

Cowichan Valley School District

LITERACY FRAMEWORK



COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

2026 Revised
2022 Original Release



The Cowichan Valley School District acknowledges that we are located on the on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, & Lyackson Peoples. We are committed to decolonizing our instruction and assessment of all students through work based in honour and respect. We value and foster our relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit neighbours, as we continue on our reconciliation journey.

Literacy is the way in which we interact with the world through written and oral communication.



This document is dedicated to the many teachers and educational leaders who came together in partnership to create a plan to empower literacy of all learners. Literacy is everywhere; it is our collective responsibility.

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Rationale

After extensive consultation with our community, including local First Nations, parents, community partners, staff, and students, the Cowichan Valley School District (CVSD) developed a four year strategic plan. Through this process, we clarified our collective mission:

Our students are agile and prepared to transition to a future of their choosing.

In addition, our district leadership identified our north star:

Equitable outcomes for learners.



As we continue our journey for truth and reconciliation, we first acknowledge inequities of outcomes for Indigenous learners AND we commit to working together with one heart, one mind, and one thought to address the inequities of outcomes. Our reflective journey identified lower than expected achievement in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In response, our district has engaged in the development of a literacy framework that provides shared resources and understandings to facilitate learner growth.

All learners in the Cowichan Valley School District deserve an educational system that partners with families and community to empower them with skills, knowledge, and ways of being that will allow them to create a future of their choosing.

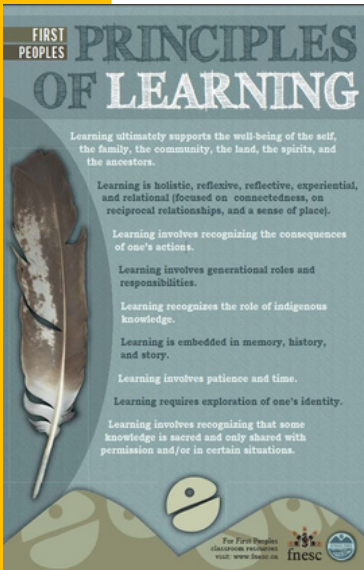


Purpose

Foundational literacy skills are necessary to empower students to create a future of their choosing. Skills associated with the written word can be barriers for future opportunities. While the term "literacy" is defined many ways across contexts, our primary focus of this framework is to support the development of independent reading and writing.

The vision for our Literacy Framework is to provide our educational community with resources and common understandings across schools. Our framework is designed to share current literacy-based research and examples of proactive, school-based structures as well as concrete examples of K-12 instruction and intervention.

The Cowichan Valley School District Literacy Framework is based upon current, global research and reflects the collective effort of teachers, support staff, and administrators.



Shared Beliefs

Our Literacy Framework is based upon shared beliefs that are reflected in all practice across our district.

First Peoples Principles/Indigenous Perspectives

Indigenous ancestors have provided wisdoms that guide our work with our xe' xe' smun'eem (sacred children). Indigenous perspectives and content are integral to our learning journey.

Oral Language

Oral language is foundational to all literacy learning and should be an integral part of a learner's journey.

Culture of Care

We recognize the critical importance of healthy relationships in safe, inclusive communities.

Core Competencies

Learning experiences should integrate the following:

- **Communication** (knowledge, skills, processes, and dispositions associated with interacting with others)
- **Thinking** (combining concepts and content to transform into new understandings, habits of the mind, and metacognitive awareness)
- **Personal and Social** (abilities related to students' identity in the world as individuals and as members of community and society)

Authentic engagement/ Play based learning

Applied learning and authentic real-world experiences contribute to deeper learning for all ages. Play-based learning also benefits all learners, from exploration of materials and the natural world to testing ideas and connecting academic knowledge.

See play-based continuum for the early years on page 19 >

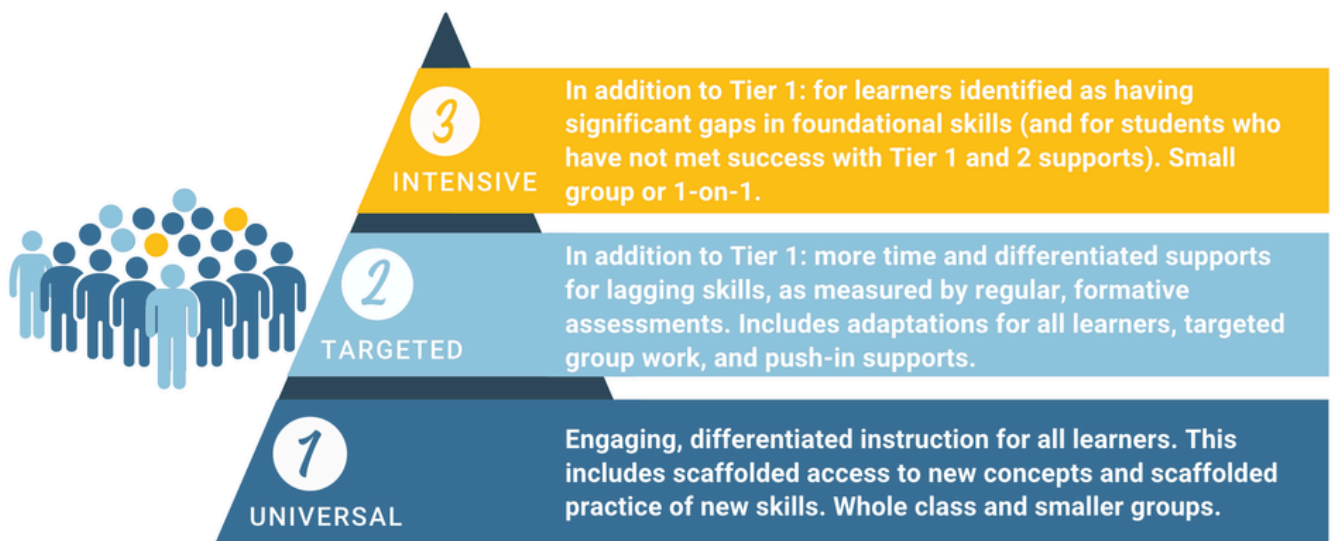
Literacy Systems & Structures

Comprehensive systems and structures that define and support the many, interconnected literacy support roles help educators and schools to successfully implement approaches that make a difference. The following research and evidence-based systems and structures enable the actions and realization of the Cowichan District Literacy Framework.

MTSS: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

MTSS is a coordinated system of academic, emotional, and behavioural supports (universal, targeted, intensive) which provides a structure for effective instruction, assessment, and support for all students. It requires the collaboration and coordinated efforts of students, teachers, support staff, educational leaders, families, guardians, and community partners in providing appropriate programs, settings, supports, and services.

Development of MTSS practices are a focus of school-based Professional Learning Community (PLC) time.



Literacy Check-In: Self-Assessment Tools

The self-assessment tool can support groups to identify literacy knowledge, expertise, strengths, and needs within a school's professional community and systems. This set of questions can also initiate an understanding of the strengths and needs of the community's learners.

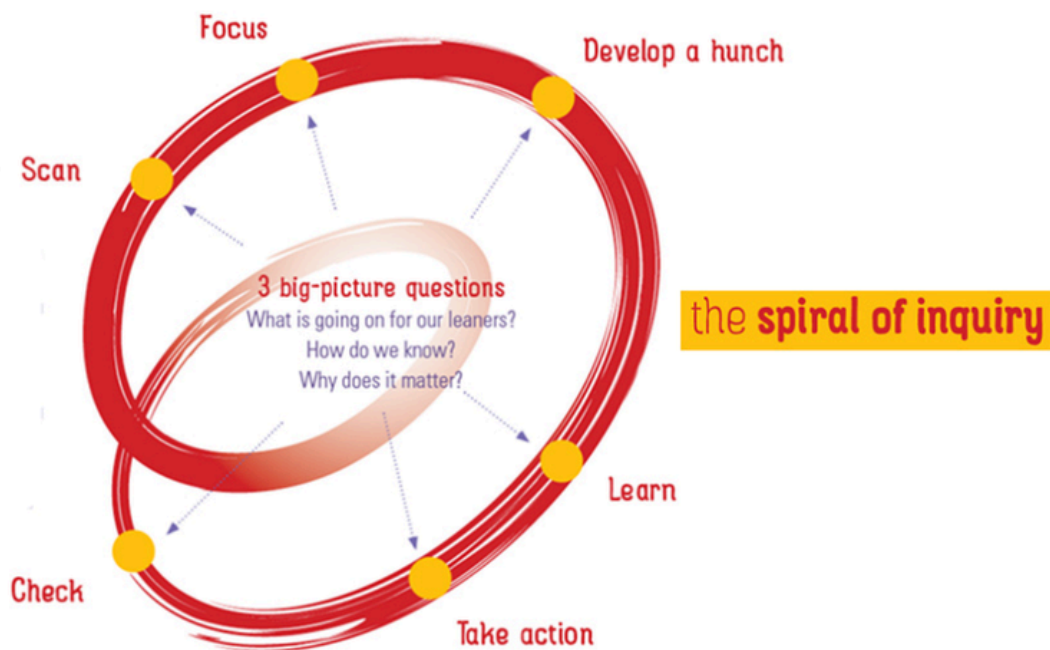
These questions are open-ended provocations that can be used as a way to build overall awareness or to initiate a path to in-depth literacy planning. Ideally, this dialogue includes all personnel who will support the learning, both directly and indirectly.

