay, ou). A dipthong consists of two consecutive vowels that feel as if it has two sounds (e.g., oy, ou).

Table 7 – Schwa

Sound	Spelling	Example
/ə/	a	alone
/ə/	e	jacket
/ə/	i	pencil
/ə/	o	gallop
/ə/	u	circus

Note: Schwa (/ə/) often makes the short u sound as in cup.

Syllable Patterns

Students need to be able to decode the individual parts of a multisyllabic word. Many students transfer their knowledge of single syllable patterns to multisyllabic words. But some don't. This is a problem frequently encountered in the upper grades. In decoding, it is the vowel that causes confusion. Understanding syllable types is important because syllable patterns dictate how the vowel in the syllable is usually pronounced. It is important for teachers to know the six primary syllable types in order to help students with decoding difficult words. Table 8 illustrates the six primary syllable types (Archer, Gleason, Vachon, 2003; Orton-Gillingham, 1997).

Table 8 – Six Primary Syllable Types

Type	Description	Example
Closed	This syllable type ends with a consonant and has a single vowel that is usually short.	mat pic-nic
Open	This syllable type ends with a vowel and the vowel is usually long.	he ve-to
Silent e or vowel-consonant e (vce)	This syllable type has a silent e on the end of the word which signals that the vowel will usually be long.	cape stripe cue
Vowel team or Vowel pair	This syllable type contains two vowels that make one vowel sound. These can be difficult because some vowel teams are variable and the student will need to be flexible when decoding. However, most vowel teams are consistent.	pain head toy
R-controlled	This syllable type contains a vowel which is followed by the letter r and is neither long or short. The vowel and the r appear in the same syllable.	tar fer-ment
Consonant + le	This syllable type appears at the end of words and the consonant always goes with the -le to form a syllable.	ap-ple can-dle

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Fluency

Definition

Fluency is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression and is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Fluency emerges gradually over time through supported and repeated practice in automatic word recognition. It is developed through phonemic awareness, accurate letter sound correspondence, sound blending, spelling pattern and morpheme recognition, and guided oral reading.

Goal & Purpose

The goal of fluent reading is to improve comprehension through the ability to recognize words automatically, accurately, and to read with prosody (proper phrasing, intonation, and expression). When students are able to identify words accurately and automatically, they can concentrate on comprehending the text rather than decoding words. When students must put more effort into recognizing the words, they have less attention to devote to comprehension.

RESEARCH NOTE

Fluency is very important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, so they can focus their attention on meaning. When students can read fluently, they can focus attention on making connections among the ideas in the text and their background knowledge (Torgesen, Rashotte, & Alexander, 2001).

Sequence of Student Center Activities

The Fluency section of the 4-5 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific skills in the area of fluency that develop conscious word analysis ability so that word recognition becomes more accurate, automatic, and ultimately, more expressive. The activities are sequenced from simple to complex and identified in the following manner: Word Parts, Words, Phrases, Chunked Text, and Connected Text (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Word Parts
Students use timed practices to identify word parts.

Words
Students use timed practices to read words.

Phrases
Students use timed practices to read phrases.
Students practice reading phrases with prosody.

Chunked Text
Students practice reading chunked text with prosody.

Connected Text
Students use timed practices to read connected text.
Students practice reading connected text with prosody.

TEACHER TIPS

Providing opportunities for students to set goals and chart their progress is motivating. Charts to facilitate this can be found throughout the Fluency Activities.

Students should practice orally rereading text which is at the appropriate level (CIERA, 2000). The Fluency Activities recommend text be at an instructional-independent level. Frustration level text should not be used. As a reminder, independent level can be read with 95% or better accuracy; instructional level can be read with 90% or better accuracy and; frustration level is read with less than 90% accuracy.

Fluency Resources

Table 9 represents the 50th percentile scores from three norming samples for grades four and five. The three norming samples are the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS®), Hasbrouck & Tindal (2006), and AIMSWEB (http://www.aimsweb.com).

Table 9 – 50th Percentile Scores From Three Norming Samples

Grade	Fall			Winter			Spring		
	DIBELS®	H&T	AIMS	DIBELS®	H&T	AIMS	DIBELS®	H&T	AIMS
Fourth	93	94	100	105	112	114	118	123	127
Fifth	104	110	112	115	127	128	124	139	142

Vocabulary

Definition

Vocabulary refers to the meanings and pronunciations of words necessary for communication. Vocabulary is often categorized as oral (listening and speaking) or print (reading and writing) vocabulary.

Goal & Purpose

The goal of Vocabulary instruction is to provide students with an understanding of the meaning and use of words so that they can comprehend what they are reading and communicate effectively. Vocabulary is critical to teach because of its connection to overall reading comprehension (NRP, 2000; Rand Study Group, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). That is, if a word is decoded and pronounced but the meaning is not recognized, comprehension will be impaired.

