



POPEY

Provincial Outreach Program
for the Early Years

www.popey.ca

The Foundations of Literacy Learning in Primary Classrooms:

Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

Monday, April 24th

10:30 – 3:00 pm

Presenter:
Dr. Jen Kelly

Outcomes for Today



- ★ definitions and **scope and sequence** for foundational literacy skills:
 - phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics
- ★ mini-lessons, activities, and routines to:
 - **explicitly** and **systematically support** our students as they learn letter/sound relationships in reading and writing
 - **provide** students with the **time, opportunity,** and **practice** to make meaning **in** and out of texts and **expand** their word solving **skills**

How did you learn to...



ride a bike?



swim?



drive a car?

Please choose ONE activity and take ONE minute to reflect individually
– take some notes on how you learned to do it.

Please share your thoughts with someone else in the room

HOW do we learn?



- * observation of someone skilled modelling/demonstrating
- * direct instruction
- * gradual release of responsibility
- * practice / repetition
- * time / opportunity
- * encouragement / feedback
- * safety to take risks and try new things
- * relationships, motivation, engagement...

Learning is:

- * social
- * constructive
- * experiential
- * inquiry-based

With this in mind, how can we provide our students with the comprehensive learning experiences needed to build their foundational literacy skills?

What is a word?

We need to build a new system
in our brains in order to read.

Sound

Meaning

Visual

*Stored in different parts of the brain –
we need to connect them.*



Phonological Awareness

–refers to the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of **sentences** and **words**, and involves a continuum of skills that develop over time and are crucial for **reading & spelling success**:

- * *rhyme, alliteration, syllables, blending/segmenting, and...*
- * *the most sophisticated – and last to develop – is **phonemic awareness***

Phonemic Awareness

–refers to oral language and is the understanding that **spoken words** are made up of **individual sounds** called **phonemes**



Phonics

–refers to **print**, and is the knowledge of **letter/sound relationships** and the ability to **apply** that knowledge to **decoding unfamiliar printed words**



Emergence of Phonological Awareness



Phonological awareness is the ability to **recognize** and **manipulate** the **spoken parts** of words.

* Rhyme

* Alliteration

* Sentence Segmentation

* Syllables

* Onset and Rime

* Phoneme Matching

* Phoneme Isolating

* Phoneme Segmenting

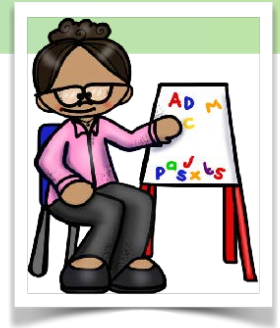
* Phoneme Segmenting and Blending

* Phoneme Manipulating

Taught and learned in the order of easiest to most difficult...

Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

These work in concert to **explicitly** and **systematically** support our students as they navigate the unpredictable, complex alphabetic structure of language & print.



Phonemic Awareness

- main focus is on **sounds**
- deals with **spoken language**
- lessons are **oral** and **auditory**
- students work with **manipulating sounds in words**
- there are **44 sounds** in the English language

Phonics

- main focus is on **letters** and their **sounds**
there are 26 letters that make 44 sounds
- deals with **written language** and **print**
- lessons are both **visual** and **auditory**
- students work with **reading** and **writing letters**
according to their sounds, spelling patterns, and phonological structure
- there are **over 200 ways** to **spell** the 44 sounds we hear

Phonemic awareness **instruction** improves phonics **skills**, and phonics **instruction** improves phonemic awareness; the relationship is **reciprocal**.

-Lane & Pullen, 2004

Readiness Skills



The two best predictors of early reading success are phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition.

Phonemic Awareness

A range of subskills is taught to develop phonemic awareness, with oral blending and oral segmentation having the **most positive impact** on reading and writing development.

★ These skills are **power skills**.

Alphabet Recognition

Involves learning the **names, shapes, and sounds** of the **letters** of the alphabet with **fluency**.

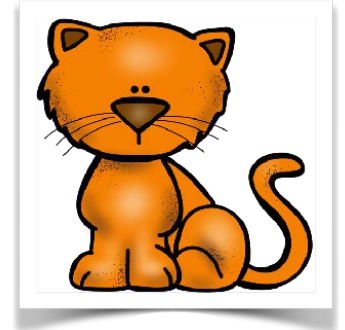
Phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition are focused on primarily in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

Scope and Sequence of Phonemic Awareness

...the understanding that spoken words are made up of individual sounds

Examples of Phonemic Awareness Skills

Taught and learned in the order of easiest to most difficult...



1. Sound and word discrimination:

What word doesn't belong with the others? cat, mat, bat, ran

2. Rhyming: *What word rhymes with 'cat'? bat*

3. Syllable splitting: *The onset of 'cat' is /k/, the rime is /at/*

4. Blending: *What word is made up of the sounds /k/ /a/ /t/? cat*

5. Phonemic segmentation: *What are the sounds in 'cat'? /k/ /a/ /t/*

6. Phoneme deletion: *What is 'cat' without the /k/? at*

7. Phoneme manipulation: *What word would you have if you changed the /t/ in 'cat' to an /n/? can*

Rhyme Recognition & Repetition

One minute direct instruction lesson

Examples:

go/no
yes/me
sad/mad
out/pig
run/fun
in/lap
rip/bag

Role of the Educator

- ▶ educator says the word pairs

Role of the Students

- ▶ Students repeat the word pairs and show thumbs up if the words rhyme, thumbs down if the words don't rhyme.

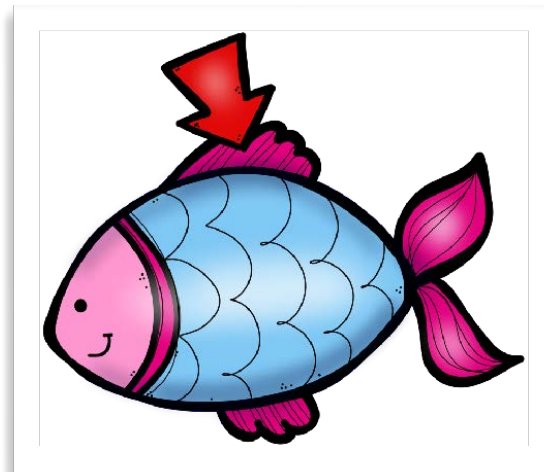
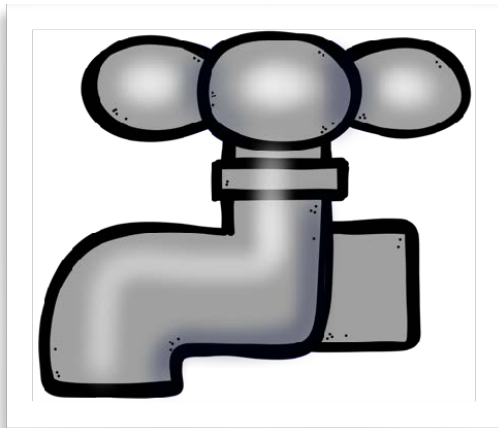
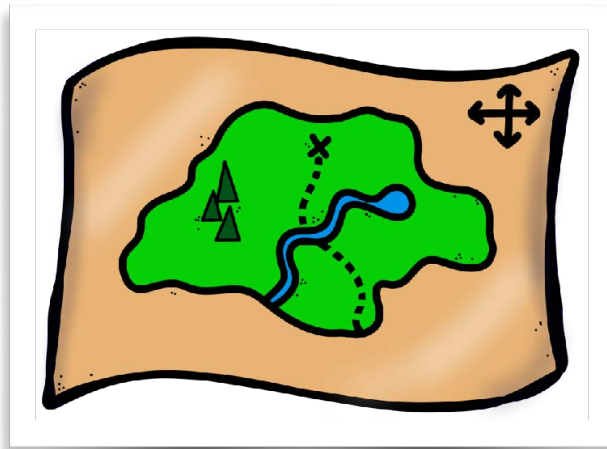
Rhyme Repetition

T says word pair,
Students repeat:

hop/mop ran/fan
wet/jet mad/dad

Rhyme Recognition

Picture Categorization



Sounds of letters

Have students use a handheld mirror to notice the shape and position of their mouths as they say letters.