Questions are divided into the following sections:

Culture
Structures
Instruction



The questions serve to support a professional process of inquiry and can be used or adapted as fits the needs of each team.



Assessment Process

5 CRITICAL COMPONENTS ASSESSMENT MAP

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY LEARNERS NEED?

To discover the needs of our learners, first check grade level comprehension. If students struggle, then dig back through the foundational skills to identify their earliest gaps. Those become instructional targets. Below are reliable, commonly used assessment tools to identify the learning needs of students and to drive instructional practice.



COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. Strong comprehension is supported by all other critical components of reading.

Maze Passages

- Passages where student must select correct word
- Book: CORE Multiple Measures
- Free online: DIBELS, Acadience & Easy CBM

Grade Level Reading Passages

- Reading passages & Multiple choice questions (Newsela.com, Readworks)

VOCABULARY

EMBEDDED, & IN CONTEXT OF, ALL TIER 1 INSTRUCTION
IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DECODING BUT NOT COMPREHENDING

CORE Multiple Measures

Vocabulary Screener

- meaning-match activity with synonyms
- requires phonics skills for success
- Book: CORE Multiple Measures

FLUENCY

Check Oral Reading Fluency (ORF):

- Book: CORE Multiple Measures
- Free Online: DIBELS, Acadience, Easy CBM

PHONICS

Phonics Survey

- Book: CORE Multiple Measures
- Free Online: Quick Phonics Survey, Really Great Reading

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- District Screeners: Acadience: First Sound Fluency (FSF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)
- Book: PRESS Intervention Manual - Phonemic Awareness Survey
- Free Online: Acadience, DIBELS, Easy CBM

STRUGGLES WITH COMPREHENSION?
CHECK FLUENCY.

STRUGGLES WITH FLUENCY?
CHECK PHONICS.

STRUGGLES WITH PHONICS?
CHECK PHONEMIC AWARENESS.

FRENCH IMMERSION RESOURCES
Screener: Acadience
Diagnostic Assessment tool: ECLAIR

SCREENERS & DIAGNOSTICS

Universal screeners check broad skills, like comprehension, & identify WHO requires interventions. Diagnostic assessments check discrete skills, like phonics, and identify WHAT to focus interventions on.

FINDING LEVEL

A student's instructional reading level for ORF progress monitoring is the highest text level at which the student can read with at least 95% accuracy, maintain a steady and manageable rate, and demonstrate basic understanding of the passage.

PROGRESS MONITORING

Progress monitoring is essential because it provides timely data to evaluate instructional effectiveness and make responsive adjustments to meet student needs.

This is one of a series of documents to support the assessment process

Literacy Learning Inventory

The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Literacy Learning Inventory is a series of assessments developed by local teachers in response to their desire for accurate, useful, and reliable data to drive instruction. These assessments, their timelines, and the procedures for administering and data-sharing were developed through committees and working groups of teachers and district literacy leaders. This work was rooted in the most current research and evidence-based assessment tools. The assessments provide useful information to drive Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 literacy supports.



Screeners	Diagnostics	Progress Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies who is at risk• All students• 3 times per year• Benchmark at grade level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies specific strengths and difficulties• Students who are at-risk (based on screener)• Once or twice a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determines if instruction is working• All students• Frequency determined by level of risk• Screening at instructional level

Reading Assessments

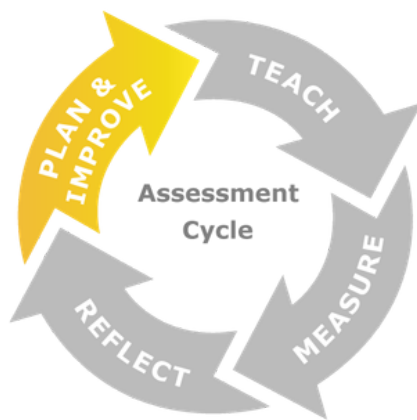
Reading assessment sets for each grade include timelines, teacher materials, supporting visuals, and student materials. K-9 sets are available for all teachers to access through their district Office 365 account.

Writing Assessments

The writing assessment sets span grades 2 - 9 and include teacher materials for pre-teaching and implementation and rubrics with clear assessment criteria. Grade 1-9 Writing sets are available for all teachers to access through their district Office 365 account.

Learning Inventory Data Collection and Viewing

Assessment data will be gathered and collated through the online Data Dashboard. The dashboard was created from ideas that emerged in literacy assessment committees and working groups. The teacher vision for an online system was developed under contract by A. Willock Information Systems, in collaboration with Cowichan Valley School District.



At all levels of a Multi-Tiered System of Support, this data helps to inform practice.

At all levels of our Future Focused System, the data collected supports an assessment cycle.

Data Dashboard Features

- Teacher dashboard to enter assessment data and to view results
 - Data viewing by student or by class
 - Graphic representation of results allow clear indication of whole group learning needs and individual needs
- Student dashboard to complete assessments directly, when appropriate
- Multiple opportunities, to allow students to demonstrate growth over time

Phonics													Oral Reading Fluency		Comprehension
Closed Syllables - Real Words	Closed Syllables - Nonsense Words	Open Syllables - Real Words	Open Syllables - Nonsense Words	CVCe Syllables - Real Words	CVCe Syllables - Nonsense Words	R-Controlled Syllables - Real Words	R-Controlled Syllables - Nonsense Words	Vowel Teams - Real Words	Vowel Teams - Nonsense Words	Consonant-le - Real Words	Consonant-le - Nonsense Words	OSP - Fall	OSP - Spring	MAZE	
0	3	0	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	0	1			10	
														14	
5	5	5	3	4	5	4	4	5	3	4	3			30	
3	5	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	1	2	0			27	
3	2	3	4	3	2	2	1	5	2	4	2			11	
														10	
5	5	5	3	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	2			17	
5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5			27	
3	5	2	3	3				1						27	

Data Dashboard (tool for collecting and viewing data)

Sample summary of phonics results

Learning Inventory Data Use

Our reading assessments provide data to inform instructional decisions at the classroom, school and district levels, as well as information related to every learner's journey to independent reading.



Classroom Use of Data

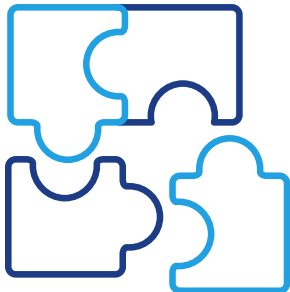
Primary Years

During the primary years, the data shows what foundational skills learners have mastered and what skills need additional instruction.

By collaborating, teachers can identify:

- skills that should be addressed through whole class instruction
- skills in which small groups or individual students need extra support or practice.

The skills assessed in the Early Learning Inventories are critical skills that are foundational for independent reading.



Intermediate and Secondary Years

As students progress through intermediate and secondary years, their independence as readers continues to increase.

Data gathered through the reading assessments identifies:

- learners that are able to independently read with fluency and comprehension
- learners who are not yet able to read and comprehend sample grade level text and who would benefit from the use of additional assessments to identify specific instructional needs.

While all students continue to benefit from developing comprehension and vocabulary, some will also require specific instruction and intervention to build mastery of foundational skills. (See Digging Deeper Graphic for additional information related to identifying student needs.)



School Use of Data

Through PLCs, SBT, and other collaborative conversations, schools can use the data to:

- identify groups or classes of students who require extra supports
- focus supports where students have the greatest need
- identify student needs that have common instruction and intervention strategies (across classrooms).

At the secondary level, the data can inform cross-disciplinary literacy practices, including integration of vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency strategies into instruction.

In addition, trends may be identified that indicate the need for educators to prioritize professional learning and purchasing of materials. School data can also help inform the school's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL).

District Use of Data

At the district level, data can:

- help guide decisions related to staffing, in-service, and instructional recommendations
- identify structures, routines, and instructional materials to address learning needs that can be supported by district learning teams
- develop district-lead learning opportunities to respond to trends or emerging needs.

For example: if data indicates intermediate students have a need for decoding and phonemic awareness, while vocabulary appears to be an area of strength, then district learning staff can create strategies that respond to these emerging needs.

Our commitment to First Peoples' Principles is integrated in the collective response to supporting learners. "Data" does not focus our minds on judgement, but is seen as part of our learners' truth and story in that moment. The knowledge gained by collectively checking on all learners' reading development allows us to ensure each student can develop literacy skills, while honouring their story, and communicating with families about strengths and next steps.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Diverse and layered opportunities are offered in order to meet the engagement preferences and needs of all participants in the MTSS model.