> **RESEARCH NOTES**
>
> A student's general vocabulary knowledge is a good predictor of whether the student will understand the text. Due to its strong link to comprehension, vocabulary knowledge affects students' success in school (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).
>
> ---
>
> A vocabulary program that is inclusive enough to benefit children at every level will include the following four elements (Graves, 2006).
> 1. Rich and varied oral and print language experiences
> 2. Instruction in individual words with multiple exposures to the words in a variety of forms
> 3. Instruction in word-learning strategies (e.g., using context)
> 4. Fostering word consciousness (i.e., promoting an interest in words and their meanings).

Sequence of Student Center Activities

The Vocabulary section of the 4-5 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific skills in the area of Vocabulary and are sequenced in a logical order. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Word Knowledge, Morphemic Elements, Word Meaning, Word Analysis, and Words in Context (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

The words used in these Vocabulary Activities were selected from grade level lists (e.g., Paynter, Bodrova, & Doty 2005; Fry, 2004). Teachers are encouraged to adapt these Activities by using vocabulary words that are relevant and appropriate for their students.

Word Knowledge

Students practice identifying the meaning of synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs.

Morphemic Elements

Students practice identifying the meaning of affixes and common roots.

> **TEACHER TIP**
>
> Answering the following questions will assist teachers when choosing words to teach (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).
> 1. In general, how useful is the word? Will the students get a lot of "mileage" from learning it?
> 2. How does the word relate to other words and concepts that students know or are learning? Will learning this word enhance understanding of the topic?
> 3. How important is the word to understanding the text?

Word Meaning

Students practice using prior knowledge and references (e.g., the dictionary) to identify and produce the meaning of words.

Word Analysis

Students practice categorizing, classifying, and identifying similarities and differences among words.

Words in Context

Students practice identifying the meaning of words by using context and other strategies.

Vocabulary Resources

Tables 10 and 11 illustrate common prefixes and suffixes, their meanings, and examples of words that utilize these affixes (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006).

Table 10 – Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example
un (im, a variant)	not, opposite of	unhappy, impossible
re	again	retell
in (il, a variant)	not or into	incorrect, illegal
dis	not, opposite of	disappear
non	not, opposite of	nonfiction
over	too much	overpay
mis	wrongly	misjudge
sub	under	subzero
pre	before	preschool
inter	between	interstate
fore	before	forewarn
de	not, opposite	deplane
trans	across	transatlantic
super	above	superhero
semi	half	semidry
anti	against	antigravity
mid	middle	midstream
under	below	underground

Table 11 – Suffixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example
s, es	more than one	books, boxes
ed	past-tense verbs	turned, created, picked
ing	verb form/present participle	playing
er	comparative	bigger
est	most (when comparing)	hardest
less	without	effortless
ly	resembling	clearly
able	is, can be	comfortable
ness	state or quality of	kindness
er	one who	teacher
ful	full of	thoughtful

Comprehension

Definition

Comprehension is defined as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

Goal & Purpose

The goal of comprehension instruction is for students to gain understanding from written language. Effective comprehension instruction requires:

- Purposeful and explicit teaching
- Classroom interactions that support the understanding of specific texts
- Students to learn the skills and strategies used by expert readers
- Careful analysis of text to determine its appropriateness for students and use of specific strategies

Motivation and engagement are critical and can best be attained by:

- Making reading relevant to students' lives
- Providing meaningful goals of learning from text
- Providing a variety of choices about text and assignments

> **RESEARCH NOTES**
>
> The National Reading Panel (2000) identified seven effective comprehension strategies:
>
> 1. Monitoring Comprehension
> 2. Cooperative Learning
> 3. Using Graphic and Semantic Organizers
> 4. Question Answering
> 5. Question Generating
> 6. Recognizing Story Structure
> 7. Summarizing

Sequence of Student Center Activities

The Comprehension section of the 4-5 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific skills in the area of comprehension and are sequenced in a logical order. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Narrative Text Structure, Expository Text Structure, Text Analysis, and Monitoring for Understanding (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Narrative Text Structure

Students practice identifying story elements, plot components, and retelling and summarizing stories.

Expository Text Structure

Students practice identifying text features, details, main ideas, and important information in expository text.

Text Analysis

Students practice identifying facts and opinions, inferences, and author's purpose.

Monitoring for Understanding

Students practice using a variety of comprehension strategies to comprehend text.

> **TEACHER TIP**
>
> Many types of graphic organizers are offered in the Activities so that teachers can choose the ones that work best for their students and use them often.