Teach students the difference between 'stop sounds' and 'continuous sounds'.

Stop sounds only need a single puff of air

▸ b, p, d, t, k, g

Continuous sounds can be held until we are out of breathe

▸ f, m, n, s, r, l, v

Start with continuous sounds for stronger word reading success

Low prep/high impact quick practices

1. Make up your own class movements for blending and segmenting sounds (a special class code you create together).
2. In your morning meeting, you can use names to clap syllables, isolate beginning and ending sounds, segment and blend sounds in names.
3. During interactive writing, have students help you as you segment sounds in words.
4. 'Guess my Special Word' – segment a word and have students blend it together and say it out loud
5. As students are eating a recess snack, walk around and segment snack food words for students to blend together.

Explicit Instruction Both In and Out of Texts

Making Meaning OUT OF Texts

Word Study

Early Literacy Concepts
Phonological Awareness
Letter–Sound Relationships
Letter Knowledge
Spelling Patterns
High–Frequency Words
Word Meaning/Vocabulary
Word Structure
Word Solving Actions

Making Meaning IN Texts

Reading

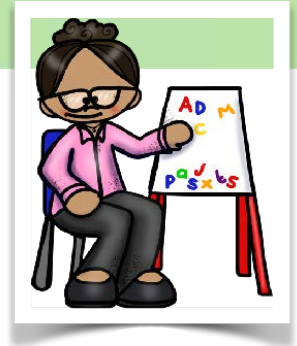
Active Read Aloud
Reading Mini–Lessons
Shared Reading
Guided/Small–Group Reading
Independent Reading

Writing

Modelled Writing
Writing Mini–Lessons
Shared/Interactive Writing
Guided/Small–Group Writing
Independent Writing

← Oral Language →

The Art of the Mini-Lesson



Mini-Lesson Structure

I do



WE do



YOU do

- * mini, not maxi
- * strategy-focused
- * model, model, model
- * direct and explicit instruction
- * guided practice in a safe, supportive setting
- * transfer to independence



Modelling a Mini-Lesson on Alliteration

- * mini, not maxi
- * strategy-focused
- * model, model, model
- * direct and explicit instruction

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

- * guided practice in a safe, supportive setting

Goofy Garrett grazes on gigantic green grapes.

Silly Simon searches sneakily for slithering snakes.

Tricky Taylor teaches ten timid tigers to twirl.

- * transfer to independence

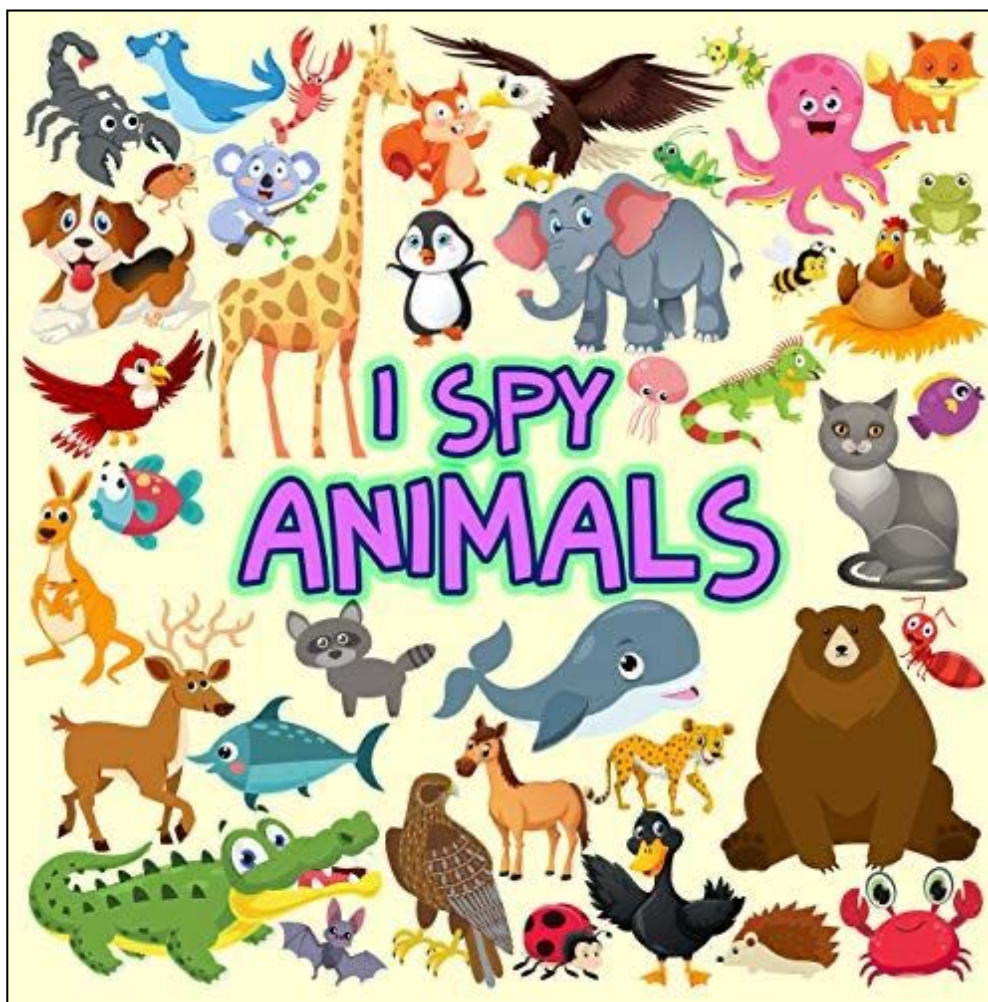
make up your own phrase using alliteration