Workshops and Professional Collaboration

Non-Instructional Days

3 days per year, the district offers professional learning for all employees.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

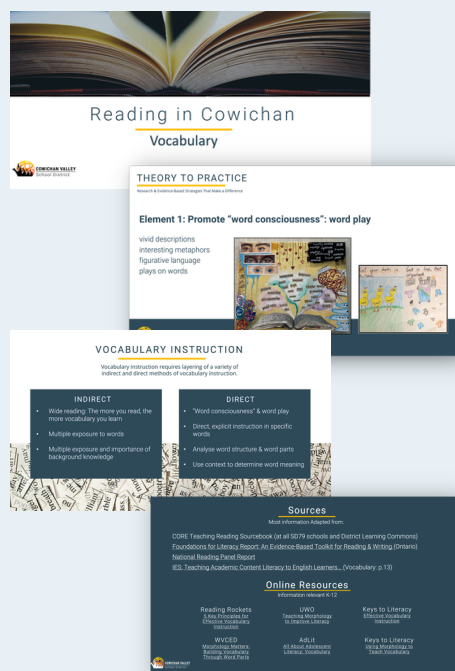
Several times per year, staff participate in school-based PLC time to focus on learning outcomes.

Inservice

Release time is sometimes offered to create opportunities for targeted learning. This is often developed responsively, as need arises.

Grants

Grant opportunities change year by year. Groups of educators may apply for a grant to cover costs for collaborative meetings. Projects are designed by each group, to meet their unique needs and goals. Professional sharing is encouraged either through an evening event, or through other learning days.



Resources

To support individual and collaborative learning, the district has created online tools for learning.

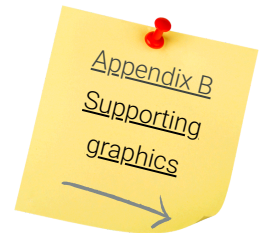
This collection includes:

- Instructional slideshows for each of the Five Critical Components of Reading
- Videos with assessment or instructional tips
- Curated collections of online resources

Grounding Research

This framework is based on the vast body of scientific research on how reading skills develop and how to teach for the greatest possible success for all learners.

For each key area, we have created or curated graphics that capture key ideas and allow us to share common language and understandings.



Stages of Reading

Because the brain learns to read in the same way, regardless of age, it is often helpful to refer to Chall's Stages of Reading Development when considering the needs of our diverse learners. Adult, youth, and child learners, both local and international, may be at the same stage with their reading abilities.



DR. JEANNE CHALL'S STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

STAGE APPROXIMATE AGE OR ELL YEARS	STAGE NAME CHARACTERISTICS
0 6 Months- 6 years 0-6 Months ELL	Pre-Reading: "Pseudo-Reading" Pre-reading & Letter Recognition Begins
1 6-7 Years 0-1 Year ELL	Initial Reading & Decoding Phonological Awareness begins
2 7-8 Years 1.5 - 3 Years ELL	Confirmation & Fluency Begins to read fluently
3 9-13 years 2.5 - 5 Years ELL	Reading for Learning Beginning to read for new information: reading expository texts.
4 15-17 years 4.5 - 7 Years ELL	Multiple Viewpoints Begins reading critically from multiple viewpoints.
5 18 + Years 7+ Years ELL	Construction & Reconstruction Able to construct their own viewpoint.

ELL & adult rates of learning are impacted by:

- (a) levels of existing literacy (e.g in first language)
- (b) the specificity, consistency, and intensity of instruction
- (c) motivation/perseverance.

Elements of Reading

While we focus our work on the 5 Critical Components of Reading, that work is supported by the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough's Rope.

SIMPLE VIEW OF READING



Simple View of Reading

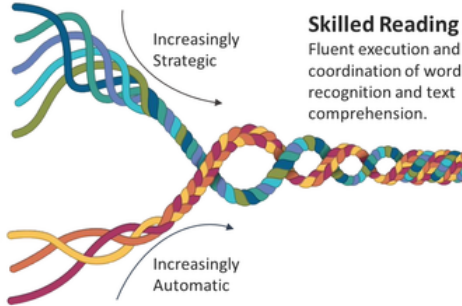
This is a theory that helps educators to understand that skilled reading is the product of both word recognition and language comprehension.

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



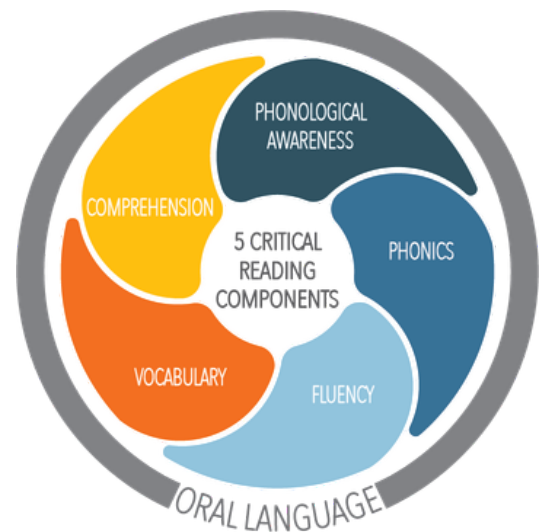
Scarborough's Rope

Hollis Scarborough unpacked the skills of word recognition and language comprehension and represented them as strands of a rope to demonstrate how tightly woven these skills are.

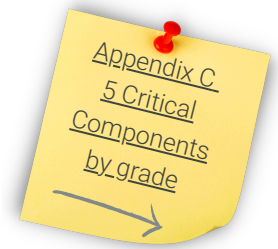
The Five Critical Components

The details of Scarborough's Rope and the extensive research can be summarised into five key skills that build upon each other to result in skilled, independent reading. Each of these five is rooted in, and amplified by oral language.

Assessment and instruction are guided by these Five Critical Components.



Overview of the Five Critical Components



Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is a broad umbrella skill that includes recognising larger sound units like words and syllables.

Phonemic awareness is a more advanced subset that focuses strictly on the smallest, individual units of sound (phonemes) and required for reading acquisition.

Continuum of Phonemic Awareness skills: simple to complex



Phoneme Isolation	Phoneme Blending	Phoneme Segmentation	Phoneme Addition & Deletion	Phoneme Substitution
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Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of individual speech sounds, or phonemes. A child's skill in phonological awareness is a good predictor of later reading success or difficulty.

Reading Rockets

Phonics

Recognising the relationship between written and spoken letters and sounds.

Continuum of skills: simple to complex



Letter-Sound Correspondences	CVC & VC Words	Blends & Digraphs	Long Vowels & Common Vowel Patterns	Advanced Word Patterns	Multisyllabic Words
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If a child memorizes 10 words, the child can only read 10 words, but if a child learns 10 sounds, the child will be able to read 350 three-sound words, 4320 four-sound words and 21 650 five-sound words.

Martin Kozloff, 2002





Fluency

The ability to read aloud with appropriate rate, expression, accuracy, and automaticity.

Continuum of skills: simple to complex

Letter Level	Sound Level	Word Level	Phrase/Sentence Level	Passage Level
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Early focus on accuracy to develop automaticity and prosody

As accuracy and automaticity increase, focus shifts to prosody and intonation.

Fluent reading is critical because it facilitates reading comprehension by allowing the reader to focus his attention on the author's message rather than on how to say the words.

Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linon-Thompson, 2011



Vocabulary

Knowledge of words and word meanings.

Continuum of skills: simple to complex

Oral Language & Foundational Vocabulary: Students build vocabulary through listening and speaking, using familiar words in everyday communication.

Word Meaning & Vocabulary Growth: Students learn new words through reading, conversation, and instruction, using context and prior knowledge.

Morphology & Word Analysis: Students determine word meanings by analyzing roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Vocabulary Application in Context: Students use vocabulary accurately and flexibly across reading, writing, and speaking, applying appropriate sentence structure (syntax) and context (pragmatics).

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, 2005



Comprehension

The understanding and interpretation of what is read.

Continuum of skills: simple to complex

Listening Comprehension

Active and purposeful understanding of spoken language.

Concrete Understanding

Understanding the literal and sequential meaning from text.

Critical Thinking

Applying increasingly complex reading strategies (e.g., predicting, inferencing, analysing, summarising, etc.) in a variety of texts and connecting ideas beyond the text.

Disciplinary Text

Accessing, using, and applying information read in different contexts and disciplines. Greater emphasis on investigations and decision making, often in relation to work or areas of study.

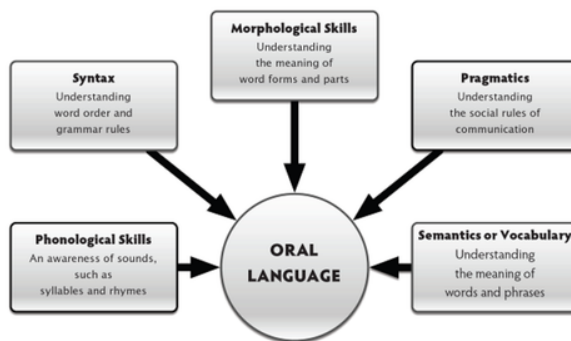
Reading comprehension involves the construction of meaning from text using decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and prior knowledge.