Rhyming Activity - OUT of text

Rhyming I Spy

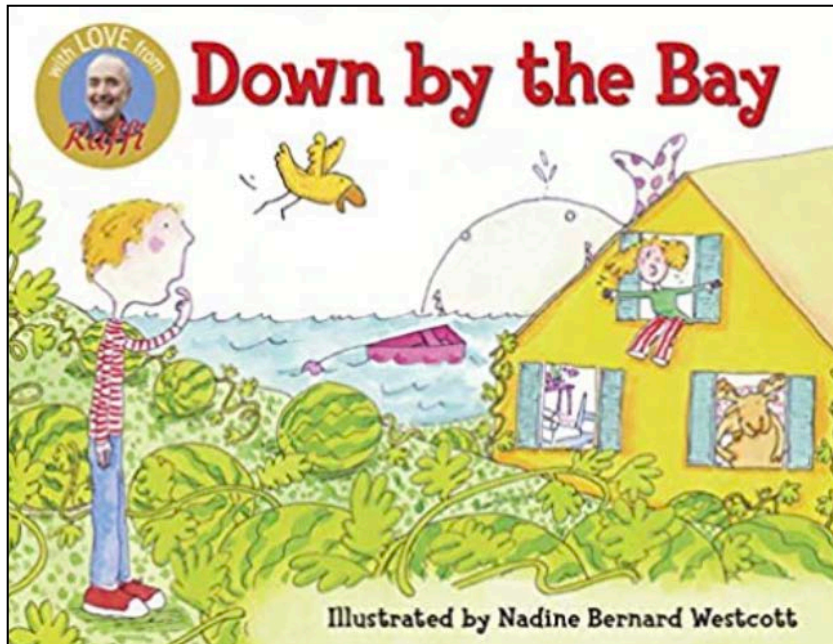
I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with ...

- mat
- tail
- hear
- grab



- log
- wish
- chair
- wheel

Read Aloud Rhyming Activity - Making Meaning IN Text



Did you ever see

...a goose kissing a moose
...a whale with a polka-dot tail

...a fly wearing a tie

...a bear combing his hair

...llamas eating their pajamas

...down by the bay?

Did you ever see a **frog**...

Did you ever see a **fox**...

Did you ever see a **dragon**...

—or choose your own animal and rhyme—

The Name Game

Our name is the first word we loved. We can study our names as an entry point for learning letters and writing other things.



Write down your name on some paper.

See how many words you can make, using the letters in your name, in **one minute**.

Stefanie

You could also **sort** them like this:

- ▶ high frequency words – **at, as, is, if, in**
- ▶ cvc words – **fan, tin, tan, set, net, sat**
- ▶ cvce words – **safe, sane**
- ▶ blends or digraphs – **nest, fast**
- ▶ vowel teams/pairs – **feast**

What's in a name?

Using these names,
how could you **sort** or **group** them together?

-syllables, beginning sounds, ending sounds/
letters, short/long vowels, vowel teams, etc.

Marie

Laura

Lydia

Nicole

Roxanne

Angela

Danielle

Robyn

Rebecca

Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction



- ✓ **Readiness Skills** – phonemic awareness & alphabet recognition
- ✓ **Scope and sequence** – build student learning from simple to complex
- ✓ **Blending** – must be frequently modelled and applied
- ✓ **Dictation** – guided spelling helps transition growing reading skills to writing
- ✓ **Word Awareness Activities**– word sorts and word building provide opportunities to play with words and experiment with how word parts combine
- ✓ **Teaching High-Frequency Words** – teaching high utility words that are irregular based on common sound-spelling patterns (typically the top 200–300 high frequency words are taught in K–2)
- ✓ **Reading Connected Text** – controlled, decodable text at the beginning level of reading instruction helps students develop a sense of comfort in and control over their reading growth – a key learning tool in early phonics instruction

Active * Social * Reflective

Possible Phonics Scope and Sequence

- 1 Teach short-vowel sounds before long-vowel sounds**
 - efficiency and ease of learning are critical
 - the simplicity of using short-vowel spellings and CVC words is beneficial to struggling readers
- 2 Teach consonants and short vowels in combination so that words can be generated as early as possible**
 - you can create decodable, connected text so kids can apply their knowledge of learned sound-spelling relationships
- 3 The majority of consonants taught early on should be continuous consonants**
 - such as **f**, **l**, **m**, **n**, **r**, and **s** – because these consonant sounds can be sustained without distortion; it's easier to model blending
- 4 Use a sequence in which the most words can be generated**
 - for example, many words can be generated using the letter **t**; very few using **x**
 - higher-frequency sound-spelling relationships should precede less-frequent ones
- 5 Progress from simple to more complex sound-spellings**
 - consonant sounds should be taught before digraphs and blends
 - short-vowel sound-spellings should be taught before long-vowel sound-spellings

WHY a Scope and Sequence?

Scope and sequence are created so that many words can be formed as early as possible.

How many words can you potentially read and write with the following letters?

* s, m, t, d, l

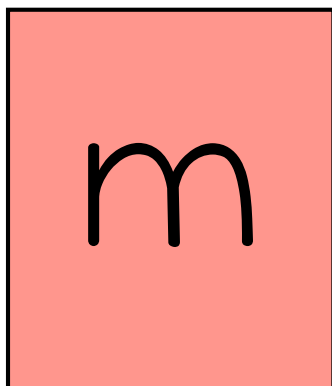
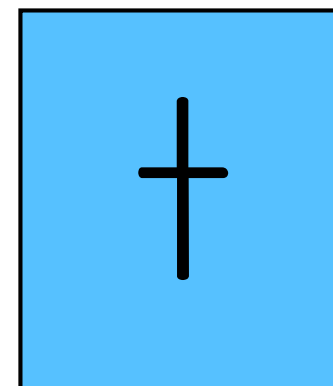
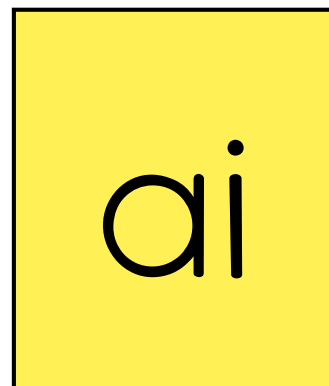
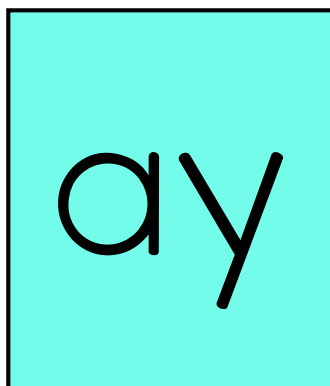
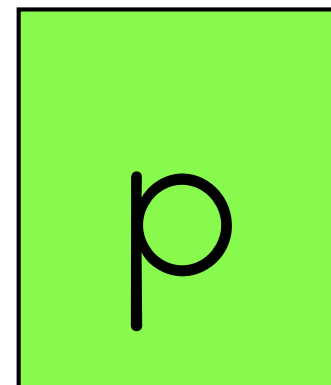
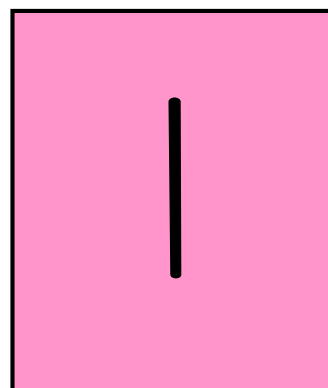
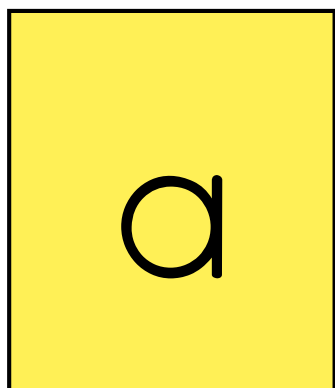
* s, m, a, t, d



Quick generation of useful words is not only more efficient, but highly motivating!