It is the goal of reading. It is the active and purposeful pursuit of understanding the author's message.

Birsh & Carreker 2018

Oral Language

The system of spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings.



Lesaux & Harris, 2015

Every aspect of oral language contributes to the child's growing understanding of words and her ability to use and understand written text.

Maryanne Wolfe, 2010

Instructional Approaches

Throughout a school day, approaches fluctuate between play-based teaching and structured teaching. For optimal learning, these approaches are employed at different times and for different purposes. The result is that learners receive targeted, systematic instruction as well as hands-on, active learning where they may practice skills, and develop background knowledge in the many contexts that play provides.

Play-Based

From imaginary play and story to puzzles and games, play has a direct, positive impact on executive functioning and self-regulation skills as well as promoting communication and problem-solving skills. In the context of literacy, play-based opportunities need to be carefully thought out, intentional, and rigorously planned. Ensuring that play is meaningful and linked to literacy learning will be beneficial to all children, and is crucial for those who need more support with their literacy growth.

Educators, advocates for children's rights, and academic researchers agree that play is vital for young children. Play should have a central role in the lives of young children—from infancy into middle childhood and beyond. The BC government recognizes the importance of play-based learning.
[BC Ministry of Education](#)

Pedagogical Strategies for Play-Based Learning



Adapted from Pyle and Daniels, 2017



Structured & Explicit

Short, sharp and effective lessons means that the time you spend on explicit teaching is balanced well with hands on, creative opportunities.

Successful literacy instruction and interventions provide a strong core of highly explicit, systematic teaching of foundational skills such as decoding and spelling skills, as well as explicit teaching of other important components of literacy such as vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.

[Spear-Swerling; International Dyslexia Association](#)

[Article regarding structured play to support explicit teaching >](#)

Elementary Literacy

Elementary literacy encompasses both developmental stages starting from the early years to sophisticated literary analysis in upper intermediate. In any classroom, all three tiers of the MTSS model could be operating simultaneously.

Tier 1: Universal

In elementary classrooms, Tier 1 literacy instruction occurs in different forms throughout the day through whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction.

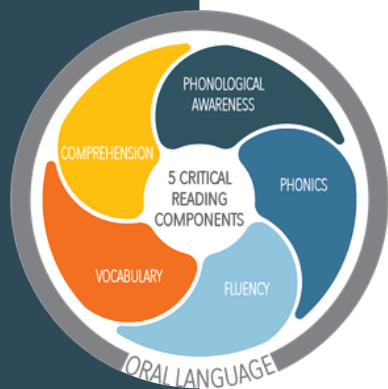
Whole group literacy instruction may include building meaning of rich stories at the carpet, explicit vocabulary lessons in the context of science or social studies, or phonics lessons intended for all learners.

Small group literacy can occur at different times of the day and allow teachers to target certain skills with certain students. Structuring the day to include small-group instruction empowers teachers to be more responsive to students needs.

One-on-one instruction can also take many forms, from side-by-side oral language coaching during an outdoor science activity, to a 2 minute assessment of oral reading fluency, where the student reads aloud to the teacher.

Tier 2: Targeted

Targeted support is also varied and includes both classroom teacher-provided scaffolds and classroom support provided by a literacy teacher or education assistant (push-in model). The assessment process, starting with the district Learning Inventory, identifies which critical components of reading require development. Instruction is then designed to meet those needs.



5 Critical Components in Context

Primary (K-3)

Instruction prioritises foundational skills to support learning to read.

Intermediate (4-7)

Instruction emphasises comprehension, vocabulary, and knowledge building, as students shift to reading to learn.

Interventions

Targeted instruction focuses on areas of struggle.

Tier 3: Intensive Support

Students who struggle with literacy skills receive intensive supports coordinated within an MTSS model. Services are provided based on the individual needs of each learner and may require a delivery of services outside of the classroom.

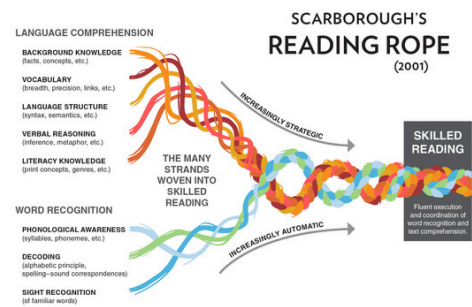
Secondary Literacy

The complexity of adolescent literacy lies in both diverse reading abilities and the very different literacy skills of each discipline area. In secondary schools, everyone has a valuable contribution towards literacy development, and those roles are richly diverse.

Tier 1: Universal

In secondary, instruction focuses on disciplinary literacy—reading, writing, and thinking within each subject.

Scarborough's Reading Rope shows how language comprehension supports this work across disciplines.



Tier 2: Targeted

Targeted support takes many forms, from scaffolds that the teacher provides within a lesson to literacy teachers or education assistants providing supports.

5 Critical Components in Context

Universal and Targeted Tiers 1 & 2 focus on:
Comprehension, Vocabulary
Fluency & Expression

Intensive Support Tier 3 focuses on:
Fluency, Phonics &
Phonemic Awareness

Tier 3: Intensive Support

Interventions for students who are not yet reading at grade level are coordinated within an MTSS model and services are provided based on the individual needs of each learner.

The assessment process identifies which critical components of reading require development. Instruction is then designed to meet those needs.



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Appendix A

Scanning Tools

The following questions are intended to support dialogue and literacy planning. A selection or all questions may be explored as they fit your team. [Word versions for download](#)>

Elementary Literacy Self-Assessment Tool Multi-Disciplinary System of Support

Literacy skills include reading, speaking, writing, and listening as well as critical thinking and communication.



Culture

1. Our school demonstrates a collective belief that every student can be an independent reader.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
2. Our school demonstrates a collective responsibility for student learning.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
3. Our school values professional learning for all teachers in literacy instruction and skill development.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
4. Our school practices a universal design for learning approach in response to student assessment data.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought

Structures

1. Our school has identified blocks of time that are protected from interruption for literacy instruction (reading, writing, oral language).

NOTE: 90 minutes recommended K-3, 60 minutes 4-7

- Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe
2. Our school utilises reading assessments to identify targeted student needs and regularly uses data to inform decision making.
- Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

3. Our school teams have identified literacy tools and resources for the five critical areas that are readily available to educators.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

4. Our school understands fluid grouping options to address student learning needs (reading).

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

5. Structures are in place in our school to identify students' targeted needs, intervention opportunities are available, and the success of the interventions are monitored.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

6. School team collectively reviews data regularly to identify whole group needs, small group instruction, and needs for intervention.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

Instruction

1. Our educators recognise common language related to reading instruction.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

2. Our educators feel confident in their knowledge of the five critical components of reading and can flexibly respond to student needs.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

3. Our educators use a variety of data to drive instruction at the whole group, small group, and individual level.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

4. Our students receive 60-120 minutes of literacy instruction per day (not including intervention blocks).
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

5. Our school has identified Tier 1, 2, and 3 instructional resources for all five key areas of reading.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

6. Teachers are clearly aware of the continuum of skills across grade levels in the five key areas of reading.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

7. Educators consistently use scaffolding and modelling (I do, We do, You do).
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

8. Students whose assessments show a need for intervention (Tier 2/3) are also active members of the Tier 1 community.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

9. Educators provide explicit instruction in the following areas:
 - Phonological awareness (see continuum)
 - Phonics/word reading (see continuum)
 - Fluency
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension

Celebrations of your school's reading/literacy program:

Hopes and wishes for your school's reading/literacy program:

Literacy 8 - 12 Self-Assessment Tool

Multi-Disciplinary System of Support



Literacy skills include reading, speaking, writing, and listening as well as critical thinking and communication.

Culture

1. Our school demonstrates a collective belief that literacy is the foundation for student success in life and after school.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
2. Our school demonstrates a collective belief that every teacher is a literacy teacher.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
3. Our school demonstrates a collective belief that literacy is an interdisciplinary responsibility, across all curricular areas and grades.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
4. Our school values ongoing professional learning for all teachers in literacy instruction and skill growth.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
5. Our school demonstrates an "all learners are our learners" mindset and flexibly responds to students learning needs.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
6. Reading for pleasure is valued and modelled at our school.
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought

Structures

1. Our school values, promotes and supports explicit literacy instruction in all subject areas (vocabulary, fluency, comprehension).
 - Definitely
 - We're making meaningful progress
 - We will give this some thought
 - Describe

2. Our school utilises reading assessments to identify targeted students needs and regularly uses data to inform decision making.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

3. Our school has identified literacy tools and resources that respond to targeted student needs.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

4. Our school resources and tools are readily available to teachers and support staff.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

5. Structures are in place in our school to provide research-based intervention opportunities, and the success of the interventions are monitored.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

6. Our school support team works collaboratively with classroom teachers to regularly review data that informs whole group needs, small group instruction, and needs for intervention.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

7. Reading for pleasure is valued and modelled at our school.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought

Instruction

1. Our educators understand common language related to literacy instruction.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Give some examples

2. Our educators feel confident in their knowledge of multi-disciplinary literacy instruction and can respond to student needs in their class context.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

3. Our educators use a variety of data to inform instruction at the whole group, small group and individual level.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

4. Our students feel confident that their literacy instruction is the collective responsibility of all their educational staff.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

5. Our school has identified Tier 1, 2, and 3 structures that respond to student data.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

6. Educators consistently describe text structures, pre-load vocabulary and model comprehension strategies.

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Comment

7. Students whose assessments show a need for Tier 2/3 intervention also are active members of the Tier 1 community (intervention is in addition to core instruction).

- Definitely
- We're making meaningful progress
- We will give this some thought
- Describe

Celebrations of your school's reading/literacy program:

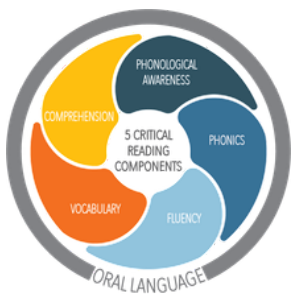
Hopes and wishes for your school's reading/literacy program:

Appendix B

Supporting Graphics

Graphics have been created to visually summarise research with the goal of building common understanding and language.

[Go to complete collection of full-sized graphic files >](#)



5 Critical Components of Reading

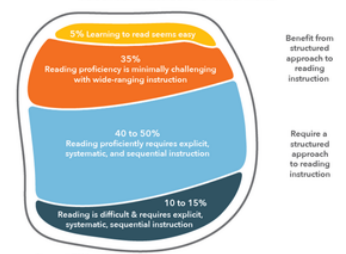
READING STAGES	
27 MO EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS	27 MO-6 YRS EMERGENT LITERACY
0-1 Years 0-1 Years (EL)	Pre-Reading: "Emergent Reading" Pre-Reading & Letter Recognition Stage
1-2 Years 1-2 Years (EL)	Initial Reading & Decoding Phonological Awareness Stage
2-3 Years 2-3 Years (EL)	Confidence & Fluency Algebraic Stage
3-4 Years 3-4 Years (EL)	Reading for Learning Responding to text with fluency, comprehension, and strategy use
4-5 Years 4-5 Years (EL)	Multiple Perspectives Responding to text with fluency, comprehension, and strategy use
5-6 Years 5-6 Years (EL)	Comprehension & Reasoning Responding to text with fluency, comprehension, and strategy use

ELL & adult rates of learning are multiplied by:
 (A) length of learning theory (e.g. in first language)
 (B) the scaffolding, consistency, and intensity of instruction
 (C) motivation/engagement

Stages of Reading

VISUAL SUMMARY OF HOW WE LEARN TO READ

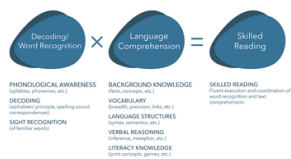
BASED ON MULTIPLE STUDIES & A LARGE BODY OF EVIDENCE



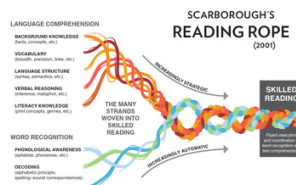
(Kempson, 2016; Lyon, 1996; NRP, 2000)

How We Learn to Read

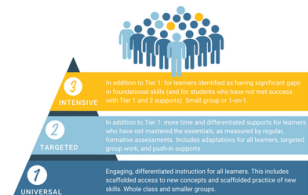
SIMPLE VIEW OF READING



Simple View of Reading (Set of 3)



Scarborough's Reading Rope



Multi-Tiered System of Support (2 Sets of 3)



Assessment "Digging Deeper" Flow Charts & Supporting Resources (Multiple Sets)

Appendix C

The 5 Critical Components Throughout the Grades

The following set of documents are two-page summaries of key teaching points and resources for each of the 5 Critical Components of Reading by grade. This resource is intended as a starting point for assessment and instructional decisions.

The suggested instructional methods and resources are supported by extensive research and evidence.

For learners who struggle with Tier 1 - universal instruction, refer to the Cowichan Assessment Maps to help identify specific skills to target. These maps will also identify assessments beyond district screeners.

In June 2025, British Columbia released the K-4 Foundational English Language Arts Learning Progressions, a significant update designed to elaborate on the English Language Arts curriculum. The learning progressions reflect the province's ongoing commitment to advancing evidence-based literacy instruction.

INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

K-4 Foundational English Language Arts Learning Progressions

PURPOSE

- The K-4 English Language Arts (ELA) Foundational Learning Progressions describe the learning progressions for foundational reading and literacy skills for students in the elementary grades.
- The progressions are designed to provide a clear and consistent framework for teaching, learning, and assessment across the province.
- The progressions are designed to be used by educators to inform instruction, assess student learning, and identify areas for additional support.

GUIDING INFORMATION

- The Learning Progressions are a high-level overview of learning progressions with an emphasis on Tier 1 instruction. They are not intended to replace the ELA curriculum.
- The progressions are designed to be used in conjunction with the ELA curriculum and other resources.
- The progressions are designed to be used by educators to inform instruction, assess student learning, and identify areas for additional support.

WHAT DOES ELA LEARNING LOOK LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM?

- The ELA curriculum should be a part of a rich and varied literacy program that includes reading, writing, and speaking.
- The ELA curriculum should be designed to be used in a variety of settings, including individual, small group, and whole-class instruction.
- The ELA curriculum should be designed to be used in a way that is meaningful and engaging for all students.



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN KINDERGARTEN

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map, which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Recommended 120 minutes overall daily literacy instruction.

Phonological Awareness

Skills:

Identify and produces initial, middle & end sound

Blending and segmenting sounds

Instruction: Identifying & producing phonemes (sounds: the smallest units of spoken language). Whole group, small group, and 1-on-1.

Sample Activity

- Alphabet Arc
- Word Chains
- Say it/Move it and Sound Boxes
- Poems & Songs
- Sound-Picture Match Games

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Sound Walls](#)

Phonics

Skills:

Letter-Sound Correspondences for all letters

Encode and decode VC & CVC words

Encode and decode with digraphs

Instruction: Teaching the sounds & symbols of our language (sound-letter correspondence).

Sample Activity

- Word Chains
- Reading Decodables
- Alphabet Arc
- Tap It-Map It-Graph It
- Continuous Blending/Successive Blending

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Reading Rockets](#)
[Rock Your Literacy Block](#)

Fluency

Skills:

Letter-Sound Correspondence

Reads VC & CVC words in isolation

Reads simple text and recognizes punctuation

Early focus on accuracy leads to automaticity. →

Instruction: Daily practice. Explicit teacher modelling. Demonstrating accuracy, automaticity, rate, & expression.

Sample Activity

- Partner Practice
- Choral Reading
- Echo Reading
- Poems & Songs

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Rock Your Literacy Block](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN KINDERGARTEN

Vocabulary

Skills: Oral vocabulary knowledge: use of words in spoken language.

Whole word knowledge: applying prior knowledge to build meaning, new words learned through reading and explicit instruction.

Instruction: Vocabulary words in context of stories and learning.

Sample Activity

- Quality Read Alouds & Discussions
- Centres of Multiple Themes
- Memory Word Match
- Dramatic Play & Story Workshop
- Practice with Predictions
- Direct Instruction/ Specific Word Instruction: Tier 2 & 3 Words

Resources

[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Read Alouds For All Learners, Molly Ness](#)
[Big Words for Young Readers, Heidi Anne Mesmer](#)
[Morphemes for Little Ones](#)

Comprehension

Skills:

Listening Comprehension: Active and purposeful understanding of spoken language.

Concrete Understanding: Understanding literal and sequential meaning.

Critical Thinking: Oral predicting, retelling, answering why, how

Instruction: Rich read alouds: discuss plot, inferences, visualizations, connections & vocabulary.

Sample Activity

- Quality Read Alouds: Story Maps, [Knowledge Trees](#)
- Elder/Cultural Storytellers & Rich Discussions
- Reflections Through Drawing
- Retell Through Dramatic Play

Resources

[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Read Alouds For All Learners, Molly Ness](#)

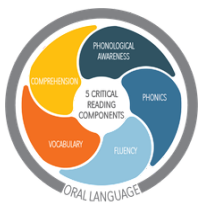
Oral Language

Oral language, or spoken language, includes speaking and listening. Developing these skills provides the foundation for word reading, comprehension, and writing.

Rich oral language in the classroom supports vocabulary, communication, and critical thinking, as students may engage intellectually with ideas that they may not yet be able to access through text.

Teachers of younger students sometimes use an oral language screener to identify developmental gaps.

Watch: [Oral Language Foundations for Literacy](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Recommended 120 minutes overall daily literacy instruction.