Giant Flash Cards

An interactive way to practice blending and focusing on phonics concepts.



Phonics Instruction The Connection Between Decoding & Comprehension

Phonics instruction helps the reader to **map sounds onto spellings**. This ability enables readers to decode words. **Decoding** words aids in the development of and improvement in **word recognition**. The more words one recognizes, the easier the reading task. Therefore, phonics instruction aids in the development of word recognition by providing children with an important and useful way to figure out unfamiliar words while reading.

When children begin to be able to recognize a large amount of words quickly and accurately, **reading fluency** improves. As more and more words become firmly stored in a child's memory (that is, the child recognizes more and more words on sight) they gain fluency and **automaticity** in word recognition. Having **many opportunities to decode words in text** is critical to learning words by sight...and to avoid making reading errors.

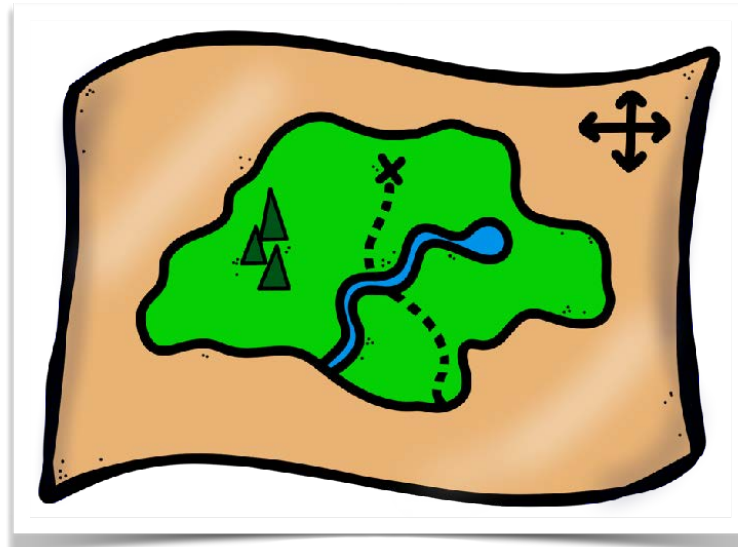
Reading fluency improves **reading comprehension**. Since children are no longer struggling with decoding words, they can devote their full attention (mental energies) to **making meaning from the text**.

As the **vocabulary and concept demands** increase in text, children need to be able to devote more of their **attention** to making meaning from text, and increasingly **less attention to decoding**.

A Systematic Plan for Instruction, Practice & Mastery

“When a new skill is introduced, it should be systematically and purposefully reviewed for the next four to six weeks.”

– Wiley Blevins



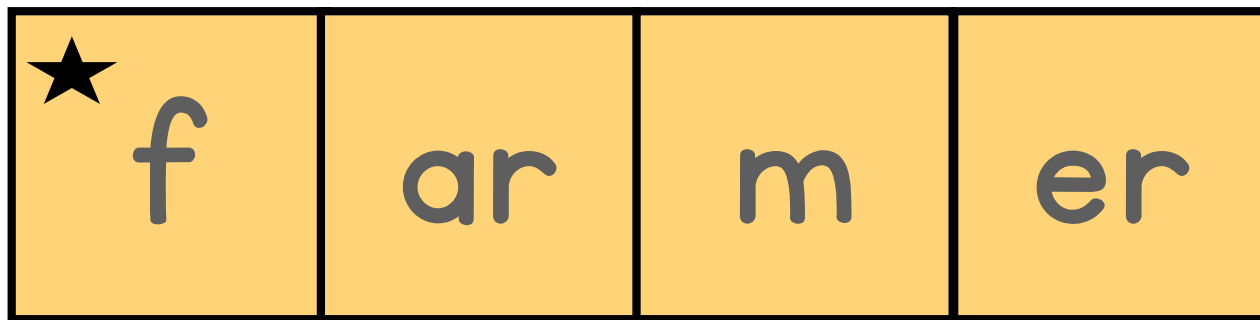
Using Elkonin boxes to Teach Orthographic Mapping

Why use Elkonin boxes?

- *it helps build students' phonemic awareness & phonics
- *it helps connect letters to sounds
- *it helps students hear and record all sounds in a word
- *it helps solidify left to right directionality

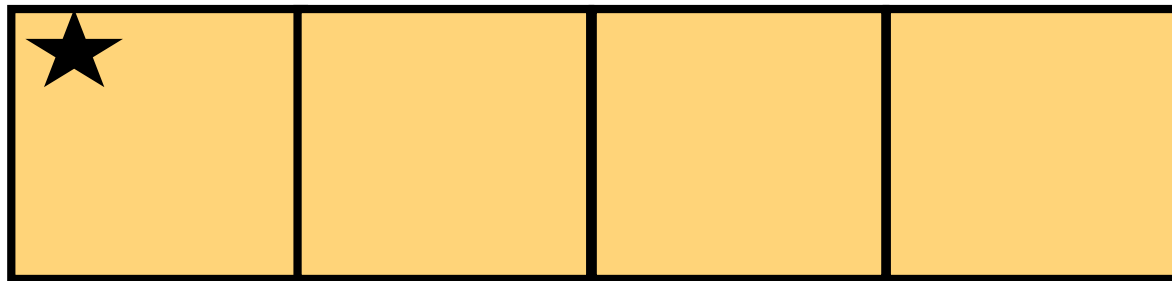
Once students are proficient with phonemic awareness:

- *You can transition to teaching **letter** boxes (this helps with spelling)
- *Students gain independence with this problem-solving strategy



The process of using Elkonin boxes during Writing

- * Give the student a 'practice page' or white board
 - * When the student is writing and they come to a word they need to problem solve, model the use of Elkonin boxes on the practice page
- * Model the task for the student
 - * Say the word slowly and touch the boxes (or push objects into the boxes) as you say the word
- * Have the student try it themselves
 - * You may do the task together until the student can take over



High Frequency Words

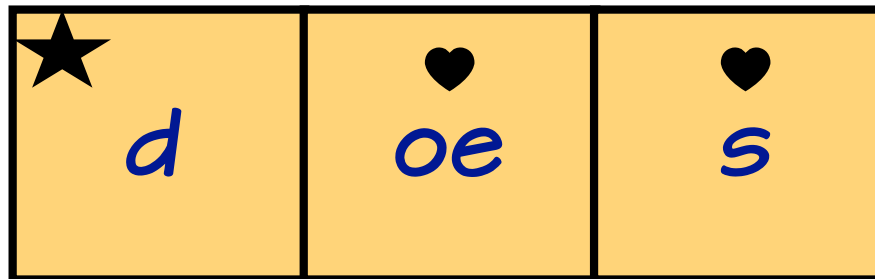
Prioritize which high frequency words you explicitly teach...

	Low Frequency	High Frequency
Regular	quake	went
Irregular	choir	was

Orthographic Mapping

Orthographic mapping proposes that we use the pronunciations of words that are already stored in long-term memory as the anchoring points for the orthographic sequences (letters) used to represent those pronunciations.