Phonological Awareness

Skills:

Phoneme Addition

Phoneme Deletion

Phoneme Substitution

Blend & Segment up to 5 phoneme words

Instruction: Identifying & producing phonemes (sounds: the smallest units of spoken language). Whole group, small group, and 1-on-1.

Sample Activities

- Alphabet Arc
- Word Chains
- Say It/Move It
- Sound Picture Match Games

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Sound Walls](#)

Phonics

Skills:

Letter-Sound Correspondences

VC & CVC Words

Blends & Digraphs

Complex Vowels

Complex Consonants

Instruction: Delivered through whole-group lessons and targeted small-group support based on student needs.

Sample Activity

- Phoneme/Grapheme Mapping
- Word Chains & Word Sorts
- Dictation
- Continuous and Successive Blending
- Reading Decodables
- Phonics Hunt (finding in text)

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[West Virginia Phonics](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[Reading Rockets](#)

Fluency

Skills:

Letter Reading

Sound/Phoneme Reading

Word Reading

Phrase/Sentence Reading

Early focus on accuracy leads to automaticity and prosody.

Instruction: Daily practice through repeated reading to increase accuracy, automaticity, rate, & expression. Frequent teacher-student reading check-ins for progress monitoring.

Sample Activity

- Repeated Reading
- Reader's Theatre
- Partner Practice
- Choral Reading
- Echo Reading
- Scooping Phrases

Resources

[Rock Your Literacy Block](#)
[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[7 Mighty Moves: Reading Resources](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Syllasense Decodable Books](#)
[West Coast Literacy Decodable Books](#)
[Easy CBM](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1

Vocabulary

Skills:

Oral vocabulary knowledge: use of words in spoken language.

Whole word knowledge: applying prior knowledge to build meaning, new words learned through reading and explicit instruction.

Instruction: Vocabulary words in context of stories and learning.

Sample Activity

- Quality Read Alouds & Discussion
- Direct Instruction/ Specific Word Instruction: Tier 2 & 3 Words
- Memory Word Match
- Dramatic Play & Story Workshop

Resources

[Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Read Alouds For All Learners, Molly Ness](#)
[Big Words for Young Readers, Heidi Anne Mesmer](#)
[Morphemes for Little Ones](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)

Comprehension

Skills:

Listening Comprehension:
Active and purposeful understanding of spoken language.

Concrete Understanding:
Understanding literal and sequential meaning.

Critical Thinking Strategies:
Oral predicting, retelling, answering why, how...

Instruction: Rich read alouds: discuss plot, inferences, visualizations, connections & vocabulary.

Sample Activity

- Carpet Story Time
- Elder/Cultural Story Tellers
- Whole Class Gist Statements
- Story Sequencing & Retell
- Reflections through Drawing
- Retell through Dramatic Play

Resources

[Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[The Reading Comprehension Blueprint](#)

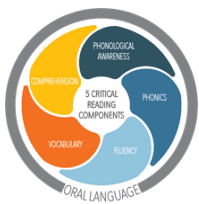
Oral Language

Oral language, or spoken language, includes speaking and listening. Developing these skills provides the foundation for word reading, comprehension, and writing.

Rich oral language in the classroom supports vocabulary, communication, and critical thinking, as students may engage intellectually with ideas that they may not yet be able to access through text.

Teachers of younger students sometimes use an oral language screener to identify developmental gaps.

Watch: [Oral Language Foundations for Literacy](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 2

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Recommended 120 minutes overall daily literacy instruction.

Phonological Awareness

Skills:

Phoneme Addition

Phoneme Deletion

Phoneme Substitution Beginning Sound

Phoneme Substitution Middle Sound

Instruction: Noticing, thinking about, and working with phonemes (sounds: the smallest units of spoken language). Whole group, small group, and 1-on-1

Sample Activities

- Sound Picture Match Games
- Sound/Phoneme Wall
- Sound Changing Game
- Word Chains

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum Equipped for Reading Success](#), Kilpatrick Bridge the Gap, [Heggerty](#), [CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#), [Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)

Phonics

Skills:

Complex Vowels

Complex Consonants

Multisyllable Words

Instruction: Delivered through whole-group lessons and targeted small-group support based on student needs.

Sample Activities

- Phoneme/Grapheme Mapping
- Syllable Instruction: 2-syllables; Schwa
- Sound Wall
- Practicing with Decodable Readers
- Dictation
- Continuous and Successive Blending

Resources

[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#), [CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#), [Florida Centre for Reading Research](#), [West Virginia Phonics \(free account\)](#).

Fluency

Skills:

Passage Reading

Increasing Rate and Expression

As accuracy and automaticity increase, focus shifts to prosody and intonation.



Instruction: Daily practice. Repeated reading. Regular teacher-student reading for progress monitoring.

Sample Activity

- Partner Reading
- Readers Theatre & Poetry
- Choral/Echo Reading
- Scooping Phrases
- Reading Decodable Text to Reinforce Phonics

Resources

[Rock Your Literacy Block](#), [Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum \(Tara West\)](#), [7 Mighty Moves: Reading Resources](#), [Syllasense decodable books](#), [Flyleaf decodable passages](#), [The Best Class \(website\)](#) Dr. Chase Young [Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy \(PALS\)](#), [Easy CBM](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 2

Vocabulary

Skills:

Phonological expression, oral vocabulary knowledge, use of words in spoken language

Whole word knowledge, applying prior knowledge to build meaning, new words learned through reading or explicit instruction.

Morphology (meaning of base words, roots, and affixes) supports acquisition of new vocabulary and background knowledge.

Syntax: The rules to make grammatical and meaningful sentences. Pragmatics: The use of language in social context.

Instruction: Essential for all students. Words drawn from content areas: science, socials, math...

Sample Activity

- Semantic Mapping
- Direct instruction/ Specific Word Instruction
- Word/Morpheme Walls
- Quality Read Alouds
- Synonyms & Antonyms
- Examples and Non-Examples

Resources

[Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Read Alouds For All Learners, Molly Ness](#)
[Big Words for Young Readers, Heidi Anne Mesmer](#)
[Morphemes for Little Ones](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)

Comprehension

Skills:

Listening Comprehension:
Active and purposeful understanding of spoken language.

Concrete Understanding:
Understanding literal and sequential meaning.

Critical Thinking Strategies:
Oral predicting, retelling, answering why, how...

Instruction: Rich read alouds: discuss plot, inferences, visualizations, connections & vocabulary.

Sample Activity

- Gist Statements
- Text Analysis
- Story Sequencing
- Story Cubes
- Retell Wheel

Resources

[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[The Reading Comprehension Blueprint](#)
[ReadWorks](#)
[Reading Beyond the Basics](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)

Oral Language

Oral language, or spoken language, includes speaking and listening. Developing these skills provides the foundation for word reading, comprehension, and writing.

Rich oral language in the classroom supports vocabulary, communication, and critical thinking, as students may engage intellectually with ideas that they may not yet be able to access through text.



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 3

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Recommended 120 minutes overall daily literacy instruction.

Phonological Awareness

Often not included in Tier 1 instruction, unless group assessments indicate a need. Students who struggle to decode or to articulate sounds clearly through speech, should be assessed.

Instruction: For a few students who demonstrate a need through assessment. Instruction happens in small, chunks, is repeated daily, and is connected to phonics (decoding) & writing (encoding).
Equipped for Reading Success, Kilpatrick; Bridge the Gap, Heggerty
UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum

Phonics

Skills: Complex Vowels Complex Consonants Multisyllable Words

Instruction: Instruction combines whole-group teaching focused on common learning goals with small-group instruction tailored to individual student needs, often in daily 20–30 minute blocks.

Sample Activities

- Phoneme/Grapheme Mapping
- Syllable Instruction (3 syllables) Syllable Scooping)
- Word Chains
- Successive/Continuous Blending Drills
- Practicing with Decodable Readers
- Dictation

Resources

- UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum
- Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum (Tara West)
- CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook
- Florida Centre for Reading Research
- West Virginia Phonics

Fluency

Skills: Passage Reading Uses Appropriate Intonation and Emphasis, As accuracy and automaticity increase, focus shifts to prosody and intonation.

Instruction: Daily practice. Repeated reading. Regular teacher-student reading for progress monitoring.

Sample Activity

- Partner Reading
- Repeated Reading
- Readers Theatre & Poetry
- Choral/Echo Reading
- Scooping Phrases
- Reading decodable text to reinforce phonics

Resources

- Rock Your Literacy Block
- Guided Phonics & Beyond Curriculum (Tara West)
- 7 Mighty Moves: Reading Resources
- Syllasense decodable books
- The Best Class (website) Dr. Chase Young
- Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS)
- Easy CBM



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 3

Vocabulary

Skills:

Phonological expression, oral vocabulary knowledge, use of words in spoken language.

Whole word knowledge, applying prior knowledge to build meaning, new words learned through reading or explicit instruction.

Morphology (meaning of base words, roots, and affixes) supports acquisition of new vocabulary and background knowledge.

Syntax: The rules to make grammatical and meaningful sentences.

Pragmatics: The use of language in social context.

Instruction: Essential for all students. Words drawn from content areas: science, socials, math...

Sample Activity

- Semantic Mapping
- Word/Morpheme Walls
- Word Matrices (prefixes/suffixes)
- Synonyms & Antonyms
- Examples and Non-Examples
- Direct instruction/ Specific Word Instruction

Resources

[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Morpheme Magic](#)
Anita Archer [Explicit Instruction](#)
[7 Mighty Moves: Reading Resources](#)
[Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)

Comprehension

Skills:

Listening Comprehension: Active and purposeful understanding of spoken language.

Concrete Understanding: Understanding literal and sequential meaning from text.

Critical Thinking: Applying increasingly complex reading strategies (predicting, inferencing, analysing summarising, etc.) in a variety of texts.

Disciplinary Reading: Accessing, using, and applying information read in different contexts and disciplines (work or areas of study).

Instruction: Provide a variety of rich text, with whole class and independent practice opportunities.

Sample Activity

- Gist Statements/Paragraph Shrinking
- Text Analysis
- Story Mapping
- Retell Wheel

Resources

[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[The Reading Comprehension Blueprint](#)
[ReadWorks](#)
[Reading Beyond the Basics](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)

Oral Language

Oral language, or spoken language, includes speaking and listening. Developing these skills provides the foundation for word reading, comprehension, and writing.

Rich oral language in the classroom supports vocabulary, communication, and critical thinking, as students may engage intellectually with ideas that they may not yet be able to access through text.



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 4

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Recommended 120 minutes overall daily literacy instruction.

Phonological Awareness

Seldom included in Tier 1 instruction, unless group assessments indicate a group need. Students who struggle to decode or to articulate sounds clearly through speech, should be assessed. This is often supported by a learning assistance teacher.

Instruction: For a few students who demonstrate a need through assessment. Instruction happens in small chunks, is repeated daily, and is connected to phonics (decoding) & writing (encoding).

Phonics

Skills:

Complex Vowels

Complex Consonants

Multisyllable Words

Instruction: Instruction combines whole-group teaching focused on common learning goals with small-group instruction tailored to individual student needs, often in daily 20–30 minute blocks.

Sample Activities

- Phoneme/Grapheme Mapping
- Syllable Activities
- Successive/Continuous Blending Drills
- Syllable Instruction (Syllable Scooping)
- Word Chains

Resources

[West Virginia Phonics](#)
[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[UFLI Foundations Reading Curriculum](#)

Fluency

Skills:

Passage Reading

Reading for a variety of purposes: audiences, genres, text types.

Instruction: As accuracy and automaticity increase, instructional focus shifts to prosody and intonation to communicate meaning (includes tending to punctuation & phrasing).

Sample Activities

- Oral Reading for Different Purposes (genres, audiences, text types)
- Readers Theatre
- Poetry
- Partner Reading

Resources

[The Best Class](#) (readers theatre) Dr. Chase Young
[Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy \(PALS\)](#)
[Shanahan Article](#) with Strategies for older students
[6 Minute Solution](#) (book) or [DIBELS](#) (online) for explicit practice and progress monitoring
[Socratic Discussion Resource](#)
[edutopia: Poetry Recital Ideas](#)
[Easy CBM](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 4

Vocabulary

Skills:

Applying prior knowledge to build meaning:
New words taught within discipline area learning.

Morphology:
meaning of base words, roots, and affixes

Syntax: rules to make grammatical and meaningful sentences.
Pragmatics: use of language in social contexts.

Instruction: Essential for all students. Words drawn from content areas: science, socials, math...

Sample Activity

- Semantic Mapping
- Word Matrices (base & root words, affixes)
- Word/Morpheme Walls
- Targeted Tier 2 & 3 Content Vocabulary

Resources

[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[Morpheme Magic](#)
Anita Archer [Explicit Instruction and Rewards Program](#)
[Morphology Matters](#) (PDF booklet)
[Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)

Comprehension

Skills:

Critical Thinking:
Applying complex reading strategies (predicting, inferencing, analysing, summarising, etc.) in a variety of texts.

Disciplinary Reading:
Accessing, using, and applying information read in different contexts and disciplines (work and/or areas of study).

Instruction: Provide a variety of rich text, with whole class and independent practice opportunities.

Sample Activity

- Reading Different Genres
- Gist Statements/Paragraph Shrinking
- Text Analysis
- Story Mapping

Resources

[CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
[The Reading Comprehension Blueprint](#)
[ReadWorks](#)
[Florida Centre for Reading Research](#)
[Keys to Literacy: Key Comprehension Teaching Strategies](#)
[Reading Beyond the Basics](#)
[Literacy Shed](#)

Oral Language

Oral language, (speaking and listening) supports vocabulary, communication, critical thinking, and writing.

Rigorous thinking activities through oral communication allow students to engage intellectually with ideas they may not yet be able to access through text. This develops thinking that transfers to comprehension, analytical thinking, problem-solving, and writing.

Sample Activity

- Structured discussion/ Socratic discourse
- Notice/Wonder strategy: Oral analysis as a class scaffolds writing when focussing on supporting ideas with evidence

Resources

[Socratic Discussion Resource](#)
[Notice/Wonder strategy](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADES 5-7

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Recommended 120 minutes overall daily literacy instruction.

Comprehension

Skills:

Critical Thinking:

Applying complex reading strategies (predicting, inferencing, analysing, summarising, etc.) in a variety of texts.

Disciplinary Reading:

Accessing, using, and applying information read in different contexts and disciplines (work and/or areas of study).

Instruction: It is essential that students are exposed to challenging text that is at or above grade level. Scaffolding instruction and teaching strategies for reading large or complex texts is key.

5 Transferable Strategies to Support Cross-Curricular Comprehension

1. Comprehension monitoring; keeping focus while reading: stop & reflect

- main ideas: stop & reflect, restate, infer
- 2 column note-taking

2. Graphic Organisers

- top-down topic web (hierarchical structure)

3. Summarising

- paragraph shrinking/find the Gist

4. Question Generation & Answering

- Bloom's taxonomy w/ question stems
- teach, post, and refer to often

5. "Before strategies"

- predicting
- building and engaging prior knowledge

Resources

[Quad Text Set Strategy](#) (to scaffold grade-level/challenging text)

[Discipline Area Literacy](#) (with pages for each discipline)

[Newsela \(levelled reading passages\)](#)

[Achieve 3000](#) (multiple levels of same disciplinary texts and questions)

[AdLit \(All About Adolescent Literacy\)](#)

[Keys to Literacy](#): adolescent focus videos & practical articles

[Literacy Shed](#)

Vocabulary

Skills:

Applying prior knowledge to build meaning: New words taught within discipline area learning.

Morphology: meaning of base words, roots, and affixes

Syntax: rules to make grammatical and meaningful sentences.
Pragmatics: use of language in social contexts.

Instruction: Vocabulary is taught across all disciplines, with teachers modeling and expecting the use of precise, content-specific language. Instruction is both explicit and integrated into daily learning, with students applying new terms in discussion and written work. Emphasis on morphology (roots, prefixes, suffixes) supports understanding and spelling of complex multisyllabic words.

5 Ways to Build Vocabulary Semantics (Meaning)

- Morphology (affixes & bases)
- Example & Non-Examples
- Synonyms & Antonyms
- Related Words (morpheme family, meaning...)
- Defining in own words (construct own meaning first, then look up)

Resources

- [CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
- [Morpheme Magic](#)
- Anita Archer [Explicit Instruction](#) and [Rewards Program](#)
- [Morphology Matters](#) (PDF booklet)
- [Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING IN GRADES 5-7

Fluency

Skills:

Passage Reading

Reading for a variety of purposes: audiences, genres, text types.

Instruction: As accuracy and automaticity increase, instructional focus shifts to prosody and intonation to communicate meaning (includes tending to punctuation & phrasing).

Sample Activities

- Oral reading for different purposes (genres, audiences, text types)
- Readers Theatre
- Poetry
- Partner Reading

Resources

[Poetry in Voice](#) (poetry bank & national competition)
[The Best Class](#) (readers theatre) Dr. Chase Young
[Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy \(PALS\)](#)
[Shanahan Article](#) with Strategies for older students
[6 Minute Solution](#) (book) or [DIBELS](#) (online) for explicit practice and progress monitoring
[Easy CBM](#)

Phonics

Likely intervention focus: may be provided by a learning assistance teacher.

Older students who struggle to decode, should be screened to identify learning gaps. Existing gaps require explicit, systematic instruction to enable reading success.

Assessing: Phonics Diagnostic (CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures)

Phonological Awareness

Likely intervention focus: may be provided by a learning assistance teacher.

Older students who struggle to decode, should be screened to identify learning gaps. Existing gaps require explicit, systematic instruction to enable reading success.

Assessing: [PRESS Phonemic Awareness Inventory](#)

Oral Language

Oral language, (speaking and listening) supports vocabulary, communication, critical thinking, and writing.