Let's Explore an Orthographic Mapping Routine for the word
does



The Power of Word Families





















Teaching word families is high impact instruction

- * There are 37 word families that can help kids spell about 500 words
- * The word families help kids make C-V-C words and also teach children a foundational spelling strategy
- * One known word can help you spell other unknown words:
 - ✓ hop, mop, chop
 - ✓ day, say, play
 - ✓ bat, cat, flat
 - ✓ fin, pin, grin
 - ✓ bit, fit, split
- * Once writers understand a word family, sometimes they can then begin to recognize that short vowel sound in other words, too.

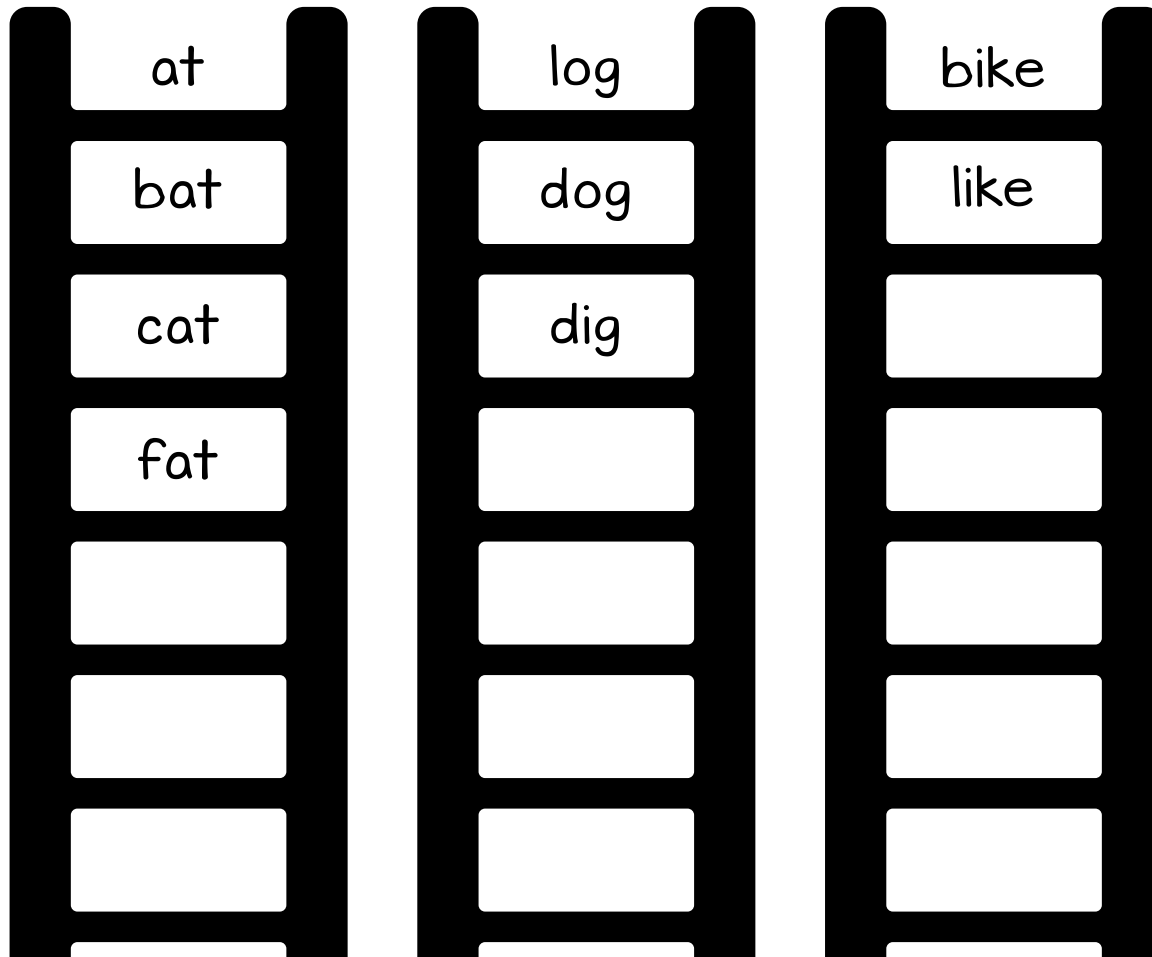


Scaffolded Supports for Working with Word Families

Word Families

-ad	-ag	-an	-ap
bad lad Dad mad glad pad had sad 	bag nag brag rag drag sag flag snag 	can plan fan tan man than pan scan 	cap nap clap slap gap snap lap tap map trap 
-at	-ed	-en	-et
bat mat cat pat fat rat flat sat hat that 	bed shed fed shred fled sled led sped red wed 	den ten hen then men when pen 	bet net get pet jet set let vet met wet 
-ig	-in	-ip	-it
big pig dig rig fig twig jig wig 	chin spin fin tin grin thin pin twin skin win 	clip rip dip ship drip skip hip tip lip zip 	bit lit fit pit grit skit hit sit kit split 
-og	-op	-ot	-ub
clog hog dog jog fog log frog smog 	cop pop chop shop drop stop hop top mop 	cot plot dot pot hot rot lot spot not tot 	cub scrub club shrub grub stub hub sub rub tub 
-ug	-um	-un	-ut
bug plug dug rug hug slug jug snug mug tug 	drum plum glum scum gum sum hum yum 	bun run fun spun nun stun pun sun 	but nut cut rut gut shut hut strut 

Word Ladders - Playing With Sounds, Letters, Words



Take one minute to finish **one** of these word ladders, or create your own word ladder.

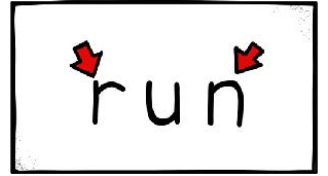
See if you can come up with 8 words in your ladder.

Share yours in the Chat box before the music ends...

Easily differentiated to be responsive to your students' varied abilities & needs, and can be extended to a literacy centre/station for additional engagement & practice.

Vowel Charts

Can help with the middles of words:



- ▶ At first, most of the sounds children hear are **consonants**.
- ▶ Tell them that every word has at least **one vowel**.
- ▶ When the middle of a word is hard, it is often because **vowels are tricky**.
- ▶ Even if their vowel guess is incorrect, it makes the word they are writing **more readable**.
- ▶ Show students how to **use the vowel chart** to help decide which **vowel to use**.

a - e - i - o - u

POPEY's Vowel Charts to Support Early Literacy

Vowel Teams

long A (a)



long E (e)



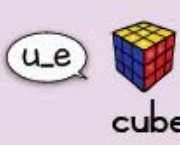
long I (i)



long O (o)



long U (u)



Revisiting High-Frequency Word Instruction

High-frequency words are the ubiquitous and abstract words that are the glue of spoken language. But in English, the written form of some of these words is represented by seemingly unpredictable strings of letters.

These irregular words present the reader with unexpected silent letters (**should**), rule-breaking vowels (**want**), and consonants that take on surprising roles (**does**).