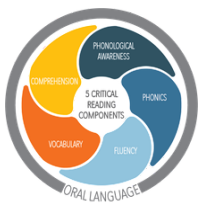
Rigorous thinking activities through oral communication allow students to engage intellectually with ideas they may not yet be able to access through text. This develops thinking that transfers to comprehension, analytical thinking, problem-solving, and writing.

Sample Activity

- Socratic discussion/discourse
- Debate, Speeches
- Oral analysis as a class scaffolds writing when focussing on supporting ideas with evidence
- Poetry Recital/Interpretation

Resources

- [Socratic Discussion Resource & PoliTalks](#)
- [Facing History Discussion Resource](#)
- [Provocations: Indigenous Art](#) collection to provoke critical thinking on multiple topics
- [Poetry in Voice](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN GRADES 8-12

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

Comprehension

Skills:

Critical Thinking

Applying complex reading strategies (predicting, inferencing, analysing, summarising, etc.) in a variety of texts.

Disciplinary Reading

Accessing, using, and applying information read in different contexts and disciplines (work and/or areas of study).

Instruction: It is essential that students are exposed to challenging text that is at or above grade level. Scaffolding instruction and teaching strategies for reading large or complex texts is key.

5 Transferable Strategies to Support Cross-Curricular Comprehension

1. Comprehension monitoring; keeping focus while reading: stop & reflect
 - main ideas: stop & reflect, restate, infer
 - 2 column note-taking
2. Graphic Organisers
 - top-down topic web (hierarchical structure)
3. Summarising
 - paragraph shrinking/find the Gist
4. Question Generation & Answering
 - Bloom's taxonomy w/ question stems
 - teach, post, and refer to often
5. "Before strategies"
 - predicting
 - building and engaging prior knowledge

Resources

[Quad Text Set Strategy](#) (to scaffold grade-level/challenging text)
[Discipline Area Literacy](#) (with pages for each discipline)
[Newsela](#) (levelled reading passages)
[Achieve 3000](#) (multiple levels of same disciplinary texts and questions)
[AdLit](#) (All About Adolescent Literacy)
[Keys to Literacy](#): adolescent focus videos & practical articles
[Readworks](#)

Vocabulary

Skills:

Applying prior knowledge to build meaning.
New words taught within discipline area learning.

Morphology: meaning of base words, roots, and affixes

Syntax: rules to make grammatical and meaningful sentences.
Pragmatics: use of language in social contexts.

Instruction: Vocabulary is taught across all disciplines, with teachers modeling and expecting the use of precise, content-specific language. Instruction is both explicit and integrated into daily learning, with students applying new terms in discussion and written work. Emphasis on morphology (roots, prefixes, suffixes) supports understanding and spelling of complex multisyllabic words.

5 Ways to Build Vocabulary Semantics (Meaning)

- Morphology (affixes & bases)
- Example & Non-Examples
- Synonyms & Antonyms
- Related Words (morpheme family, meaning...)
- Defining in own words (construct own meaning first, then look up)

Resources

- [CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook](#)
- [Morpheme Magic](#)
- Anita Archer [Explicit Instruction](#) and [Rewards Program](#)
- [Morphology Matters](#) (PDF booklet)
- [Instructional Routines for Building Vocabulary](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING IN GRADES 8-12

Fluency

Skills:

Passage Reading

Reading for a variety of purposes: audiences, genres, text types.

Instruction: As accuracy and automaticity increase, instructional focus shifts to prosody and intonation to communicate meaning (includes tending to punctuation & phrasing).

Sample Activities

- Reader's Theatre
- Partner Reading/Paragraph Shrinking
- Poetry readings; Spoken Word
- Speeches & Debates
- Reading Academic Texts Aloud

Resources

[Poetry in Voice](#) (poetry bank & national competition)
[The Best Class](#) (readers theatre) Dr. Chase Young
[Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy \(PALS\)](#)
[Shanahan Article](#) with Strategies for older students
[6 Minute Solution](#) (book) or [DIBELS](#) (online) for explicit practice and progress monitoring
[Easy CBM](#)

Phonics

Likely intervention focus: may be provided by a learning assistance teacher.

Older students who struggle to decode, should be screened to identify learning gaps. Existing gaps require explicit, systematic instruction to enable reading success.

Assessing: Phonics Diagnostic ([CORE Assessing Reading Multiple Measures](#) book)

Phonological Awareness

Likely intervention focus: may be provided by a learning assistance teacher.

Older students who struggle to decode, should be screened to identify learning gaps. Existing gaps require explicit, systematic instruction to enable reading success.

Assessing: [PRESS Phonemic Awareness Inventory](#)

Oral Language

Oral language, (speaking and listening) supports vocabulary, communication, critical thinking, and writing.

Rigorous thinking activities through oral communication allows students to engage intellectually with ideas they may not yet be able to access through text. This develops thinking that transfers to comprehension, analytical thinking, problem-solving, and writing.

Sample Activity

- Socratic discussion/discourse
- Debate, Speeches
- Oral analysis as a class scaffolds writing when focussing on supporting ideas with evidence
- Poetry recital/interpretation

Resources

- [PoliTalks](#) (by CIVIX)
- [Facing History Discussion Resource](#)
- [Provocations: Indigenous Art](#) collection to provoke critical thinking on multiple topics
- [Poetry in Voice](#)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN FRENCH IMMERSION

For learners who struggle with any part of Tier 1, universal instruction, please refer to the Cowichan Assessment Map which helps identify specific critical component skills to target.

*Recommended
120 minutes
overall daily
literacy
instruction.*

Phonological Awareness

Instruction: Identifying & producing phonemes (sounds: the smallest units of spoken language). Whole group, small group, and 1-on-1.

Sample Activities

- Alphabet Arc
- Word Chains
- Say it/Move It and Sound Boxes
- Poems & Songs
- Sound-picture Match Games
- Sound Changing Games
- Sound/Phoneme Wall

Resources

Son-au-graphe
Calgary Board of Education: La littératie structurée
ONlit
AlphaGraphe
 Raconte-moi les sons (Chenelière)



Phonics

Instruction: Teaching the sounds & symbols of our language (sound-letter correspondence).

Sample Activities

- Word Chains
- Reading Decodables
- Alphabet Arc
- Tap It-Map It-Graph It
- Continuous Blending/ Successive Blending

Resources

Son-au-graphe
Calgary Board of Education: La littératie structurée
ONlit
AlphaGraphe
Amélioration du Français
Online Blending Board
Decodable High Frequency Words
 Raconte-moi les sons (Chenelière)

Fluency

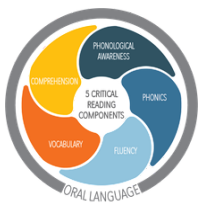
Instruction: Daily practice through repeated reading to increase accuracy, automaticity, rate, & expression. Frequent teacher-student reading check-ins for progress monitoring.

Sample Activities

- Partner Practice
- Echo/Choral Reading
- Echo Reading
- Poems & Songs
- Repeated Reading
- Reader's Theatre
- Scooping Phrases

Resources

Son-au-graphe
Calgary Board of Education: La littératie structurée
ONlit
Je Lis, Je Lis, Littératie!
 Raconte-moi les sons (Chenelière)
 Adorables et décodables (Chenelière)
 Décodables de Scholastique
 Tout pour Lire (Chenelière)



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN FRENCH IMMERSION



Vocabulary

Instruction: Vocabulary words in context of stories and learning.

Sample Activities

- Quality Read Alouds & Discussions
- Centres of Multiple Themes
- Dramatic play & Story Workshop
- Direct instruction / Specific Word Instruction: Tier 2 & 3 Words
- Word/Morpheme Walls
- Semantic Mapping
- Examples and Non-Examples
- Morphology, Synonyms and Antonyms

Resources

[ONlit](#)
[Decodable High Frequency Words](#)
[Amélioration du Français](#)
[Alloprof](#)

Comprehension

Instruction: Rich shared stories. discuss plot, inferences, visualisations, connections and vocabulary.

Sample Activities

- Quality Read Alouds: Story Maps, Knowledge Trees
- Elder/Cultural Storytellers & Rich Discussions
- Reflections through Drawing
- Retell through Dramatic play

Resources

[Son-au-graphe](#)
[Calgary Board of Education: La littératie structurée](#)
[ONlit](#)
[Alloprof](#)

Oral Language

Oral language forms the foundation for all later literacy learning in French Immersion, as students' ability to speak and understand French directly supports their reading and writing development. Providing frequent, authentic opportunities for students to listen and speak in French is essential for strong language acquisition and long-term proficiency. Oral language, or spoken language, includes speaking and listening. Developing these skills provides the foundation for word reading, comprehension, and writing.

Sample Activities

- Quality Read Alouds with Discussion Prompts
- Question of the Day
- Retelling Stories with Props or Story Boards
- French Speaking Challenges and Incentives

Additional General Planning Tools

- [British Columbia French Education Network](#)
- [Association canadienne des professionnels d'immersion](#)
- [SD72 French Language Learning Hub](#)



COWICHAN VALLEY

School District