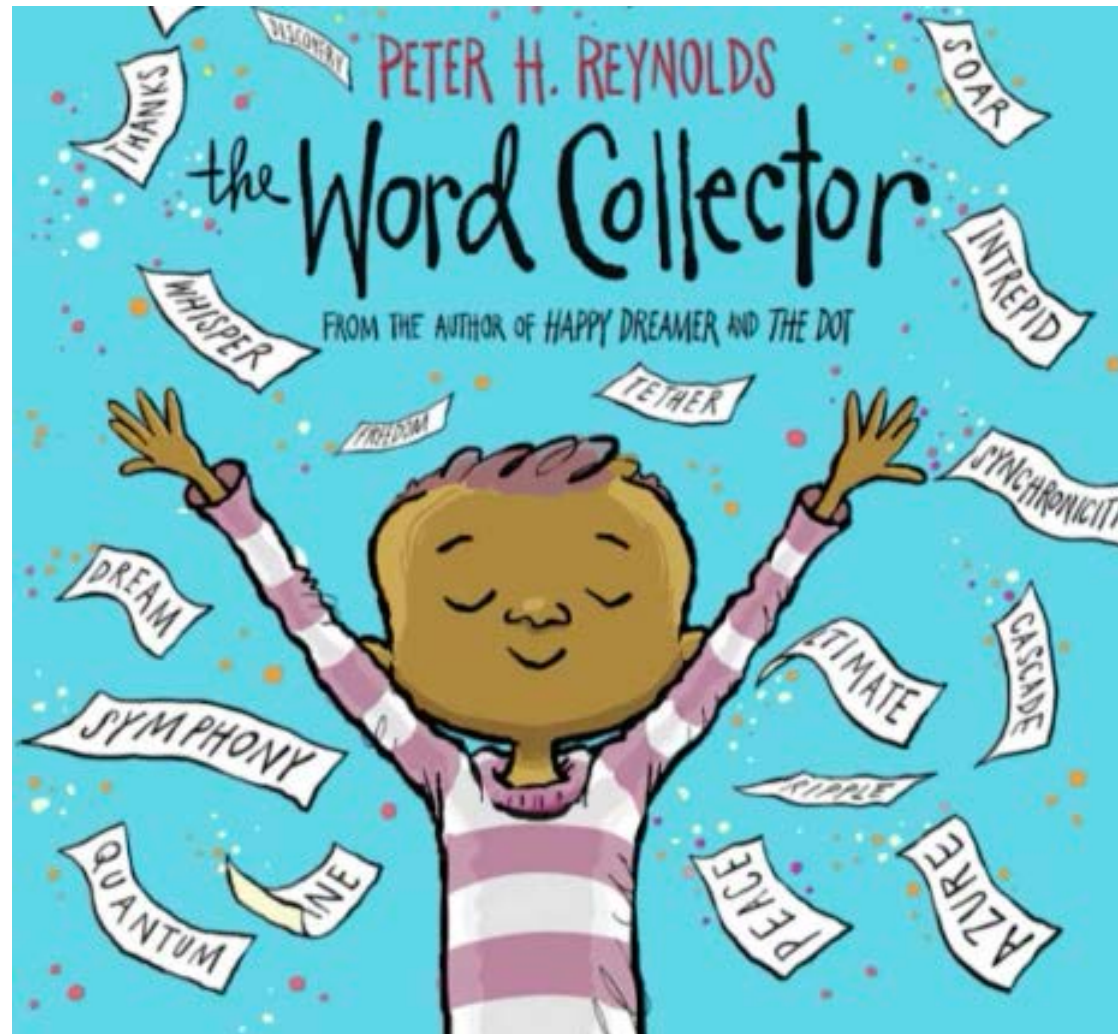
Vocabulary Development

Come up with a more interesting word than “interesting”

- * Vocabulary is correlated to increased reading comprehension
- * Rich content words can increase background knowledge

What interesting word did you discover this weekend?

The Word Collector



How could you use this story with your students?

High Frequency Power Words

109 words comprise 50% of the words found in children's texts

*the	*for	from	were	do	some
*of	*was	I	when	will	so
*and	on	have	we	each	these
*a	are	or	there	about	would
*to	as	by	can	how	other
*in	with	one	an	up	into
*is	his	had	your	out	has
*you	they	not	which	them	more
*that	at	but	their	then	her
*it	be	what	said	she	two
*he	this	all	if	many	like

* Words 1-13 make up 25% of the words in children's texts

High Frequency Power Words

109 words comprise 50% of the words found in children's texts

him	its	only	after	back
see	who	way	words	much
time	now	find	called	before
could	people	use	just	go
no	my	may	where	good
make	made	water	most	new
than	over	long	know	write
first	did	little	get	
been	down	very	through	

Word Wall I Spy

To: Everyone ▾

|Type message here...

- ▶ the word starts with 'm'
- ▶ the word has 3 letters
- ▶ the word has 2 syllables
- ▶ the word has a long 'e' sound
- ▶ it's a compound word
- ▶ it's a word that means the opposite of **last**

and	animal	because	another
ball	big	crash	community
can	friend	eating	discover
day	have	make	everybody
fun	look	outside	first
like	night	really	question
play	said	school	recycle
see	talk	sometimes	terrible
the	thing	truck	usually
up	your	writing	weather

Easily differentiated to be responsive to your students' varied abilities & needs.

Can be adapted to use with vocabulary words from across the curriculum, and extended to a literacy centre/station – Portable Personalized Word Wall Folders.

More Advanced Language Comprehension

Common Prefixes and Suffixes we can **explicitly** teach:

Prefix	% of words	Meaning	Examples
un-	26%	not, opposite of	unaware, unsure
re-	14%	again	redo, replay
im-, in-, il-, ir-	11%	not	impossible, illogical

Suffix	% of words	Part of Speech	Examples
-s,-es	31%	plural of noun	cats, boxes
-ed	20%	past tense of verb	sailed
-ing	14%	progressive tense of verb	jumping, racing

Look what knowledge students can gain from these explicit lessons!

Spelling - Ehri's phases of reading development

Reciprocity – reading and spelling

Phase 1:
pre-
alphabetic

(not using
alphabetic
principles)

Phase 2:
partial

(write with
consonants-
initial & final
sounds)

Phase 3:
full
alphabet

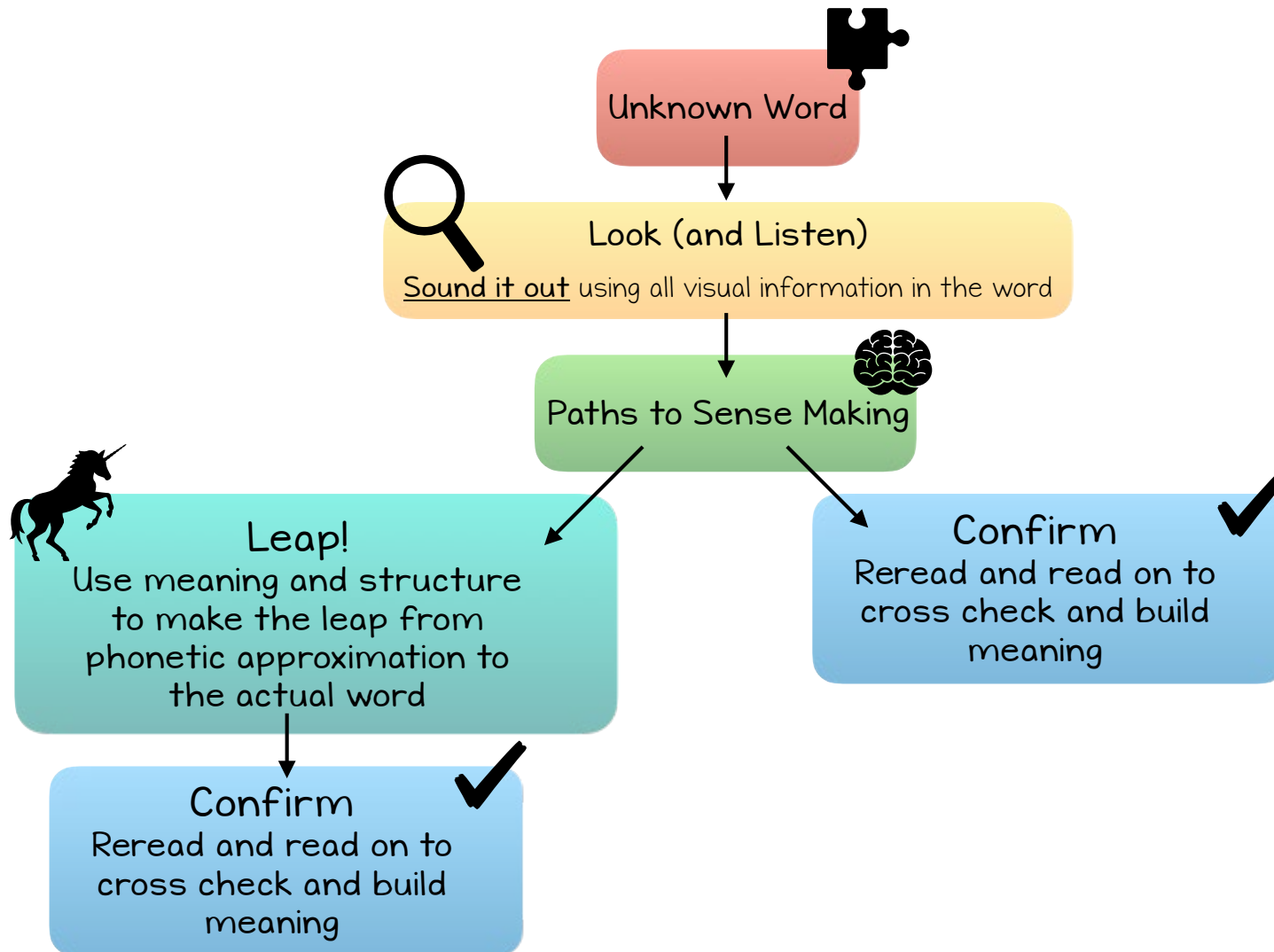
(All the
sounds are
present, not
necessary
spelled
correctly)

Phase 4:
consolidated
alphabetic

(Writing
multi-syllabic
words)

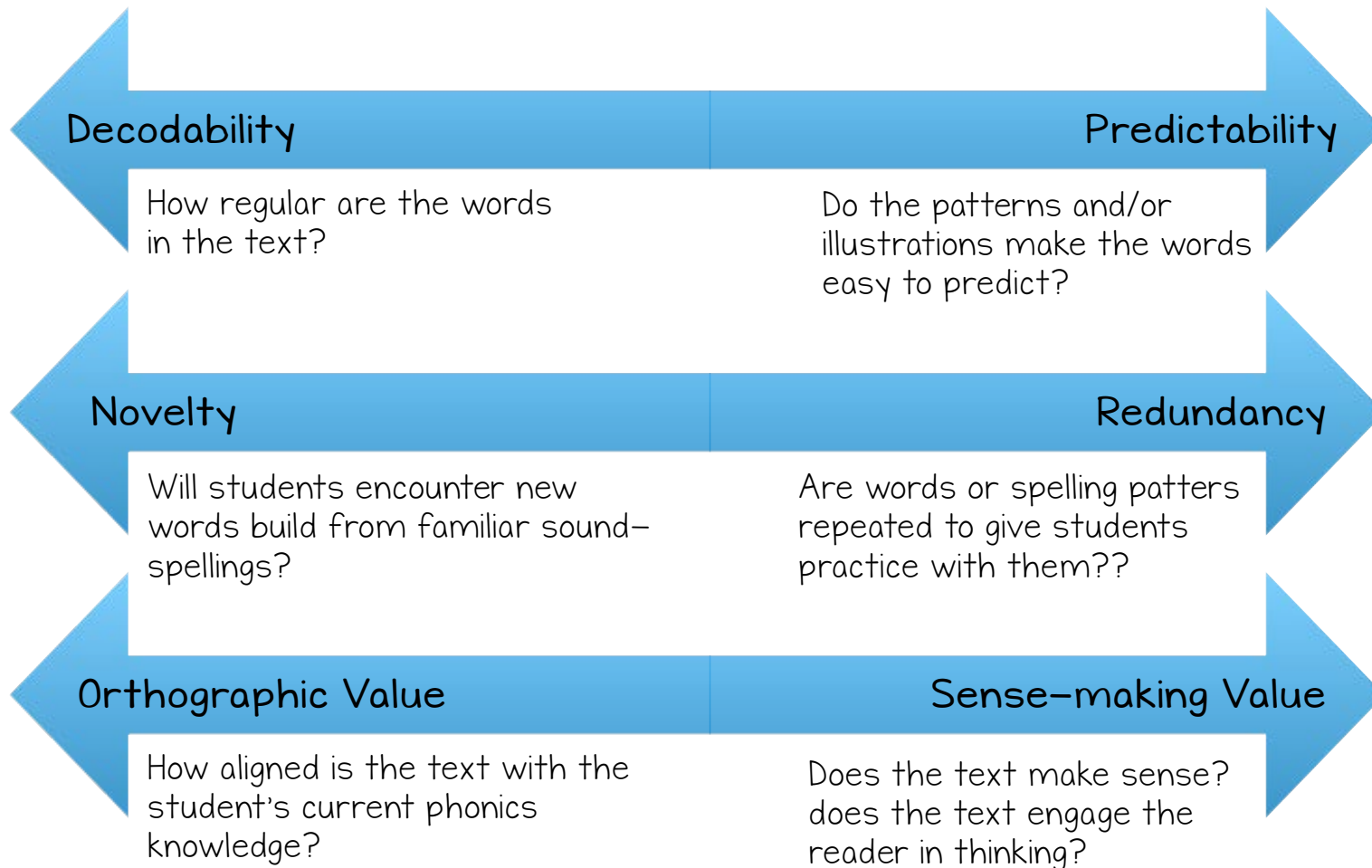
Path to Problem Solving

Look (and Listen) before you Leap:



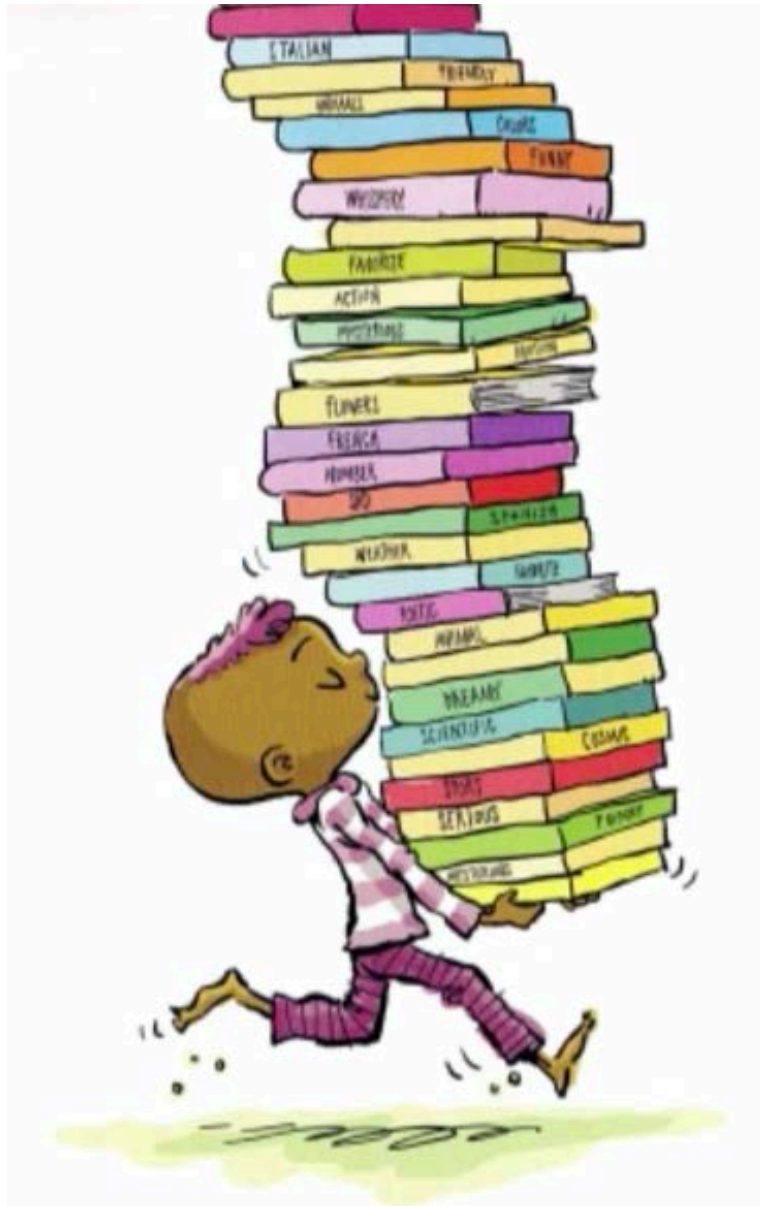
Choosing books

Questions to ask when considering beginning texts:



Choosing books

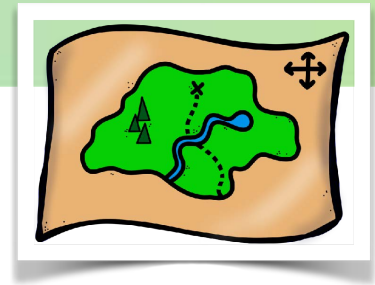
	“Read-All-the-Words” Texts	“Read-in-Other-Ways” Texts
What it mostly looks like	Children read all the words on the page.	Children study and “read” the pictures. They talk with friends about the texts.
What else might children do with these books?	Children may also notice and talk about the illustrations and story information.	Children may notice the print and attempt to decode some words.
Why it’s important	Children strengthen their understanding of the alphabetic principle.	Children engage with familiar and new texts, extending their oral language.
Who chooses the texts?	Teacher chooses some texts.	Students choose from a wide selection.



Engagement deepens further as children actually deploy their developing phonics and spelling abilities to read and write texts to inform, persuade, entertain, and innovate.

–Nell Duke

The Building Blocks of Literacy Learning



The goal is for students to...

- be enthusiastic explorers of words:
 - ★ puzzle out letter–sound relationships
 - ★ see patterns
 - ★ take words apart
 - ★ investigate meanings
- connect to words in an active way
- expand their reading and writing powers

Students learn **HOW TO LEARN** aspects of words, and develop efficient and powerful word–solving strategies

Reflections & Next Steps

Resources, research & activities shared today:

- ✓ Definitions, scope & sequence: phonological & phonemic awareness, phonics
- ✓ How we learn, and the reading brain (visual village, sound city, meaning mountain)
- ✓ Explicit, intentional, and repeated word study in and out of texts
- ✓ Mini-lessons (direct instruction, model, guided practice, transfer to independence)
- ✓ The connection between decoding & comprehension
- ✓ Characteristics of strong phonics instruction
- ✓ Elkonin boxes and orthographic mapping
- ✓ Using students' names, word families, word ladders, word wall I spy
 - ★ differentiated & engaging word solving routines

What is **ONE** thing you can commit to **TRY** in your classroom or role? Share it with your table group.

Sources

Resource Books

A Fresh Look at Phonics, Grade K-2 – Blevins

Phonics Activities & Games Kit – Blevins & Sadler School

Phonics From A-Z – Blevins

Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates

Units of Study in Phonics – Calkins

Units of Study in Writing – Calkins

Literacy Lessons Part Two – Clay

Comprehension Skill, Will & Thrill of Reading – Fisher & Frey

The Fountas & Pinnell Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study System – Fountas & Pinnell

When Readers Struggle: Teaching That Works – Fountas & Pinnell

Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom – Fountas & Pinnell

Lesley University Institute: Word Study: Teaching Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling in Grades K-3

Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum

Comprehensive Literacy Resource – Trehearne

Sources

Blogposts & Presentations

[Carolyn Strom – Presentation: Refining Professional Knowledge to Build Capacity in Reading Instruction, Learning & the Brain Conference, April 2022](#)

[The Big Five: Phonics–Orthographic Mapping – Wooldridge](#)

[Reading Rockets – Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: Introduction](#)

Videos

[Worry About Yourself](#)

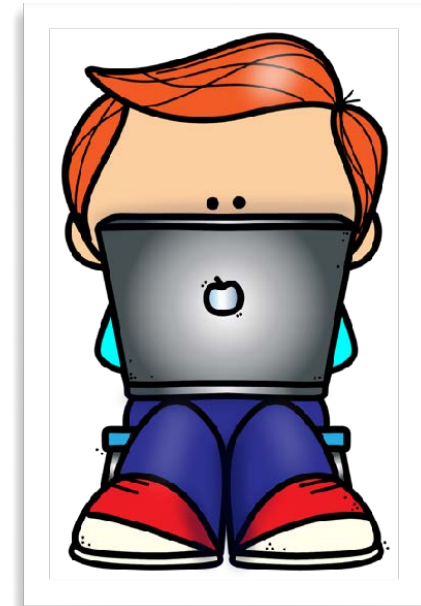
[TED Talk – Birth of a Word](#)

[Balanced Literacy Diet – Park Those Sounds](#)

[Tik Tok Word Reading](#)

[POPEY – Word Ladders](#)

[Balanced Literacy Diet – Word Wall I Spy](#)





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